

An Introduction to English Language Teaching

Second Year 2020-2021

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First Semester

Week 1:

Lecture 1:

The Self-developed Language Teacher



Course Objectives

The major purpose of this course is providing you with ways to work on the development of your teaching and classroom practices. It offers ways that you, as a prospective EFL or ESL teacher, can develop your teaching through a process of exploration.

This course also provides discussion on the different English teaching settings around the world and teaching issues associated within them. It also provides discussions, examples, and illustrations of how EFL/ESL can be taught as interaction among people; how classrooms can be managed; how teachers and students can make use of authentic teaching materials, media, and technology; and the significance of culture for both students and teachers.

In addition, this course shows how EFL/ESL teachers teach students to comprehend spoken English, to converse in English, to read for meaning, and to process writing.



Introduction

Teachers in general need to reflect on their teaching. Effective teachers are first to admit that no matter how good a lesson is, their practice can always be improved. Teacher reflection is important because it's a process that helps teachers to collect, record, and analyze everything that happened in the lesson. It allows teachers to move from just experiencing, into understanding. If they don't question themselves about what their experiences mean and think actively about them, research has shown that they won't make any changes and therefore improve.

When teachers collect information regarding activities in their classrooms and take the time to analyze them from a distance, they can identify more than just what worked and what didn't. They will be able to look at the underlying principles and beliefs that define the way that they work. This kind of self-awareness is a powerful ally for a teacher, especially when so much of what and how they teach can change in the moment.



The Effect of Reflective Teaching

Encouraging reflective practice in schools, not only benefits individual teachers but the school as a whole. Developing a culture of reflective practice improves schools by creating a strong foundation for continuously improving teaching and learning. It sends the message that learning is important for both students and adults, and that everyone is committed to supporting it. It creates an environment of collaboration as teachers question and adapt both their own practice and that of their colleagues. Teachers can team-up, drawing on expertise and offer each other support. This develops best practices across the school, resulting in a more productive working environment.



The Benefits of Being a Reflective Teacher

1. Professional growth

Firstly and most importantly, reflective practice is the key to improvement. If teachers don't think about, analyze and evaluate their professional practice they cannot improve. Also once teachers start to take ownership of their CPD in this way, their confidence grows.

2. Keeping up-to-date and innovative

Just as you wouldn't want to be operated on by a surgeon who wasn't familiar with the latest techniques, we probably won't want to be taught by someone who doesn't know their subject or the best ways of teaching and learning. Reflective practice allows teachers to create and experiment with new ideas and approaches to gain maximum success.



The Benefits of Being a Reflective Teacher

3. Understanding learners

Reflective practice encourages teachers to understand their learners and their abilities and needs. Reflection helps teachers to put themselves in their students' shoes, which is something many skilled teachers do. Stephen Brookfield believes that: 'Of all the pedagogic tasks teachers face, getting inside students heads is one of the trickiest. It is also the most crucial' (Brookfield, 1995).

4. Developing reflective learners

Reflective teachers are more likely to develop reflective learners. If teachers practice reflection they can more effectively encourage learners to reflect on, analyse, evaluate and improve their own learning. These are key skills in developing them to become independent learners.



Central Factors to Teacher Self-development

1. No doubt that development takes time. It takes time to observe communication in EFL classrooms and to visit other teachers' classes, as well as to write in a journal and to talk to others about teaching. The time factor is built into the teacher education program. Teachers in in-service programs or those working independently on their development have less time. Nonetheless, teachers who believe that development is important need to make a commitment to devote time to their development.
2. Development requires a lasting commitment. Teaching development is not something to do only in a teacher education program or at the beginning of a teaching career. Rather, even the most experienced teacher can learn new things about teaching, and development is enhanced when the teacher makes a commitment to ongoing development.



Central Factors to Teacher Self-development

3. Development is enhanced through problem solving. When teachers recognize problems and work at solving them, they can discover new ways to teach and discover more about their role as a teacher.

4. Development is also enhanced through exploration for exploration's sake. Teachers can, indeed, discover much by exploring simply to explore, not just to solve a problem. Such exploration can be based on pure interest, for example, Trying an approach that is the opposite of one you love simply to see what occurs, or trying a new approach/technique simply because it sounds interesting.

5. Development is enhanced by paying attention to and reviewing the basics of EFL/ESL teaching. Although Kathy's introduction to the basics began during her Peace Corps training, she has continued to study ways to create opportunities for students to interact in English; ways to manage classroom behavior; and materials and media used to teach EFL.



Central Factors to Teacher Self-development

6. Development is enhanced by searching out opportunities to develop. It turns out that Kathy talks with other teachers about teaching; she reads about teaching; she attends teaching seminars and workshops; and she participates in other activities that give her chances to reflect on her teaching and see new teaching possibilities.

7. Self-development of teaching beliefs and practices requires the cooperation of others. It takes others who are willing to observe us, listen to us, and talk with us about our teaching. We need administrators, students, other teachers, and friends to help us succeed with our development. Without their cooperation, self-development is very difficult as there is neither any source for feedback nor any stimulus for ideas.

