



The Word

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Hawai'i Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, the local affiliate of TESOL, is a nonprofit organization dedicated to building a community of professionals teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) in the state of Hawai'i.

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Submissions



Topics

I welcome any topic which would be of interest to HITESOL members or ESL professionals in Hawai'i. We are interested in, for example: recommended Internet sites (or a tech type column), book reviews, a grad student's perspective, field trips/learning outside the classroom, reports from members working overseas, content-based teaching ideas, using video and music in the classroom, online teaching, CALL, a "gripes" column, DOE news/concerns, K-12 news, neighbor island news, applying theory to practice, interview with someone in the field, blended learning, and other topics. (You do not have to be a member of HITESOL to submit an article).

Format & Style

Articles should be no more than 4 pages, double-spaced, Times New Roman font, 12 point, attached as an MS Word document. Accompanying photos or clip art are optional but welcome. Please also include a short biography statement about the author (email address optional). In general, articles are written in a fairly informal, non-scholarly style. Please refer to previous issues of *The Word* to get a sense of the types of articles which appear in the newsletter, or contact the editor with questions.

Submission Deadlines

You can send an article at any time and it will appear in the next issue of *The Word*. Please note that the deadline for submissions will be posted on the web site regarding the upcoming issue.

Please submit the articles via E-mail to Lisa Kawai at kawai793@aol.com

Note: All images are from the author or from Upsplash.com.

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Anthony Silva; silvaa@hawaii.edu
Samantha Hume; sjhume@hawaii.edu
Kelly Kennedy; mclanah@hawaii.edu
Brent Green; brent.green@byuh.edu
Monica Vidal; mvidal@hawaii.edu
Shawn Ford; sford@hawaii.edu
Lisa Kawai; kawai793@aol.com
Mark Wolfersberger; maw44@byuh.edu

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Samantha Hume; sjhume@hawaii.edu
Jean Kirschenmann; jkirschenmann@hpu.edu
Sally La Luzerne-Oi; slaluzerno@gmail.com
Kristen Urada; kurada@hawaii.edu
Hoan Nguyen; hoantn@hawaii.edu
Perry Christensen





*News from
Hawai`i*

Letter from the President of Hawai`i TESOL

Aloha and welcome to another academic year of networking and professional development with Hawai`i TESOL! Welcome, also, to another academic year under the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic. And as the pandemic continues, Hawai`i TESOL will also continue to do its best to support all its members as we navigate these uncertain times.

This academic year, Hawai`i TESOL events will be held virtually (until it is safe to do otherwise). After our pandemic-escape Opening Social, we are looking forward to our usual Practical Workshop in late fall, our Annual Conference in February, and our Language Experience in spring. We hope you will be able to join us virtually at any or all of these events.

Hawai`i TESOL is also on the move – to a new website! We hope our new home on the web will be a more flexible and dynamic space to bring you interesting and useful content that will enhance your professional development and networking opportunities. Look for an invitation to experience and join us at the new website in the very near future.

The Hawai`i TESOL Executive Board also encourages you to let us know how we can best serve you in these unprecedented times. Feel free to contact me or any of the Executive Board members with your thoughts and ideas.

Even as the pandemic drags on, Hawai`i TESOL hopes to continue to grow the organization and to serve your professional development and networking needs. Thank you for your continued interest in, and support of, Hawai`i TESOL!

Sincerely,
Anthony Silva
President, Hawai`i TESOL

2021 Language Experience: Filipino

By Perry Christensen

On the evening of May 6, 2021, Hawai`i TESOL resumed its annual language experience after last year's hiatus due to the novelty of dealing with COVID. Jayson Parba, an instructor at the University of Hawai`i at Manoa, led us in a 90-minute interactive online Zoom class that put us in our students' shoes.

The Zoom session was well attended. Some had muted microphones while others were unmuted. Those of us with unmuted microphones could receive feedback from *Kuya* (elder brother) Jayson as we repeated back greetings and phrases. *Kuya* Jayson called on each of the participants throughout the evening to give individual responses. After a year of COVID, everyone seemed to be comfortable with learning and interacting on Zoom.

I've had Filipino students in my classes for decades, so when I saw Hawai`i TESOL's flier announcing "Learn Filipino," I thought they had made a mistake. It's Tagalog, not Filipino. Or maybe it's Cebuano or Ilocano. Which is it?

Kuya Jayson helped us understand the history of Filipino, the national language, and the different regional languages. We also learned

some greeting words and how the basic sentence structure of Filipino is ordered: verb, subject, object. Furthermore, we learned that stress placement on a word can sometimes change its

meaning. For example, *gabi* means evening, while *gabi* means taro. I came away well informed and with a greater appreciation for my Filipino students.



About the Author: Perry Christensen is the new Hawai`i TESOL Historian.

What We Talk About When We Talk About “Repetition”

By Reed Riggs

Repeated experience plays a regular part in any type of instruction. Whether we train people to use a language, run cross-country, or solve complex math problems, most stakeholders—our students, their families, our colleagues, and we as teachers—expect learners to engage in some kind of practice or observation many times. As language teachers, we might repeat a word or sentence for input, or ask students to review vocabulary lists, workbook sentences, or flashcards at home. We might ask students to repeat after us, or use pre-selected words or grammatical targets during a small-group task. We might preview key vocabulary that will appear several times in an upcoming text or media clip. For the purposes of this article, all of these examples help define *repeated experience* as a useful category. This article will pick apart a bigger question—**What do learners gain from repeated experience?**—and offer several answers that can help us make decisions for teaching.

First, we can ask: **What does it mean to “learn a word”?** Linguists, philosophers, and I believe ordinary people have long recognized that the meaning of any word will

depend on its context of use (Firth, 1957). We can look at “safe” as an adjective: *The child is safe. The beach is safe. The shovel is safe* (from Evans, Bergen, & Zinken, 2007). Our understanding of “safe” should change in each sentence. First there is the *child* to whom no harm will come, followed by the *beach* containing no harmful elements, and, finally, the *shovel* being unable to cause harm, possibly to the child. Now let's move the sentences around and delete one: *The shovel is safe. The beach is safe. We might now interpret the shovel, appearing first, as being precious and awaiting no harm or theft. Linguists refer to a word having many “shades” of meaning as polysemy (puh-LIH-suh-mee). In our classrooms, whenever we repeat an exact sentence over and over—Was the child safe? Yes, the child was safe! Again! Was the child safe? Yes, the child was safe!—learners miss opportunities to observe and fine-tune their perceptions around polysemy, the possible similarities and differences in meaning for a word or grammar that rely on context.*

So then, **are we harming learning when we re-use a word in an identical context?** Researchers who look into how

people learn languages (e.g., Ellis & O'Donnell, 2011), exploring what our minds do with the information we observe, talk about two kinds of repeated experience. When we observe the same word or grammatical form across unchanging contexts, we call this *token frequency*. Three definitions from Merriam Webster's online dictionary for the word “token” can help us here: “an outward sign or expression,” “a small part representing the whole,” and “a distinguishing feature.” When we repeat an identical word in the same context over and over, we are implying that there are no other members in the category of what *could* appear in that context. Token frequency helps learners “entrench” a fixed string of sounds or words, but it also implies the edges of a category—everything *not* seen there is what learners should *not* expect to see, hear, or produce in similar contexts. Along these lines, Foster (2013) points out that teachers providing a fixed “phrase of the week” can misrepresent to learners which parts of that phrase might be more variable when compared with how people normally use that phrase. By contrast, *type*

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frequency is the number of different examples of a category that a learner observes. Consider the sentence *She drove me crazy* (from MacWhinney, 2004). Based on our lifetime of experience with English, high type frequency (different examples) in the subject slot (*She/He/That/The X*) in this phrase helps us perceive that almost anything in the subject slot should sound fine. However, **She drove me sad* should sound odd because *sad* lies outside of the category of normal meanings that we have ever observed in that part of the phrase. Type and token frequency work together to help us perceive narrow and broad categories; we build our common sense “bottom up” from large numbers of examples.

Should we then use language in our classrooms in maximally complex ways? Any experience interacting with novice and intermediate language learners will tell us: no, if we want learners to contribute to topics and work on tasks. We can, however, consider ways in which type and token frequency can occur naturally for learners at lower proficiency levels if we *focus more narrowly on topic and task ideas*. Before we get into that, let’s first look at how language is used repeatedly when language teaching is not the focus. I generated the following

frequency list from an episode of *I Love Lucy* (1956, season 06, episode 10): *you* (said 131 times), *the* (119), *to* (98), *I* (95), *a* (80). I don’t imagine any audience member protesting these numbers, shouting “Goodness, there are too many *the*’s in this episode! And a hundred and thirty-one *you*’s? Why can’t the show writers use a wider variety of words!” Humans naturally re-use words to develop topics and work on tasks without focusing on which words are repeated.

Let’s also take a definition of “task” from outside of language teaching contexts, again from Merriam-Webster: “a usually assigned piece of work often to be finished within a certain time.” Tavakoli & Foster (2008) give a similar definition of “task” for language instruction, and include these examples: “telling stories, making plans, discussing problems, or explaining information” (p. 441). Teachers can provide more natural type and token frequency for novice and intermediate proficiency learners in two ways: *task repetition* (from Tavakoli & Foster, 2008), and *narrow topic development*, mentioned above. First, we can narrow our focus on the particular area of information for whatever we are talking about or trying to get done. Here is a made-up example: co-creating one detail about

a person, animal, or thing as part of a larger story or image. The teacher’s side of a whole-class discussion, re-using the word “lonely,” can look like this: *Okay, so...this magic bug, Daniel...Is he lonely? Yes? Yes, he’s lonely? Do we all agree that he is lonely? No? You don’t think he’s lonely? Do you think he’s a little lonely? Yes? He’s a little lonely? Okay, does he feel lonely every day? Does he feel lonely on Mondays? No? He’s not lonely on Mondays? Yes? Well, is he alone on Mondays? Oh, he’s at work? Does he have friends at work? Does anybody at work say that he looks lonely? Yes? Is the work friend also feeling lonely . . .* Focusing narrowly on one idea, feeling *lonely*, helped this teacher repeat a word, whether pre-planned or chosen spontaneously to meet the needs of the task while in-process. This narrow focus also naturally varied the surrounding words and grammar. After this sub-task, *decide on a person’s problem*, ran its course, the teacher could then repeat the same sub-task for a different person (an idea from Lichtman, 2018, p. 31). We often talk about repetition as doing the “same thing” over and over. We might find it more useful to think about learners building knowledge from observing many possible *differences* in and around that thing. Topic

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focus and task repetition can help.

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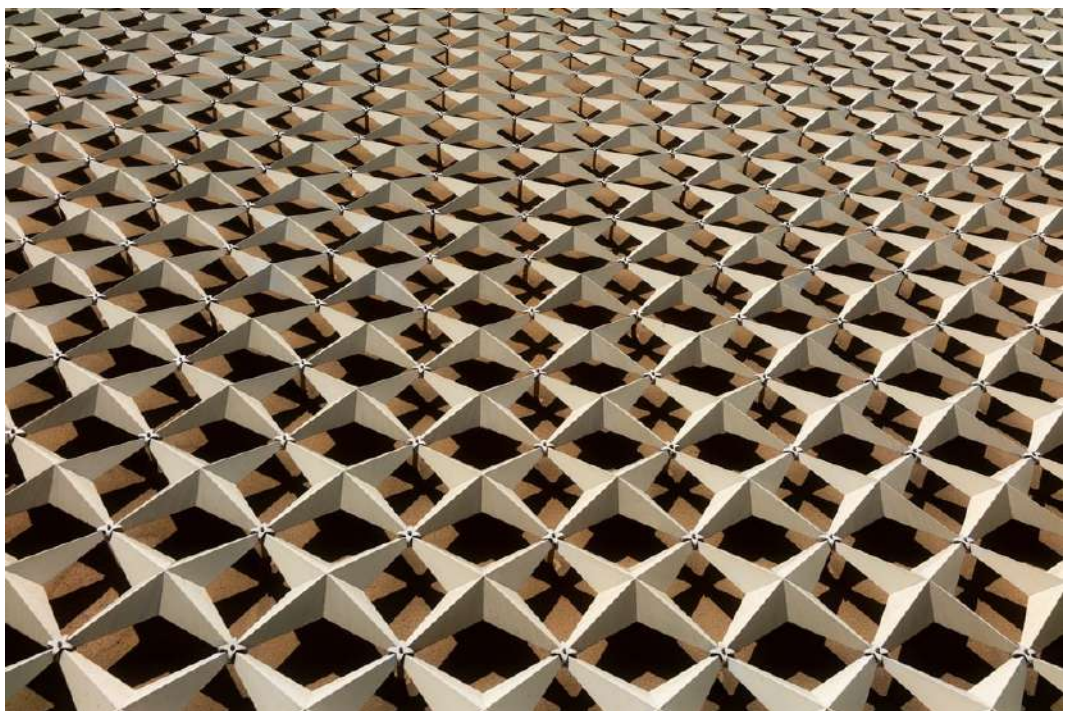
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About the Author:

Reed Riggs is a Chinese language instructor at Brigham Young University–Hawai`i. He completed his Ph.D. at the University of Hawai`i in 2018, and has been working in language teacher education in Hawai`i since 2012. Reed has presented workshops for language teachers across the United States and



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internationally, including China and France. His research ties language teaching practices with research in Conversation Analysis and Usage-Based Linguistics. Reed hopes to highlight more areas where teachers and researchers can work together and gain from each other's work. Email: reedsamuelriggs@gmail.com

Cultivating Seeds of Empathy

By Cornelio “CJ” Ancheta

“Mister, you have a new student from Mexico. He has limited comprehension of the English language,” my former student’s low, whispering voice wafted into my last math period. Our discussion of trigonometric functions paused.

“*Buenas tardes*,” I greeted Victor and introduced him to the whole class, who gave a warm welcome in return.

At dismissal, I spent time learning more about Victor, a reserved fine young man whose aspiration in life is to finish higher education.

While I have an equal amount of understanding and familiarity with Spanish, I am cognizant of Victor’s language barrier, and a cobweb of questions started to spin in my head. “How am I going to meet Victor’s learning needs?” “How can I be an effective math teacher to him?”

For an immediate band-aid, I placed another Spanish-speaking student next to Victor. This strategy provided an opportunity to build his social network as well as give access to some communication in his initial transition. After a while, I observed that the partner whom I asked to help Victor started missing some of the content as he is translating, so I switched gears and started a one-on-one conference using a

translator app and math manipulatives.

To be an effective teacher, when approaching a new instructional situation, I must be able to put myself into someone else’s shoes. In Victor’s case, I immediately recognized where he was coming from. As an immigrant, I myself faced the challenges of acculturation to a new language and culture. I related to what Victor was going through. I knew firsthand how difficult it is to adjust to a new world and much more—to a whole new ecology of formal education. I wanted him to experience a sense of belonging by incorporating multilingualism activities in my classroom.

At an intermediate point during the school year, Victor presented as part of a group project in Spanish using Google Slides in English. Encouragingly, he received warm applause from his fellow students. Through this opportunity, I have sown the seeds of empathy. I saw how he has grown and how he has welcomed the challenge of getting acclimated to his new circumstances. He told me of his deep appreciation of what I have done for him. In his halting English, Victor pointed out how my encouragement helped develop his self-

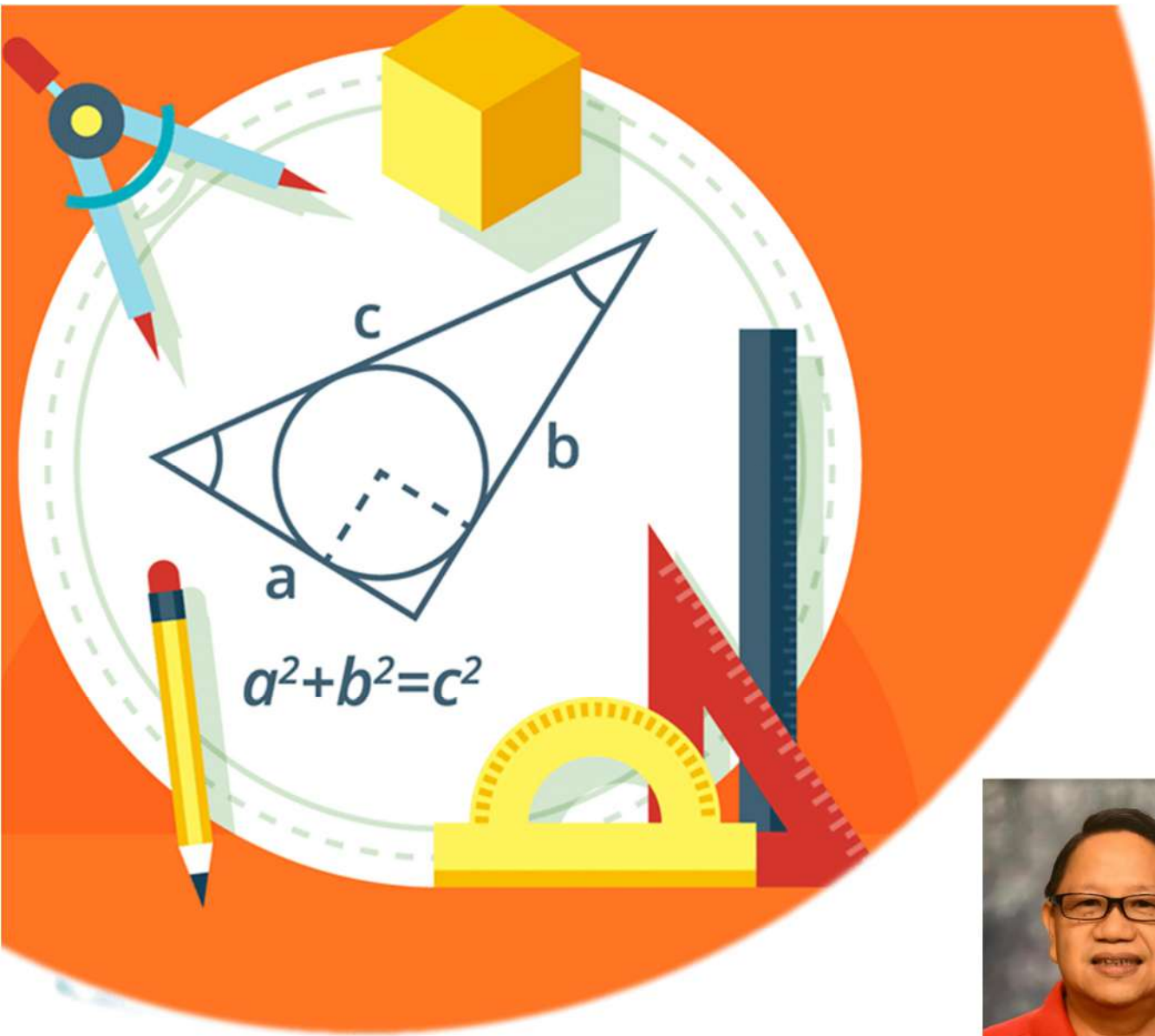
confidence that he needed so much. Conversely, he unknowingly challenged me to create a slide deck of geometry vocabulary in Spanish using the Fryer model graphic organizer.

With these valuable hands-on interactions, Victor successfully completed Geometry.

Sometimes I think of the days when Victor would be searching for the word in English whose Spanish equivalent was a word that I did not know. I think of the struggle for progress during the inauguration of his learning in the new language of his immigrant life. Though I didn’t know what to do initially, what I did do was give a positive vibe. The embrace of a welcoming attitude is one I can never fake. Either it is there, or it is not, and students take notice.

As teachers build relationships, the quality of the time we invest in our students is essential for students to navigate the complex world of formal education in a new language. Listening to them respond to our prompts is not an easy task. It takes a lot of patience and endurance, with attention to non-verbal cues and on-the-spot adjustments to those needs that surface. These interactions

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gave me an exponential rate of return.

My experience working with Victor revealed my vulnerability as a teacher. There were other strategies I could have implemented to further enhance his self-esteem was building on his interests. From those one-on-one interactions, I discovered that Victor had a passion for music. I could have

challenged him to compose a piece of rap music using geometry terms as lyrics.

As I keep sowing the seeds, I must continue the natural process of growth and development of myself as I cultivate students who are planted in my class. Victor and all the Victors that will come to my Geometry class need to have a healthy and sustaining source of support and inspiration.



About the Author: Cornelio “CJ” Ancheta is a Hawai`i State Teacher Fellow and a Secondary Mathematics teacher at Lahainaluna High School. He is an advocate of Project-Based Learning (PBL) and a staunch supporter of incorporating multilingualism in the classroom.

Of Direct Method and Role Plays

By Denis Guéret

I was into the second year of my new career as a teacher of English as a Second Language, giving evening classes to adults in a local high school after the students had left for the day. This was how I got in this business in the first place, as I was looking for French classes for my American spouse. My only credential was my fluency. One thing led to another, and I was now involved with several government-sponsored adult ESL and FFL remedial training.

By that time, the French National Education decided to experiment with teaching foreign languages in the 5th grade wherever possible. Since the beginning of public schools, foreign languages, dead or alive, were not part of the curriculum until the 6th grade.

Elementary schools being the responsibility of municipalities, these suddenly had to scramble to find available independent teachers, provided they could afford them.

The principal of the high school where I taught was contacted by the local office in charge of the project, and he highly recommended me. The other good thing was the little city where all this was happening was one of the wealthiest in the Greater Paris

area, within its jurisdiction, an international airport and the largest wholesale market in all of Europe .

The project, deployed without any planning nor communication was not received very well by the teachers and the parents. The teachers felt this was encroaching on their prerogatives, and outsiders not belonging to the public school system (nicknamed the “Mammoth” because of its bureaucratic sluggishness) were not welcome. The parents had different concerns. They did not want any more homework added to what was already required, and please no more books and notebooks for the kids to haul back and forth between home and school. There are no lockers in French elementary schools, and desks with storage space have fell out of fashion, so children carry enormous schoolbags equipped, for the lucky ones, with straps so they can carry them like a backpack and thus instead of damaging wrist and shoulders, they can

hurt their backs. Finally, Parents viewed warily another,



but not compulsory, subject added to the curriculum of that important 5th grade year, at the end of which was the first

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Of Direct Method and Role Plays

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serious hurdle in their children's academic progression. Good and consistent grade averages were needed to be able to exit elementary school and go on to the next cycle. So, no books and homework—out of the question. And by the way, who said it had to be English, after all, German, protested some of the parents and teachers, is spoken in one form or another more than any other language in the E.U. Consequently, I shared the classes with a German teacher, on different days. So much for a welcoming committee.

I thought about bringing my own material and make copies as needed, but I realized quickly I was not going to be helped with copying class material: copyright infringement is really frowned upon there, and more paper would not be appreciated by the parents.

But there were promises of generous compensations and this would look good on my then rather thin résumé as a teacher of English, even though it looked like all I could do was show up and improvise...

Thankfully, no goals nor objectives had been set. I was not required to deliver anything

at the end of the schoolyear: this was to remain informal, even casual, simply a first experience learning a second



language, without the pressure of results.

The other consideration is the difference between the 5th grade and the following grades: it is the last year students will be taught all subjects by just one teacher. Therefore, the

presence of a special other teacher would be a bit of an issue in this context. I was expected to defer to the

teacher in charge, who would help me control a class of about 35. Maintaining the peace was not to be my concern.

I was assigned two classes, twice a week each.

As foreign language teachers, we all follow the first rule of what a direct method is all about: speak only in the language being taught from the moment you are with your students and until they have all left once the course is over. But I know from experience it does not work well with adults, especially below the intermediate level. There is a risk for loud protest from unhappy frustrated customers, in this case professionals and/or managers who often felt humiliated by, or not having any control over, this sort of experience. However, I was about to find out

how wonderful and personally rewarding it could be with very young learners.

Of the children in the two groups I was going to teach, some of them already had plenty of practice with learning

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a second language. They came from every corner of the world and had to learn French not that long ago. Two went to Chinese classes after school and were learning English already as well with private tutors.

I understood there was no room for error on the first day. It was a fail or succeed situation, and I had never worked with a classroom full of ten-year-olds. I knew everything hinged on that first class; I would be observed like some oddity by a dubitative elementary school teacher. I had no choice but to go in there and just interact with the children in some proactive way.

I produced a plan which had a single practical objective: give the children the minimum means required to get help should they find themselves on their own somewhere abroad, (i.e., separated from their parents at the airport). That is, being able to answer simple questions about themselves.

So, on the first day I started with “my name is...” “what is your name?” then moving on to “what is my name? His name? Her name?” (Of course, being able to spell was essential, so I soon taught them the alphabet using “twinkle, twinkle little star” and it was a great moment). Everybody got a chance to participate, the children caught on quickly and obviously had fun with the style of the class. The teachers of both classes were won over as

I involved them as well.

Asking questions goes a long way as a method for teaching a language. Things start getting complicated when tenses are weaved in, so I chose not to make them part of the program. I also stayed away from modals. All those would have required too much personal work from the children. Vocabulary had to be meaningful—that is for children—with emotional value: Family, friends, pets, school, possessions.

It really was a rote learning approach: I had 35 students in each class, I made sure they all participated, randomly in turns. New elements were added only after whatever came before was acquired.

The difficulty was keeping their attention for 45 minutes without boring them or giving an opportunity for dissipation because of the one-man show nature of what I was doing: moving around and gesturing a lot, making eye contact with everyone.

This experiment went very

well, and it was very rewarding week after week, as the children soaked it all up and progressed quickly, all this strictly by prompting them verbally. Nothing was ever



written nor explained. Sometimes I would draw a picture on the blackboard to clue them a little. They saw it as some sort of a guessing game. By the end of the school

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Of Direct Method and Role Plays

year most of the students were able to have an articulate conversation with me about who they were, about their parents, where they lived and worked, even give a phone number. I would push the stronger ones a little further and observed they were able to synthesize from the expressions they had learned, using them with new vocabulary in different contexts.

I must have been doing something right because official looking people would be coming more and more often as weeks turned to months, to observe the classes and take notes. They introduced themselves as academic inspectors or teachers. They stayed in the back, never interfering. I also noticed the two teachers I was working with were now also busy taking notes, writing down everything I said and how I delivered the courses. Over time this ended up amounting to a well-structured roadmap. The irony was they were writing the class book I was not supposed to bring in. However, I found doubtful they could replicate what I was doing, not being bilingual themselves, not able to perceive when the children needed a little extra prompting and why, not to mention with the right stress and pronunciation necessary to educate learners' ears.

For the last class I brought my guitar and got them to sing "Old McDonald had a farm." I was a hit, with both groups, that too was unexpected and a lot of fun

I did not come back for the

following year as I had bigger commitments. I only requested a little bit of follow-up on my students, curious to know if they did well in their first year of formal ESL learning. But since I was not part of the "Mammoth" (and even if I was, substitutes are not treated with much consideration anyway) I never heard of anything.

This was in 1995. Over the years this ceased to be experimental and became part of the 4th and 5th grades curricula wherever possible, all over France. It is still an informal, book-less approach. However, there is now plenty of course material available to the teachers in the form of very contextual flashcards and videos (ie: breakfast, home, etc.).

The moral of this story is although students feel reassured by formal class materials, notebooks and manuals, these items are not the keys needed to learn a foreign language, but a teacher having fun is, as I discovered over the years. Sure, books are nice things to fall back on, helpful in establishing some context for instance, or giving structure to a class on a rainy day.

In conclusion, we have all heard about role plays, and it is assumed it consists of setting up some situation where students will interact (i.e., going shopping at the supermarket and much more).

It can turn out to be rather dull because students are focused on grammatical

correctness rather than just communicating as best as they can, like they would have to, should they be abroad. So, it is up to the teacher to "animate" and make it a memorable experience, behaving more like an entertainer, even using props if needed. The role play is for the teacher, not so much for the students.

About the Author: Denis Guéret was born and raised in France. He studied fine arts in Ecole des Beaux Arts de Paris. He has worked in theatrical and motion pictures set design; picture and mirror framing; antique ornamentation restoration in France and California. He has worked for many years as a Chef de Cuisine in California and France. He came to Teaching English as a Foreign Language in France, or second language through life's unpredictable twisting pathways 20 some years ago. He is also a Français Langue Étrangère teacher. He currently works in the hospitality industry and as a translator for online material and training seminars. He can be contacted at France

Contacts:

france.contacts.hawaii@gmail.com.

Hawai`i TESOL's Adventure Through Virtual Advocacy

By Chanel Ellison

Prior to Covid-19, TESOL International Association had organized an annual professional development opportunity that trained educators about U.S. federal education issues and policies that support language education for English learners of all ages. At the end of the summit, attendees would implement the training and meet in-person with Congressmen and Representatives from their home state. The event was clearly insightful and effective since TESOL's advocacy work never stopped and the summit lived on in 2021 despite the challenges that another travel-restricted summer posed.

This past June, educators across the United States, including myself, logged on for the 2nd Virtual TESOL Advocacy & Policy Summit. Following the same principles, the first couple of days created a virtual space for attendees to hear from prominent speakers across a number of fields that impact the English language education realm. We sat through virtual panels that brought attention to diversity, global ties, and inclusion. We also listened in on live sessions about the latest advocacy resources up for funding and

made commitments to prepare for the TESOL Day of Action. We even viewed special messages from Senators and State Representatives that praised all of the hard work that has been done for English learners.

On the final day of the summit, we were given the opportunity to contact Hawai`i State Representatives and discuss various issues affecting the TESOL field throughout the islands. Representing the Hawai`i K-12 English education sector, the advocacy points we selected included:

- **Passing the Reaching English Learners Act (H.R. 3779, S. 1963)**, which addresses the nation's critical shortage of English language teachers by providing grants for training and development of future teachers of English learners at colleges and universities across the country.
- **Passing the Supporting Providers of English Language Learners (SPELL) Act (H.R. 3830)**, which increases student loan forgiveness for English language teachers from \$7,500 to \$15,000, for which math and science

teachers currently qualify.

- **Funding Title III of ESSA at \$2 billion for FY 2022**, which provides supplemental funding for the instruction of English learners and has never received full funding, despite inflation and the population growth of eligible students over the years.
- **Funding Title II of ESSA at \$3 billion for FY 2022**, which provides states and school districts with formula funding that ensures educators, principals, and school leaders will receive the professional learning and leadership skills needed to support every student.

Even when State Representatives were unavailable for discussions, like ours, the summit still provided a platform for us to be heard. We emailed our written statements through the TESOL International Advocacy Center, and within a few days after the Summit received productive feedback about our messages. After absorbing so much information in such a short span of time and advocating for the points listed

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Hawaii TESOL's Adventure Through Virtual Advocacy

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above on behalf of Hawai'i educators, this small victory was worth celebrating.

After such an intensive training experience, I've become strongly aware of the impact that advocating can make when presented effectively. Although my group was unable to have an in-person conversation with our representatives, sending multiple testimonials was the second-best way of representing our community's voices and passion for the TESOL field. While our location may be remote, its transient nature and multitude of ethnicities and languages passing through monthly makes Hawai'i TESOL uniquely positioned to advocate for English learners of all ages. My final takeaway from the summit is to remember that these changes don't happen overnight and that it's ok to start small. You can advocate for your local school district, which can in turn spark the mind of another individual to take your efforts even further. It's never too late to start making a difference!

About the Author: Chanel Ellison obtained a BS in Elementary Special Education at the University of South Alabama, and an MA in TESOL at the University of Greenwich. She spent four years teaching English to school-age students in Kuwait, Oman, Vietnam, and Czech Republic. She now

resides in Honolulu, Hawai'i and recently became the MLL teacher at Wai'alaie School. Her scientific interests include music-centered mnemonic

device development for elementary MLLs and MLL gamification.



Language Learning in a Virtual World

By Lin Zhou

Virtual worlds like *Second Life* and *OpenSim* are no longer new concepts to the e-generation, yet the application of the virtual worlds in language learning has not been widely observed. This article discusses the benefits of using virtual worlds in language learning and showcases different pedagogical activities that can be implemented in a virtual world. For those educators or programs who are interested in creating a virtual world, you can also find some useful tips and obtain a general idea with regard to the processes involved in building your own virtual world.

Benefits of Virtual Worlds in Language Learning

Table 1 summarizes the definition of virtual worlds, platforms for virtual world creation, pedagogical activities that can be held in a virtual world, and benefits of virtual worlds.

Virtual worlds refer to the three-dimensional virtual space in which users can create their own

avatars to complete different kinds of actions, such as talking, walking, jumping, flying, riding a shark, playing games, and many more. Popular platforms for virtual world creation include *Second Life*, *OpenSim*, and *Spatial*. I have used virtual worlds in ESL (English as a Second Language) listening and speaking classes as well as reading classes, and engaging students in various communicative activities in a virtual world has shown to be effective in increasing students' willingness to use the target language. For those who are new to virtual worlds, it is important to note that the virtual platforms like *Second Life* and *OpenSim* can be constantly modified and re-built for different purposes. Because of the 3D nature of the virtual world and its versatility, participants in a specifically virtual world can enjoy different experiences based on the design of the world and the affordances of all the artefacts within a world. Different from an online conferencing tool, virtual worlds cater to

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Table 1. Background of Virtual Worlds

Background of Virtual Worlds	
Definition of Virtual Worlds	A virtual world is a three-dimensional space where avatars can interact with each other in different ways.
Popular Virtual World Platforms	Second Life OpenSim Spatial (VR software)
Benefits of Using Virtual Worlds	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Students demonstrated increased willingness to communicate.2. The world can be constantly modified or re-built for different purposes, and students can be part of the co-construction.3. Virtual worlds offer a more diverse online virtual environment than an online conferencing tool.4. Virtual worlds embrace the concept of authenticity in language learning by engaging students in communicative activities.

Language Learning in a Virtual World

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the educators whose teaching philosophy revolves around learning by doing and experiential learning. Last but not least, from the perspective of second language learning, virtual worlds embrace the concept of authenticity through the creation of a communicative environment or need.

Pedagogical Activities in a Virtual World

Pedagogical activities that can be implemented in a virtual world have been listed in Table 2 and organized based on in-class and out-of-class activities, but the activities are not limited to the ones listed above. For example, for those who are into gamification or game creation for language learning, you can design your own game in a virtual world.

A virtual world is an ideal place for group discussions (see Figure. 1) as instructors can divide students into different groups, and each group can occupy a location in the virtual world without being interrupted by other groups. In the meantime, the instructor can walk or fly around to eavesdrop or participate in different group discussions.

As for class presentations and poster presentations, the virtual world emphasizes the individual presence by allowing participants to maneuver around using their avatars. Figure 2 shows a poster presentation in my virtual world. Students gathered at a specific location at the start of the poster presentation, and then they moved to different poster booths/pods based on their interests.



Figure 1. Class Discussion in a Virtual World



Figure 2. Poster Presentation in a Virtual World

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Table 2. Pedagogical Activities in a Virtual World

Pedagogical Activities in a Virtual World

in-class

Group Discussions
Class Presentations
Poster Presentations

out-of-class

One-on-one Individual Conferences
Public Speaking
Digital Storytelling
Conversation Partners
Museum

Language Learning in a Virtual World

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Figure 3. Class Presentation in a Virtual World



Figure 4. Individual Conference with One Student in a Virtual World

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Language Learning in a Virtual World

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Figure 3 shows a comparatively more conventional setting for class presentation. For a class presentation in a virtual world, the presenter can show his or her slides while the class can type their questions either on a collaborative board or voice their questions after the presentation. It emulates an in-person presentation in every way possible and makes it even more interactive if you want to include more affordances like an interactive board.

A virtual world can also be used as an interactive site where you can exhibit various kinds of multimedia resources by building an exhibition hall, a museum, a library or even a cafe. Those who were given access to your virtual world can come to the space to hang out with their friends or work on their projects. You can also hold public speaking events there by building a podium. As a teacher, you can also build yourself a fancy office and conduct individual conferences in your own virtual world as shown in Figure 4.

How to create a virtual world?

Most of the commercial platforms on the market do not require you to have coding skills in order to build a virtual world. In fact, the most popular virtual world platform Second Life and OpenSim have readily available artifacts that you can make use of to create your own virtual world. Moreover, many educators and programs would strategically involve students in the process of building a virtual world. The co-construction not only produces countless communicative opportunities, but it also involves students in various kinds of communicative actions that situate language use in authentic projects.

Table 3 delineates the first main steps needed in creating your own unique virtual world. Creating a virtual world would require expertise, time and budget, and the very first step is to choose a platform for creation based on the resources available. When you have a platform, you need to identify the objective of your virtual world and who the virtual world is for. For

example, is the virtual world created for a writing center in which writing tutors can have individual consultation with students? Or is the virtual world created for a required core class that will be taught every semester? Or is the virtual world created so that students within the program can have a virtual social space? This question is essential as it is also closely related to the theme of your virtual world. For instance, if the virtual world is created for regular student conferences, maybe you want to create a comparatively formal theme. The first three steps are the most important ones as once you have a clear direction and idea of what your virtual world is like, the creation of the virtual world such as looking for relevant artefacts and drawing a 3D blueprint for your construction becomes seamless. One final note is that within your virtual world, you might want to have “permanent” structures which represent the main objective of your virtual world and also “temporary” structures that you can instantly install when you need. For instance, if you have a group of visitors coming into your world, and you want to have a spontaneous in-world meeting, then you can drag a meeting pod to wherever you stand. Or when you are meeting a student and you want to draw something on a whiteboard, you can pull out an interactive whiteboard on the spot.

In summary, virtual reality has great potential for educational innovation, especially language learning. Educators, students and programs can work closely together in a virtual world to co-construct, co-develop, co-learn and have fun as a community. In addition, different virtual worlds with similar objectives can also collaborate on different projects by becoming neighbors and sharing artefacts.

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Language Learning in a Virtual World

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Table 3. Steps to Creating a Virtual World

Steps to Creating a Virtual World	
Step 1	Choose a platform for creation.
Step 2	Identify the purpose of your virtual world.
Step 3	Define a theme for your virtual world.
Step 4	Look for relevant artifacts for creation.
Step 5	Create a 3D blueprint for your construction.
Step 6	Build your “permanent” structures and “temporary” structures.

About the Author: Lin Zhou has PhD (Second Language Studies) from the University of Hawai`i.

Lin Zhou is an assistant teaching professor in the NU Global program of Northeastern University (Boston).

An expert in pedagogical game design and innovative course design, Dr. Zhou promotes and practices teaching that revolves around experiential learning, project-based instruction and game-supported pedagogies using new online technologies. A frequent speaker at international conferences, she has presented papers on topics including Learning Chinese in Chinatown with an Augmented Reality Mobile Game, Translanguaging in Pedagogical Drama

Gaming, and An Ecological Approach to an Online Second Language Writing Course.

Dr. Zhou has taught in the Department of Second Language Studies and the English Language Institute at the University of Hawai`i at Mānoa. Her research focuses on game and course design to empower educators and foster differentiated instruction. For her PhD dissertation, she created a game-supported critical writing course for second-language learners in which students could work with peers and game characters to explore socio-political issues.

Dr. Zhou lives in the greater Boston area and teaches in Boston and online.





Ukrainian Connections

TESOL Ukraine Spotlight

By Sally La Luzerne-Oi



A Bit of History about the Partnership

In 2000, Hawai`i TESOL President at that time, Donna Prather, wrote an article for *The Word* relaying a request from the TESOL International Association suggesting that U.S. affiliates consider forming partnerships with international affiliates. She asked if any HI TESOL members had a connection with an international one. Sally La Luzerne-Oi had spent the 1995-96 academic year as a Fulbright Scholar in Ukraine precisely at the time that Ukrainian teachers of English were working to form an official affiliate of TESOL which became a reality on October 31 1996. She shared this story in response to Donna's article, and interest in collaboration grew as result. After some hard work over the next few years, the partnership became official at the TESOL 2002 Convention in Salt Lake City

when representatives from TESOL Ukraine and Hawai`i TESOL both signed a formal Partnership Agreement and celebrated over dinner. Since then, the members of both affiliates have connected in a number of ways, including meeting at the annual International TESOL Convention. Watch for stories about present-day TESOL members and events in future issues of *The Word*.

Recent News from TESOL Ukraine

- In June TESOL-Ukraine continued the tradition of National Teacher Development Summer Institutes. These institutes titled "CLIL Methodology in Secondary Education: Challenges and Implementation" provided training on teaching literature and math in

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TESOL Ukraine Spotlight

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English.

- In July Dr. Robert Nelli delivered webinars on “Social Emotional Learning” to members of TESOL Ukraine.
- To wind up the summer break, sessions on “Classroom Management and Lesson Planning” were given in August.

For more information about TESOL Ukraine and past issues of its newsletter, visit the TESOL Ukraine website <http://www.tesol-ukraine.com/> You might also want to like TESOL Ukraine on Facebook.

Happy Independence Day!

Ukraine celebrated 30 years of independence on August 24.



TESOL Ukraine Member Profile

For the first column of the 2021-2022 academic year, we are profiling a long time member of TESOL Ukraine and the TESOL Ukraine Executive Committee, Dr. Liliia Kuznetsova. Liliia is a university professor in the architecturally lovely city of Lviv. Not only is she a very active member of TESOL Ukraine, but she has also participated in international projects and conferences. Hawai'i TESOL members who attended the TESOL Conventions in 2004 or 2008 might have met her there.

Liliia Kuznetsova



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TESOL Ukraine Spotlight

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Name: Liliia Kuznetsova

Institution: Ivan Franko National University of Lviv

Please tell us about your institution.

Ivan Franko National University of Lviv is a classical higher educational establishment with powerful scientific schools, old traditions and modern innovation approaches. Its principal aim is to provide high educational and scientific standards, as well as the cultural and social needs of a person, the society and the state in the process of training highly qualified specialists. The University activity is formed on the grounds of preserving Ukrainian culture and traditions, developing national consciousness and identity. Our graduates hold bachelor and magistrates degrees.

LNU, named after Ivan Franko, is situated in West Ukraine. It was founded in 1661. Nowadays, it consists of 19 departments, 3 colleges, and numerous research centers, laboratories, and a Scientific Library. Currently 22,111 students and 671 postgraduate students are studying at LNU.

What is your position at this institution?

I have a PhD, and am an Associate Professor in the Foreign Languages Department for Humanities. I am teaching General English, Academic English, and ESP for students in the Law Department.

During the first two years of study, we teach General English, preparing students to reach the B2 level, preparing them for the Cambridge First Certificate Test. Besides that, we give them a basic knowledge of Legal English. They try to read and translate basic legal texts, and learn legal vocabulary. The best students write and maintain their coursework in English. We encourage them to participate in different student conferences in Ukraine and abroad.

Students of the 3rd and 4th years take English as an optional subject and are dealing with Legal English and Academic English. We also consult

with them on their English test for the Magistrate Course. They write their course papers both in English and Ukrainian.

Please tell us something about the city where your institution is located.

A city with a lively history, Lviv (also spelled L'viv) in Ukraine's west was founded in the 13th century and has changed flags many times in the years since, having been part of Poland, Austria-Hungary and the Soviet empire. The city's well-preserved historic center is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and has attractions like the Market Square (Ploshcha Rynok). The tower at the town hall provides a great city view. The Lviv Opera House is dazzling and hosts world-class performances.

What are your professional interests?

I have a wide range of interests in teaching English: ESP, CLIL, EMI methodology, text discourse analyses, text linguistics, media literature, and critical thinking.

What are your personal interests?

I am always looking to participate in different projects to upgrade my knowledge of the English language, teaching skills and cultural awareness. I have been involved in managing and participating in different projects which deal with sustainable education (experienced Netherlands-Ukrainian project on sustainable education, Estonian-Ukrainian (Lviv schools and kindergartens in Frankivskii region) projects on sustainable education in kindergartens and primary schools.

I try to keep a healthy lifestyle. My special interest is the programme Fitness Curves. I also like reading fiction (detective stories) and watching movies (dealing with psychological issues).

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TESOL Ukraine Spotlight

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How long have you been a member of TESOL Ukraine?

I have been with TESOL-Ukraine from the very beginning (1995). I was elected Treasurer of TESOL-Ukraine several times (2001-2004), (2011-2017). I am the TESOL-Ukraine Treasurer now (2017- till now). I participated in all TESOL-Ukraine Conventions and events of our organization.

What else would you like to add about yourself or your work?

I also participated in the TESOL International Convention in Long Beach (2004) and presented at the TESOL International Convention in New York (2008).

Can you suggest a website where Hawaii TESOL readers can learn more about you, your institution, or your region?

You can find more information here:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Lviv

<https://lnu.edu.ua/en/>

<https://uk.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%9B%D1%8C%D0%B2%D1%96%D0%B2>

<https://lnu.edu.ua/360-kafedra-inozemnykh-mov-dlia-humanitarnykh-fakultetiv/>

<https://lnu.edu.ua/about/university-today-and-tomorrow/documents/education-programs/>





News from Abroad



Teach and Reflect!

By Samir Omara

Teacher professional development is very important to support the teaching and learning processes. To help develop teaching and learning, language teachers should go on teaching as a reflective practice. Gnawali (2008) thinks that reflection helps teachers to “understand themselves, their practices and their learners” (p. 69). As teachers deliver face-to-face, blended and/or online teaching, they should keep reflecting on and developing their practice. Reflective teachers should be open-minded, and their reflection should help link theory and practice. Teacher reflection is beneficial for teachers and students although there are some misconceptions. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused lots of educational changes and pedagogical challenges, so teacher reflection helps to develop more solutions for the emerging challenges. There are different approaches to teacher reflection.

Reflection is a key requirement for teacher professional development. It is the process that helps language teachers to question their everyday practice. Teachers work individually and in communities of practice to check what went well and what would be better in case it is

conducted again. Reflection helps teachers to develop their performance through learning from their professional practices. It goes beyond checking previous practices into future improvements. It is beneficial for both pre-service and in-service language teachers. Bailey (1997) thinks that “reflective teaching is extremely valuable as a stance, a state of mind, a healthy, questioning attitude toward the practice of our profession” (p. 15).

Teacher reflection should be deliberate, purposeful, structured, and link theory to practice. Teachers should practice reflection consciously and purposefully; they reflect because they need to develop both teaching and learning. Through reflection, teachers should link theory and practice by checking lesson plans and practices in a structured approach. They should reflect on teaching in order to develop students’ learning. They should reflect to help change and develop teaching, learning and school practices.

There are some principles of reflective practice. Reflective practice is evidence-based: when teachers reflect on their practices, they use evidence to develop practical insights. It involves dialogue: teachers communicate with peers to

give, get and reflect on constructive, developmental and non-judgmental feedback. It explores beliefs and practices: teachers’ beliefs impact their teaching practices; therefore, it is beneficial to explore such beliefs and their impact on practices. It is a way of life: it helps teachers, educators and professionals to get used to reflection as a part of their personal and professional behaviors and development.

Reflective teachers should be open-minded, responsible and wholehearted. To be open-minded, teachers should have a desire to get, reflect on and act upon different feedback and insights from others including students and peers. They should pay attention to different possibilities and experiences. They should accept the possibility of errors. To be responsible, teachers should be fully aware of the possible consequences of their actions and practices in classrooms and schools. Therefore, they should plan, reflect on and act upon their teaching continuously. To be wholehearted, they should help to develop teaching, learning and professional development. To develop open-mindedness and responsibility is to develop wholeheartedness.

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Teach and Reflect!

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According to Bartlett (1990), the reflective cycle consists of five steps. They are “mapping, informing, contesting, appraising and acting” (p. 209). At the mapping step, teachers observe their own teaching. They collect different pieces of evidence about their teaching by using different techniques. They answer the question, “What do we do as teachers?”. At the informing step, they look for the meaning behind teaching plans they have developed in the previous step by sharing their plans with peers. They answer the question, “What is the meaning of our teaching?”. At the contesting step, they try to find underlying reasons for their theory and practice. They answer the question, “How did we come this way?”. At the appraising step, they continue to find alternative teaching methods. They answer the question, “How might we teach differently?”. At the acting step, they act according to the reflective insights they have developed throughout the reflective cycle steps. They answer the question, “What and how shall we teach?”. They should continue on this cycle to maintain reflective practice,



teaching improvement and sustainable professional development.

There are some misconceptions on teacher reflection. Some teachers think that reflection takes too much time. However, they can do reflection on action during teaching. Some teachers think that reflection focus is on

teachers only. However, reflection helps to develop teaching, learning and teacher professional development as well. Some teachers think that reflection is a negative practice or process. However, reflection is a cyclical process that helps to have positive and developmental impact on teachers and students. Some teachers think that reflection is an individual process. However. There are different collaborative approaches and techniques for reflection.

Reflective practice is beneficial for teachers,

students, educational leaders and supervisors. It helps to develop confident teachers who keep reflecting on and developing their practices. It helps to make sure teachers are responsible for themselves and their students as well throughout teaching and learning processes. It helps to encourage innovation as

reflective teachers find, develop and implement innovative solutions for different challenges. It helps to encourage engagement of teachers and communities of practice using different individual and collaborative reflective practice approaches and techniques. These approaches and techniques help teachers to get, give, share, reflect on and act upon feedback.

There are different approaches for teacher reflection. Reflection in action is teacher reflection during teaching. It happens during the lesson, so it helps to change practice at the time of teaching. Reflection on action is teacher reflection after teaching. It happens after the lesson, so it helps to develop practice for the future. There

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Teach and Reflect!

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are different techniques for teachers to reflect on their teaching. They are shared planning, peer observation, self-reports, autobiographies, journal writing, collaborative diary and recording lessons.

- Shared planning helps teachers to reflect on teaching and learning by getting support from peers to plan lessons together.
- Peer observation helps teachers to go through each other's teaching. Therefore, they get critical reflection on their teaching.
- Self-reports help teachers to reflect on teaching by completing inventories or checklists that highlight their teaching practices during lessons.
- Autobiographies help teachers to reflect on teaching by keeping reflective and narrative records of their teaching professional experiences and progress. They help teachers to track the most and least effective aspects and possible future modifications of teaching.
- Journal writing helps teachers to reflect on teaching and professional development by keeping regular accounts of learning, teaching and professional development experiences. It helps teachers to reflect, share and check back from time to time to see how different experiences, events,

interactions and sessions develop personal professional development. Journals can be written or virtual.

- Recording lessons helps teachers to reflect on teaching and professional development by keeping audio or video recording of different lessons. Audio or video recordings help to record the moment-to-moment teaching processes as many things happen simultaneously in the classroom.
- Critical analysis helps teachers to reflect on teaching and learning by answering and reflecting on specific teaching situations or practices. Teachers analyze a situation or practice in order to develop future performance.

Some teachers think that reflection is a time-consuming practice. However, it is a key for language teaching and learning improvement and teacher professional development. To teach and reflect is to link both theory and practice and to develop teachers who are open-minded, responsible and wholehearted.

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About the Author: Samir Omara has been an English language teacher and teacher trainer for the Ministry of Education and Technical Education in Egypt since 1998. He has received diplomas of education, special education, and educational leadership. He studied TEFL at the University of Exeter and Management & Leadership Development at the University of Westminster, UK. He has presented at ILACE, NileTESOL, IPAWL, TESOL and BETT. He has been a RELO Cairo mentor, AE E-Teacher alumnus, MOOC alumni facilitator, IVLP alumnus, AUC Professional Certified Trainer, PAT and AMIDEAST teacher trainer. He received the UK Alumni Professional Achievement Award. He was the Head of Professional Development for Teachers First Egypt from 2016 to 2020. He is NileTESOL President, 2021.

Email Address

samir.omara76@yahoo.com



Up Coming Events:

**October, 2021:
Fall Social**

**November, 2021:
Practical Workshop**

**February, 2022
Annual Conference**

**May, 2022
Language Experience**