Vol 36 No 4

www.pilgrimsttj.com

The Teacher Trainer

Summer 2023

A Pilgrims Publication
ISSN 0951-7626

Contents

Contact details.

The Pilgrims Teacher Trainer Journal is produced by Pilgrims, operated by Instill Education Limited, a company registered in England under company number 01293463. Registered office: 90 Banbury Road, Oxford, OX2 6JT.

Copy-edited by Alison Sharpe

Designed by Jay, I Need Arts, Addis Ababa.

Editor: Phil Dexter phil.dexter@pilgrimsttj.com

Contact us at phil.dexter@pilgrimsttj.com or via the website https://pilgrimsttj.com

Phil Dexter

Phil Dexter manages the production of *The Pilgrims Teacher Trainer Journal*, has worked as a teacher trainer for Pilgrims since 1997 and is now a freelance educational consultant. Phil worked for the British Council for over 30 years in English and education projects in teacher development and inclusive education. Phil's most recent consultancy advice in inclusive education involves working with governments across the world in a variety of contexts in the UK, Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America – supporting applying approaches to inclusive teaching and learning. Phil has also worked with Cambridge University Press, supporting ways of adapting coursebooks to be more inclusive.

Phil's research interests are in good practice approaches to teaching and learning and evidence informed approaches based on current developments in neuroscience, with a specific interest in understanding neurodiversity.

Phil was awarded an MBE in the 2017 Queen's New Year Honours for his work in special educational needs, equality, diversity and inclusion, and more recently he has retrained in counselling and bereavement counselling.

Phil is the sub-editor of a most recent British Council publication on inclusive education – *Creating an Inclusive School Environment* – and a number of other publications.

www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/creating-inclusive-school-environment

www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/language-rich-africa-policy-dialogue-cape-town-language-development-conference-looking

www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/creating-inclusive-learning-experience-english-language-learners-specific-needs

https://soundcloud.com/british-council-southasia

https://www.ukfiet.org/author/phil-dexter/

About *The Pilgrims Teacher Trainer Journal*

The Pilgrims Teacher Trainer is a practical journal for those involved in English and modern language teacher training, teaching and training subjects through the medium of English, and teaching and training in wider education fields. Whether you are a teacher who tends to be asked questions by others in the staff room, a director of studies/head of department, a mentor or supervisor, an inspector going out to schools or a teacher educator at a university or you do all this online or in blended/hybrid ways – which is most likely today – this journal is for you.

Our aim is to provide a forum for ideas, information and news, to encourage collaboration and innovation between professionals, to understand how trainers in other fields operate and to continually learn from each other.

Editorial

I am very pleased to welcome you to the latest issue of the digital *The Pilgrims Teacher Training Journal*.

As always, in this issue we have a strong international representation in our articles and reviews, plus an interview reflecting an important ethos of the journal which is to give voice to teacher trainers and educators telling their stories. In this way, we can share our similar and different global understandings of good practice in teacher education. Our different realities in this edition once again cross a number of countries and regions – Canada, Czech Republic, Germany, Romania, Spain, South Africa and the UK. We have another video interview and, in this issue, a number of reviews including the fourth review of the British Council Teaching English "How to" guides – this one on research into teacher identity, motivation and resilience.

Our archive is a very rich one and we have begun a new section in the journal highlighting articles from this rich resource. This will be a feature of each issue we publish and this first one is from volume 28/3, 2014, "Learning and growing as a teacher educator" by Briony Beaven. The issues discussed here are as relevant as when they were first printed. As we link the past into the present, we intend the journal to reflect our digital age and one short article is with an introduction from myself linking to six short videos from the British Council Teaching English website by Susan Douglas explaining ways we can create an inclusive school culture. I hope you will take time to watch each of these videos.

Our cooperation with the British Council Teacher Educator network continues. We are very pleased we can reach such a global audience with the journal, through the British Council Teacher Educator Newsletter which can be accessed here.

As always, we would love to receive contributions – articles, interviews, book and resources reviews from teacher educators globally. A brief description of the guidelines for writers can be found on the website. For more detailed information contact Phil: phil.dexter@pilgrimsttj.com.

Our *Teacher Trainer Journal* is very much a public face of Pilgrims in promoting excellence in education. As our Director of Education and Training, Chaz Pugliese says in his editorial, this summer we are hosting our summer training with a rich and varied number of courses at the University of Galway. While courses will have been completed by the time you read this, you might like to see what we have been doing in Galway and there is always next year with EU Erasmus funding available for those who can access the programme.

We hope you find this very much another content rich edition as we intend every edition to be. The journal continues to be intended to be YOUR VOICE in reflecting and sharing global ideas on teacher education. In doing this, sometimes an article may seem to be a little controversial and though we strive for everything to be evidence-informed, this also means there may be strong personal views on a topic. We believe that *The Pilgrims Teacher Trainer Journal* should be a space for this. And, of course, we welcome debate and would very much welcome any responses to articles that we publish.

Sending best wishes for everyone to have a lovely summer – or indeed a lovely winter depending on which geographical hemisphere you are living in.

Phil Dexter
Production Manager and Editor
phil.dexter@pilgrimsttj.com

Welcome from Pilgrims

Dear colleague and *The Pilgrims Teacher Trainer Journal* reader, As I write this, at Pilgrims, we are getting ready for our summer school, which this year will take place in beautiful Galway for the first time. The programme in Galway will span four weeks: more information can be found here: https://www.pilgrims.co.uk/teacher-training-courses/2023-face-to-face-courses.

In addition to the courses in Ireland, Pilgrims will also run a summer programme in stunning Segovia, Spain.

The course content, Pilgrims' high standards, and very often the trainers themselves, will stay the same, it's just the location that's different. I promise you would love Segovia! Check out the courses in Segovia here:

https://www.pilgrims.co.uk/teacher-training-courses/pilgrims-in-segovia

(Please remember that all these courses are eligible for Erasmus funds.)

So, Galway, or Segovia, we look forward to welcoming you this summer. We will work very hard to offer you a memorable time with us …

Have a great summer and a well-deserved break!

Chaz Pugliese
Director of Education and Teacher Training, Pilgrims
Chaz.pugliese@pilgrimsteachertraining.eu

EFL: Linguistic imperialism or a defence of democracy?

By Charlie Taylor, Taiwan

Introduction

The global dominance of English is controversial. Some argue it constitutes a form of linguistic imperialism which threatens the survival of minority languages and bestows privilege upon its speakers in the form of unequal opportunities. This idea is given credibility by the fact that it was unquestionably imperialism that spread English around the globe in the first place. All this contributes to making some EFL teachers and teacher trainers uneasy with their role. While these concerns have merit, it is important that discussions about a colonial legacy do not overshadow the vital role English plays in safeguarding democracy today. For many people around the world, English is no longer a tool of oppression, but rather one that helps safeguard their freedom.

Background

A global lingua franca combined with modern technology creates a major obstacle to the old imperialist practice of divide and rule. Universal communication lets people share their plight and win support from a global audience. It also allows access to news that contradicts the narratives authoritarian regimes carefully script for their own citizens.

There are countless examples of peoples for whom English is a defence against authoritarian aggression. Ukraine is actively engaged in a social media war with Russia (Serafin, 2022). Posts in English are more likely to reach the foreign audiences upon whose support Ukraine depends. Taiwan is seeking to draw closer to western democracies and distance itself from its would-be colonial overlords by adding English as a second official language (Vickers & Lin, 2022). Uyghurs in China famously out performed their Han compatriots in English proficiency – despite government pressure to focus language learning on Mandarin (Byler, 2022). This was apparently such a threat to Beijing's authority, it resulted in English schools shut and teachers arrested.

Examining the evidence

If it is true that English proficiency is an effective defence against creeping authoritarianism, we should see a correlation between a country's English proficiency and the degree of democracy it enjoys. At least one organization claims this is the case. In its most recent report, Education First (EF), a private company which produces an annual global *English Proficiency Index* (EPI) based on the results of its online tests, compared its 2022 *EPI* results to the 2022 *Global Freedom Rankings* released by Freedom House, and found a pretty respectable correlation of 0.74 (Education First, 2022). The results for the same comparison a year earlier also yielded a result of 0.74 (Education First, 2021), suggesting good reliability. Unfortunately, despite sample sizes in the millions, the validity of EF's *EPI* is questionable since it uses self-selected sampling. This means we should be cautious about taking the findings at face value.

Finding good data with which to evaluate EF's results is challenging, since most serious academic studies of

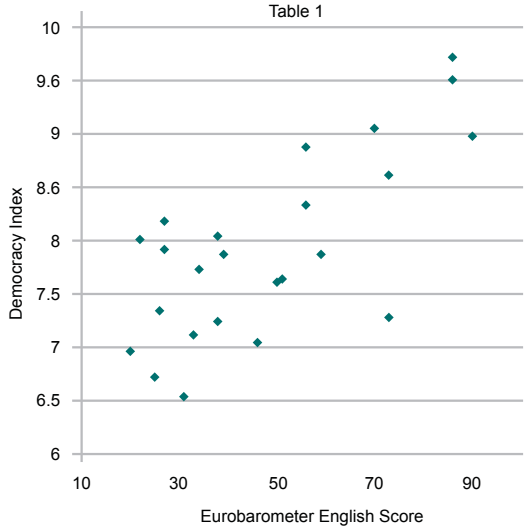
national average English proficiency levels tend to be done on a country-by-country basis, with each researcher using different instruments, demographics, and criteria for evaluating proficiency, thus making any inter-country comparisons extremely difficult. There is, however, one study that used a unified methodology to evaluate the average English proficiency of a number of different countries. This is the *Eurobarometer 2012* study ordered by the European Commission (TNS Opinion & Social, 2012). It is not ideal because it relies on self-reported proficiency – their criterion is speaking English "well enough to be able to hold a conversation" (p. 21) – but the data can nonetheless help us evaluate EF's claims by assessing its concurrent validity.

There is a strong positive correlation of 0.84 between the EF EPI (Education First, 2012) and the *Eurobarometer* results for the 15 countries that were tested by both in 2012, which despite the methodological flaws, provides some support for the validity of the study. We can further test EF's finding that there is a correlation between English proficiency and democracy by comparing the *Eurobarometer* data directly with a democracy rating – in this case the *Democracy Index* compiled by *The Economist* (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2012). There are 27 countries evaluated by the *Eurobarometer* study. The three which have English as an official language were eliminated from this comparison because there are too many complicating variables. That leaves the following countries:

Austria	Belgium	Bulgaria	Cyprus
Czechia	Denmark	Estonia	Finland
France	Germany	Greece	Hungary
Italy	Latvia	Lithuania	Luxembourg
Netherlands	Poland	Portugal	Romania
Slovakia	Slovenia	Spain	Sweden.

If we compare the average English proficiency in these 24 countries to the data from *Democracy Index* from the same year (2012), we find a correlation of 0.73 (see Table 1 for a scatter plot of where the various countries fit on the English/democracy axes). That is pretty close to the EF finding of 0.74. It supports the hypothesis that higher numbers of EFL speakers in a country predict a stronger democracy.

Table 1



On the bottom end of the English scale, we find Hungary and Bulgaria at 20% and 25% respectively (TNS Opinion & Social, 2012). These two countries were second-last and third-last on the *Democracy Index*, only beaten by Romania which also had a relatively low English score of 31% (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2012). At the top end of the English scale we find the Netherlands, Denmark, and Sweden, at 90%, 86%, and 86%, respectively (TNS Opinion & Social, 2012). These three countries were rated fourth, second, and first on the *Democracy Index* that year (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2012).

Of course, it is not clear where the causation lies. These correlations do not necessarily mean that English fosters democracy; it could be that more democratic countries simply have better education systems, or place a higher value on English while authoritarian regimes are more ambivalent. Furthermore, in the case of the European countries discussed above, the older generations in the former east-bloc countries were more likely to learn Russian, rather than English, as their second language in schools, and these countries might score lower on the democracy index for reasons more related to their political history than to linguistics.

However, if we compare the English levels from the 2012 *Eurobarometer* study to *Democracy Index* scores from 2021 (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2021), the correlation gets stronger, at 0.75. While this is not a large change, it could be weak evidence of causation. Countries with higher levels of English tended to become more democratic over that decade, whereas countries with lower levels of English tended to become less democratic.

Takeaways for teacher trainers

Despite this, it is possible that EFL teacher trainees might express concern about playing a role in perpetuating a legacy of linguistic imperialism. It is also likely that Native English Speaking Teachers (NESTs) and Local English Teachers (LETs) approach this issue from different perspectives and with different sensitivities. While NESTs might feel more guilt about the role they play in entrenching existing inequalities of which they are beneficiaries, LETs might feel conflicted about supporting a system that could be seen as devaluing their own language or culture. If these issues come up, teacher trainers must know how to respond appropriately.

First of all, it is important to draw a clear distinction between practices where language is used to exert power or control and those that equip people with the tools to empower themselves. Of course, there certainly are practices and attitudes in ELT that fall into the former category. However, good teacher trainers can steer their trainees towards the latter. For example, teachers can teach intercultural communication rather than strictly preparing their students to interact with native speakers, thereby giving them the skills they need to communicate with users of different world Englishes, and also putting all speakers of English on a more equal footing. Creating opportunities for students to practise English with English speakers or learners from other cultures is a great way to simultaneously improve their linguistic and intercultural abilities (Lewis &

O'Dowd, 2016). These conversations can happen orally or in writing, synchronously or asynchronously, inside or outside of class time. There are plenty of resources teachers can use to find classes in other countries for their students to practise communicating with. Empatico.org provides a free platform for classroom-matching and video-meeting; penpalschools.com matches students with pen pals in other countries in an app that can be monitored by teachers and parents; epals.com allows teachers to connect with each other and their students in countries around the world. Of course, teachers who already have connections with counterparts around the world can set up collaborations using whatever communication platform they are familiar with.

Teachers can also try to use localized learning materials in the classroom, rather than exclusively using texts which are designed to teach the target cultures of inner circle countries. While the argument has been made that the inextricable link between language and culture means the two must be taught inseparably (Byram, 1997), there is plenty of evidence supporting the benefits of using locally relevant learning materials, and this marriage of English with local cultures helps to reimagine the English language as a partner in preserving local cultures, rather than as a threat to them. Indigenous Taiwanese students responded positively when I used folktales from various local tribes as learning materials in my EFL classes (Taylor, 2022).

Even the language used to motivate students can be considered. Often learning English is presented as a means to improve one's own social or financial status, but this connection to wealth and power paints English in a dominant position *vis-à-vis* local languages. Instead, teachers can promote English as a tool to share information and forge solidarity between the many local ethnic, cultural, and linguistic groups that are under threat from the irredentist, nakedly expansionist, or genocidal intentions of autocratic leaders around the world.

Conclusion

Many such regimes would love to frame the global hegemony of English as a capitulation to an Anglo-American neo-colonialist world order. If this idea gains enough traction, it could allow them to hamper global communication, and thus isolate and subjugate those they have set their sights on, one minority group at a time; Thus, any EFL teachers or teacher trainers who are concerned about the colonial legacy of English should keep in mind that the global battle lines between liberty and authoritarianism have been redrawn, and this time the English language is on the right side of history.

References

Byler, D. (2022). Alienation and educational "third space": English learning and Uyghur subject formation in Xinjiang, China. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, *53*(4), 396–415. https://doi.org/10.1111/aeq.12434

Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Economist Intelligence Unit. (2012). *Democracy index 2012.* https://www.eiu.com/public/topical_report.aspx?campaignid=DemocracyIndex12

Economist Intelligence Unit. (2021). *Democracy index 2021*. https://www.eiu.com/n/campaigns/democracy-index-2021/?utm_source=economist&utm_medium=daily_chart&utm_campaign=democracy-index-2021

Education First. (2012). *EF English proficiency index 2012*. https://www.ef.com/assetscdn/WIBIwq6RdJvcD9bc8RMd/cefcom-epi-site/reports/2012/ef-epi-2012-report-en.pdf

Education First. (2021). *EF English proficiency index.* https://www.ef.com/assetscdn/WIBIwq6RdJvcD9bc8RMd/cefcom-epi-site/reports/2021/ef-epi-2021-english.pdf

Education First. (2022). *EF English proficiency index.* https://www.ef.com/assetscdn/WIBIwq6RdJvcD9bc8RMd/cefcom-epi-site/reports/2022/ef-epi-2022-english.pdf

Lewis, T. & O'Dowd, R. (2016). Online intercultural exchange and foreign language learning: A systematic review. In R. O'Dowd & T. Lewis (Eds.), *Online intercultural exchange: Policy, pedagogy, practice* (pp. 21–68). Routledge.

Serafin, T. (2022). Ukraine's President Zelensky takes the Russia/Ukraine war viral. *Orbis*, *66*(4), 460–476. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orbis.2022.08.002

Taylor, C. (2022). Using indigenous folktales as EFL materials to increase the foreign language enjoyment and learning motivation of indigenous Taiwanese students. *International Journal of Research in English Education, 7*(2), 50–64. https://doi.org/10.52547/ijree.7.2.50

TNS Opinion & Social. (2012). *Special Eurobarometer 386: Europeans and their languages.* https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/f551bd64-8615-4781-9be1-c592217dad83

Vickers, E. & Lin, T. B. (2022). Introduction: Education, identity, and development in contemporary Taiwan. *International Journal of Taiwan Studies*, *5*(1), 5–18. https://doi.org/10.1163/24688800-20211302

The author

Charlie Taylor teaches English at National Taitung Senior High School and National Taitung University in Taiwan. He regularly publishes articles in refereed journals and professional teaching publications.

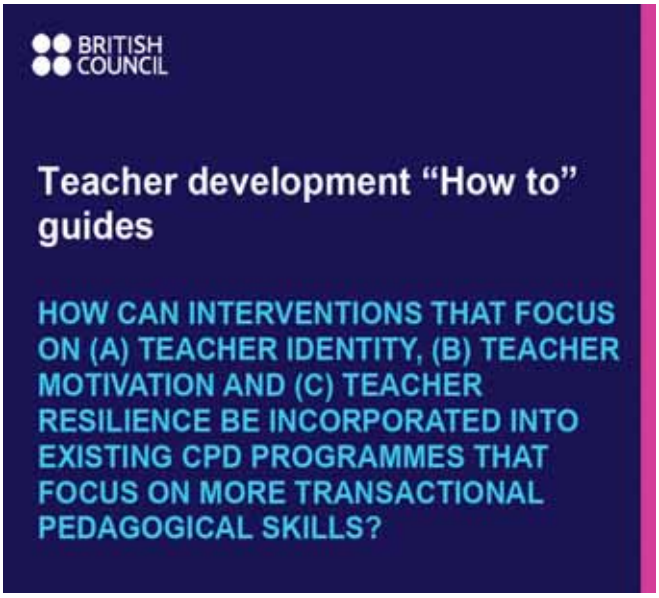
Email: 15cgt1@queensu.ca

https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/publications/case-studies-insights-and-research

Review: Teacher Development "How to" guides: How can interventions that focus on (a) teacher identity, (b) teacher motivation and (c) teacher resilience be incorporated into existing CPD programmes that focus on more transactional and pedagogical skills? by Mark Almond

British Council (2021)

By Annie Altamirano, Spain



Introduction

According to a survey carried out by the Association of Teachers and Lecturers in the UK in 2015, the majority of respondents cited the joy of working with students and the aspiration to contribute to their success as the driving factors in choosing a teaching career. However, stress and mental health issues, poor work/life balance, heavy workloads, and student discipline problems, exacerbated further by the global Covid-19 pandemic, are taking their toll.

The primary objective of this guide is to raise awareness of the key factors that influence teachers' job satisfaction and to explore feasible and realistic approaches for teacher educators to assist teachers in preserving resilience, physical well-being, and mental health. Teacher educators, directors of studies, and others in school leadership positions will find this guide useful to address these areas and help prevent burnout and retain teachers in the profession by offering practical strategies for empowering teachers to reflect on their own practice and professional development. The guide also recognizes the diverse educational settings in which readers operate and encourages them to adapt the guide's insights to their specific contexts.

Mark Almond's guide is part of a series of short evidence-based "How to" guides for individuals and institutions. The guides are hosted on the British Council's TeachingEnglish website.

The guide

Literature review

With an informed review of the literature, Almond starts by looking at teacher identity and how the many roles teachers play both inside and outside the classroom, the way they perceive themselves and are perceived by others, as well as their interactions, shape their beliefs and attitudes about education. He closes this section by offering recommendations for language teacher education programmes or CPD events.

Teachers build their personal theories of teaching and learning through a continuing process of reflection on their lived experiences. It is this process that fuels their personal and professional growth.
(Cited in Maley, 2019, p.8)

Almond then moves on to explore issues related to motivation and interaction in classrooms, focusing on face, status and classroom presence, rapport and "flow theory", a branch of positive psychology, and their applications. He also includes an outline of the essential

tenets of flow theory followed by a training activity that helps understand these principles more clearly. On the whole, there is a good balance between the literature and suggestions for classroom application and PD discussions, with clear examples and activities.

Summary of survey findings

This section describes the context of the survey, which was carried out in fifteen countries in the Middle East and North Africa with the most number of respondents from Yemen (42); Saudi Arabia (28); Oman (20); Bahrain (14); Palestine (12) and Jordan (11). The numbers of years of experience of participants ranged from novice teachers with two years' experience to very experienced ones with up to thirty years in the profession, across different types of schools and sectors.

The survey included questions related to teacher identity, motivation and resilience, such as, *What adjectives can be used to describe the kind of teacher you are?* or *Which of the following have had a positive influence on your approach to teaching and your style of teaching?* The results provide information about different factors such as teachers' self-view as educators, the perceived positive influences upon their approach and style of teaching, the significance teachers give to vocational and affective elements of teaching. The data also reveal that teachers feel undervalued as a result of low salaries and that quite a high proportion of teachers' students lack motivation, which negatively impacts on teachers' own motivation.

Some of the results related to teacher identity are particularly interesting. These results revealed that, all in all, teachers have a healthy self-esteem, which in turn might indicate that they view their work as meaningful and useful. Most participants also indicated that being part of an international group of English language teachers, networking with other groups of teachers and joining Special Interest Groups and Teachers' Associations contributed to their feelings of belonging to a community.

The guide includes a short analysis of the answers after each question, possible conclusions to be derived from the data obtained and potential areas for further research. Teacher educators and directors of studies might find it useful to carry out this same survey in their institutions and compare the results. They might also extend the scope of the survey using the suggestions for further research.

In the *Practical applications* section, the publication offers a range of training activities based on the areas of teacher identity, resilience and motivation suited to self-reflection, personal research, group discussion, lesson observation or teacher training workshops that teacher educators and school leaders can use to support the professional development of teachers. These activities could also serve as inspiration to develop others that are more context-specific or that delve deeper into some of the aspects of the survey.

Finally, I would recommend reading at least some of the titles referenced in the list at the end of the guide, which includes Prabhu's (in Maley (Ed.) 2019) *Developing Expertise Through Experience*, London, British Council or Positive Education: positive psychology and classroom interventions, in *Oxford Review of Education 35*(3), London, Routledge by Seligman, M. et al. (2009).

In various educational settings worldwide, teachers confront limitations imposed upon them by institutions and national standards. This guide manages to provide teacher educators and school leaders with valuable insights, practical suggestions and material for reflection on how to sustain enjoyment, mental well-being, and physical health, primarily through the acknowledgment of the significance of rapport-building and fostering positive classroom environments.

The Reviewer

Annie Altamirano is an independent teacher trainer and author. She started her teaching career in Argentina before moving to Spain and has given teacher-training workshops in Latin America, Europe and Asia. She has authored and co-authored educational materials for children, adolescents and adults for all main publishers. Her main interests and areas of study are differentiated instruction, formative assessment and the use of literature and storybooks to teach values and citizenship. Annie currently runs her personal project Empowering Teachers Worldwide, offering training and mentoring services, consultancy and authoring to teachers, schools and publishers.

Email: annie.altamiranotrainer@gmail.com

From the archive: Learning and growing as a teacher educator: 'I wouldn't be the person I am if I wasn't a trainer – and I wouldn't be a trainer if I hadn't developed into who I am'

By Briony Beaven, Germany

Introduction

This article explores the impact of ELT teacher educators" personal development on their professional development and vice versa, as articulated by a number of teacher trainers. The quotation above is from one of those trainers (or educators). The tendency in academic literature is to call such people "teacher educators" while most of those doing the job seem to refer to themselves as "teacher trainers". Despite the differing definitions of "teacher educator" and "teacher trainer, (see Abednia 2011) they should be regarded as synonymous for the purposes of this article, both terms meaning all those who work in an informational, advisory or assessment role with teachers or trainee teachers of English to help and guide them in extending their knowledge and skills.

My previous research (Beaven 2009) highlighted some of the difficulties teachers experience on moving from teaching to teacher training, one such difficulty being the wide range of ELT training courses they may work on. These include CELTA/DELTA courses, schoolteacher training, one-off workshops, publisher-sponsored training and TEFL tasters. Courses take place in many settings, for example, universities, private language schools, cultural institutes, state schools, and adult education institutes. Teacher educators may be salaried, or may work for one or two organisations on a regular but self-employed basis. Yet others are freelance, a status which sometimes leads to their lacking a permanent occupational community. (See Woodward, 2014).

Furthermore, new entrants to the field often feel bewildered by the lack of a standard professional preparation for becoming a teacher educator. This deficit stems from the poorly defined knowledge base and absence of an agreed skills set for teacher educators. Many new teacher educators appear to step into the job expecting it to involve either lecturing on "methods" or "grammar", or, at the other end of the spectrum, simply running through classroom language-teaching activities with participant teachers acting like language learners:

> (At the beginning er I… OK I kind of took my cue from (my training partner) and probably, yeah, didn"t really see a whole lot, whatever she said was the word and that"s it and she really never got involved in any kind of teacher training theory or even teacher, yeah, teacher training material, we just did handson stuff like new games with the teachers and things.) (Respondent: Beaven, 2004)

The lack of professional preparation for the job of trainer is very unlike becoming a teacher, a job usually preceded, in most contexts, by some form of pre-service training. Uncertainty about the demands of teacher education, and a diversity of contexts and duties, make for a tricky, hesitant and challenging start to many teacher educators" careers.

Yet many teachers do want to become teacher educators. Now it may be that some interest in the job exists because of the supposedly higher status in which the job of "teacher trainer" is held, compared to that of "teacher". However, this is rarely mentioned as a benefit of the role (though its influence might merit further research as perhaps it goes against the grain of the sub-culture of ELT teacher education to mention a wish for status). For whatever reasons, those who succeed in becoming teacher educators appear keen to stay in the job. In view of the problems faced by new teacher educators as revealed in my earlier research, this surprised me, but I suspected that the opportunities for growth and learning provided by the field might be relevant. So in 2013 I conducted a preliminary investigation based on three questions:

1. What do ELT teacher educators think they learn through their work?
2. How do they feel they are different in mind, morale and behaviour after a period of time working as a teacher educator? Is there a link between professional and personal development, and if so, is it a problem or a benefit of the job?
3. What counts as worthwhile learning and development for teacher educators?

I followed this up in 2014 with another investigative survey that sought to find out answers to the following questions:

4. Do changes in the working approach of experienced teacher educators result from the changes that have occurred in their "personhood". Or, conversely, does working for a long time in teacher education change the educators as people?
5. What effects of their changing personas and teacher education practices do the teacher educators perceive as significant for the teachers/trainees they work with?

The surveys

I had studied new and newish teacher educators and their difficulties before (Beaven 2004, 2009), but most of us do not leave the job after a year! What happens as we stay longer in teacher education? Why do we stay? What is good about it from our point of view?

Apart from some background, introductory questions,

the areas I asked about are not amenable to positivist answers. So I position this small piece of research within the tradition of phenomenology which describes and interprets personal lived experience "at face value" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2001:23). According to Schutz (Radnor, 2002) meaning can only be made from experience by a process of reflexivity. Thus, during the research process, meanings may be created for and by the participants as they interpret their experience; these meanings or interpretations are collected by the researcher, who then in turn interprets or accords them meaning, that process being unavoidably influenced by the researcher"s position as a practitioner in the same profession, teacher education. This approach seemed suitable as it can be situated within an epistemology of practice. That is, I was interested in the teacher trainers" perceptions of their professional and personal learning and the relationships between the two and consider that the perspectives of teacher trainers themselves are likely to contribute to our understanding of the teacher training profession.

The distinction between personal and professional learning is not always clear. For Struthers (2007), the professional development of teachers focuses on technical skills and competencies such as subject knowledge, planning/structuring lessons, managing the learning process and transferring knowledge (what a teacher or trainer does). Personal development, on the other hand, is seen as comprising personal skills and competencies such as managing your worklife balance, your personal efficiency and your ability to connect, build rapport and inspire (how a teacher or trainer conducts themselves). Kurtoglu Eken (2014: 204) goes further and mentions as examples of "creating opportunities for personal development within the work [school] context" activities such as "jewellery making, dance routines … the Tarot, cooking etc." Other writers (Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop 2004, Berry, Clemans & Kostogriz, 2007, Korthagen 2004, Zembylas 2003) have preferred to conflate personal and professional growth through the creation of a concept called PTI (Professional Teacher Identity). This concept could be extended to create PTTI (Professional Teacher Trainer Identity). In my surveys, however, I did not use this term, choosing in most of the questions to separate professional and personal growth or learning in order to allow participants to decide if there was an overlap or connection between the two and, if so, what kind of relationship existed between the two spheres of development.

"The distinction between personal and professional learning is not always clear."

A first questionnaire was sent to an opportunity sample of forty-eight teacher educators, of whom thirty (62.5%) responded. They had different levels of experience, and included both freelance and salaried trainers, together with some who worked on a self employed basis but mainly with one or two institutions. The teacher trainers worked with both in-service and/or pre-service teachers, and in a wide range of contexts with varied goals. The sample was too small to allow for the creation of sub-groups so typicality and transferability are not ensured. Purposeful selection of sample groups, and larger sample groups, would be desirable in any new research projects on this topic. The questionnaire asked the teacher educators about the type of teachers they work with, how long they have been teacher trainers, effects of any formal training for teacher education they may have had, modes of self-evaluation, if any, professional changes since starting work as a teacher educator, kinds of personal growth experienced while working as a teacher educator, reasons for continuing in this line of work or for giving up,and the relationship between their professional and personal lives.

My second questionnaire was addressed to thirty-one experienced teacher educators, again with mixed workplace affiliations, of whom twenty-six (83.9%) responded. Twenty (76.9%) of these had more than twelve years" experience in teacher education, and none had less than four years" experience. Sixteen were in salaried training jobs and five worked regularly in one or two institutions so only a small minority (five) were itinerant freelancers. This survey solicited the same background information as in Survey 1, and then moved on to ask about means of professional growth and amount of professional change, whether personal as well as professional growth had taken place and if so what kinds of personal growth. Finally, respondents were asked if they believed that personal changes were the result of their work in teacher education or whether their approach to working with teachers changed as a result of changes in themselves.

Results

Survey 1

The main findings were that all the respondents use techniques to self-evaluate their work and that the great majority of them:

- Learn new professional skills,
- Find their learning useful in all areas of their lives,
- Do not want to stop being teacher educators,

and for many:

- Their professional and personal lives are closely intertwined.

The professional skills, designated by the participants themselves in response to an open-ended question, fell into three categories: technical skills, trainee-centred skills and general professional growth. The most frequently mentioned technical skills were the extension of teacher educators" repertoire of training activities, the development of their skills in linking visual and aural materials, and the ability to use loop input (Woodward, 2003). Examples of becoming more trainee-centred were: learning to take account of different trainee contexts, to introduce differentiated levels of challenge, to lead trainees to "question" rather than giving information, and – a strikingly recurrent theme – to leave space and

time for trainees. General professional growth involved becoming more tentative, flexible and affirmative, and less judgmental.

Twenty-nine of the thirty respondents (96.6%) considered that their work leads to personal as well as professional growth. A multiple choice question listed thirteen areas of personal growth and asked the respondents to choose the ones they perceived as having taken place. The thirteen areas were:

- Better understanding of self
- Greater confidence
- More willingness to take risks
- More flexibility
- Validation of your identity
- Better ability to cope with stress and challenge
- Reflective attitude as a basic habit
- Better inter-personal skills
- Better writing skills
- Better organisational skills
- Development of leadership skills
- Development of ability to write for publication
- Development of ability to give conference presentations

As can be quickly grasped, whilst all of the above areas represent "personal" growth in the sense that all are transferable to situations outside teacher education, the first eight appear more "personal" and the latter five more useful in the world of work. It was notable that most of the research participants chose between six and eleven areas of personal growth as relevant, suggesting considerable transfer of skills from the professional to the personal domain.

Respondents were also asked if they found it difficult to separate the personal and professional and, if it was difficult, whether it was a problem or benefit. For twelve respondents, some separation of the personal and professional was relatively easy, though even for them there were connections between the two spheres.

For the eighteen (60%) for whom separation of personal and professional was more difficult, eleven, about a third of the total, found the links beneficial. They seemed to echo Dewey (1915) who described education as growth, and even as "life itself", and Roberts (7: 1998), who writes: "Our personal development cannot be isolated from our social experience."

Participants in this survey appeared to value greatly the opportunities for professional and personal development and learning available to teacher educators. In spite of negative aspects of the job mentioned by many respondents, such as poor pay, insecurity and losing touch with teaching learners of English, none of the thirty wanted to give up being a teacher educator. Cited attractions of the job were the multiple opportunities to develop life skills, the diversity of people, contexts, experiences, and the "wonderful professional family" of "people you really like and enjoy working with".

Survey 2

An unequivocal finding of the second survey, confirming the data from Survey 1, was that the great majority of the participants believed that their work and learning as teacher educators had led to personal changes (defined as "changes in you as a person"). Twenty-four of the twenty-six respondents (92.3%) stated that this was the case for them.

The multiple-choice question in Survey 1 might have privileged the choice of particular personal changes. In the second survey I wanted to avoid this and so asked an open-ended question about personal growth, namely: "Please name the kinds of personal growth or changes in you as a person that you perceive as having taken place". However, this tactic was not entirely successful. Thirty-six percent of the respondents to Survey 1 were also participants in Survey 2. My assumption had been that, owing to their packed, busy working lives, and the year"s gap between the two surveys, they would have forgotten much of the first survey. This proved not to be the case for all participants, since there were a couple of puzzled-sounding responses to the question above, for instance: "As noted in my earlier reply …," and "As completed before, a few months ago". In spite of this sampling flaw, the new respondents and most of the former respondents did not refer to previous answers. Furthermore, the stratagem was successful in bringing out new ideas as to what constitutes personal learning from a professional situation, extending the idea of personal learning deriving from professional experience well beyond the thirteen areas I had listed in the first survey. Table 1 below summarises the kinds of personal development mentioned and provides examples of each category.

Area of personal development	Examples
Positively viewed characteristics	confidence (x10), tolerance (x6), being relaxed, patience (x2), flexibility (x2), resilience, willingness to see the positive side, skills of reflection, self-respect, creativity, recognition of own strengths and weaknesses
Relationships with people	more reflective in relationships, more consultative, better at dealing with people, developed awareness and acceptance of other people"s vulnerabilities and how to respond to them (x2), awareness of the need for compassion and of limitations in thinking and acting towards self and others compassionately, greater capacity to engage in potentially emotional conversations in an engaged yet moderate manner, greater capacity to distinguish between my needs and the needs of others, happy to be unsure about something, coping with challenging situations
Organisational skills	time-management, ability to work under pressure, greater awareness of the need to keep complete and accurate records of the training process
Intercultural awareness	more understanding and respect, especially for those coming from other cultures (x5)
Personal non-ELT knowledge	"developed a particular liking for other areas of human endeavour such as economics and politics", "come to believe that [ELT] training needs to involve input, ideas and experiences from other fields such as the broader field of education, psychology, philosophy, arts".
Learning to enjoy life and help others to gain enjoyment	"I have grown a richer person by [looking beyond ELT] and adopted an approach where I like to think about life and work from a variety of perspectives. I have learned and am still learning to combine many dots in this exploration and love it." "As I have grown older and done my job longer, the following things have tended to happen …. Joy and delight, a deep sense of the right of all those in a relationship to dignity and fun."

Table 1: Categories of personal learning

The responses given to the question about the kinds of personal growth perceived to have taken place suggest widespread reflection on their training experiences within this sample of teacher educators. The trainers articulate what has happened to them in a way that suggests an altered self, which is perceived as at least partly due to the exercise of their professional roles, and also, presumably, as having an effect on the way they lead their professional lives (consultative, accepting other"s vulnerabilities, etc.). Furthermore, some of the explications of the changes in self go beyond reflection to reflexivity. *Reflexivity* is a concept most often instanced in relation to academic researchers showing awareness that their own persona contributes to the construction of meaning in the research process, and of the impossibility of remaining separate from their subject matter. I am indebted to Edge (2011) for an interpretation of reflexivity as it can be applied to teacher educators. Most of the participants in my research (88%) demonstrate their awareness of the connectedness of their personal and professional experiences, and that these experiences are shaped by their interactions with their professional contexts and the teachers they have worked with, mediated through their reflections on the experiences.

The causal configuration of this connectedness was, however, more problematic for some. Five respondents (19%) were unhappy with trying to decide whether teacher education caused changes in their persona or vice versa. One participant commented:

> *In just the same way that my answer to the question "Which came first: the chicken or the egg?" is "I think that"s the wrong question", I think my answer to your question here is: "I think that"s the wrong question.*

While another expanded on this idea:

> *I don"t think I can separate the two, and couldn"t isolate changes caused by working in teacher education from changes caused by working in ELT, teaching generally or other factors, e.g. growing older, changes in personal circumstances, economic changes, changes in society?*

Other survey participants (38%), while also expressing the inextricability of professional and personal, represented it in different, arresting formulations, some finding a line running from the professional to the personal:

> *Allowing more space for trainees and teachers to develop means allowing more space for my partner. Teaching intercultural awareness and being a role model for tolerance and respect does not go along with narrow-mindedness in my private life, so I grew in terms of finding the courage to leave a partner or a friend behind.*

and others a path from the personal to the professional:

> *My growth as a person (experience, maturity, coping with challenging situations, developing empathy and people skills) is inseparable from my professional life. I don"t know whether some of these abilities were there already, sort of dormant, but I"m convinced that I only got to competence level [as a teacher trainer] through the wide variety of work situations.*

Conclusion

Teaching has "an inherent personal, ethical and moral dimension" (Mann, 2005), as does the responsibility of working with trainee teachers and teachers. The teacher trainers whom I surveyed perceive themselves as being engaged in a continual process of learning both professionally and personally, and foreground changes in their "personhood" arising from the mutual interaction between their lives inside and outside work, noticing also the difference their own learning makes to the way they approach teachers they are training. Taking part in a survey provided one opportunity for some teacher trainers to step back and consider these matters. Trainer trainers working with teacher trainers, or groups of teacher trainers, might like to use other techniques to foster their reflexivity, such as concept mapping, the creation of individual/group metaphors, or contrastive professional/personal imagined-future biographical scenarios. I hope to report on the practical implementation of these techniques at a later date.

References

Abednia, A. 2011. From Teacher Training to Teacher Education in Second Language Education. *AUC TESOL Journal*, 2011/1. Accessed 11.3.14.

Beaven, B. 2004. How eight English language teacher trainers made the transition from teaching to training. Unpublished doctoral dissertation: University of Exeter.

Beaven, B. 2009. Becoming an ELT Teacher Trainer. *The Teacher Trainer*, 23/3, 11–15.

Beijaard, D., Meijer, P.C. & Verloop, N. 2004. Reconsidering research on teachers" professional identity. *Teaching and Teacher Education,* 20, 107–128.

Berry, A., Clemans, A., Kostogriz, A. 2007. *Dimension of professional learning. Professionalism, Practice and Identity.* Rotterdam: Sense Publisher.

Cohen, L, Manion, L. & Morrison, K. 2001. *Research methods in education*, 5th edition. London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Dewey, J. 1915. *The School and Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Edge, J. 2011. *The Reflexive Teacher Educator: Roots and Wings*. New York: Routledge.

Korthagen, F. A. J. 2004. In search of the essence of a good teacher: towards a more holistic approach in teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 20, 77–97.

Kurtoglu Eken, D. 2014. The ELT Weather Forecast: Perceptions on Effectiveness and Teacher Motivation. In T. Pattison (Ed.). IATEFL 2013 *Liverpool Conference Selections:* p. 193–204. Faversham: IATEFL.

Mann, S. 2005. State-of-the-Art Article: The language teacher"s development. *Language Teaching*, 38, 103–118.

Radnor, H. 2002. *Researching your professional practice*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Roberts, J. 1998. *Language Teacher Education*. London: Arnold.

Struthers, D. 2007. Personal Development for Teachers. Accessed 12.3.14.

Woodward, T. 2003. Key Concepts in ELT: Loop Input. *English Language Teaching Journal*, 57/3, 301–303.

Woodward, T (2014) Ways of Working with Teachers. *The European Journal of Applied Linguistics and TEFL*, Special Issue 2014 on TESOL Teacher Education and Development

Zembylas, M. 2003. Emotions and teacher identity: a post-structural perspective. *Teachers and Teaching: theory and practice*, 9 (3), 213–238.

The Author

Briony is a language teaching consultant, teacher trainer and materials writer, who has recently moved to semi-retired status. She taught English in a British secondary state school (PGCE and QTS) for several years before moving into teaching EFL, later becoming the DoS in a large adult education institute. She is a Cambridge Teaching Awards Delta tutor, and for many years was a Module 2 assessor and Module 2 moderator. Briony was a NILE Affiliate Teacher Trainer, who worked with teachers in many countries around the world, and who supervised students on the NILE MA course. She has served as the Co-ordinator of the Teacher Trainers" and Educators" Special Interest Group of IATEFL and was Editor of IATEFL Conference Selections for five years. She has presented at many international conferences and has written coursebooks for Oxford University Press and for Cornelsen Verlag. Briony has written several especially commissioned teacher training and trainer training courses, and her articles have regularly been published in professional journals. Her ELT qualifications include the UCLES Dip. TEFL and a Doctorate of Education in TEFL.

Email: brionybeaven1@t-online.de

Pilgrims

Pilgrims has been running teacher development courses in the summer months for nearly five decades. We are now pleased to announce that this year the courses will be held in Galway in Ireland. Pilgrims also runs one-week or weekend courses in Segovia and Paris in the summer and all year round. And please remember that if you can't come to see us, we would be delighted to come and work with you in your school, in your country. Keep an eye on our website: www.pilgrims.co.uk

Choose growth, choose Pilgrims

See you soon!

Review: The Psychology of Great Teaching: (Almost) Everything Teachers Ought to Know by Pedro De Bruyckere, Casper Hulshof, and Liese Missinne

Corwin (2022)

By Sharka Dohnalova, The Czech Republic

This book set a very ambitious goal: to deal with everything people involved in the education of children ought to know. In their introduction the authors state:

Put simply we want to discuss (almost) everything about psychology that you need to know as a teacher, caregiver, or a parent. In short to create an all-embracing psychological handbook for anyone who works with and guides the development of children and young adults (p 14).

However, being aware that is an unreachable goal in a single book, they target their choices on what you need to know about psychology for use in everyday life and practice. What is useful is that after every chapter there is a section on what parents, teachers, or other caregivers can take from the information shared within it. Nevertheless, one needs to get familiar with the specialised terms and stop and maybe even read more on the theories and phenomena mentioned in the text.

The book is clearly structured in the contents as well as chapters and subchapters, and in the e-book version all the links work and send you immediately to the right destination from *Introduction*, *Personal development (I*), *The others around the child*, *Learning*, to *Behaviour*, i.e., to the chapter that will give you more information (see *How this Book is Structured*, p 12). The text is interconnected and when the authors talk about something that will be mentioned in a future chapter, they give you a link as well as another one going back if you want to re-read the corresponding information in one of the previous chapters. Moreover, the list of references is comprehensive (almost 100 pages) and there are also many that provide a link to the source (an article, a website, etc.).

The book intends to provide as current information as possible using 4 golden rules: 1) history is limited to the minimum necessary to understand each subject; 2) information provided is as current as possible (and they try to avoid "questionable" research); 3) asking what people working with children and young people really need to know; 4) practical thinking.

The book covers the most important names and theories; however, it also deals with what is already outdated or surpassed and suggests new findings, studies, and opinions. It also discusses some widespread parenting or teaching myths and explains why they are no longer valid (though if you want to learn more, they suggest going to their previous book, *Urban Myths about Learning and Education*).

The book starts with the introduction asking, *"How do we know something in psychology?"* referring to the most important method in psychology: observation involving focused and systematic monitoring and detailed description of everything the child does starting with Jean Piaget, who first observed his three own children and then observed other ones, elaborating a "clinical method of observation occasionally altering the observed child´s environment to better understand their behaviour and knowledge" (p 18).

Then we are offered four chapters each focusing on a big topic further divided into smaller more digestible subchapters that are interlinked with the other chapters/subchapters as well as the references at the end of the book.

Chapter 1 focuses on **"I"**, its determination, what is genetic and what can be influenced by the environment (parents, caregivers, teachers); how a personality develops and what the components are thereof; attachment as a secure or insecure starting point leading into moral development and then to intelligence and its types, possibilities, but also testing where it speaks about the pros, cons and dangers; cognitive development, language development, physical development, and, surprisingly, finishes with a subsection on the development of playing.

Chapter 2 focuses on **"others"**, i.e., all the people that encounter the individual in the process of growing up and being educated. The authors start with the question: **"Who helped to make you the person you are today?"** and refer to Bronfenbrenner's system model, which describes the influencing agents of a child, i.e., teachers, caregivers, trainers, parents, friends, and other relationships; followed by subchapters on parenting and teaching styles, and friends and friendships, including the dark sides of friendships like bullying or currently cyberbullying.

Chapter 3 is on **"learning"** starting with the laws and the order of perception and the importance of not only visual and auditive, but all the sensual perceptions, especially at the early stages, moving on to perspectives on learning up to acquiring expertise. Learning is seen as one of the central elements in human psychology and the many different elements of psychology – development, perception, memory, motivation (described within the chapters/subchapters of the book) are all connected and interact with learning. Regarding the phenomenon of nature vs nurture the authors concluded that, "*innate skills and talents seem to play a less important role that was once thought but this (sadly) doesn´t mean that everyone can become an expert in everything"* (p 217), which gives the environment (parents, caregivers, and teachers) a better space. The final subchapter is on creativity, which they seem to describe more as the ability to improvise based on the previously acquired expertise; they do not see it in isolation from domain specific knowledge.

Chapter 4 deals with **"behaviour"** starting with three different lists of executive functions compiled by, as the

authors say, the leading researchers in the field, followed by broad age ranges at which the various executive functions become active, as well as practical examples to support and develop executive functions at various age groups, including improving one´s resilience (or its components) through social-emotional learning as seen in Chapter 2.1. The final subchapter is devoted to motivation and natural curiosity, i.e., going from an infant´s intrinsic motivation to later aspects known as extrinsic motivation usually in formal setting, i.e., school education with pre-set curriculum, even though the authors state that the simple distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is much more complex than originally thought, see Self-determination Theory (Deci and Ryan, 1985; 2000), which is referred to in the book on pages 244–245. The final subchapter in Chapter 4 deals with the modern concept of behavioural economics and how to nudge people in the right direction (even though I do not consider some of the mentioned marketing strategies to be in the right direction).

What I liked about the book was the structure that was easy to follow and, in the e-book version, it gave me the opportunity to click and move to the desired page immediately, as well as the cross-referencing in the chapter and to the sources (either behind the chapter or in the list of references at the back of the book). Moreover, every chapter and many a subchapter had the section called "Teacher takeaways" that gave explanations and suggestions for the classroom.

To sum up, I find the book useful for teaching professionals as well as for students of teaching even though it is not an easy book to read and requires attentive study of the contents and phenomena dealt with within it.

The reviewer

Sharka (Šárka) Dohnalova is a teacher, teacher trainer, and trainer of pre-service teachers at The Faculty of Education, Masaryk University in Brno, The Czech Republic. She cooperates with Pilgrims TT and Oxford University Press, Czech Republic. She specializes in ELT didactics for Very Young Learners and Young Learners, SEN learners, and using drama as a tool for learning languages. Recently, she has been working on using synchronous and asynchronous online tools in shadow education of SEN children.

Email: dohnalova@ped.muni.cz

Review: Decentring ELT: Practices and Possibilities by Amol Padwad and Richard Smith (Eds.)

By Cina P. Mosito, South Africa

A lot has been written about English Language Teaching (ELT), in the context of either a home or of an additional language. This is not surprising given the centrality of English as a language of commerce and learning in many countries all over the world. *Decentring ELT: Practices and Possibilities* published by All India Network of English Teachers (AINET), aims to deepen understanding and spread awareness of the potential of decentring ELT. The authors describe the importance of decentralising ELT as follows:

Decentring ELT, "highlights teachers' own development of contextually appropriate thinking and action ... in relation to the needs of their local contexts." (p. 80)

The world of ELT has been characterized as a hegemony of "global" or "centre" approaches and materials developed outside the teaching contexts in which they are expected to be used. However, these approaches and materials ("frames for action") are not necessarily appropriate to and do not recognize teachers' and other insiders' experience and expertise in those contexts.

A decentring perspective involves valuing and seeking to understand how teachers, often collaborating with each other, try to articulate key features of their work (including the reasons for these features) and ways they feel their practice can be improved. It highlights teachers' own development of contextually appropriate thinking and action (on methodology, materials design, curriculum development, teacher education, and so on) in relation to the needs of their local contexts.

"*Decentring ELT* enables exploration of alternatives to English language teaching centred on "outsider" agendas. It entails engagement of contextually situated, "insider" expertise and creativity, with teachers and groups of teachers identifying, understanding and extending practices which are effective for them, and which can be built on by other teachers, teacher educators and policy makers." (p. 80)

The book features nine chapters. The introduction and the first two chapters trace developments in the *Decentring ELT* initiative since it was launched in 2018 and unpacks what the concept and ensuing practices entail. The gist of the book is in the case studies written by teacher associations from eight countries (Guinea-Bissau, DR Congo, Kenya, Argentina, Cameroon, Chile, India and Nepal). The case studies demonstrate contextualised practices on how teachers promote ELT through materials development, pedagogic practices and awareness campaigns that target different stakeholders from teachers, students, parents, and communities at large. Each case study presents unique, rich, and

nuanced country-specific initiatives which could benefit teaching-learning across the curriculum. A permeating message from each chapter is that there is no prescriptive one way in which English (or any language) should be taught, which then lends itself to the philosophy of decentring. At the heart of successful English language teaching lies a willingness to experiment with available resources, learn with and from others, and promote the sharing of experiences. The last six chapters outline recent happenings in the ELT space, with a special focus on ELT rebooting to circumvent the debilitating effects of the pandemic on teaching-learning.

Even though the book is triggered by a particular concern, *Decentring ELT*, it promotes ideas and practices that offer possibilities beyond ELT. Since successes in teaching and learning of language has a ripple effect on other subjects, this book is an excellent reference for all interested in enabling inclusion of all learners in educational settings where English is used as language of teaching and learning (LoLT) but is not their mother tongue. Curriculum and materials developers, teacher educators in initial teacher education and continuing professional development of teachers, academics, student teachers, teachers and other relevant stakeholders have something to learn from this book.

“ In South Africa where I am based, the book offers relevant examples of strategies for contextualising English language teaching across diverse classrooms where English is sometimes a 3rd or 4th language to learners. Notably, we could draw inspiration from a range of university-school-community engagement projects from countries with similar resource and economic challenges such as the RICELT Infographics project (p47) and the Kenyan BETA-SIAYA initiatives (p28)”.

The book is available on the Hornby Trust website https://www.hornby-trust.org.uk/decentring-elt.

The reviewer

Cina P. Mosito (PhD) is Associate Professor of Inclusive Education in the Faculty of Education at Nelson Mandela University. Her research interests are teacher education, child development and inclusive education. She is currently a co-PI in a longitudinal national study that seeks to understand teacher pedagogy in South Africa (2022–2027). Previously Cina was involved in *Teaching for All: Mainstreaming inclusive education in South Africa*, an innovative inclusive teaching and learning project funded by the European Union and managed by the British Council in partnership with the University of South Africa UNISA and MIET South Africa in phases one and two of the project (2016–2022).

Email: cina.mosito@mandela.ac.za

An interview with A life-time educator – my story through multiple learning experiences

By Maria Millar-Dumitrescu, UK

My name is Maria Millar-Dumitrescu, and I am an experienced teacher, trainer and researcher, with almost three decades of teaching experience. I live and work in the UK, though I have a rich, diverse learning experience from both Romania and Canada. I prepare curricula and teaching materials for different levels and programmes in the fields of literacy, business communication and English for international students. My research projects focus on integrating aspects of the multiple intelligences theory and the learning preferences in teacher training programmes, though I prefer to call it Multiple Teaching and Training rather than the more controversial concept of multiple intelligences. I currently run my teacher training company, 21st Century Educators Ltd.

I am delighted to be interviewed for *The Pilgrims Teacher Trainer* and feel very privileged to have this opportunity. I have experienced learning and teaching in different contexts and “my journey” is one that I hope many readers of the journal living and working in different global contexts will likely identify with. My particular experience in Romania, Canada and the UK reflects my story. This interview is, of course, my story and voice, though while we all have a different story to tell – and none of us have a single story – there are so many similarities of experience across our different contexts and these are necessary to share as we look for and find meaning in what it means to be a teacher educator in our ever changing world.

I believe I experienced a “light bulb” moment that made a significant difference from what might be described as a “transmission learning approach” in my early learning in Romania to one that starts from understanding who our learners are and their specific needs. Especially in the difference between teaching young learners and adults.

I have developed a concept of “caring for my learners and showing it” and I want to explain why the concept of multiple teaching and training styles is important for me. I hope you might identify with my story in your own way and and you find some helpful insights for whatever context you work in.

The full interview can be found in the following link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x1Ck1Et4tNE

The author

An experienced researcher, with almost three decades of teaching experience, Maria has been preparing curricula and teaching materials for different levels and programs in the fields of literacy, business communication and English for international students. Her research projects focus on integrating aspects of multiple intelligences theory and learning preferences in teacher training programs. She is currently running her teacher training company, 21st Century Educators Ltd.

Email: millar18edu@gmail.com

BRITISH COUNCIL | TeachingEnglish

Inclusive teaching and learning – It's just good practice in teaching and learning, isn't it?

By Phil Dexter

Introduction

In *The Pilgrims Teacher Trainer Journal* we almost always include a CPD interview with a professional in the field. This short article is a different, innovative approach to interviewing and rather than a question and answer session this interview is presented via six short videos.

I'm sure you will agree that good practice in teaching and learning is the place where we strive to be in all we do. Catherine Walter and Jessica Briggs, (2012) produced a significant piece of research and a report, *What professional development makes the most difference to teachers*, analysing the results of 35 evidence-based studies of teacher professional development. These studies show that effective teaching makes a difference to learning. Crucially, they also provide evidence about what kind of teacher development makes a difference to teachers' skills and learners' learning. The professional development that makes the most difference to teachers identified in the report:

1. is concrete and classroom-based
2. brings in expertise from outside the school
3. involves teachers in the choice of areas to develop and activities to undertake
4. enables teachers to work collaboratively with peers
5. provides opportunities for mentoring and coaching
6. is sustained over time
7. is supported by effective school leadership.

These seven aspects of professional development identified constitute a whole school approach which support the continued skilling of teachers through continued professional development (CPD). If you would like to look at the detail of the research, you can read the full report here.

So what's the connection with inclusive teaching and learning?

In my work in teaching, training and teacher education with the British Council and now as a freelance consultant, I have realised that while these seven principles tell us so much about good practice professional development in general, it just so obviously, for me, equally applies to inclusive practices. Inclusive practices are basically just good teaching and learning practices.

Inclusion seems to be a buzz word in education, which all governments have as an objective, with schools and teachers expected to implement. However, what do we really mean by *inclusion* and how can we really apply it?

Susan Douglas from the British Council and Chief Executive of a network of special schools in the UK has produced a series of six short videos for the British Council Teaching English website https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/ which describe what inclusion means to her. She explains this in the following videos:

- An introduction to inclusion and inclusive practices
- What makes inclusive teachers
- Thinking inclusively – different models of disability
- Creating an inclusive learning environment
- Using inclusive pedagogies
- Inclusive assessment

These short videos can be accessed on YouTube through the link below. For me, each video explains clearly and simply what we mean by inclusive practices.

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLvCfA99qTst8q5Ccziuuc2deaOII_IBom

In a previous article in *The Pilgrims Teacher Trainer Journal* Volume 36, no. 1 (which can be found in the journal archive), I described the 12 top approaches to quality teaching and learning in school contexts. The image below from that article describes and supports Susan's videos and describes graphically, in my view, how we can understand inclusion and inclusive practices through a whole school approach.

Figure 1: An overview of what inclusion in schools involves

Conclusion

By way of conclusion – watch the videos and decide for yourself how best inclusion can be implemented in your context – this short article is, hopefully, an example of global good practice. Good inclusive teaching and learning is "just" good practice in teaching and learning. And while we can learn lots from good global practice application will always be local and based on our own teaching realities. Assuming, of course, it is based on good evidence-informed practice …

Sources

Guide for teacher educators: Supporting teachers in teaching English to learners with special educational needs and disabilities | TeachingEnglish | British Council

https://clie.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Walter_Briggs_2012.pdf

https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/creating-inclusive-school-environment

https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/professional-development

The Cuisenaire© rods in language teaching

By Steve Hirschhorn, Italy

Introduction

The purpose of this article is to briefly investigate the role of Cuisenaire© rods in language teaching. Their flexibility and extraordinary breadth of use seems to be little known or perhaps lost in time, so my intention is to reintroduce the sense of austerity and clarity which they embody. Among all the latest hi-tec, there is still room for an aid as simple and transparent as the rods and this article attempts to introduce them to trainers who may not yet have embraced them.

Background

I have been using the Cuisenaire© rods for more than 40 years having originally been introduced to them at the now closed International House, Hastings. Adrian Underhill, who was then directing their teacher training course, was instrumental in my choice to adopt the rods. His inspirational lead then and since, set me up for a career promoting their use.

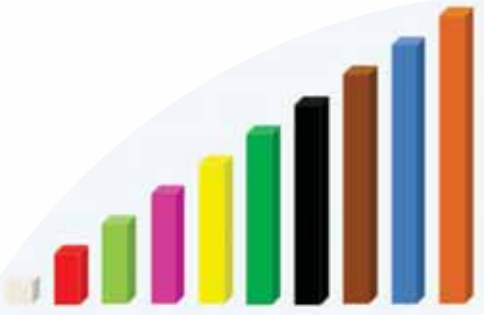


Figure 1: The rods

In almost all the positions I have held over the years, other than HE External Examiner, I have found that the rods have somehow played a role – they have been relevant and appropriate in one way or another. I have used the rods in language learning for training with small children, sophisticated bankers and architects, senior citizens from all over the place, teachers from around the world (too many places to list), military personnel ranking from Private to Colonel, streetwise teens, a blind student, a deaf student, with groups and with individuals. I have trained teachers to use them and have run teacher-development workshops on their

use. I can't recall delivering a language lesson in which I didn't use them, except when I have been teaching with a specific approach such as Suggestopædia or Total Physical Response (TPR) which have little scope for their inclusion. I can recall only one student who absolutely refused to get involved with them but to be fair, she only wanted to learn through reading English literature. The austerity, simplicity, approachability and flexibility of the rods seemed to me to represent all that I wanted for my students – a way to approach the language directly in an uncomplicated, unambiguous way, relying on one's senses to intuit and one's willingness to take risks in order to clarify for oneself how the language works. This may sound rather esoteric at the moment but I'm hoping that I'll be able to show you in this short text a little of how the rods work – or rather how you will make the rods work, since they do nothing at all on their own.

Figure 2: A box of rods and a pointer

A little history

The idea (first mooted by the late and great Dr Caleb Gattegno) is that these little pieces of coloured wood (originally created by Georges Cuisenaire for use in maths teaching) can be used by teachers and students of language to create physical situations in which students can discover rather than be taught. Gattegno was of course the inventor of the Silent Way (SW) and the rods are absolutely central to that endeavour. My intention has never been to bind teachers into a specific method but rather to introduce some techniques under a general umbrella or approach which, almost by default, has been heavily influenced by SW processes and procedures. The nature of these little pieces of wood or plastic seems to lend itself to a student-centred, bottom-up, relaxed approach, without which I imagine their effectiveness might easily be diminished.

Imagine

The rods are as boundless as your imagination and as effective as you make them. They are not foolproof, unless you are. They are probably not the answer to all your problems, although in certain cases they can resolve difficulties that otherwise might have remained unresolved for longer.

There are many blindingly obvious ways in which these mathematically formulated lengths can be used. You've probably thought of some already. Among these popular and commonly cited uses are, for example, prepositions of position: "the red rod is between the green and the orange one".

Figure 3: Between

Comparatives: "the orange rod is taller than the brown one". Lay them down, and you have longer – shorter.

Figure 4: Taller / shorter and longer / shorter

"The dark green rod is next to the brown one."

Figure 5: Next to

"There's a blue rod either side of a pink[1] one."

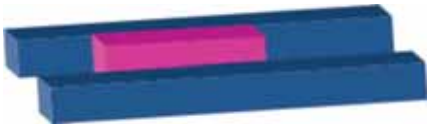


Figure 6: Either side

The white rod is on top of the orange one. The purple rod is lower than the white one" – which can open up the lower/higher, taller/shorter area, given that the white rod is higher than the purple one, although the purple one is longer. However, the orange rod is taller than the blue one and so on almost ad infinitum but hopefully not ad taedium!

Figure 7: On top, higher / lower

And then there's colour, number, etc., which are so obvious that, over the years, many teachers have come to accept that they represent the limitations of the rods without really trying to push the boundaries and discover more challenging uses. In fact, it has often been

1 This colour rod may be referred to as pink, purple or mauve and sometimes as the rods age, their colours can change.

suggested to me that the rods are OK for beginners but not for more advanced learners. This is patently not the case. As a little appetite whetter, consider this: “If you hadn’t given me two more yellow rods, I couldn’t have built the structure as I had planned to”.

How did we get there? Aah, keep reading.

On authenticity

When I first encountered the rods and SW, I commented that much of what was being produced was unlikely – it seemed as wooden as the rods. Over time I realised that these first steps lead on to develop learners’ ability in producing more flexible, nuanced and natural language. Consider: “A blue rod, which is longer than the three light green ones nearby, is between two other rods, one mauve and the other yellow”.

Figure 8: More complex positioning

A piece of language that will never be uttered outside the rods’ classroom. But look at the components of that inauthentic example, notice how many useful constructs there are, how easily the lexis could then be substituted for more relevant examples and how the structures can be transposed elsewhere. Note too that the indefinite article is used for “a blue rod”, which suggests that there are others available, as indeed there should be, even if they are not referred to. This kind of subliminal concept work is typical of the way rods can encourage accuracy and thoughtfulness from both student and teacher.

We have then a sort of scaffold upon which to hang other items of lexis and structure as and when they might appear or are needed – a kind of skeletal format to begin the process which later on can be expanded, enhanced and enriched. To further clarify this idea, given that it is central to the use of the rods, let’s take a few pieces of common functional language and let me ask you, where necessary, to substitute the words in italics for something which would fit in that position in the real world:

- “Please can you give me an orange rod?”
- “I’d like three green rods please.”
- “Have you got any black rods?”
- “Sorry, she wanted four blue rods but you gave her white ones.”
- “If you put that rod there, they’ll all fall down!”
- “You could have given me the five white rods I needed but you didn’t!”

As you can see, the breadth and depth of language possibilities is limitless. The only real question is how to get there.

Here are a couple of ideas to get you used to handling the rods.

Take four or five blue rods and make a slightly crooked diagonal line from your far right to your near left (with the box between you and the rods). This is a river.

Let’s take a moment here. I’ve told you, as I would tell students, that this is a river because this sets the context or the scene and without that specific information learners could easily wander off in an unexpected direction.

Now, take a few light green ones and stand them up on either side of the river. What are they? Crocodiles standing on their hind legs? Martians? Or do you think they are trees? If so, that’s in part because I have set the scene, the context, by letting you know that the blue rods are a river and trees fit in with it.

Figure 9: A river and trees

Now take a few minutes to build up a scene, houses, a road, maybe a factory, shops and so on. Don’t try to have everything in proportion – you can’t. A certain amount of imagination and poetic licence is required if a person can be taller than a house. This will become a passive convention: things don’t need to resemble what they are. On the other hand, if you can plan your scene to exploit the different colours and lengths, so much the better. It’s preferable to have a light green rod standing up to symbolise a tree, rather than a long orange one lying down.

Figure 10: A village scene

It’s a bit like a naïf painting. Keep it simple. When you are satisfied with your scene, introduce some movement; a person or a car and experiment with relocating rods without knocking others over. Take a look from the other side of the table since the theatre you are constructing is for the benefit of the people over there.

Remember that as you build such a scene with students, each item you place will be elicited, checked and rechecked. I often use: “If this is a river and these are trees, what’s this?” as a technique to a) remind learners what those items are and b) give a sense of self-determination. Clearly, if some bright spark says, “It’s a reverse differential inverter pylon,” I will respond with something like “Ah! Could be but it isn’t!”

Here are some challenges for you to try. My own solutions will follow but there are no right answers. We can all learn from each other’s creativity. How could you represent:

- the seaside
- a sunset
- stormy weather

- a crocodile and a giraffe?

These simple scenarios I have asked you to create are to get your fingers used to manipulating the rods, moving them, placing them and creating visual aids that students can appreciate. They are also designed to introduce slightly more complex and abstract ideas moving on from prepositions of place. Consistency is a key among several here. Using diagonal blue rods for a river will come up again and next time, students will know immediately what it is. The same applies to using brown rods for roads and green ones for trees. Of course, this doesn't mean that green rods are always trees, but when you need a tree, use a green rod.

And here are my solutions to the previous challenges. Blue and yellow for sea and sand are fairly obvious. Orange and yellow suspended over the table is a sunset or sunrise, depending on where you hold the rods and whether you move them over and down or up and over.

Figure 11: The sea-side

Figure 12: Sunset or sunrise

Black rods with one or more white ones (depending on the weather) held above the table will become a convention for weather of various types. The addition of a diagonal orange rod through the black ones can also offer lightening.

Figure 13: Stormy weather?

A green rod lying down and an orange one standing up become a giraffe and a crocodile. Of course, you might need some context too and that's why I ask, for example: "If this is a zoo, what animals are these?"

Figure 14: Crocodile and giraffe

While challenge is a good thing in my style of teaching, there's also a need to give support or scaffolding so that learners have at least a rough idea of what it is you're looking for. Avoid offering too broad a choice in the language-learning environment, instead, present a context alongside a question. Since I am trying to engage via achievable challenge, this is involving the learner in the process.

Rods lend themselves beautifully to that process of relaxing and engaging since they can be physically handled, moved, removed or adjusted by learners with almost no input at all from the teacher. In the right hands, the rods provide a basis for the most bottom-up, self-determining style of teaching/learning that I have ever come across.

A note on pronunciation

Pronunciation work may be out of fashion in these days of "intelligibility" but I have always felt it essential as a language component. I created an IPA font and chart, the latter is present in the classroom and referred to very often while I use the font to write various things for students. The IPA is a tool for life and well worth investing a little time.

Figure 15: Adapted from Adrian Underhill's chart, with his kind permission.

I have met objections from teachers who either don't teach pronunciation at all: "a colonial endeavour" or refuse to use the IPA since they say it represents received pronunciation. But it can represent whatever you say and however you say it. And so, I include here some examples of my use of the IPA.

Abstracts and people

Produce a light green, a yellow, a brown and a black rod. Place them alongside the orange rod like this:

Figure 16: The seasons

This is a case in which using evocative colours can guide students' ideas. In general, when we arrive here, they think for a moment and then someone says "Seasons!" They may not say that word but they do show that they get it! Now work through each one starting with the light green 'spring'. Now we can use the seasons to set the scene for narratives and other things.

Moving on to "people rods"! Let's create a little scenario…

The way you initiate this idea is quite important. "What's this?" is not a good question at all here since it offers no guidance and the answers could be anything at all from "It's a Tyrannosaurus rex" to "It's Mount Fuji" and all stages in between. So, here's what I do to offer that all important guidance. Position a couple of red rods and indicate one of them asking:

"What's her name?" Students will usually grasp this easily and happily give our little piece of red wood or plastic a name!

St. "It's Hannah."

T. "OK, and her husband?" Thus, giving the idea that this is a family, retrieve the husband's name and then the kids, pointing at the white rods: "How many kids have they got?" I like to elaborate on the family idea so I often ask how old the kids are, if they have hobbies, etc. This gets students to invest in the scenario and such involvement usually helps motivation.

Now, I point to the green rods:

T. "This is their house."

Figure 17: A family

That's straightforward, I don't always have to elicit absolutely everything, sometimes I'll give them a break! Then I build up a scene as I have shown here.

Figure 18: Setting up habitual actions, part 1

Over on my right are the days of the week which students will recognise as I am using exactly the same format and colours as previous work. I'll point to the pink "tower" and say, "This is an office block" or similar. The blue block is "a school". Now check the names of the red rod people and take the wife in one hand, move three of the day rods out a little and shuffle Hannah to the pink tower and right up to the top of it.

Your scene now looks like this:

Figure 19: Setting up habitual actions, part 2

Learners should be ready to comment or narrate so indicate Hannah and the days of the week.
St. "Hannah she go work Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday."
T. "Ok, that's true" this is a response I use to indicate: the idea is right, the language needs work.
St. "Hannah go to work for 3 days."
T. "Only this week or…?"
St. "She go to work every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday."

Let's be fair, they may not come up with this, you may need to offer some further support which for me, will be in the form of pointing out the words or phrase from the IPA chart. Usually students have come across *every* but if anyone looks blank, take a moment, pick up and put down the Monday rod with an air of boredom to suggest repetition:

T. "Monday, last Monday, next Monday…" Students will understand that you are indicating all Mondays or Tuesdays, etc.

Once you've resolved the problem of *every*, we'd need to look at the 3rd person of *go*. A conventional management could be, for example: "Can you change *go*?"

So we arrive at: "Every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, Hannah goes to work." I usually ask what she does at work, just as an aside really. The answers are always interesting and when they've finished telling me she's the cleaner or a secretary, I indicate that she's at the top of the building and they understand that, in fact, she's the boss.

Now take the two kids, put them on the double decker, red rods bus and drive them to the school. Pull out all 5 working days and sit back!

Figure 20: Two kids on a bus!

Would you agree that in reality we would say: “Every day, the kids go to school by bus,” even though it’s not actually “every day” but every working day? I’ll leave that with you. The *by* + mode of transport is super useful and may need a little time to work on. I sometimes expand these situations to include a clock so that we can get the time family members leave and return. Bear in mind too that this little tableau could become a much longer and richer tale with kids going swimming on Saturday afternoons or the family going to watch the football and so on. The limits are only in your own imagination.

And finally…

I hope this has given you a taste of what you can do with the rods. There’s lots more, of course, and there are also times when the rods might not be the answer but that and much more can be found in my book later this year. Have fun.

The author

Steve Hirschhorn has more than 40 years in language teaching and training, having worked in the private sector and in HE both in the UK and abroad. He has given workshops for teachers, students and trainers from Chile to China and most stops between. Although now retired, he still writes and takes an active interest in matters ELT. Later this year, he’s hoping that his book will make it onto the market. It contains many more ideas and detailed guidance including setting up rod stories, work on business language and student-led activities.

Email: hirschhs@zoho.com

The informal index of articles printed in The Teacher Trainer Journal
Volume Thirty (2016) onwards

Different Schools of Thought and Feeder Fields

E-Matters

In-Service Training & Development

Interview with:

E Matters & It's a Wired World

Just for Interest

Language Matters

Literature Matters

Meet a Colleague/A Trainer Like Me

Miscellaneous

Trainer session plan (& reports)

Trainer Training

Training around the World

Pilgrims
Humanising
Language
Teaching

HLT at www.hltmag.co.uk is the leading free online magazine for teachers of English, and possibly for teachers of other modern languages, with a wealth of articles, resources, lesson ideas, voices and book reviews.

Contributors include teachers from all over the world as well as leading ELT trainers and authors. **HLT** is edited by Hanna (Hania) Kryszewska and is published by Pilgrims.

You can access the archives at https://www.hltmag.co.uk/prev and http://old.hltmag.co.uk/prev.html.

Why HLT?

1. You can read and publish in HLT for free.
2. You can keep in touch with recent ELT trends and developments.
3. You can use it for your self-development.
4. You can use it on pre-service and in-service courses, and for mentoring.
5. You can enhance your professional profile by publishing in HLT.
6. You can co-host an issue of HLT on behalf of your school, teachers' association, region or country.

Editor's email: hania.kryszewska@pilgrimsteachertraining.eu