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The

Teacher Trainer

A PRACTICAL JOURNAL FOR THOSE WHO TRAIN, MENTOR AND EDUCATE TESOL TEACHERS

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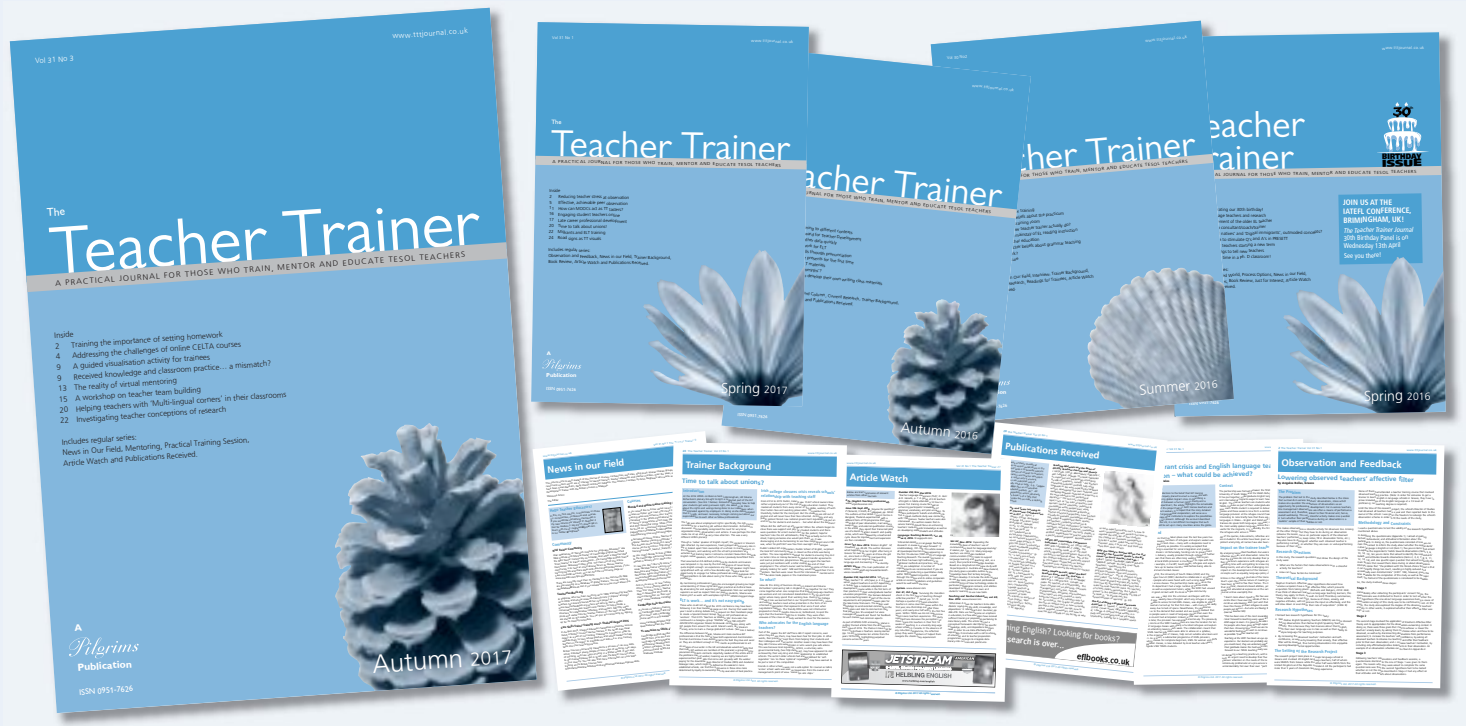

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Contents

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Editorial

Welcome to the first issue of our thirty second volume.

Instead of introducing the articles in the issue one by one, as I often do, I would like to encourage you to write for the journal. I did this in the last issue and we had a great response, so I will do it again!

Whether you are a novice or more experienced writer, we welcome articles on any topic of interest and relevance to teacher trainers, teacher educators and teacher mentors. To give you an idea of the sort of articles we publish, here are our established columns:

Author's corner, Book review, Classic articles or Golden oldies, Classroom practice, Conference and session reports, Current research, E-Matters, Feeder fields, Games for TT, Have you read…? In-service training and development, Interviews, Language matters, Literature matters, Meet a colleague, Observation and feedback, People who train people, Training round the world, Practical training session, Pre-service training, Process options, Q and A, Readings for trainees, Mentoring, Teacher selection and evaluation, The spoof page, Trainee voices, Trainer background, Trainer materials, Trainer mistakes, Trainer training, Training teachers for primary.

The series listed above do not appear each time but come back as and when we have an interesting article to add to them.

We also take articles that do not fall neatly under the headings above so don't be put off if your idea doesn't fit there!

For more details on who our readers are and how to send draft articles in, please see page 10 of this issue. And if you have any questions at all, please do get in touch. Our aim is to try to get as many people into print as possible!

This issue is available, as usual, in this print edition and also by subscribing online at: www.tttjournal.co.uk. Also online is a free selection of back articles and some extras in the TTTJ Plus section!

I hope you enjoy reading Volume 32 Number 1!

All good wishes

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About "The Teacher Trainer"

The Teacher Trainer is a practical journal for those involved in modern language, especially TESOL, teacher training. Whether you are a teacher who tends to be asked questions by others in the staff room, or a Director of studies with an office of your own, whether you are a mentor or a course tutor on an exam course, an inspector going out to schools or a teacher educator at a university, this journal is for you. Our aim is to provide a forum for ideas, information and news, to put fellow professionals in touch with each other and to give all those involved in training, mentoring and educating teachers a feeling of how trainers in other fields operate, as well as building up a pool of experience within our own field.

The journal comes out three times a year and makes use of a variety of formats e.g. articles, letters, comments, quotations, interviews, cartoons, spoofs. If the idea is good and useful to trainers, we'll print it no matter what voice you choose to express it in.

Using WhatsApp for peer support in a mentoring programme

By Jon Parnham, British Council, India, Radhika Gholkar, British Council, India and Simon Borg, ELT Consultant, Slovenia

Introduction

In this article we discuss the use of WhatsApp as a means of supporting the work of mentors on a large-scale teacher development project in India. WhatsApp (www.whatsapp.com) is a simple messaging service which operates via an application that is available for different mobile phone operating systems, including iOS and Android. Anyone with a compatible mobile phone can use WhatsApp and messages (including links and attachments) can be sent at no or minimal cost (see www.whatsapp.com/faq/en/general/20965922). According to figures released in February 2017 by Facebook (which owns WhatsApp), the service has 1.2 billion monthly active users.

The educational applications of WhatsApp have been discussed in recent years both in ELT and other curricular areas. To take one of several similar blogs available, Philip Haines presents '25 ideas for using WhatsApp with English language students[1], while WhatsApp is also one of the platforms referred to in the study on mobile pedagogy for ELT by Kukulska-Hulme, Norris and Donohue (2015). The impact of using WhatsApp in ELT settings has also been investigated; for example, Nduja (2016) and Fattah (2015) examined how the service can be used to develop ESL writing, Javari and Chalak (2016) have looked at using WhatsApp to develop vocabulary, while Tarighat and Khodabakhsh (2016) have studied mobile-based speaking assessment using WhatsApp. Beyond ELT there has also been much discussion of the educational uses of WhatsApp (e.g. Bouhnik & Deshen, 2014; Güler, 2017). In contrast to this growing volume of work on the use of WhatsApp to support student learning, not much research seems available into its use in teacher development contexts; for example, a search on the Web of Science academic database using the keyword 'WhatsApp' generated 351 results; refining these using the keywords 'teaching' and 'teacher' narrowed the list down to 41 and 21 hits respectively, while using 'teacher development' as a more specific key word gave seven results, of which one was relevant (Ndlovu & Hanekom, 2014). This last study describes the use of WhatsApp on an in-service programme for teachers of mathematics in South Africa and reports positive feedback from teachers on the programme to the use of the messaging application. On another widely used academic database (Scopus), a search for WhatsApp generated 371 results and narrowing the search to 'teacher development' produced 31 hits, none of which were relevant to our purposes here. Some existing work of relevance may exist in books or chapters not covered by these databases but overall our conclusion is that the use of WhatsApp in teacher development contexts remains unexplored.

We will now describe the mentoring project we worked on and how WhatsApp was used on it to support the mentors. We draw on WhatsApp transcripts to describe the different ways it was used by the mentors and conclude by considering both the challenges of using WhatsApp on the project and its benefits.

[1] https://oupeltglobalblog.com/2016/05/17/25-ideas-for-using-whatsapp-with-english-language-students

The ELISS project

There are approximately 1.3 million secondary school teachers of English in India and teacher development initiatives there have tended to operate at scale. ELISS – the recently completed English Language Initiative for Secondary Schools project – is one such initiative. It was a four-year partnership between the British Council and Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyaan (the state education authority) which aimed to enable teachers to understand the rationale behind learner-centred approaches and to apply them in their lessons. In the first two years of ELISS, 420 experienced teachers were given training to become Master Trainers who in turn provided cascade training to 16,400 secondary teachers across Maharashtra. In order to provide further support to teachers receiving ELISS training, a mentoring programme was piloted in the third year of the project where 80 Master Trainers were selected to be trained in mentoring skills. This was scaled up in year 4 of the project to include the remaining 340 Master Trainers. In the mentoring programme (see Borg & Parnham, 2017, for more details), each mentor was responsible for supporting around 15 teachers in their district. This support took the form of school visits (which involved a pre-lesson meeting, a lesson observation and a post-lesson discussion), workshops, and teacher WhatsApp groups. In addition, WhatsApp was used to support the mentors, and this is what we focus on here.

ELISS mentor WhatsApp groups

The 420 mentors on ELISS were geographically dispersed across 36 districts in Maharashtra, a state with an area of almost 308,000 square kilometres. This meant that once the initial mentor training had been completed there were limited opportunities for them to meet as a group; even within their districts. it was difficult for mentors to meet given their busy workloads (mentors continued to teach four days a week in addition to supporting their mentees). We wanted, though, to maintain the sense of community among mentors and also to create a platform through which they would be able to share experiences and to receive support, both from one another as well from the team managing ELISS. WhatsApp was selected for this purpose for a number of reasons: it was (a) already widely used in India (b) inexpensive (c) quick to use (e.g. no logging on each time) (d) instant (in terms of sending and receiving messages and (e) easy to use (no specific knowledge of technology is needed beyond knowing how to send text messages). In a survey of technology use in South Asia (British Council, 2015), WhatsApp was found to be the most popular social media application among teachers in India.

Patterns of activity on WhatsApp

As the maximum size of a WhatsApp group is 256 members, the 420 ELISS mentors were split into two groups. The British Council team managing ELISS were members of both groups, as were some education project officers from the government of Maharashtra.

WhatsApp allows the chat history of group conversations to be exported as a text file. These files can then be opened in Microsoft Excel or Word for analysis. For the purposes of this article, we will refer to data from the two WhatsApp groups that were active between 10 March 2015 and 29 March 2017. We will start here with some information about the volume of activity, then move on to examine the content of the messages that mentors posted.

An analysis of the chat history of the two ELISS WhatsApp groups shows that 63,310 individual messages were posted during the period under study (and an average of almost 151 per mentor). The first point to make, then, is that the WhatsApp groups were very frequently used by the mentors. Of course, while volume of activity is not in itself an indicator of quality, the fact that mentors did use the groups so often was an important first step and can be explained with reference to the points we made earlier about why WhatsApp was chosen on this project. For example, many of the mentors were already using it socially and one common problem that technology often creates for teachers – a steep learning curve – was not present here. A closer analysis of the chat records shows that the most popular days among the mentors for using WhatsApp were Tuesdays and Fridays with a total of 10,276 and 9,874 messages posted respectively on these days. Saturday was the least busy day with a total of 8,098 messages. Most group messages were posted between 8pm and 10pm – i.e. outside working hours and when most family and social commitments had been fulfilled. At times, there were so many mentors online during these evening periods that communication among them was synchronous.

We were also interested in the extent to which different mentors contributed to the groups. Unsurprisingly, there were variations here. Over two years every single mentor participated at some point in the groups and over half of the members (240) posted 50 or more messages each. The 10 most active mentors across the two groups posted around 1,000 messages each over two years (we note some drawbacks of such voluminous contributions below).

Overall, then, we found that the WhatsApp groups were frequently used by the mentors. We now move on to look at the content of the WhatsApp messages – i.e. what were the mentors writing about?

Content of WhatsApp messages

The content of the WhatsApp messages posted by the mentors can be placed broadly into two groups: professional or social (though one message often fulfilled both functions). Table 1 summarises, under these two broad headings, the various purposes of mentors' postings.

Table 1: Professional and social purposes of WhatsApp messages

Professional	Social
Discussions of issues from the mentoring training workshops	General greetings
Sharing experiences and plans related to their mentoring role	Birthday greetings
Sharing resources e.g. materials and links to useful websites	Compliments
Sharing pictures/videos of activities they have tried in class	Congratulations
General discussions about teaching and learning English	Messages relating to local festivals
Asking for and providing support and advice	Messages of condolence
Talking about language use	
Discussion and support with administrative issues in the project	

Although the primary purpose of the WhatsApp groups was originally conceived of in purely professional terms, it soon became clear that it would be counter-productive to suppress social interactions as these promoted positive group dynamics. For example, they helped to build the trust and understanding within the group which was useful in encouraging more members of the group to participate, share experiences, and respond to others.

We will now present a series of examples taken from the WhatsApp transcripts and which illustrate the professional themes listed in Table 1 (we will not focus here on examples of purely social interactions).

Discussions of issues from the mentoring skills workshops

Extract 1 below comes from a discussion that took place after a three-day face-to-face training top-up course for all the mentors. After the course, the British Council moderator asked a question related to a training module on writing learning outcomes. This generated a lot of discussion and over two days there were some 50 posts. As can be seen below, at first members of the group answer the question individually. However, gradually it turns into more of a conversation between members of the group.

Extract 1

Moderator:
Hi all. Hope you all travelled home safely after the training and have had a nice start to your school year. [Name] asked earlier about your one take away from the training. Quite a few people mentioned learning outcomes. Can you elaborate further on this? E.g. why was this a key point for you? What will it mean for your work as a mentor?

Mentor 1:
Learning outcome is of prime importance as that is what the whole exercise is trying to achieve. What we as mentors try to do is to help our mentees achieve the learning outcomes by creating an appropriate action plan for generating a lesson plan with SMART GOALS. We may use all the tricks of the trade to achieve the designated learning outcomes. Minus the accomplishment of the learning outcomes the lesson would end up as a fun activity.

Mentor 2:
Learning outcomes r the core of the Teaching learning process. It's very important for the Teacher to achieve the learning outcomes & to plan his / her lesson steps, activities accordingly. Being a mentor I'll make my mentees to understand what Learning outcomes exactly are & how to achieve it. I will also follow the same as a teacher.

Mentor 3:
Well elaborated mam

Moderator:
Nice comments everyone. Thanks a lot! [Mentor 2]'s post about learning outcomes and doing the same ourselves as teachers was interesting. – We can look at and reflect on the learning outcomes in our own teaching, making sure we understand clearly what we want to help our learners achieve and select appropriate activities to do this. So, what are the learning aims of your next lesson this week?

The following day the topic was picked up again by mentors without any prompting from the moderator. Throughout the day a further 46 messages were posted by 12 different members of the group. Extract 2 below shows the start of the discussion between two of the mentors.

continued >>>

Extract 2

Mentor 2:
The first job of a teacher is to IDENTIFY the learning outcomes of the activities he / she is going take in the class. In textbooks the learning outcomes may not be given clearly.....it's our job to identify them.

Mentor 4:
I completely agree with [Mentor 1] sir. Identifying is one of the key issues here: be it about learning outcome or setting up a goal or area of development.

Mentor 2:
If the learning outcomes are not met .... then ask a big question 'WHY'

Mentor 4:
Absolutely. 'Why' is a crucial question to answer right from Why mentoring? to 'Why weren't the learning outcomes met?'

Mentor 2
Yeah. U r right, [name of Mentor 4]

Mentor 4
👍👍

Sharing experiences and plans related to their mentoring role

One of the most common kinds of interactions on the mentor WhatsApp groups involved one mentor posting a description of a mentoring activity they had completed (e.g. a workshop or a classroom observation), followed by a series of photographs or short videos illustrating the activity. Following this (see Extract 3 below), other mentors responded with short replies complimenting or congratulating the original poster. While most such messages were descriptive rather than reflective in nature, they did serve at least three important purposes: (a) the sharing of practical mentoring ideas and activities among the groups; (b) they were motivating both for those who read the message and (when compliments or congratulations were posted in reply) to the original poster; and (c) they allowed the ELISS project team to see in concrete ways how mentors were discharging their duties.

Extract 3

Mentor 1:
Yesterday two of my mentees observed my lesson. They wanted to see a demo lesson of activity based teaching and how to conduct pair work and group work activities in classrooms.

[Mentor 1 posts nine pictures from lesson observation]

Mentor 2:
Wonderful classroom display n chits [cut up pieces of paper] for group work.

Sharing was also sometimes prospective, and mentors regularly posted messages describing activities they were planning to do. In Extract 4, Mentor 1 posts a message about a meeting they have set up to explain the mentoring programme to Head Teachers in their local district (this was one mentor responsibility early in the project). Following this, several other mentors reply wishing Mentor 1 good luck. This kind of interaction was very common; once again, it allowed mentors to see what their peers were doing and to send motivational messages to the original poster.

Extract 4

Mentor 1:
Hallo friends, [location] team is ready for HMs [Head Teacher] meet tomorrow! Thanks all of your contribution. it will help to accomplish the task.

Mentor 2:
Wish u all the best for [location] n [location] team

Mentor 3:
Team [location] is raring to go

Mentor 4:
Good luck to all dear mentors

Mentor 5:
All the best

Mentor 6:
[Name of Mentor 1] u r d best so definitely u will shine best luck

General (moderated) discussions about teaching and learning English

Mentors used the WhatsApp group to discuss a wide range of issues related to the teaching and learning of English. Four British Council team members who were also part of the WhatsApp groups occasionally moderated these discussions, as shown in Extract 5. During a discussion about helping mentees to develop their skills in giving learners corrective feedback, different members of the group made statements about errors in both learners' and teachers' use of language during lessons. At this point the British Council moderator stepped in twice to focus the discussion and then to rephrase a question, which allowed the mentors to share and build on their knowledge about error correction. As this extract also illustrates, during discussions there were variations in how coherently thoughts were articulated (we have added glosses in brackets to assist readers here) but over the course of a discussion (sometimes over a few days) ideas did generally become clearer and more focused.

Extract 5

Mentor 1:
I am unable to make it clear about errors. If the teacher is not totally satisfied about correcting the error his learners are making. Then the teacher may provide more opportunities to listen first. Then just before the time of activity set the SMART goal about how much he wanted from his learners.

Mentor 2:
I am confused. Are we discussing about errors committed by the teacher, students or both?

Moderator:
Hi all, here we are talking about errors by the learners and the teacher is worried because he feels that he can't address all of them.

Mentor 3:
U may support [your mentee] by saying 'ask the students about their observations about the activity' so that [and then] he can rectify [correct] the mistakes later through students' observations.

Mentor 4:
Even ask the teacher to brief [give feedback on how the learners performed during] the task at the end so that he can recall [review] all the mistakes n [and] correct them.

Mentor 4:
When [on] the spot corrections are not possible

Moderator:
When is it not advisable to do [on the] spot correction?

Mentor 4:
While the learner is speaking, let him finish with it. Doing spot correction may have negative impact on the learner.

Mentor 5:
Delayed correction can be for those errors which doesn't need immediate correction. It may depend on the lesson objectives also. For example: if the lesson objective is about preposition then we may delay in correcting verb forms which isn't our lesson objective.

This discussion then continued as other mentors responded to the moderator's prompts. The moderator's interventions helped focus contributions and generate more discussion, which helped the other group members extend their knowledge of the topic being discussed.

Asking for and providing support and advice

Although all mentors had attended a preparatory mentor training programme, it was anticipated that they would face a steep learning curve on the ground once they assumed their role as mentors. The WhatsApp groups gave mentors a rapid peer support mechanism; they were able to ask for advice on aspects of their mentoring work and to receive several (and often immediate) replies from their colleagues. Extract 6 is a typical example; it shows how a mentor was seeking advice on how she could encourage her mentees to make wider use of the WhatsApp group she had created for them. Her post generated various responses with practical advice and suggestions.

Extract 6

Mentor 1:
I created their WhatsApp grp but still de [they] dont share anything.

Mentor 2:
Ya [name of Mentor 1] that is d [the] problem even with me but when I started sharing the photos n [and] positive feedbacks intentionally now some of them r [are] trying to be active

Mentor 3
Mam, if you want your mentees to be active on group, you start posting on topic that appeals to them, make them reply on group. Once the chat gets started you can slowly turn to chat on to mentoring

Mentor 2
Ya doing same

Mentor 4
Good idea [name of Mentor 3] sir.

Mentor 5
Yes. It takes time to accept any new thing. Maybe that's why.

Mentor 6
Actually, I had the same problem, I consulted [name of colleague], asked his advice. He advised me to initiate discussion with small but interesting things in English. It worked so well that everyone started posting

Mentor 7
[Name of Mentor 6] sir plz share the topics.

Mentor 6
We can just start with interesting topics like
Is it good to use mother tongue in classrooms?
Such topics appeal them n they start sharing their ideas.
It paves a road for us.

Talking about language

The WhatsApp groups were frequently used by the mentors to discuss aspects of English grammar, sentence structure and vocabulary. Often the discussions would focus on words, phrases or sentences from the textbooks they or their mentees were using in their classes. Extract 7 shows a discussion around the use of passive voice and direct/indirect objects that arose after one of the mentors posted a grammar task. As other mentors replied, some of them posted incorrect answers while others had misread the task. This resulted in a discussion around direct and indirect objects.

Extract 7

Mentor 1:
I sent them a beautiful elephant. – Rewrite the sentence beginning with 'They.....'

Mentor 2:
They were sent a beautiful elephant

Mentor 3:
A beautiful elephant was sent to them.
They were received a beautiful elephant.*

Mentor 2:
✔ You are right [Mentor 3] ✔

Mentor 4:
They were sent a beautiful elephant

Mentor 2:
False. Because object in the sentence is a beautiful elephant.
A beautiful elephant was sent to them by me

Mentor 4:
If [Mentor 3] is right then why were we asked to begin the sentence with 'they'?

Mentor 5
Both are right. 'Them' is an indirect object while beautiful elephant is a direct object

Mentor 6:
'Them' is a direct object. 'beautiful elephant' is indirect object. – Is the correct one.

Mentor 5:
According to the instruction of the sentence 'They' is the right object but in the sentence it is indirect object.

Mentor 6:
Yes it is right.

Mentor 7:
'A beautiful elephant' is a direct object and 'them' is an indirect object. That said, we have to begin the sentence with 'they'.

Discussions of these kind occurred frequently; while they often highlighted gaps in mentors' language awareness, the point we want to emphasise here is the way the WhatsApp groups facilitated talk about language and the sharing of knowledge about language among this geographically-dispersed group of mentors.

continued >>>

There are three professional themes from Table 1 which we have not given examples of here (partly but not solely due to limitations of space). In two cases – those related to sharing resources and classroom activities – there was normally not much discussion; mentors posted links to materials they had found useful or photos and videos from their classrooms, and other mentors responded with appreciative comments. The third theme was an administrative one; there were certain procedures mentors had to follow (e.g. completing observation templates and uploading these to the project managers) and when there was some uncertainty about what precisely was required mentors often used the WhatsApp group to seek peer advice on the matter.

Challenges and benefits in using WhatsApp on ELISS

In this final section of the paper we will first comment on some challenges that arose in relation to the use of the mentor WhatsApp groups. Then we will also highlight what we (and mentors) felt the main benefits of WhatsApp were.

Challenges

We will highlight five challenges that arose over the course of the two years (some guidelines in response to these challenges are listed at the end of the article).

Misunderstandings: The informal and often spontaneous nature of communications on WhatsApp means that misunderstandings did occasionally occur among participants, leading to what might be described as 'mild social tensions'. Mentors' intentions were always positive, but contributions were sometimes abrupt, not fully articulated, or posted without sufficient understanding of a prior post, and this meant that disagreements did arise. These were normally resolved by group members themselves, though the British Council moderators were also on hand when needed.

Information overload: WhatsApp allows information to be shared freely but this carries with it the danger of information overload and at times individual members of the groups were advised (by other members) that they were posting too many messages, not all of which were seen to be relevant. The moderators also periodically reminded mentors to keep messages concise and relevant. Setting ground rules (e.g. in terms of not posting irrelevant information and being aware of the volume of messages individuals were posting) and moderation are important in reducing information overload.

Showcasing personal achievement: WhatsApp allowed mentors to share their own experiences as mentors and teachers of English and this was a valuable aspect of the group. However, there was a tendency in some cases for mentors to showcase their personal achievements too frequently in order to receive 'appreciation' and 'likes' from their peers. Such showcasing often lacked any commentary or reflective dimension. Members of the group can in time become unresponsive when the same individuals are constantly talking about what they do and, again, ground rules and moderation systems to manage this issue can improve the functioning of such groups.

Variable participation: Although, as we noted earlier, the volume of activity on the WhatsApp groups was substantial, across mentors it was variable; one of the challenges of such groups, then (especially on a large scale), is how to encourage everyone to participate; even those who did not post messages very often may have still been regular participants by reading and possibly thinking about others' messages, but the goal should be to maximise active participation. Minimising some of the issues noted above such as information overload might help in this respect; we were aware, too, that some mentors were not wholly comfortable with social media and, within the limits of what is feasible on any given project, support in such cases could also be made available.

Uncritical acceptance: Mentors were very appreciative of any resources that were shared by peers on the WhatsApp group. However (and this may be partly explained by the volume of information noted above and by a tendency to show appreciation for others' efforts) these resources were generally accepted without much critical discussion of how they could be used, adapted, or of their value for mentoring or teaching English more generally. This is another aspect of the group where additional guidelines and moderator intervention would have been useful.

Benefits

The WhatsApp groups were, though, also clearly beneficial in many ways, as we explain below.

Group membership: Without WhatsApp, it would have been difficult for mentors to maintain a sense of group membership. The groups, though, allowed them to be part of a professional community. This was one point noted by mentors when we asked them about the WhatsApp group at the end of the project. One, for example, said that "as it is not possible for all of us to be physically present at various events organised at various places by our team members, we were kept connected with the events through photographs, videos and news reports". WhatsApp, then, created a virtual network that compensated to some extent for the lack of physical contact among mentors.

Sharing knowledge and experience: This is perhaps the most obvious benefit of the group – the facility it offered for colleagues to share knowledge and experience, regularly, rapidly and in a closed (and therefore relatively safe) environment. Mentors were able to learn together and from each other, and they were the main sources of ideas and activities discussed in the groups (there was limited direct 'input' of ideas by the group moderators). 'Sharing' was one aspect of the group that mentors particularly appreciated, as this mentor noted: "Since this group has formed we discussed, exchanged our ideas, our classroom experiences and mentoring work. The links of articles, journals and websites provided us a big platform to join forums, social media groups and participate in many activities".

Peer support: The WhatsApp groups were a source of support for mentors when they encountered difficulties and thus countered to some extent the feelings of isolation that they might have otherwise experienced. One mentor reported that "We share our success and also our failures here and gear up once again after a thorough analysis of our work to prod further to reach our goal. At no moment have we felt left out. There was always somebody online who would bail us out and console". As this quote suggests, mentors also had someone to share their successes with too (though, as we noted above, some individuals made excessive use of this facility).

Workshop follow-up: The mentors attended training workshops a few times during the project and WhatsApp was a very useful way for issues from the workshops to be reviewed (often with the support of a moderator) when mentors had returned to their districts. For example, if one of the themes discussed at a workshop had been how to make post-lesson discussions effective, this was picked up and mentors were asked to discuss ways in which they could apply or were applying such ideas in their work. This also gave mentors the chance to further clarify their understandings of specific ideas as needed.

Practising English: One of the ground rules for the mentors' WhatsApp groups was that communication would be in English. Thus, in addition to sharing ideas about teaching and mentoring, the groups also gave mentors regular opportunities to interact professionally (and socially) in English. There was no requirement that formal written English be used and many mentors did use 'text messaging' English; however, the spontaneous nature of the discussions gave them added opportunities for fluent communication. And as we noted earlier, sometimes the focus of the discussion was language itself, which also created opportunities for mentors to enhance their language awareness.

Learning how to use social media: Finally, while WhatsApp was already familiar to many of the mentors, its use as a tool for professional development was not, and several mentors said at the end of the project that they felt they had improved their ability to use social media generally to support their development. For example, some had started reading and writing blogs, as this mentor noted: "I learnt from the experiences of others and started trying something new. I had never written a blog but after reading blogs here, I also started writing my own blog". Improving mentors' ability to use WhatsApp for professional development was important not just for themselves but also for the teachers they mentored and who had their own WhatsApp groups.

Conclusions

We have no doubt that during ELISS WhatsApp was effective in enabling mentors to create and sustain a supportive professional community. To conclude, we summarise the key lessons that we have taken away from our experience. We express these as a set of guidelines for setting up WhatsApp groups (not only but especially large ones) for the purposes of professional development in ELT:

- Appoint one or more moderators as they will have an important role to play, especially when the group is first formed. Moderator roles can include modelling expected etiquette, resolving misunderstandings and reminding members of the group's rules; at times when moderated discussions are taking place, moderators will need to thank people for their contributions, summarise ideas and ask open questions to encourage more participation.
- Create a sense of purpose from the start. Ensure that all members of the group understand what the purpose of the group is and how it will be beneficial for their own professional development.
- Agree a set of rules and code of conduct for the group. These could include, for example, general guidance on behaviour such as showing respect to others and valuing others' rights to share their opinions and specific guidance on the content, format and volume of posts.
- During the initial stages of setting up the group, agree a small number of topics to discuss on the group each week. This will help keep the group focused and allow more meaningful discussion to emerge. If this is not done, there is a danger that an unmanageable number of different topics will be posted on the group at the same time. This can result in information overload for the group participants and lead to limited overall engagement in discussions.
- Expect and accept a mix of social and professional interactions as the former can help build the rapport in the group. However, the moderator will need to step in to keep the group focused if social interactions are more evident than professional discussion.
- Where needed, model the kinds of interactions members are being encouraged to engage in. For example, if members are expected to share experience and to reflect critically on it, they may need to see examples of what this looks like in practice. Moderators can model such behaviours and/or provide examples for members to discuss.
- Monitor the progress of the group so that action can be taken as necessary to improve the quantity and quality of contributions. This may involve periodic feedback from members on how useful they are finding the group. With very large groups, while universal participation will be the goal, variability in participants' engagement must be expected.

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#CELTAchat

By Fiona Price, UK

The initial idea

The initial idea for #CELTAchat was conceived in November, 2016 while I was working on a Cambridge course leading to a Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (CELTA) in Rome, Italy. My colleagues and I had been discussing the merits of another Twitter chat called #ELTchat for English Language Teachers and thought that it would be great to have a similar platform for CELTA teacher trainers to share and discuss ideas.

How it began

We decided to create a Twitter account @AchatCELT and to set up a Blogger account for a CELTAchat blog. The first #CELTAchat was on the 9th of January 2017. We posted our first Padlet – an online virtual noticeboard: www.padlet.com - for topic suggestions on Twitter and teacher trainers responded by suggesting four topics. We then had a Twitter vote to decide which topic to choose from the four suggestions. After 17 votes, the winning topic with 35% was chosen. After the chat, the first summary was written up by a volunteer and published on the #CELTAchat blog.

This format became the structure for future #CELTAchats and @AchatCELT now has 147 followers.

Voted topics so far

We have had ten #CELTAchats so far with a wide range of suggested topics and final topic suggestions voted for on Twitter:

Date	Topic
09/01/2017	Supported lesson planning and input
06/02/2017	Lesson observations
03/03/2017	What works best for Teaching Practice (TP)
03/04/2017	Making the CELTA Course really global
01/05/2017	Teacher talk
05/06/2017	Observation tasks – ideas and good practice
03/07/2017	Are TPs always coursebook-based?
07/08/2017	What is the future of CELTA in the 21st century?
04/09/2017	• What do we do with extra TP slots? • Pros & cons of the AS grade – To use or not to use?
02/10/2017	Input sessions

At the end of each chat we ask for a volunteer to write the summary. You can read summaries for these chats on the blog: http://celtachat.blogspot.co.uk

How it works

#CELTAchat is held on the first Monday of the month from 7-8 pm BST/GMT on Twitter and then goes into asynchronous mode for 24 hours for those trainers who are unable to make the live chat. You can suggest a topic on the monthly Padlet that gets posted a week or so before, then vote for the final topic choice and join in.

However, #CELTAchat only works if teacher trainers know about it and are sufficiently interested enough to participate. I hope that writing this article will raise awareness and increase interest.

Benefits of #CELTAchat

There is no special interest group within IATEFL specifically for CELTA teacher trainers so having a platform to share ideas with fellow teacher trainers globally is beneficial in terms of being a great source of professional development.

Experiential learning is the basis for CELTA, and is the basis for #CELTAchat. During my experience of helping to set up #CELTAchat, I have benefited a lot in terms of developing digital literacies such as:

- Setting up @AchatCELT on Twitter
- Understanding the use of hashtags on Twitter
- Discovering TweetDeck for easier access to #CELTAchat
- Voting on Twitter
- Using appropriate tools according to the task: Blogger for blogging, Padlet for topic suggestions, Canva for writing an infographic summary, Storify for creating a transcript,
- Writing a summary
- Taking part in an online chat, following threads

We need your support

Whether you are a complete Twitter beginner, in which case you'll need to start by setting up a Twitter account: https://youtu.be/4rVbG917kg4, or are already on Twitter, we need your support. We hope you will follow @AchatCELT and join us online so we can maintain #CELTAchat as a growing and ongoing support for teacher trainers worldwide.

The Author

Fiona Price is a CELTA teacher trainer with 20 years of experience in ELT in private language schools and Further Education in the UK and abroad. She is very interested in the use of technology to enhance teaching and learning for CPD. Based in London, she is currently a freelance CELTA teacher trainer and teaches EAP in Higher Education on pre-sessional summer courses. She is one of the moderators for #CELTAchat.
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A useful trainer development resource

Many teachers moving into teacher training, teacher education or the mentoring of teachers have little access to specific training for their new role. And once in role have few, if any, colleagues to learn from or to discuss teacher education issues with. Other readers who have been fortunate enough to have had access to special training for their new role, and who have been working with pre- or in-service teachers for a while, would still like a feeling of learning and progression in their work.

If you or people you know fall into either of those two groups, you may like to know about a very useful resource produced by the British Council. You may know of their Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Framework for teachers available at: www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/british-council-cpd-framework

But they also have a CPD Framework for teacher educators available at: www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/cpd-framework-teacher-educators

"This second framework acts as a guide to the CPD of anyone involved in the education and training of teachers."

This second framework acts as a guide to the CPD of anyone involved in the education and training of teachers. If you go to the link just above, you can download a free booklet that shows you:

- four stages of development (Foundation, Engagement, Integration, and Specialization)
- seven enabling skills (Communicating effectively, Teamworking skills, Thinking critically, Building relationships, Effective organisational skills, Increasing motivation, and Leadership/supervisory skills)
- ten professional practices (Knowing the subject, Understanding the teaching context, Understanding how teachers learn, Planning, managing and moderating teacher learning, Managing and developing learning resources for teachers, Demonstrating effective teaching behaviour, Supporting and mentoring teachers, Monitoring teacher potential and performance, Researching and contributing to the profession, and Taking responsibility for your own professional development)
- five self-awareness features. (Openness, Conscientiousness, Interactivity, Empathy, and Resilience)

Each item listed above is detailed. For example, the 'Foundation' stage of development is described thus:

'You have the foundation of teaching skills and knowledge on which to build your role as a teacher educator.'

The enabling skill of 'Teamworking' is described as including 'working with groups of adults from diverse backgrounds on a collaborative project.'

The text on the professional practice of 'Knowing the subject' states that it 'involves the following elements. Demonstrating proficiency in the subject area. Demonstrating familiarity with a range of current reference materials/sources/(online) learning platforms relevant to the subject and using these to support teacher development. Demonstrating familiarity with current theories and research and their applicability to a range of teaching contexts and a range of learners. Demonstrating familiarity with current theories of subject assessment and their applicability to a range of teaching contexts and a range of learners. Demonstrating familiarity with key subject-specific research issues and their relevance to a range of teaching contexts and a range of learners. Demonstrating familiarity with key subject-specific terminology. Researching and reflecting on own subject knowledge.'

Once you have gained an overview of the Teacher Educator Framework via the free downloadable booklet, you can get further information and a bank of related resources by clicking through to EnglishAgenda, the British Council's website dedicated to teacher educators. There, for every component of the framework, you can find related resources that include webinar recordings, research papers, e-guides, and articles. All of these are accessible free!

Teacher trainers, teacher educators and mentors could use the Teacher Educator Framework as a guide or catalyst for solo, pair or group CPD, enjoy, and perhaps add to the extensive resources.

The Editor

BRITISH COUNCIL

The

Teacher Trainer

Sending in?

Would you like to send something in to *The Teacher Trainer*?

If you have an idea that is useful, relevant and interesting to teacher trainers, teacher educators and teacher mentors, why not write it up for us? If you are not familiar with our content or style, read an issue or three of the journal and also go on our web site to read examples of articles that have appeared in our pages.

Our readers

Our subscribers and readers are all over the world. Some have English as their first language. Many do not. They may be trainers of pre-service or in-service teachers and they work in many different settings. This is why a clear structure and clear language are very important in a first draft article. We are not overly academic. Even thoughtful pieces will keep the number of bibliographical references to under ten. And these pieces will contain a section on how the thoughts can be implemented or made to come alive to readers in their own settings

Timing

The Teacher Trainer comes out three times a year, but for contributors there are no deadlines as such so there is no need to worry about timing. Articles are printed once they are ready and after they have queued up for a while. There are no special issues, but there are specialised series running in most issues. Examples of these are "News in Our Field", "Practical Training Session", "Observation and Feedback" and 'Interview'.

First draft

So, if you would like to send us an article, please write in an accessible, non-academic style. Length should normally be 800-4,000 words. Send your first draft in double spaced with broad margins. Use headings and sub-headings throughout to make your text easier to follow. Please give a brief bio data and an accurate word count at the end. Make sure your name and contact details appear in both your article and your accompanying email in case the two get separated. Don't send your article to other publications at the same time as you are sending it to us as we will then not consider it.

Your article will be acknowledged by pro-forma email. It is normal for contributors to receive editorial comments later on so please do not take this as a sign of failure! Edits are often necessary to ensure your text is clear, a good length and makes sense to readers in very different settings round the world.

Turning down

We do sometimes turn articles down. This is usually for one of the following reasons:

- The article is for language students or language teachers not for our readership of teacher trainers, teacher educators and teacher mentors.
- The article is too similar to one already published or about to be published in the journal.
- The article (or a part of it) has already been published elsewhere.
- The article is too long for our few pages.
- The article is very academic in style.
- The article contains nothing new.

But wherever possible the editor will work with you to get your ideas in print. She is part-time so there may be delays when she is teaching or training and thus not working on articles for a few weeks.

Once accepted, we try to publish your article in about four issues, but if it is an awkward length, or we have space constraints, it may be in the queue longer.

Short articles!

When we are laying out a new issue of the Teacher Trainer journal, we often have a little space left over. We keep that for extra adverts that come in late. These little spaces are also perfect for short articles! So, if you have a really good idea that you want to share with fellow professionals, and it is very short (under 1,000 words), send it in! It may well help us with our layout. It may also mean that your work gets printed quicker than usual too!

Copyright

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Author's Corner

This column gives space for authors to explain why and how they wrote their books. The authors this time are Kathleen Graves, Donald Freeman and Tessa Woodward. They talk below about their co-authored book '*Teacher Development Over Time*' out with Routledge in 2018.

The book is in the series *Research and Resources in Language Teaching*. If you would like to know more about the series itself, please see *The Teacher Trainer* Volume 30 Number 1, pp 18-19 where the series editors Jill Hadfield and Anne Burns wrote, 'Practical theory: How we came to co-edit a book series.'



An idea sparks

TW: I had been invited a couple of times, by Jill, to discuss possible ideas for the Routledge Research and Resources in Language Teaching series which we nicknamed R and R! But it was only after an interesting conversation with my future co-authors at the IATEFL Conference in Liverpool that I realised that, as a trio, we had something to offer. Kathleen and Donald talked to me, outside the conference, in a coffee shop overlooking the river, about the research they were doing in two separate countries on how teachers perceive the usefulness of professional development sessions and programmes they had undergone. I had a chat with Jill a few weeks later and she encouraged us to put in a proposal.

KG: Donald and I have known Tessa for years and we have really enjoyed working together as trainers in different places. When the opportunity to work on this book came up, it seemed like a great vehicle for bringing together various ideas about teacher development and how we understand learning and growth over a professional life span.

DF: When we first spoke with Tessa about the project in Liverpool, Kathleen and I were finishing up two national studies on public-sector ELT teachers' experiences of professional development in Chile and in Turkey. (Since then, there has been a third national study in Qatar). In the project, which we called *Learning4Teaching*, we had been thinking about how to better understand these experiences at a large scale, from the perspective of national education systems, so that teachers' voices and their learning could be represented, and thus hopefully more formally incorporated into policy discussions, where they are often left out.

Framing the book

KG: The initial challenge, as we began to put our ideas together, was how to frame the book. There are lots of good books on teacher development so we had to think about how the three of us, as authors, could combine our interest to make it distinctive. Given that we have each been working in teacher development for a long time, both on our own and with teachers, we explored the idea of looking at development throughout a teacher's career.

DF: Another challenge was to work within the series' four-part structure.. Because our topic focuses on teacher, rather than student, learning, we had to propose some adjustments to that structure. Briefly, Part 1, which is called in the series "From Research to Implications", presents research on the topic.

We kept that focus, with some tweaking as we explain below. Part 2, "From Implications to Application", is for us the heart of the book. It assembles a variety and range of training activities and connects them to central ideas and findings from the research in Part 1.

In a lot of ways, Part 2 ended up becoming the most creative section of the book to write. We brought together 'tried and true' activities that we've used as trainers, and we developed new ones to connect and to probe some of the research ideas through readers' experiences. In some senses, it was like collaborating on designing a teacher-training course, with the guiding structure coming from the research in Part 1.

TW: Given the book's focus on teacher learning, we needed to modify Part 3 and Part 4 a bit. Part 3, "From Application to Implementation", focused on how the activities could be put together in different teacher training contexts. We wanted the book to be useful to teachers working in a wide variety of settings, so we tried to expand these organizational ideas to reflect that variety. Part 4, "From Implementation to Research", is meant to close the cycle. We wanted to focus on research that readers of the book could undertake as teachers.

DF: Here we drew a key distinction with usual ideas of teacher research. Often teacher-research or action research focuses on understanding and modifying teaching in terms of classroom learning. But the focus of this book is on teacher learning, so we wanted the research section to concentrate on ways in which teachers can study their own learning.

A way of working on Part One

TW: Once we'd settled on the format and design of the book, we had to decide how to work. Starting with Part 1 …a logical place to start….. we thought we would each choose a piece of relevant research and write it up separately. We hoped that our different writing 'voices' would not constitute a bumpy ride for the reader!

DF: But it actually turned out to be a good thing. By writing as individuals, we could work from the ideas that we each found useful. We each chose what we came to call a 'trajectorist' researcher – someone who looked at teachers' professional lives over the spans of their careers. I chose the work of Daniel Lortie, a sociologist of education who was one of the first people to ask teachers about their views of their work and their professional lives. His study, Schoolteacher, which was first published in 1975, has had a profound impact on how we understand the work of teaching from the inside out, from teachers' perspectives.

TW: I chose the work of Michael Huberman, a professor of education in Switzerland who published an account of his research project in The Lives of Teachers in 1989. Huberman's aim was to gather teachers' views of their teaching over time. He suggested we may be able to plot trends in teachers' careers that are roughly related to their number of years of teaching. What drew me to his work was not only the warm sense of humour that comes through in his writing (especially in his use of the words of the teachers themselves in interviews), but also the care he took to remind us that the identification of phases and sequences in teachers' careers are descriptive rather than normative and therefore need to be handled gingerly.

KG: I wrote about Amy Tsui's 2003 study of expertise in teaching. Her work was motivated by questions about what exactly constitutes expertise and what makes an "expert" teacher different from an experienced or novice teacher. She developed her ideas based on case studies of four English teachers in Hong Kong, so the content is very relevant to language teachers.

continued >>>

TW: That gave us three sound and valued pieces of research to explore. To update things a bit, I asked Kathleen and Donald to write about their own research which was current and had really sparked my interest in the coffee shop conversation in Liverpool.

DF: Yes, as we were winding up our work on Part 1, Tessa urged us to include work from the national studies in the *Learning4Teaching* project. It turned out to be a really nice fit in that these studies, like the other research in the book, focus on teachers' understanding of their own professional learning. And they they offer a useful counterpoint in being large-scale studies at the national level.

We start Parts Two and Three

TW: We then decided that I would tackle the practical activities in Part 2 and the way they might be incorporated into a busy working life. Each of the practical activities in Part 2 is written up in recipe format. The reader knows how the activity relates to the research and what materials, procedures, and so on are necessary. There are ideas for extensions and variations too.

KG: I looked closely at how to make the links between the research in Part 1 and the activities in Part 2 clear. This involved lots of cross checking between the implications drawn from the research and the practical activities. Where we found gaps, we ended up creating new activities, which was both challenging and fun.

Tessa then wrote a very practical Part Three about how teachers and teacher trainers could use the activities in Part 2 in different contexts ranging from working alone or with colleagues in a staff room, to working on a short Professional Development course, or with colleagues from other institutions in the same local area.

And then Part Four

TW: Donald then looked closely at how teachers could take on research possibilities for Part 4. Kathleen, as well as adding to the pile of activities for Part 2, had the awful job of trying to keep all our drafts, comments, redrafts and further comments in some sort of order so that she could retrieve them in order to prepare drafts for the series editors, twice, and eventually a final, formatted manuscript for the publishers!

And as we write this…

As we write this, we are deep into discussions of book cover designs and advance readers. The main work of writing is now behind us. Phew! Next, we start the joyful business of making the work public at conferences and workshops around the world. It will be so interesting to hear the comments of those who learn about the book and start to try out the ideas in it!

The book's current available date is March 2018. The book's home page is: www.routledge.com/Teacher-Development-Over-Time-Practical-Activities-for-Language-Teachers/Woodward-Graves-Freeman/p/book/9781138207059

News in Our Field

By Amin Neghavati, Singapore

Hello Teacher Educators,

Greetings from hot and humid Singapore! This issue's News in Our Field column covers some very popular conferences and then shares some useful resources with you. As always, if you would like to send me something for my column in the next issue, get in touch with me on Twitter @neghavati or simply drop me an email at neghavati@gmail.com. You can also add #TTTjournal to your posts on social media if you would like to get in touch.

Conferences

52nd Annual International IATEFL Conference and Exhibition

Brighton, on the South Coast of England, will once again host the largest ELT event in Europe from 10th to 13th April 2018 with the 12 Pre-Conference Events (PCEs) on 9th April. If you are interested and have not yet registered, make sure you do so before 22nd March.

If you have already planned your IATEFL Brighton tour, make sure you don't miss the joint PCE event by the LAM (Leadership and Management) and TD (Teacher Development) SIGs with a focus on personalised teacher development. Clare Magee and Fiona Wiebusch, Ed Russell, Liam Tyrrell and Ania Kolbuszewska will be speaking at this awesome event for Directors of Studies, managers and teacher trainers.

Another joint IATEFL PCE of interest to us this year is on pronunciation in teacher education by the Pron. (Pronunciation) and TTE (Teacher Training and Education) SIGs and is aimed at teacher trainers and trainer trainers who want to have a discussion around issues involved in preparing teachers to develop a practical pronunciation pedagogy.

You can also watch the Trinity IATEFL Scholarship winner, Peter Browning, who will be talking about reflexivity in the training of pre-service teachers in Colombia.

If you are interested in a review of past IATEFL conferences, here is some useful information: https://conference.iatefl.org/pastandfuture.html and you can follow #iatefl2018 on social media to join the conversation globally. It is also worth mentioning that it is not too early to think about IATEFL 2019 in Liverpool if you have missed this year's event.

TDSIG Web Carnival

The IATEFL Teacher Development Special Interest Group held their third TDSIG Webcarnival in February 2018 after two successful web carnivals in 2016 and 2017. The theme was 'success stories from around the world' and it had its main focus on defining teacher development in different contexts and for different people. Recordings, blog posts and a lot more on their carnivals are stored at https://tdsig.org/webcarnival/. You can also join their online chat on Twitter at #tdsigcarnival.

In August 2017, the TD SIG started their YouTube eBulletin as well. If you would like to know what is going on with this SIG, watch their eBulletins on their YouTube channel. Their first one is here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=yipBDnNwaQ0.

52nd TESOL International Convention and Expo.

Chicago, Illinois, USA is hosting the 52nd TESOL Conference from 27th to 30th March 2018 at the largest convention centre in North America- McCormick Place. With more than 1,000 education sessions, TESOL 2018 has a lot to offer teacher educators.

Shabana Basij-Rsikh is this year's opening keynote speaker. She is the co-founder and president of the School of Leadership in Kabul-Afghanistan's first and only all-girls boarding school. Her success stories and the challenges of running this school are definitely interesting to teacher trainers, mentors and ELT managers who work in totally different environments. Don't miss the Teacher Education Open Meeting on Wednesday 28th March from 5 to 6.30 pm if you are in Chicago. More information: www.tesol.org/convention-2018 and #TESOL18 on Twitter.

53rd RELC International Conference

From 12th to 14th March 2018, Singapore is hosting the 53rd Regional English Language Centre event aiming to improve language teaching and language teacher education in the Southeast Asian region. If you are in Singapore in March and you are attending this event, make sure you go for the sessions under the '21st century language teacher education' theme (and you can also get in touch with me so we can arrange to meet).

Hanan Khalifa, Kurt Kohn, David Nunan, Jack Richards, Thomas Farrell and Victoria Clark are among the invited speakers for this year's event. More information about the sessions, and slides and resources from past RELC events are all here: www.relc.org.sg/Conference

Other news

Becoming a CELTA Trainer

If you are a CELTA trainer, you already have a lot to say about the journey you had to go through to become one and you perhaps have a lot to reflect on. If you have done a lot of teacher training or have completed your Delta, you have perhaps been following up on becoming a CELTA trainer at some point in your career life and you have probably read blog post like www.teachingenglish.org.uk/blogs/heath/celta-training-being-a-tit (CELTA Training- Being a Trainer in Training), https://ricardobarroselt.wordpress.com/2015/12/10/becoming-a-celta-tutor-part-1/ (Becoming a CELTA Tutor), https://sandymillin.wordpress.com/2016/08/16/two-years-as-a-celta-tutor/ (Two years as a CELTA Tutor) and https://sallyhirst.wordpress.com/2013/03/10/becoming-a-tutor/ (Becoming a CELTA Tutor).

In October last year, Anthony Gaughan, who has been a CELTA trainer for more than 13 years and a CELTA Assessor for about 10 years, started writing a series of detailed blog posts on how to become a CELTA trainer with some very useful tips. The first part is here: http://teachertrainingunplugged.com/so-you-want-to-be-a-celta-trainer-part-1-getting-to-the-starting-line/ and, at the time of writing this column, Anthony has put 4 posts on his blog.

In 2010, Scott Thornbury posted the 'T is for Teacher Training' on his blog and since then teachers and trainers have been discussing working as CELTA trainers below his post. Some very interesting comments can be found there as well: https://scottthornbury.wordpress.com/2010/11/07/t-is-for-teacher-training

Why not join the conversation and add your comments to his posts about your experience of working on a CELTA course?

VR in Teacher Training

Have you ever tried adding some technology to your teacher training courses? The Digital Teacher, a project by Cambridge English which aims at developing digital competencies in teachers, has some ideas for teacher trainers as well. This post is about using 360-degree cameras in Teaching Practice sessions: https://thedigitalteacher.com/training/tips-teacher-training-with-virtual-reality. There are some interesting 'new technology in ELT' lesson plans and quick training modules there as well: https://thedigitalteacher.com/training.

TEFL Training Institute

If you are looking for some videos to show in your training sessions and don't have time to spend hours on the internet to find the best ones, you can enjoy the videos Ross Thorburn and Tracy Yu have collected in their YouTube Channel. Besides, there are some very interesting blog posts and podcasts on various topics like academic management and teacher development on their website: www.tefltraininginstitute.com

Asking the right questions – student-created feedback

By Anthony Sellick, Japan

Introduction

Teacher trainers and in-service teachers receive feedback from our students in various ways. It is not uncommon to receive informal feedback at the end of a course in the form of flowers, cards, or some other student-made form of approbation. This kind of feedback is often profoundly moving, memorable, and motivating. However, while heartwarming, and sending a strong message of a job well done, this kind of informal feedback is often of less value in our skill development as it rarely informs us of our strengths and weaknesses.

Formal feedback is commonly derived from three sources: line management, peer observations, and formal student feedback. Observations allow trainers and teachers to have strong and weak elements of their teaching identified by fellow professionals. In this way, certain aspects of classroom behavior that we may not be aware of, due to our being immersed in the process of teaching, can be ascertained. This level of feedback tends to be technical and practical in nature as it is generated by peers who are knowledgeable in the fields of education and pedagogy.

Formal student feedback gives students the opportunity to report back on how well a teacher's approach and classroom behavior is received. As the students have regular contact with their teachers in an educational setting, and as the targets of their teachers' teaching, they are perhaps best placed to provide insights into the quality and effectiveness of a teacher's skill (Follman 1992, 1995; Peterson et al, 2000; Worrell & Kuterbach, 2001).

Giving the students a voice in such a way is an important part of student-centred education. Formal student feedback also provides administrators with a quick and cheap way to assess their teachers' performances (Little et al., 2009; Worrell & Kuterbach, 2001).

continued >>>

Thus it has become an increasingly common part of the process of professional development since it was first trialed in the 1920s (Remmers & Brandenburg, 1927). However, it is not uncommon for administrators, particularly for short courses, to create student feedback instruments that are focused on measuring students' overall satisfaction of a course, and which provide little feedback of use for the teacher.

Strengths of student feedback

Considerable research has been conducted into student feedback, and the following findings have been identified:

- Rather than simply treating teachers as a uniform group, student feedback clearly differentiates teachers (Ferguson, 2010).
- Students can discriminate between teachers' teaching skill and interpersonal skills (Peterson et al., 2000; Aleamoni, 1999).
- At least from secondary school age, students can discriminate between effective and ineffective teaching methods (Follman, 1992; Worrell & Kuterbach, 2001).
- Ratings of teachers by students of any age are as reliable and valid as those of adults (Follman, 1992, 1995; Worrell & Kuterbach, 2001).
- Student ratings of their teachers are correlated with student achievement in that teacher - higher-rated teachers tend to have students who obtain higher grades (Wilkerson et al., 2000; Kyriakides, 2005; Crow, 2011).

Unsurprisingly, receiving good quality feedback from students can help teachers to improve their teaching skills (Follman, 1992, 1995; Aleamoni, 1999; Roche & Marsh, 2002).

Issues with student feedback

However, useful as it is, there are some problems relating to student feedback. These include:

- Students are students – they lack technical knowledge about teaching and a full understanding of the demands and duties of a teacher (Follman, 1992, 1995; Goe et al., 2008; Worrell & Kuterbach, 2001).
- Student ratings of teachers and ratings of teachers by other teachers can be very different (Aleamoni, 1999).
- Student motivation to complete feedback often declines with the amount of time needed to complete it and the frequency with which it is required (Brennan & Williams, 2004).
- Students can be disappointed if their teachers do not appear to respond to the feedback (Richardson, 2005).

"As a result, while pilot studies and validation tests are carried out on many student feedback instruments, can we really be sure that we are asking the questions that our students want to answer about their teachers?"

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Furthermore, while considerable effort has been made to ensure that student feedback is valid – that it provides an accurate assessment of a teacher's teaching – the fact remains that the content of these surveys is prepared by educational professionals. As a result, while pilot studies and validation tests are carried out on many student feedback instruments, can we really be sure that we are asking the questions that our students want to answer about their teachers? Furthermore, if educational professionals write the student feedback instruments, where does their ownership actually lie?

The rest of this article describes an investigation into what questions language students want to be asked in student feedback in a Japanese high school.

What was done

Context

In Japan, student feedback surveys have been compulsory in Japanese educational institutions since 2008, as part of the Japanese Ministry of Education's Plan 21 to improve teaching quality and student satisfaction (MEXT, 2003).

The investigation reported here took place in a six-year private co-educational high school in the Kanto region of Japan. The school is attached to the Faculty of Teacher Education of a private university. Trainee teachers are regularly rotated through the school, and the school also provides free after-school classes for the students. These are taught by the trainee teachers.

Student feedback is obtained in the middle and at the end of each term (six times per year). The current instrument consists of a questionnaire with four items (see Table 1 below), for which the students can rate the teacher as satisfactory, average, or unsatisfactory. Some additional space is provided for students to provide comments. This feedback instrument is used to assess both the regular in-service faculty and also the trainee teachers, and is focused on specific skill areas.

Table 1. Student feedback survey items
1. Is your teacher's voice clear?
2. Does your teacher use the blackboard well?
3. Does your teacher explain things clearly?
4. Do you understand the teacher's lessons?

Teachers receive a summary for each of their classes and a representative selection of any comments. Should a teacher receive a poor rating from a class (generally greater than 10% of students expressing dissatisfaction), they are required to undertake some kind of administrative action, such as submitting a report reflecting on why they received that feedback and outlining a plan for improving the situation with that class. Trainee teachers are required to undertake this kind of self-reflection and planning as part of their training, regardless of the quality of their feedback.

Approach

My initial intention was to conduct a questionnaire survey of the 11th grade students about the student feedback questions. In other words, I intended to perform a validation of the existing student feedback questionnaire. After subsequent discussions, I decided to expand the participating students to include all of the students from grades seven through eleven. However, I recognized that a questionnaire survey approach would inevitably suffer from the same potential issues as the questionnaires that were being investigated. Faced with a summer of analyzing nearly a thousand questionnaires and a potentially infinite recursion of questionnaires about questionnaires, I decided that a different approach would be taken, and that the students would be asked to write their *own* student feedback questions.

Procedure

One post-end-of-term-test lesson was devoted to this activity.

1. At the beginning of the lesson, the students were shown an explanatory sheet (see Appendix). Any student not wishing to take part was allowed to do self-study, although none actually chose this option.
2. The students were divided into groups of around four members each.
3. Each student group was given a copy of the current student feedback questionnaire.
4. The teacher took a little time to explain different question types, specifically scalar (rating a statement on a three or five-point scale), forced choice (YES/NO items), and open question types (where space is given for a freely-written answer).
5. The students were then allowed to make their own student feedback questions, with the teacher acting as a facilitator.
6. At the end of the lesson, each group's contribution was collected.
7. The students were asked for any feedback comments about the experience.
8. The students were thanked and reminded that the results would be passed on to the school, BUT that there was no guarantee that the student feedback questionnaire would be revised.

Once all the student-generated questions had been collected, they were passed on to several blind judges (teachers unfamiliar with the students and the school's student feedback survey) and grouped into categories.

Finally, the results were fed back to the teaching faculty and consideration was given to revising the student feedback instrument to include the additional factors identified by the students.

What was expected…and what actually happened

Thinking up feedback questions can be a very challenging task, and in fact every group in every class in every grade reported that they found this to be the case. Comments from the students included, "It was interesting, but very, very, very, difficult!", "It is hard to think like a teacher," and, "It was my first time to think about classes like this."

As a result, rather than completing the task as instructed and producing their own student feedback questions, the students re-interpreted the instructions and re-formulated the task.

Reformulation of the Task

The groups universally reformulated the task into two steps:

1. Are the current questions okay? [If not, how should they be revised?]
2. What additional questions are needed?

This reformulation significantly reduced the cognitive and linguistic load of the task and allowed the students to focus on what they thought was missing or wrong about the existing student feedback instrument rather than creating a new one from scratch.

Results

Inevitably, some groups returned unusable or off-topic items, ranging from general "Don't knows," and items directed at specific teachers such as, "Is your teacher strong?" and, "Does your teacher like pizza too much?", through to proposals for the abolition of homework and the student election of the school principal. However, as a body, many useful and interesting items were produced.

In addition to the questions relating to the three areas of teaching skills that made up the original student feedback survey, (clear voice, board work and explanation) which the students endorsed (thus providing a convenient content validation of those questions), the students produced questions that clustered into the following factors: teaching skills, teacher attitude, teacher interpersonal skills, and teacher behavior.

Teaching Skill

As noted above, the students endorsed the original questions used. However, they also revised and expanded the teaching skill factor, as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Expanded Teaching Skill items
1. Is your teacher's voice clear?
2. Does your teacher use the blackboard well? Does your teacher write clearly?
3. Does your teacher explain things clearly?
4. Do you understand the teacher's lessons?
5. Is the pace of the lesson too fast or too slow?
6. Does your teacher use a variety of activities?
7. Does your teacher help you when you need help?
8. Does your teacher answer your questions?
9. Does your teacher set too much homework?

How well the teacher responds to a student's need for assistance and clarification was clearly identified as important.

Teacher Attitude

In addition to teaching skill, the teacher's professionalism and approach to the lesson was clearly identified as a factor of importance to the students. The key questions identified are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Teacher Professionalism items
1. Does your teacher look professional?
2. Does your teacher come to class on time?
3. Is your teacher enthusiastic?
4. Is your teacher knowledgeable?
5. Are your teacher's lessons interesting/fun?
6. Is your teacher active?

Students clearly recognize the importance for a teacher to be both professional and passionate about teaching. Essentially, education *is* communication, but as teachers we communicate much more than just our target lesson content, we also signal to the students how we feel about the subject, teaching, and the class. While a teacher's professionalism and enthusiasm can never motivate all of the students, a lack of either will certainly demotivate every student – after all, if the teacher does not seem to care about the lesson, why should the students?

Furthermore, the students seem to be showing a preference for teachers who are active and have a wider knowledge beyond their own subject area – many students can benefit from learning how different subjects interrelate as opposed to being distinct (see, for example, the Fibonacci Project, an EU-wide program to improve mathematics and science education via cross-disciplinary and cross-curricular approaches).

continued >>>

Teacher Interpersonal Skills

A third factor identified by the students was the teacher's interpersonal skills, described in Table 4.

Table 4. Teacher Interpersonal Skills items	
1.	Is your teacher friendly?
2.	Is your teacher kind to you?
3.	Is your teacher positive and encouraging?
4.	Does your teacher chat with you?
5.	Do you want to ask your teacher questions?
6.	Does your teacher smile?
7.	Is your teacher an interesting person?
8.	Is your teacher funny?
9.	Is your teacher cool?
10.	Do you want to have lessons with this teacher next year?

For any group of students, the creation of a warm, positive, and friendly learning space is important, but this is particularly so for adolescents who are going through profound psychological changes.

One reason a school may not include teacher interpersonal skills in a student feedback survey is the fear of a Dr. Fox effect – that a personable and loquacious teacher could receive high ratings based on their personality despite teaching poorly and presenting lessons with little real content (Marsh & Roche, 1997). However, as noted above, students from grade seven are able to distinguish between a teacher's technical skills and interpersonal skills, and there is no reason in my view why a good student feedback survey should not include both factors.

Teacher Behavior

The final factor identified by the students was the teacher's attitude and behavior towards the students in class. These are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Teacher Attitude items	
1.	Is your teacher fair?
2.	Is your teacher impartial?
3.	Is your teacher too strict?
4.	Is your teacher unreasonable?
5.	Does your teacher show favoritism?
6.	Is your teacher angry all the time?
7.	Does your teacher look down on anyone?
8.	Have you been bullied by your teacher?
9.	Has your teacher been violent towards you?
10.	Has your teacher sexually harassed you?

Most of the items in this factor reflect the high value students place on being treated fairly and on teacher impartiality, the absence of which can seriously impact student motivation (Aydogan, 2008; Crone, 2013).

Worryingly, the final three items listed do not reflect poor teaching, but immoral and illegal behavior. Such behaviors may not be uncovered by peer observations, and their inclusion in a student feedback survey could be part of the mechanisms a school has in place to ensure such activity does not occur.

However, while there is a strong case to include such items, various ethical considerations must be met. Teachers may object to the inclusion of such questions because they fear the effect untrue accusations could have on their careers or because they feel offended by the implications of such questions. On the other hand, students may avoid answering such questions out of the real fear that a teacher could identify who had made the report.

As a result, it is necessary to find a way to protect student anonymity and avoid insulting the teaching staff. One possible indirect way would be to include a reminder that behavior such as bullying and sexual harassment is not tolerated and that any student who experiences it or who witnesses it should report it to a trusted third party, such as a school counsellor or nurse.

Conclusion

There is a danger that teacher-made student feedback instruments have a narrow focus on technical teaching skills. However, effective teaching is multi-factorial in nature and, when considering the quality of a teacher's teaching, students as young as 12 are both able to discriminate between these factors and, as this study shows, to generate the relevant questions when asked in groups.

Conducting an exercise like this is quick, cheap, and ensures both that subsequent student feedback instruments really are owned by the students and really do ask the questions they want (and need) to be asked. Consequently, this is an activity that in-service teachers should give serious consideration to undertaking, especially those based in larger institutions like high schools where the student body is relatively stable over time.

Furthermore, while this investigation centred on a student feedback questionnaire, there is no reason why the same process could not be applied to produce target questions in other student feedback instruments such as focus groups, feedback interviews, or snowball evaluation (a sampling method whereby a well-placed individual is asked to recommend a person for interview, that interviewee is then asked to recommend the next interviewee, and so on). A cautionary note must be sounded, however. If this kind of exercise is conducted, students must be able to see that their input is respected and that the student feedback instrument is actually revised accordingly. Not to do so risks disenfranchising the students and discouraging them from future participation in feedback evaluations (Bury, 2015, personal communication).

While the utility of this kind of activity may be clear for in-service teachers, why should teacher trainers consider adopting this approach in their own courses? I think there are definite benefits from doing so in addition to obtaining more directed feedback from our teacher trainees and increasing their ownership of the course.

Firstly, teacher trainees are students. While they aspire to become teachers, like all students, they lack complete knowledge of the teacher's role. This kind of exercise, conducted very early in a course (ideally during the introductory or orientation lesson), can identify holes in the trainees' knowledge of, their perceptions of, and their expectations of teachers and teaching in the classroom, which can be helpful in guiding subsequent training.

Secondly, this kind of exercise can serve to bond the student teachers and help to clarify their own expectations of the course they are taking.

Thirdly, reflected back to the teacher trainees, the questions they produce can serve as a self-assessment instrument, allowing the trainees to identify areas needing development in themselves, particularly when they begin their practice lessons.

Fourthly, unlike high school students, our teacher trainees will regularly encounter student feedback instruments. This kind of exercise is a useful way to introduce the importance of, and utility of, student feedback for a teacher.

Finally, as teachers our trainees may well be required to develop various evaluation instruments themselves, and this kind of activity gives them early experience in what this entails, as well as showing them one way to go about it.

If the teacher trainee feedback is collected both mid-course and at the end of the teacher training course, this activity could be conducted twice, thus allowing a comparison of the questions produced by the teacher trainees. This would allow trainers to see how well the gaps in the teacher trainees' knowledge have been filled and also allow the trainees to reflect on how their skills, attitudes towards, and expectations of teaching have changed through the course (suggested by Woodward, 2015, personal communication).

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Appendix: Student information sheet

Please help us with our research!	私たちの研究を助けてください。
Every term, all the students complete an アンケート *about their teachers.*	毎学期、すべての生徒が教師についてのアンケートに答えます。
If the school made a new アンケート*, what questions do you think should be in it?*	もし秀明が新アンケートを作るとあれば、あなたたちはそれにどのような質問を入れるべきだと思いますか？
Please make a list of the questions you think are important.	あなたが重要だと思う質問のリストを作ってください。
Later, we will make a list of all the questions students from different classes made and give it to the school.	後で、私たちはすべての質問をまとめて、学校にそれを提役します。
Then, if the school makes a new アンケート *in the future, they will be able to hear your voices.*	そして、学校が未来に新しいアンケート作る場合、あなたたちの意見を反映することができます。
Thank you.	ご協力をありがとうございました。

The Author

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Interview

The British Council's Iranian Teacher Training Project (BC ITTP)

An interview with Sue Leather

TW: Sue can you tell me a little about your company and why you were chosen for the British Council's Iranian Teacher Training Project (BC ITTP)?

SL: My company is called Sue Leather Associates, and we are a group of ELT consultants and trainers. We do a lot of trainer training and consultancy on large projects, and we specialise in resource-poor and transitional contexts. We also run online courses in educational project management. You can see more about us at www.sueleatherassociates.com

We got involved in ITTP through tendering for the work at the beginning of the project. We were then taken on as Lead Consultants. Prior to that, we (myself and Simon Smith, one of our associates) had been Lead Consultants on a large BC project in Central and South Asia - ETTE (English for Teaching, Teaching for English), which ran 2007-2011. That programme ran in 7 countries. Iran was initially one of those countries, before it had to drop out in 2008. So, the Iranian team on that project knew of our work.

TW: Had you ever been to Iran?

SL: I had never been to Iran, but I had a fair degree of knowledge about the needs of Iranian teachers and trainers because of the ETTE project.

TW: Can you tell me a bit about the British Council's Iranian Teacher training Project (ITTP)?

SL: The project started in 2012. The aims are threefold:

1. To train a group of Master Trainers who will be agents of change in the private and public sector.
2. To train cohorts of teacher trainers to deal with the changing context of ELT in Iran, and deliver effective teacher training courses.
3. To increase teachers' access to a variety of developmental methods and ELT materials, which they will feel confident in using and adapting.

ITTP is a cascade training project. We chose the cascade model because we needed to manage and run the project from outside the country. The British Council in Iran was closed down in late 2008.

As many of your readers will know, the principle behind cascade training is that if you train a trainer to train other trainers who then train others, the multiplication of learning helps development and maximises the distribution of ideas and skills. In other words, ideas, skills, materials are all passed down to other teacher trainers, and ultimately to teachers.

Although of course the final beneficiaries of the training will be Iranian language teachers and students, the project itself only works directly with teacher trainers. It covers a number of strands:

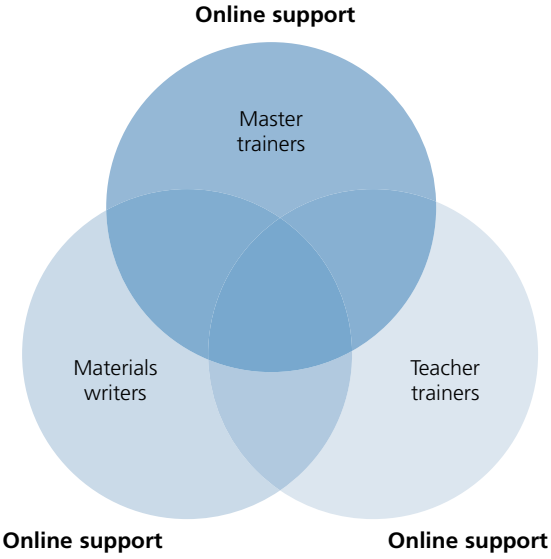
- Training of Master Trainers
- Trainer Training
- Assessment of teacher trainers
- Materials Development
- Continuous Professional Development - which we do on a Moodle platform

TW: So how does the cascade work?

SL: We (the consultants) trained 24 Master Trainers (13 women, 11 men) on two separate 55-hour courses face-to-face in Istanbul. The Master Trainers, or MTs as we call them, have so far trained 135 teacher trainers in Iran via trainer training courses. Once the teacher trainers have finished their courses, they are assessed (usually in Dubai or Istanbul) by myself, the project manager, and two of the very experienced Master Trainers. The assessment has been specially designed for use in the project and has a number of criteria by which trainers are assessed. There is also a 10-person materials design team in country, who have also been trained by us.

In addition, all the participants are invited onto our learning platform (we use Moodle) and we provide them with ongoing professional development.The training of teacher trainers is ongoing too, and as teacher trainers qualify with us, they are invited to take part in professional development on the project Moodle.

This diagram might help a little with conceptualising the project:



There are also two articles about the project, which explain things in more detail. They are referenced at the end of the interview.

TW: Where do the participants come from? What kind of institutions do they work for?

SL: The Master Trainers and teacher trainers come from different places in Iran. They come from big cities like Teheran, Mashhad, but also places in the south such as Ahvaz, and in the north such as Miandoab. They work in a variety of types of institution: state schools and colleges; private schools and universities.

TW: What is the content? What is the process?

SL: The Master Trainers were trained in how to deliver training by being trained in trainer training themselves, and then by studying the process. All the courses have a mix of theory and practice, with a big emphasis on practice. All the courses also have a lot of micro-training.

Then of course, we look at modes of input, content and process and reflection. I gave a talk on incorporating reflection in this project for the British Council's Teaching for Success Online Conference in 2016. There is a reference to the recording at the end of the interview.

In terms of process, we have tried to be context-sensitive and to find a way of training that both incorporates the methodologies of the 'outsiders' to the context (myself and other consultants) but also to honour and respect the knowledge of Iranian trainers. So for example, from the beginning we have had training teams made up of consultants and Iranian trainers. I myself believe that this is the best way to ensure the sustainability of the training. It also gives the participants a good feeling that one of their own group, an Iranian trainer, is on the training team. It's a good model for them. And of course, the Iranian trainer has a huge amount of credibility because s/he knows exactly what the conditions are on the ground. We (the outsiders) are learning from the Iranians. All this is described in more detail in the article by Khalil Motallebzadeh and myself, referenced at the end of the interview.

TW: How does the Moodle work?

SL: On the Moodle, we usually run programmes in twelve- or fourteen-week segments, so usually three a year. We offer a wide range of sessions, usually in two-week slots within the fourteen weeks. They will be professional development topics e.g. 'How to design a training course or 'What is effective teaching?' Sometimes the Master Trainers run sessions themselves, sometimes it's a combination of Master Trainer and Consultant. Then at other times we invite guest speakers, such as yourself. In the past year or so, we've had well-known ELT people such as Adrian Underhill, Susan Barduhn, John Hughes, Amy Lightfoot, Gary Motteram. Over the years, we've had a large number of outside speakers. This is a quite important part of the programme, because although it's changing bit by bit, many of our participants have been isolated, largely for political reasons. They really get a lot out of being in contact with international experts.

TW: So how does the Moodle PD work in detail?

SL: Usually the facilitator(s) will offer an article or video on a certain subject in the ELT field. Then s/he will pose a number of questions or tasks to encourage discussion. The discussion happens over two weeks usually, and finally, the facilitator(s) sum up.

Participation in the Moodle is entirely voluntary and is not assessed. There are some participants who get very involved in the discussions, and others who 'lurk.' At the time of writing, over 150 trainers from all over the country are signed up for the VLE

We also have a separate partition on the Moodle for the Master Trainers. Here we can do things like discuss changes to the assessment criteria, which we did recently.

Then also, we have 3 (yes 3!) archive sections, where we have kept all the materials and discussions from the past 5 years. So this is like a library. Participants can access them and find materials on anything we've discussed and they are free to use them for their own sessions.

TW: What are the pluses of the Moodle part?

SL: The good thing about the Moodle is that we can keep people engaged at some level. All participants receive an email digest every day, so even if they are not posting themselves, they may be reading. It keeps the trainers in contact with what's happening internationally in ELT. Also, it's a way we can contact people, and update them on project events. I think the Moodle is ideal when you need security, because it's a very secure platform, and when participants are spread over very large areas.

TW: And what about the minuses?

SL: Well, although all the participants have met us, either in training or in assessments, contact online is not always ideal. You can't beat meeting face-to-face from time to time.

In addition, 5 years is very long for this kind of project, and it's sometimes hard to keep the impetus going. The length is really about the fact that we haven't been able to get in country. Still, we keep having to re-energise everyone by adding an element of challenge. So, for example, we ran a 6-day face-to-face course for the Master Trainers in 2016. The course had 3 strands: mentoring, effective listening and a Master Training refresher. The trainers were one Master trainer, the BC project manager and myself.

TW: What do you think the impact of the project is?

We feel that capacity building is happening in a real and measurable way. We have been able to assess the impact of the training done by MTs in-country by the performance of teacher trainers at assessments. We can then give feedback to Master Trainers in order to modify training on an ongoing basis. Because of the restrictions mentioned above, impacts on teachers have not yet been meaningfully assessed, and clearly this will be of utmost importance in the final assessment of the success of ITTP. As the final users of the project are the teachers and their target students, it will be necessary to research the impacts at some point.

We hope that there are a number of strategies and outcomes in this project which will aid sustainability. The most important achievement so far is the development of a large group of professionals who have become engaged in the project and have shown a willingness to contribute to ELT in their home context. The Master Trainers are running their own face-to-face courses in-country, training Teacher Trainers. On average each of the Teacher Trainers delivers courses to 30-50 teachers a year, so the cascade effects of this project are considerable.

As Fullan (2007) and others have said, change is all about people, and ultimately I think our project will be assessed on how many of our participants have become active- and will be active in the future- in the development of ELT in Iran. It's really a process of developing change-makers.

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Trainer Background

Practical strategies to get children excited about English class activities

By Phạm Ngọc Thúy Dung, Vietnam

Introduction

With the expansion of English teaching to younger and younger age groups, you and the teachers you work with may find yourself working with lower age groups than before. This will necessitate your working with new curricula, new materials and new ideas. To get you started though, this article introduces some key strategies to motivate, engage and excite children in English Language classes. These are strategies that I usually share with young and new ESL teachers when I train them here in Vietnam. Judging from my ESL classroom observations, being well-prepared, and having good materials cannot by themselves guarantee the success of an English teacher's lessons. Understanding children's interests, and being energetic and enthusiastic yourself are the key factors that help keep young students excited about learning, and help them absorb the knowledge in the most comfortable way. Below I list some key principles of teaching children and detail some practical activities that follow from the principles.

Kids love competition

Children have a natural tendency to compete, to want to win and be better than others. The drive to compete develops in children around the ages of 4 or 5 (Klein, 2014). Therefore, by encouraging healthy and productive competitions through class activities, English teachers can positively encourage their young students to participate in class activities with fun and enjoyment. Moreover, healthy competition inspires kids to put more effort and hard work in than required (Veale, 2016).

Competitive activities can be carried out via pair, group or team work. Teachers, as activity organizers, and referees, can give scores to student groups and keep a record of the points earned on the board. Some competitive games follow.

Watch my lips!

Materials needed: a word list on a theme that the students have already dealt with, such as jobs (police officer, farmer, firefighter, etc.), or animals (tiger, lion, snake, penguin, etc.) or food (chocolate, hamburger, pizza, French fries, etc.)

Procedure:

- The class is divided into 2 teams in a line facing each other. One student of team A will be paired with one student of team B to form competitive pairs. The pair members stand next to each other.
- The teacher mouths a word in the word list. The first competitive pair watches the teacher's lips to guess the word.
- Whichever student of the competitive pair says the correct word mouthed first will get a point for his or her team.
- The activity proceeds until all the pairs have had a chance to compete.

Memory cards

Materials needed: identical sets of matching word and picture cards for each team. It is important that the students have already met and learnt the words given.

Procedure:

- The class is divided into teams of about 4 students. Each team gathers at one table or in one corner of the class.
- The teams are given a set of matching word and picture cards and are asked to match word cards and picture cards in the time allotted.
- The teacher sets a time limit for all teams to perform the task: 30 seconds or more.
- Whichever team has the most correct matching pairs after the time is over wins.

Charades

Materials needed: a word list of action words that students have already dealt with such as *sleep, get up, go to school, ride a bike, read a book, jump, hop, fall, dance, etc.*

Procedure:

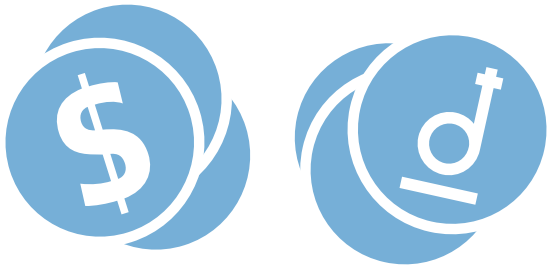
- The class is divided into 2 teams, lined up, facing each other.
- One student from the first team is brought to the front of class and the teacher whispers to the student an action word he or she must act out for his or her team to guess.
- If his or her team guesses the action word correctly from the mime, they get a point.
- Next a student is brought out from team 2 and the process is repeated with a different charade.
- The game is played until time is up. The teacher makes sure both teams have had equal turns.

Who wants to be a millionaire?

Materials needed: a series of review questions based on what students have been learning recently. The questions could be set out in the format of the quiz show "Who wants to be a millionaire?" No lifelines from the show such as "Ask the Audience" or "Phone a Friend" are applied.

Procedure:

- The class is divided into teams of 4 or 5 students.
- Each team takes a turn to answer the questions given by the teacher to get points. In case one team fails to give the correct answer, other teams have the chance to take over.
- After all the questions, whichever team earns the most points wins and gets a paper million pound/dollar token.



Pictionary

Procedure:
- The class is divided into teams of 4 students.
- One student at a time from each team is handed a piece of paper with a word written on it. They draw on the board something to represent the word.
- The first team to guess the word correctly from the drawing gets a point for their team.

Sentence Race

Materials needed: a word list that students have already learnt.

Procedure:
- The class is divided into 2 teams. Each team is put into a line facing each other. The students from each team facing each other will be paired to become competitive pairs.
- When the teacher calls out a word, a pair must run to the blackboard and race to write a sentence using the word given by the teacher.
- Whichever student delivers a correct and clearly written sentence containing the word given earns a point for their team.

Kids love physical activities

Teaching in the primary classroom requires different techniques from teaching teens or adults because of the tremendous amount of energy children have. When teachers incorporate physical activities in ESL classes, students will be provided with an outlet for their energy, so preventing them from getting restless and bored. Movement can help get students out of the trance that they sometimes get into from sitting in one place for a long time. Most importantly, using physical activities in an ESL class will create a fun and lively atmosphere for the students, which serves as a vital component to motivate them, maintain their attention and increase their classroom participation.

If space is limited, games involving miming, moving certain body parts, and passing things around can be used as they don't require students to leave their desks. Individual students can be invited to write an answer on the board as this will not be too noisy or disruptive and takes up little space. This definitely provides variety, livens up dull exercises and keeps students engaged and alert. If you have enough space, activities that get students out of their seats can be used at least once in each class period.

Some activities follow that can be used as icebreakers or warm ups at the beginning of the class, for review purposes, or used in the middle of a lesson to refocus and energize students, as well as help develop students' confidence and enthusiasm.

Find someone who… The human scavenger hunt

Materials needed: a sheet of Yes/No questions starting with "Do/Did you…", "Have you ever …?", "Are/Were you …?", "Can you …?". For example,
- Do you have a pet?
- Have you ever been abroad?
- Are you good at swimming?
- Can you swim in the ocean?

Procedure:
- All students have about 5 minutes to move around the class at the same time and ask their classmates the questions listed on the worksheet.
- If their classmates say, 'Yes', students have to write their classmate's names under or next to the question.
- The process continues until the time is up.

Vocabulary Navigation

Procedure:
- Place items or flashcards that the students have learnt the names for in English around the class and have all students stand in the center of the room.
- The teacher calls out a particular item or vocabulary word and the students must turn and point to the corresponding flashcard or item.

Board race

Procedure:
- The class is divided into 2 teams. Each student in team A will be paired with one student in team B.
- All the students are asked to stand at the back of the class.
- The teacher shouts out a word that students have learnt. In turn, each pair has to run to the board and write it down.
- Whichever student finishes writing first and correctly gets a point for their team. Whichever team has more correct answers wins.

TPR (Total Physical Response) Commands Game

Materials needed: a list of actions that students have learnt such as touch your toes, kick a ball, clap your hands, stomp your feet, turn around, jump, run, walk, play the guitar, etc.

Procedure:
- Teacher calls out action commands and all students repeat the phrase back and do the action at the same time.

Action songs

Materials needed: some action songs that involve movement of the body for miming the words. Action songs can be found on some Youtube channels such as *Dream English Kids, Pink Fong! Kids' Songs and Stories, Super Simple Songs*, etc. Some action songs for kids are suggested as follows:
- *The wheels on the bus*
- *Hokey Pokey*
- *This is the way*
- *Open, shut them*
- *If you're happy*
- *Head, shoulders, knees and toes*
- *Shake your sillies out*

Procedure:
- The teacher plays a video song or teaches the students some action songs.
- The students are asked to sing and mime the actions in the song.
- The teacher can also ask students to sing songs or say chants faster and faster to stir them up, or slower and slower to calm them down.

Animal stickers

Materials needed: stickers with the names of animals on

Procedure:
- The teacher sticks an animal sticker to each student's back.
- The students walk around asking other students "Yes/No" questions to find out what they are. For example: "Can I fly?", "Do I have wings?", "Am I black/white/yellow?", "Do I like bananas?"

continued >>>

Ball game

Materials needed: a ball

Procedure:

- All students sit or stand in a circle.
- One student holds the ball and says the first word in a vocabulary set taught by the teacher such as numbers, days of the week, months of the year, etc. then throws the ball to another student in the circle. The one who catches the ball has to shout out the next word in the sequence. The game continues with the students catching the ball and saying the next word in the sequence.

Snowballs

Procedure:

- Students write down 3 facts about themselves on a piece of paper such as "I like ….", "I often …", "I don't …"
- Students crumple up the paper on which they have just written their facts.
- The students are allowed to have a one minute "snowball" fight where they stand up and throw the crumpled fact papers around
- After one minute, the students grab which ever snowball is closest to them.
- The teacher brings the class back together and has the students read aloud the facts on the snowball, and the class has to guess which student the snowball belongs to.

Kids love compliments/rewards

Many students crave recognition and praise for performing well. Rewards and reinforcement also serve as effective ingredients to inspire younger student's spirit, interest in learning and participation. The philosophy of encouragement incorporated into ESL games gives students the feeling of confidence and strength, and reminds them that they are progressing and that their hard work is being noticed.

Some compliments and rewards are suggested as follows.

Verbal compliments: This is the most common form of reward. When offering praise, it is recommended that teachers offer it promptly, so the emotional impact of the action is still present. Furthermore, it is necessary that teachers deliver compliments with a positive, encouraging voice and facial expressions so that complimentary words are not empty and automatic.

- Cheering: Yay! Wow!
- Cool!
- Good job! – Great job!
- Very good! – Great!
- Excellent!
- Awesome!
- Beautiful!

Non verbal compliments: These should be combined with verbal compliments to reinforce their effectiveness.

- Giving hi-fives
- Putting thumb(s) up
- Clapping hands

Rewards: simple and handy rewards are encouraged occasionally such as:

- Stickers of gold stars, smiley faces or any characters that students like
- Stamps of complimentary words
- Badges
- Candies or lollipops
- Good work coupons

Fun penalties: are a set of fun command cards prepared by teachers. Students are asked to randomly pick one of the cards and perform the command on it. Some of the suggested fun commands are as follows:

- Walk like a model on a catwalk and to music
- Sing and mime an action song such as Baby Shark, Five Little Monkeys
- Dance to a song
- Roar like a tiger
- Jump like a kangaroo
- Act like a monkey
- Make silly faces

Teacher energy and enthusiasm is contagious

The term enthusiasm is often used in teaching to connote a motivating, encouraging, energetic, passionate, and dynamic teaching style (Kunter et al., 2011). An enthusiastic teacher often spices up a class with excitement and enjoyment. It is an undeniable fact that enthusiasm and positive energy are contagious. Zhang (2013) discovered that the powerful effect of teacher enthusiasm on student emotional engagement is related to this emotional contagion, where teachers transfer their enthusiasm and energy to students. Teachers cannot expect their students to enjoy the class activities above if they themselves are not having fun with them,

Conclusion

In order to guarantee the success and efficiency of class activities done with children, it is the teacher's job to establish a competitive, active, supportive atmosphere where students find impetus to partake instead of simply passively spending their time in class. Having a firm grasp of the key strategies mentioned above and weaving them into the design and organization of class work with enthusiasm will, in my view, definitely help promote students' enthusiasm, excitement, participation and language learning.

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Teacher development workshops – given with the help of university students

By Andrew Jarvis, Hong Kong

Introduction

This article gives a brief account of a teacher development programme in rural China which aims to enhance the speaking skills of in-service primary school English teachers. The programme offers speaking workshops to the teachers and uses university students to assist in the delivery of these workshops. The speaking workshops have run for the past two years and have received a very positive response from the participating teachers, who otherwise lack opportunities to develop their own English language proficiency. I will give an overview of the programme and the participants, and then go on to discuss the benefits of this type of teacher development programme and the lessons learnt so far.

Background

The speaking workshops are delivered as part of a service learning subject offered by the English Language Centre at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Service learning can be seen as a type of experiential learning in which students work in a community setting to address an area of need (Jacoby, 1996). In our subject, students prepare, over one semester, for a week-long trip to a rural area of Guangdong province in China. During the trip, the students assist in the delivery of the speaking workshops and engage in cultural and educational activities. The aim of the trip is to provide a needed service to members of a less advantaged community and to develop the skills and life experience of the university students. The teachers in this community have minimal opportunity for professional development due to a lack of resources and the isolated location of the schools (it would take at least seven hours to travel to an urban location to attend training). This year, nine students took part in the speaking workshops with one university lecturer (me) as workshop facilitator.

In-service teacher training in China and the needs of teachers

There are two main approaches to in-service English teacher training in China. The first focusses on the interpretation of the national curriculum and learning how to use the state textbooks (Li & Baldauf, 2011). This type of training is often delivered via lectures by university professors. Another approach becoming more common is school-based and involves lesson observations, co-lesson planning and reflection (Wong & Tsui, 2007). What seems to be missing in these two approaches is improvement of the actual English language level of the teachers. In-service teacher training for English teachers in China does not usually focus on English proficiency which is a key area of need in the rural schools.

> "Most of the teachers could manage basic conversations on common topics but fluency and pronunciation were weak areas."

The teachers

The majority of the teachers who took part in the workshops in China were trained English teachers. Some participants were teachers of other subjects who had been assigned to teach English because of the lack of English teachers in rural areas. The English level of the teachers varied but was generally very low. Most of the teachers could manage basic conversations on common topics but fluency and pronunciation were weak areas.

The teachers rarely speak English outside class and often do not use English to teach English in class. Most had not spoken English since leaving university. Despite a lack of speaking skills, the majority of teachers had high awareness of the phonemic script and grammar structures. Teachers understood the value of speaking English in their own classes but most were not confident enough to do so.

Most of the teachers were in their twenties and apart from two participants, they were all women.

Rural schools tend to have a high proportion of young teachers, placed there after completing their university studies. After they have worked for a few years, they are in a better position to compete for jobs in urban locations.

> "In terms of attitude, we wanted to judge the students' commitment to working with the teachers and whether they would be able to cope with the long journey and challenging living conditions on the trip."

The university students

Nine university students assisted in the delivery of the speaking workshops and these students all attend an English medium university in Hong Kong. The students came from different disciplines, including hotel and tourism, social work and accounting. This year, the students were from Hong Kong, Mainland China and South Korea and either use English as one of their first languages or were highly proficient learners and users of English. The students were interviewed to ensure their suitability and this interview included an assessment of their English language level, experience of teaching or tutoring and their attitude. In terms of attitude, we wanted to judge the students' commitment to working with the teachers and whether they would be able to cope with the long journey and challenging living conditions on the trip. During the semester, students developed some basic teaching skills (e.g. how to set up an activity) and researched the needs of the Chinese teachers. They also helped, under my supervision, to develop speaking activities for the teachers.

The speaking workshops

The speaking workshops were held in primary schools in a rural part of Guangdong Province. We delivered one-day or two-day workshops to three schools with 20-30 teachers present at each workshop. The workshops focused on pronunciation, fluency and confidence building and were conducted entirely in English (English was not commonly used as the language of instruction in the teacher training programmes the participants had experienced before).

Students acted as 'speaking partners' which meant conducting communicative activities with the teachers in small groups. Students also had the opportunity to set up some activities in front of the class.

As facilitator, my role was to host the workshop, do the initial setting up of activities and round up activities by giving language feedback, teaching guidance and offering the chance for participants to share their teaching experiences. Most of the workshop time was spent with teachers on-task doing communicative activities and so there was no formal training of e.g., how to teach speaking.

continued >>>

Having a university instructor in the role of main trainer/facilitator is an essential element to this approach because of the notion of 'face'. Although teachers are engaging with the students for most of the workshop, the facilitator is there to help the workshops feel 'official' and 'academic'.

Discussion

What can university students offer in-service teachers?

University students who are highly proficient in English and have a certain amount of professionalism can provide a wonderful opportunity for in-service teachers. As can be seen from figure 1 below, students can offer the rare chance for teachers to develop their English skills by engaging in small group interactions with proficient speakers. This would not be possible with only one up-front trainer delivering speaking workshops. The presence of the students also enhances the training by bringing a lot of energy into the room.

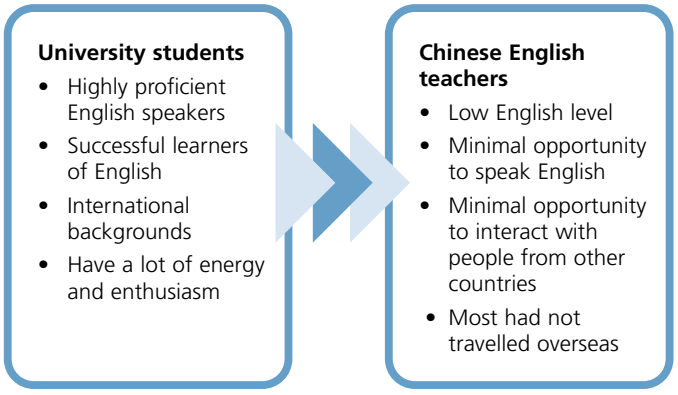

Fig 1. Overview of how our students can meet the needs of the in-service teachers

Four of the students were Chinese and were educated in China, now studying in Hong Kong. These students proved to be very influential on the teachers because the teachers could see that it was possible to become a highly proficient user of English by going through the education system in China.

In terms of feedback from the teachers, 47 teachers completed a post-workshop survey this year and results suggest that the workshops were positively received. 89% of the teachers 'strongly agreed' with the statement '*the speaking workshop provided me with a valuable learning experience*' with the remaining teachers agreeing with this statement. Similarly, 81% of the teachers 'strongly agreed' and the rest 'agreed' with the statement '*the interactive activities helped me to develop my English skills*'. One teacher commented that *"I very like the games, because they can make me confident to open my mouth to say English"*.

What the university students gain from the experience

Students also gain a great deal from the experience of engaging with the in-service teachers. Firstly, the students gain insights into the education system in China and the way that English is taught (the programme included discussions with principals and lesson observations). Students were encouraged to reflect on their own educational experiences and analyse how this differed from the system in rural China. The Chinese students also benefited from this reflective process as they had grown up in different regions of China and could see differences from their own education. Written reflections from students show that they began to look at educational issues from different perspectives which fostered a less judgemental and more analytical view of the situation in China. One student sums this up by writing '*the experience did not only motivate me to explore some of the social backgrounds of the English teachers, but the struggles they were facing, and it completely changed my mind in perceiving the way Chinese teachers taught, from judgements to understandings*'.

Secondly, students learnt from the dedication and professionalism of the teachers and principals they engaged with. One student wrote this in her reflection *'From the teachers of Gao Bei, I learned the importance of having internal motivation and passion. By seeing and experiencing their challenges, I also hope to fight my own limitations with passion and motivation in myself'.*

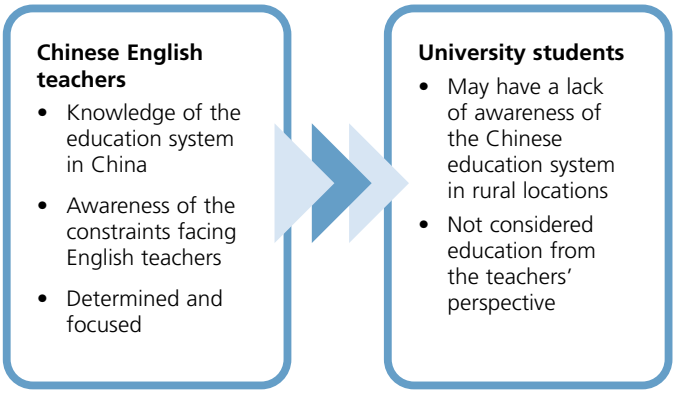

Fig 2. Overview of how the in-service teachers can influence the students

Lessons learnt from this approach to working with in-service English teachers

Involving university students in training activities with in-service teachers does not automatically guarantee a successful experience for either group. There are a lot of issues to consider before committing to this workshop approach. Here are some points to consider:

1. Needs of teachers
The needs of the teachers are a central consideration when planning this type of programme. As mentioned above, the English language levels of teachers tend to be low in this area of China and this was identified as a key area for development.

2. Skills of students
The skills of students need to match the needs of teachers. In my university, there is a pool of highly proficient English speakers who can interact with the teachers.

3. Selection process
I recommend a selection process to ensure that the most capable students are admitted onto the programme as it takes a lot of confidence for a student to take on a 'teaching' role with adult qualified teachers. We interviewed students and asked them about their reasons for wanting to join the programme and some 'what would you do if…?' questions to assess their attitude and initiative.

4. Student training
Students need to have some basic training in certain aspects of teaching, for example, giving instructions. In addition, students need to have effective presentation skills and be able to alter their speech to accommodate the teachers. Students need to have some cultural awareness training and guidance on professionalism.

5. Face
The issue of 'face' needs to be addressed and so it is important to have a qualified and experienced trainer to facilitate the workshops.

6. Links with schools
Long term links with the schools and education bureau have also contributed to the success of the speaking workshops. The language centre I work for has been working in this area of China for a few years and we run another programme working with the primary school students of these schools.

7. Recruitment of teachers
It is also important to have the support of the local education authority and the schools for the purpose of teacher recruitment. This is a large administrative task because while some teachers attend the workshops, others will need to cover classes for those teachers.

8. Flexibility
This year, due to the relaxation of the one-child policy in China, schools were stretched as a high number of teachers were on maternity leave. This meant that we had fewer teachers at the workshops and some participants needed to rush off and teach. We had to cancel one session at one school and re-arrange other sessions. The need for flexibility and an understanding of the local social/political environment is therefore very important.

Conclusion

University students can add value to the training of in-service English teachers if their skills match the needs of teachers. In China, speaking the target language is an area of weakness for many teachers and therefore speaking workshops with students acting as 'speaking partners' is one approach teacher trainers could consider.

University students participating in such programmes need to have excellent target language skills, be confident to work with teaching professionals and have a mature and respectful attitude. This type of programme offers the in-service English teachers precious opportunities to speak the target language and the presence of students creates an informal and energetic atmosphere. This programme has so far been successful in building confidence in speaking English amongst the in-service teachers and offering the students a different perspective on a world.

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NEW SUBSCRIBERS!

Here are some recent additions to our subscription community of teacher trainers, mentors and teacher educators:

Aiden Thorne, UK
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Larissa Jonk, Malta
Lesley Painter-Farrell, New York

Article Watch

Below are brief summaries of relevant articles from other journals.

English Teaching professional. 2017. Issue 112 (Sept).
www.etprofessional.com/home

***Pp. 16-18**, 'One small step to creativity'. J. Feher.* A clear interesting article that, with apt quotes and examples, discusses what creativity is. The author goes on to explain the gap implied in the 'bridging of ideas' in creativity and gives ways of adding a creative thinking gap to different kinds of language learning tasks. Recommended.

***Pp. 52-54**, 'Under observation', C. Farrell.* Focusing on the formal observation process in his own organization, the author looks at ten guidelines for making the whole process as beneficial as possible to all parties. These guidelines include: giving advance notice of the observation, allowing time for a pre-observation meeting, making 'running commentary' notes, and gathering student views. There are also suggestions for the post-observation meeting.

***P. 58**, 'Five things you always wanted to know about email (but were afraid to ask)', N. Hockly*. Another useful addition to the 'Five things…' series, this one concentrating on the 'old' technology of email. The questions answered are: Why would I want to use it with my students? What's the best way? Other suggestions? How can I help students who need to write emails for work? What about students who don't have email accounts?

Language Teaching Research. 2017. Vol. 21/5, pp.632-651.
http://journals.sagepub.com/home/ltr

'Learning to mediate: Teacher appropriation of dynamic assessment', K. Davin, J. Herazo, & A. Sagre. This article examines how four second language teachers' discursive practices changed as they attempted to implement dynamic assessment (DA) in their classrooms. Classroom artefacts, lesson recordings, and reflections from two pre-service and two in-service teachers both before and after a professional development series on DA revealed that all teachers' approaches to mediation changed by them providing more prompts and fewer recasts.

***Language Teaching: Surveys and Studies. 2017. Vol. 50/4 (Oct), pp. 527-543**.*
www.cambridge.org/core/journals/language-teaching

'Homo pedagogicus: The evolutionary nature of second language teaching'. D. Atkinson. The author explores the question 'What is teaching?' in this write up of a plenary speech given at Pennsylvania State University College, USA. First claiming that the second language teaching literature rarely defines teaching explicitly, he offers a heuristic definition, reviews research comparing animal and human teaching, and describes teaching as studied by anthropologists. Finally, he discusses implications of the ideas presented. Interesting!

Teaching and Teacher Education. 2017. Vol. 68 (Nov), pp, 99-113.
www.journals.elsevier.com/teaching-and-teacher-education/

'Effects of professional development on the quality of teaching'. J. Gore, et al. Robust evidence of the effectiveness of professional development (PD) for teachers is limited. This study tested a pedagogy-based, collaborative PD approach for impact on the quality of teaching. A trial involving eight teachers at each of 24 schools found significant positive effects on teaching quality that were sustained six months later. The study illuminates how to support teacher learning for measurable positive impacts on teaching quality and teacher morale.

Teaching in Higher Education. 2017.
www.tandfonline.com/loi/cthe20

***Vol. 22/4 (May), Special issue. 'Teaching Excellence' in Higher Education: Cultural Perspectives**. Guest editors: L. Gourlay & J. Stevenson.*

***Vol. 22/6 (Aug), pp. 639-654.** 'Reassessing the value of university lectures'. S. French & G. Kennedy.* This article discusses the role of the lecture in contemporary higher education, considering both potential problems and possible pedagogical, practical, and social benefits of the lecture as a mode of teaching and learning. Seven reasons are identified as to why the lecture continues to be valuable, but suggestions for more innovative approaches and processes are also made.


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***Vol. 22/8 (Nov)** 'Invisible and hypervisible academics: The experiences of black and minority ethnic teacher educators'. V. Lander & N. Santoro.* This qualitative study investigates the experiences of black and minority ethnic (BME) teacher educators in England and Australia. Findings suggest the participants felt marginalized and encountered subtle everyday racism. The authors argue that despite long-standing equal opportunities policies, tenacious racism in the academy must be disrupted through structured career support and mentoring for BME staff and that there should be staff development on implicit bias and everyday racism.

Online journals

Professional Development in Education
Vol 45 No 5 2017
www.tandfonline.com/toc/rjie20/current

Articles that may be of interest include:

'Professional development of teacher-educators towards transformative learning' by Marie-Jeanne Meijer et al. Pp 819-840

'Extending the teacher educator role: developing tools for working with school mentors' by Alaster Scott Douglas Pp 841-859

IATEFL Teacher Training and Education Special Interest Group newsletter

If you are a member of IATEFL, you can choose to receive this newsletter. The online Autumn 2017 issue came out in November. For more information go to: https://ttedsig.iatefl.org/

Publications Received

The purpose of these thumbnail summaries of recent publications in ELT and related fields is broadly to indicate topic and points of interest to mentors, teacher trainers and teacher educators. Print size is noted only if unusual. Dimensions are indicated only if exceptionally small or large; E.g., *148pp+* means "148pp plus an informative roman numbered preface, etc". All books are paperback unless otherwise stated. If the book is of a type that requires an index but an index is lacking, the lack is noted.

Handbook of Professional Development in Education: Successful Models and Practices, Pre-K–12. *L. Martin, S. Kragler, D. Quatroche, & K. Bauserman. Guildford Press. ISBN 978-1-4625-1521-9, 562pp+, hardback*. The 49 of the 50 contributors were, at time of writing at least, based in the USA – mainly at universities. (The one exception was affiliated with the Australian Council for Educational Research.) So, the 'Pre-K–12' in the subtitle means from very young (pre-kindergarten age which is about 5) to the 12th grade (typically 17 -18). There are 25 chapters and an appendix comprising eight case studies. The chapters are grouped under the following headings: Professional development (PD), past and present; The complexity of PD in today's schools; Developing solutions for effective PD; and Pulling it all together. An extremely impressive resource.

A History of IATEFL*. S. Rixon & R. Smith. (2017) IATEFL (International Association of Teachers of EFL). ISBN 978-109095-93-7, 180pp.* An overview of the first 50 years of this flourishing, nonprofit professional organization. Besides the introduction, the chapters are: Organisation, Main activities, Output and outreach, IATEFL's influence, and IATEFL in perspective (including, Continuity and gradual change, Tensions and possibilities, Other teacher associations). Appendices list, for instance, all office holders and all conference plenary presentations from 1967 through 2016.

International Perspectives on English Language Teacher Education: Innovations from the Field. *T. Farrell (ed.) Palgrave Macmillan. ISBN 978-1-137-44005-1, 202pp+, hardback*. The 12 chapters by 12 contributors (in various combinations) are: Second language teacher education (SLTEd): A reality check; Constructivist language teacher education: An example from Turkey; Encouraging critical reflection in a teacher education course: A Canadian case study; Teaching everything to no one and nothing to everyone: Addressing the content in content-based instruction; Dissonance and Balance: The Four Strands framework and pre-service teacher education; Materials design in language teacher education: An example from South-East Asia; Translanguaging principles in L2 reading instruction; Creative enactments of language teacher education policy: A Singapore case study; The impact of technology on teaching and language teacher education in UAE federal institutions; Using screen capture software to improve the value of feedback on academic assignments in teacher education; Developing novice EFL teachers' pedagogical knowledge through lesson study activities; and Reflective practice as innovation in SLTEd.

Language Teaching Insights from Other Fields: Psychology, Business, Brain Science, and More. *C. Stillwell, ed. (2015). TESOL Press; ISBN 9781942223481; 177pp.* Each of these two interesting books is made up of 15 chapters. Chapters in the first volume (2013) include: 'How would a bartender create a safe, social, and supportive classroom environment?' (by A. Boon), 'What does it mean to be a whitewater language teacher?' (by K. Blinder), 'How would a restaurant reviewer critique student writing?' (by S. Whitman), and 'How would a social activist promote critical literacy in the language classroom?' (R. Hayik). The second volume (2015) includes chapters with titles such as 'How would a TV commercial producer make lessons as memorable as an ad?' (by W. Hendrickson), 'How would a project

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manager plan a lesson?' (by G. Focho), 'How would a positive psychologist design communicative language tasks to elicit positive emotion?' (by M. Helgesen), and 'How would a creative director build a teacher's brand? (by A. Green). Most of the contributors are active in some form of ELT (or were at time of writing) but have had training or work experience in the field used as a source of insight.

What is English? And why should we care? *T. Machan. (2013) Oxford University Press. ISBN 978-0-19-960125-7, 404pp, hardback*. A sustained, highly nuanced, meticulously documented, and multi-faceted reflection on the two questions that make up the book's title. Readers who start the book knowing that the answer to the first question is complex may well be likely to finish it realizing that the answer can be *really* complex. One dimension of Machan's inquiry is historical. Machan mentions, for instance, that the historical record of pre-1066 England includes many mentions of interpreters being needed for parlays between speakers of the various Old English dialects, on the one hand, and speakers of a Celtic language (e.g., Welsh or Irish) or speakers of French on the other. But there is no mention of interpreters in any of the many surviving records of verbal interactions between speakers of Old English

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and speakers of Norse (e.g., Icelandic and Danish). Were the Vikings, then, in some very practical sense native-speakers of English? But Machan's wider point here is that there appears never to have been a time when it was remotely easy (or perhaps even fruitful) to say who is and who is not an authentic native-speaker of English. This book is particularly likely to interest anyone interested in the topics of World Englishes and English as a lingua franca.

The Artful Educator: Creative, Imaginative and Innovative Approaches to Teaching. *S. Cowley. (2017) Crown House. ISBN 978-178583115-7, 293pp+.* From the back cover blurb: "Sue Cowley demonstrates how teachers can become artists, sculptors, actors, dancers, musicians, playwrights, poets, designers, and directors, no matter which subject they happen to be teaching." The 17 chapters include 110 sections, each with its own unifying theme. Example sections are: Thinking creatively: the power of play; The joy of failure; The magic of metaphor, Using play scripts for learning, Using props for learning, Sharing personal stories. A typical section presents tips. Generally these are paragraph-size accounts of things a teacher can do or else lists of options around a theme. In the section 'Children as authors' (pp. 133-34) we find such tips as, "Set up a class website", "Publish children's writing online", and "Create pamphlets or booklets to share or sell at fundraisers". There may well be more than 500 tips overall.

Gender Perspectives on Vocabulary in Foreign and Second Languages. *R. Catalán (ed.). (2010) Palgrave Macmillan. ISBN 978-0-23023262-4, 269pp+, hardback.* Each of the ten chapters reports an empirical study. Part I: Gender tendencies in lexical acquisition, development, and use (e.g., Gender and L1 influence on [the] EFL learner's lexicon, Exploring the role of gender in lexical creations, Gender and motivation in EFL vocabulary production, Gender tendencies across vocabulary tests, and Boys' and girls' L2 word associations); Part II: Gendered words: Representation and identities (e.g., Gender identity in words for professional titles in textbooks and Lexical encoding of gender relations and identities).

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