

Sabancı  
Universitesi



**PATHWAYS THAT INSPIRE US**

**Proceedings of the  
Sabancı University**

**School of Languages International Conference  
4th – 5th May 2018**

# **PATHWAYS THAT INSPIRE US**

## **Proceedings of the Sabancı University**

### **School of Languages International Conference 4th – 5th May 2018**

Edited by

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# PATHWAYS THAT INSPIRE US

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# PATHWAYS THAT INSPIRE US

## FOREWORD

### Sabancı University School of Languages International Conference: Pathways that Inspire Us

English language teachers and English language learners were gathered together at the Sabancı University campus, to share their research and teaching ideas at our International Education Conference entitled “Pathways that Inspire Us”, which was held on 4 and 5 May 2018. The Conference brought together experts from multiple disciplines to discuss how to sustain continuous societal development by optimizing critical thinking skills in their professional communication. The conference theme emphasised the significant role of research in academic learning and instruction as well as teacher reflection and effective exchange between professionals. The knowledge base and abilities and the data gathered through research that are required for our societies to progress have to be redefined to adapt to the modern world which is fast-moving and complex. Participants shared their up-to date data in order to reflect their hard core research studies related to teacher development through teacher exchange.

Sabancı University School of Languages welcomed distinguished participants to an inspiring event that brought together learners and educators in the field of English language education to share, discuss, reflect on and develop their ideas. This conference provided an opportunity to explore and reflect on who we have become as teachers and learners, the experiences that have shaped and changed us, and the transformations that we have undergone along our career paths. This conference aimed at bringing together practitioners, policy makers and researchers to encourage the exchange of findings, ideas and practices through a variety of presentations, such as plenary speakers, invited speakers, workshops, learner presentations and paper sessions. There were presentations related to changing pedagogies, lifelong learning, new technologies, learner feedback and learner autonomy, personal and professional development as well as learning from success and failure, curriculum development, assessment and critical thinking.

We would like to thank to our plenary speakers who are not only lecturers and researchers but also writers in the field of linguistics: Deniz Kurtoğlu Eken, Lawrence Norman Berlin, Bena Gül Peker, Paul Kei Matsuda, and Tony Humphreys. Our invited speakers deserve a big thank you: Tijen Akşit, Kenan Dikilitaş, Beril Ayman Yücel, İsmail Hakkı Erten, and Bahar Gün. Our thanks also go to our conference sponsors Sabancı Vakfı, the American Embassy, Cultural Affairs Regional ELO, Cambridge University Press, GLOBED, Oxford University Press, Pearson Educational, and IDP Educational Testing Services (ETS) for their collaboration and contribution in realizing this significant event.

# PATHWAYS THAT INSPIRE US

This journey, however, would not have been possible without the efforts, collaboration and contributions of all those who have had an important role in making this conference a unique experience for everyone involved. We are especially grateful to our Director Jacqueline Einer, Projects, Development & Research Coordinator Deniz Kurtoğlu Eken, all administrative and academic staff of the School of Languages, the wider Sabancı University community and also our learners who performed, presented and supported us in this endeavour. A big thank you to all our delegates who came together in order to provide everyone with an opportunity to share, reflect and learn from each other. We would very much like to thank our dearest colleagues who have come all the way from all around Turkey, Europe, Asia, America and Africa. We would now like to invite you to the third phase of our Pathways that Inspire Us journey with this publication. The following is a collection of selected papers, summaries and research papers by those delegates who chose to contribute to this publication.

The Conference Committee,

Meral Güçeri, Berna Akpınar Arslan, Jonathan Smith, Görkem Satak, Nurdan Çoksezen Metel, Deniz Çiçekoğlu Daryavuz, Merve Karabulut Baykan



# PATHWAYS THAT INSPIRE US



## Research As Inspiration:

**A Genuine Interest to  
Explore with Self and  
with Others**

Plenary by  
Deniz Kurtoğlu Eken, Ph. D.

Plenary : <https://youtu.be/QPXOFOLK1R8>  
Interview : <https://youtu.be/8yhzAGNVB6s>



*Reflections on the plenary by **Metin Esen**, Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University*

### The Mindset of *Circare*

Having listened to Dr. Kurtoğlu Eken's plenary, I wanted to reflect on some of the concepts she kindly presented in her session in terms of the ideas they brought to my mind.

Research has always been one of the fundamental elements of positive sciences, and without its presence, our cumulative knowledge would not be where it stands at the present. We the human beings are born with the instinct of curiosity - an unquenchable thirst to know what lies beyond. To find answers to our never-ending questions, we first used myths to explain certain phenomena. Once superstition was not an adequate explanation, we started to question things and what was kindled by philosophy travelled all the way up until today's modern physics. Along this journey, research has served as a loyal companion that worked like a lever to lift the heavy stones for us to see what is beneath.

Dictionaries describe the verb *research* as 'to study a subject in detail, especially in order to discover new information or reach a new understanding' (Research, n.d.). Sometimes, we are so determined to prove or negate a hypothesis that we only focus on the 'new', 'discover', and 'reach' aspects, leaving the 'study' aspect totally aside and stray from what we actually seek. This is the point where Dr. Kurtoğlu Eken helped me gain a new understanding of the word *research* by drawing attention to the root of the verb *seek*, which is *circare* in Latin. This Latin word means 'to go around' or 'to wander' (Wadsworth, 2011) suggesting a continuous journey rather than a destination or an end result. I believe this to be a more favourable mindset in terms of research, because if researchers set out to discover something or to prove/negate an idea, they usually develop certain 'assumptions' that bring along bias and a limited perspective. On the other hand, when they begin their inquiries with curiosity and open-mindedness, two key words emphasized by Dr. Kurtoğlu Eken, they are certainly inspired by what they encounter (not discover) and their inspiration motivates them to carry out more research. I think his bilateral cycle both helps researchers avoid assumptions and furthers the study away from the delusion of reaching a conclusion. As the famous physicist Albert Einstein quotes: 'If we knew what it was we were doing, it would not be called research, would it?'

The plenary also convinced me that this mindset certainly values all research processes no matter how large or small the scope is. When we visualise research, we usually think of a number of well-constructed research questions to be asked about a large sample group as a representative of the target population. We aim to collect some qualitative and quantitative data to base our interpretations and judgements on.

However, what we actually need is to determine a topic that we are curious about and that will contribute to the teaching and learning process, which is all about ‘staying relevant’ as Max Lukominskyi (2017) puts it in the following quotation, shared by Dr. Kurtoğlu Eken:

Everyone wants to be everywhere and do everything at the very same time ... looks more like an extrinsic requirement. ... the biggest challenge of today’s life is simple: you need to stay relevant. It is the unique way to be demanded by the modern society. It’s impossible to stay relevant at several spheres at the same time. ... Treat your life like a marathon. Not a sprint. ... Otherwise, you are likely to end up getting your attention scattered, thereby investing your time in things that don’t add any value but only create the illusion of progress.

With this mindset, anything can be research material as long as the researcher is selective and relevant to the topic, prioritising the genuine learning environment in the natural setting of the classroom. When considered from this point of view, and as was shared in the plenary session, we can see that a great deal of classroom-related output makes excellent tools worth incorporating into classroom research. If analysed deeply, student satisfaction surveys carried out at the end of each semester can mean much more than an official requirement to be fulfilled in the student information system. Similarly, every piece of writing produced by learners is a precious raw material that can be turned into precious gems via corpus analysis. Today, such a task is simple to all teachers as websites such as *laurenceanthony.net* provide easy-to-use tools enabling various kinds of document and corpus analysis. Last but not least, all types of observations and commentaries written at the end of observations could tell us more than we are actually looking for about the learning and teaching process.

Some studies carried out with this mindset at the School of Languages, Sabancı University, shared with us during the plenary, provide nice examples of research as inspiration and research in the natural classroom setting without changing any aspect for the sake of discovery. In order to explore school ethos and inquire about the perceived school culture in their minds, students were asked a number of open ended questions. One of the questions Dr. Kurtoğlu Eken referred to was, *‘If the SL school culture were a colour/a season/a song etc., what would it be? Please explain briefly.’* Here is a student answer that speaks for itself:

It would be white. Teachers and students adding the colours to it. (SL student)

To me, the simplicity and plainness of the question is overwhelmed by the greatness of the answer as there is no more direct way to dignify the individuality of teaching and learning. What post-method pedagogy defines as being ‘sensitive to a particular group of teachers teaching a particular group of learners pursuing a particular set of goals within a particular institutional context embedded in a particular sociocultural milieu’ (Kumaravadivelu, 2001, p. 538) is all present within this very sentence. It is doubtful if another research tool could yield an outcome more relevant than the one given with the colour metaphor.

One other open-ended question asked further about the school culture: *‘How would you define the SL culture? Could you please share words or sentences that best describe your thoughts and feelings?’*

A paragraph written by one of the SL students definitely provides more than mere thoughts and feelings:

I think SL is probably the most sophisticated system of English learning in Turkey. It has variety of programs and way of learning as well as somewhat new methods. These are good parts of it. Because if a student works properly, s/he can learn enough. English for the faculty or for the whole life. However, it has some unuseful and/or somewhat non-sense parts as well. Most homeworks are given with innocent good purposes but they don't work. ... Also for pupils, ... there must have been some extra studies for word-by-word translations... It is a cliché but quite important to master a foreign language, you need to master your main language first ... (SL student).

In an era when the necessity and an efficacy of homework is open to vehement debate, this student clearly reflects the learner point of view: no matter how ‘innocent’ or well-intentioned the reason behind assigning homework is, the result is more often extra burden on the shoulders of learners rather than individual free practice or revision. What is more, the student draws attention to the mastery of L1 if one is to learn a foreign language. This is a self-justifying reaction to approaches such as Communicative Language Teaching that disapprove the use of mother tongue in language learning.

It is also possible to carry out similar research with teachers; one conducted with the SL teachers asked them to complete the sentence *‘If my teaching were one of the four elements (air, water, fire, earth), it would be ... because ...’* to reveal their teaching philosophies. Dr Kurtoğlu Eken shared some of the teacher answers with the audience in the plenary, and here is what one of the teachers who chose water stated:

I have the power to redirect the flow moment to moment depending on how the lesson is unfolding from an interactional standpoint. The path is less important than arriving at the destination (i.e., the learning target) (SL teacher, Kassandra Robertson).

This teacher emphasizes the importance of achieving the objectives in the lesson plan rather than designing a flawless, moment-by-moment lesson plan. Indeed, it is crucial to have a lesson plan and stick to this plan, but classroom dynamics are always different from what teachers anticipate with pen and paper in front of them. This clash between theory and practice urges the teachers to keep a close eye on what is going on, and adapt accordingly to pragmatically ‘redirect the flow’ to enhance learning. Another teacher who opted for fire quoted:

I want to burn away the rote-learning, passive and fearful high school student, and pull out an independent, responsible, and curious adult learner from the ashes (SL teacher).



The phoenix mentioned above is the exact description of an autonomous learner. In the context of this teacher, the students come to the preparatory school with the limiting personality traits of high school, and the teachers deem these traits barriers to autonomous learning. No research question, no well-constructed survey, no hypothesis could result in such an inspiring description of learner autonomy.

All in all, the plenary guided me to understand that we always need to support our teaching with classroom research, and the more classroom research we carry out, the more inspired we will become to seek answers. It is essential to keep in mind that research is not big-business with thousands of participants and pages of statistics; as long as we stay relevant and sustain curiosity, everything is fuel for research. The mindset of *circare*, which Deniz Kurtoğlu Eken nicely puts into words, shall always remind us that there is no best way or best time to carry out research, but only best goals and best tools without leading assumptions.

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## PATHWAYS THAT INSPIRE US



**Be A Phoenix:**

**Learning from Failure**

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### Introduction

On a regular basis, we tell our students that learning is a process. Reflecting back on our own paths toward becoming language teachers. However, we need to remind ourselves that our learning process may not have always been perfect. Indeed, in my own journey, I have had experiences that can only be considered failures; but as any path toward success is fraught with setbacks, we can look at those experiences as opportunities and, like the proverbial phoenix, we can rise above them to become an even better version of the teacher we always wanted to be.

### Reflections

#### Applying Professional Knowledge

The first reflection comes from an experience that occurred while working on my doctorate and teaching in my university's Intensive English Program. It can be classified under the pedagogical function and the ability to meet student needs and expectations by applying that professional knowledge. At the beginning of the term, I encountered a very difficult case. Though the student had been placed into the bridge class through testing, he had previously been failed by other teachers in the program. Reviewing the first examples of the student's writing, I couldn't believe he had been placed into an advanced class; his writing was completely illegible. There seemed to be no awareness of English writing conventions. When I asked him about his work, he didn't know what the problem was. He was aware that other teachers had commented negatively on his writing, but he didn't know what the problem was since they kept moving him forward (Freeman & Freeman, 1994). Even giving him multiple chances to do rewrites didn't make any difference. I had to find a different way of working with him if I was going to help at all.

Trying to recall all the readings, lectures, and discussions in my teacher preparation and linguistic classes, I came up with the idea to put aside my expectations of writing conventions and simply try to read the essay phonetically. I was amazed! The ideas were clear and coherent, well-organized, and demonstrated an advanced knowledge of writing. Even with this discovery, I still needed advice on how to help the student with the English language conventions.

I approached one of the senior teachers, first to confirm my assessment and then to ask for advice. I read the paper to her without showing her the text. After hearing the whole essay, she said she could easily see the student in a university-level English composition class. Then I showed her the written essay. She was astounded, but she stood by her original assessment. She gave me several suggestions for working with the student. By the end of the term, he was ready to enter the university with a new understanding of how to improve his writing. Using our pooled linguistic and pedagogical knowledge, we were able to diagnose the student's language barriers and help him advance.



### Shifting to a Learner-Centered Approach

The second experience occurred when studying for my M.A. and teaching in a state college Intensive English Program to a group of Japanese L1 students. I noticed throughout the term that the students were not engaged. They were bored with the material—a grammar class which followed a very structural syllabus—and they didn't like my way of presenting it. At the end of the term, the director, who had been made aware of the students' discontent, very diplomatically suggested that she could understand if I didn't want to return in the following semester. While the shock of being fired gave me pause, the thing that struck me more was that I had failed my students. I hadn't found a way to make connections with them within the societal function of the classroom. I asked the director for another chance to come back and try to redeem myself by making the classes more engaging and student-centered (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992). She was very pleased to see that I had realized that I was the problem and that I was willing to actually learn from my own mistakes. She invited me to come back.

The next semester, I was assigned a new class with the same students. The return wasn't easy. The only students who showed up to class were new arrivals; the continuing students were still wary of repeating of the same negative experience with me. But I worked hard to turn the situation around. I had completely revamped my way of teaching, prepared materials for students to choose from, and incorporated technology to make the class more interesting and meaningful for them. The new students started asking their classmates why they weren't coming to class, recounting all that we were doing which they found interesting and helpful for them. They also mentioned that the teacher, me, had a real interest in their learning process. Slowly, the others started returning to class. The class turned out to be a success and I had learned a huge lesson about humility and good teaching by connecting the class to student needs and interests.

### Individual Differences

The third reflection comes from my first teaching experience. Though this job started before I had ever considered doing a teacher training program at university, it was the experience that ultimately made me want to pursue an advanced degree and become a better teacher and a TESOL professional.

I was to teach at a community college. The first semester was magical. I didn't know what I was doing, but I followed the syllabus to the letter and I tried all kinds of things to explain different language points to these beginner students. The class met for 16 hours per week and it had its ups and downs, but I couldn't have fallen more deeply for my new profession. I could see the students advancing before my eyes; they had enough faith in me that I was trying my best and they gave me the chance to experiment. By the end of the term, I felt more confident with a *bag of tricks* that seemed to work. I eagerly awaited the start of the next semester; I felt ready.

Then came the real lesson in teaching: the *tricks* that I had picked up along the way weren't necessarily going to work with the new group of students. In other words, you shouldn't imagine that you can teach everyone in the same way. I began to understand that learners are individuals with different learning styles, language orientations, and learner preferences (Oxford, 1993; Schumann, 1978). I needed to develop a differentiated approach, leaving myself open to listen to the feedback—both expressed and silent—from my students and to remain open enough to modify my plan and adjust to those differences. In other words, I had to find a balance within the environmental function that connects the classroom to the external world where the students will be using the language.

### The Three Functions: Pedagogical, Societal, Environmental

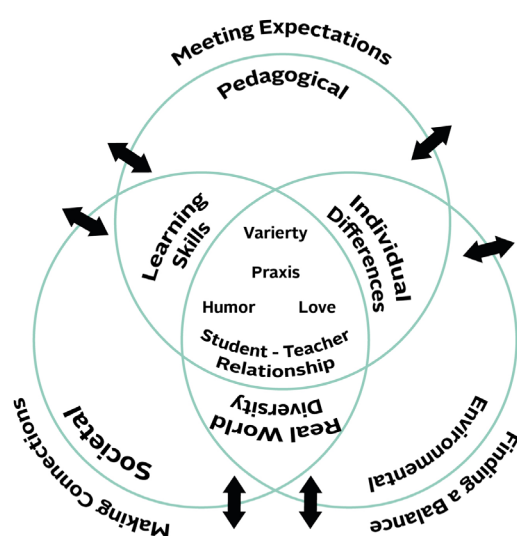
Effective language teaching incorporates the three functions in a variety of ways. Looking at the pedagogical function, we recognize that students and teachers have different beliefs about language and learning. While students' beliefs are informed by past learning experiences, teachers incorporate their multiple spheres of belief about language learning, language teaching, the instructional program, and the student-teacher relationship (Chaudron, 1988). They incorporate relevant research and practice from their teacher education programs to develop effective praxis. Part of this knowledge includes awareness of differences between students L1 and the target language, as well as the need to differentiate instruction to meet student differences, as seen in the first reflection.

The second reflection highlights the societal function, which translates effective language instruction through a student-centered approach and the connections made between the classroom and the outside world. This function underscores the need to make the learning meaningful to students. When we're able to build a bridge between our training and their language orientations in a clear and useful way, we can transform the learning experience.

Within the environmental function, the student-teacher relationship is most poignant. It is the interactional zone where teachers' theory and practice not only merge into praxis, but where we face the true test of instruction: to see if teaching can actually be translated into learning (Wink, 1997). Teachers' and learners' beliefs meet *face to face*, and any disparities that exist must be resolved for effective instruction to take place. In finding a balance, the pedagogical skills must be translated through the unique human gifts that each individual teacher brings to the classroom. As in the third reflection, the ability to diagnose and respond to individual learner differences at any given moment keeps the learning process fresh and helps prepare learners to function in their new language in the way that they learn best.

## From Effectiveness to Application

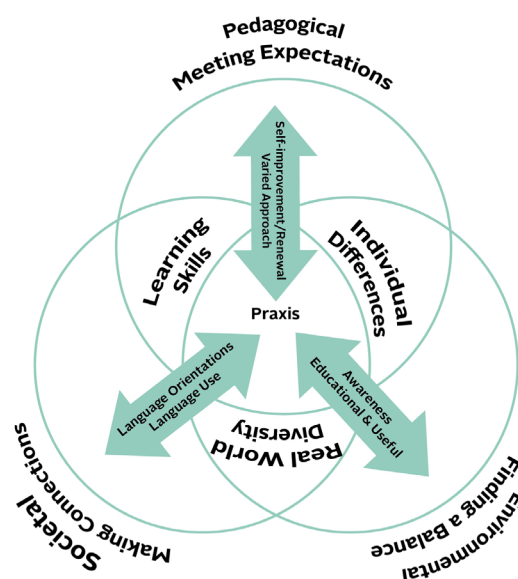
Of course, it is easy to detect all three functions in any one of the reflections provided. Consequently, the need to merge all three into our daily classroom praxis cannot be understated. Being a truly effective language teacher requires maintaining a *meta-awareness* when engaging in praxis. Not only is it essential to develop acumen in the learning process, but also in the multicultural factors that can moderate student response to that process, especially in a second language setting.



(Figure 1)

The Effective Model was derived through an approach to theory building known as Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The data were obtained through a series of interviews, observations, and surveys from multicultural, university-level ESL classrooms in the United States. The functions defined here are not meant to be taken as delimited and finite, but as the representation of a framework that can and should be integrated within an approach to language teaching. The overlap which occurs between the functions demonstrates the fluidity and flexibility necessary in effective language instruction and the arrows symbolize the multidirectional nature of these constructs. They also exemplify the fact that the classroom is only a microcosm for the larger society. In this respect, teachers need to foster a problem-posing approach (Freire, 1970, 1994; Wink, 1997) to effective language teaching that will empower students to think critically inside and outside the classroom.

In sum, the pedagogical function enables the language teacher to meet the students' expectations and to communicate what their own expectations of those students may be. It merges theory with practice in preparing to address students' emotional and psychological needs, and to provide access to the skills necessary for their individual development. The societal function connects the classroom and the real world, situating its microcontext in the larger context of life. It further conjoins the language orientations of the students to the curriculum and prepares them to meet the language requirements of whatever their future endeavors may be. Finally, the environmental function moves toward finding a balance in the classroom to accommodate the needs of the students as individuals and as members of distinct and diverse cultures.



(Figure 2)

Again, the model is not intended to be interpreted verbatim as top-down process. Not only does that type of prescription run the risk of advancing the image of an idealized learner, completely ignoring the myriad differences inherent in the individual, but it also negates the environmental influences that change both diachronically and synchronically in any given classroom context. Therefore, an emerging definition of effective language instruction must always include the voices of the students involved at any given time (Berlin, 2001). Recognizing that there will be natural variation based on the changing needs and expectations of the students from one context to the next, the meta-awareness mentioned to meet these changing needs and expectations, along with an appreciation and respect for the diversity and individual learner differences inherent in any contemporary classroom, should be fostered in teacher preparation programs and in-service training.

Thus, ongoing professional development, reading research about current trends in pedagogy and discoveries in second language acquisition, we must remain continually reflect on our teaching praxis and work toward self-improvement and renewal, both for our students and our own personal well-being. To foster life-long learning in students, we must serve as a model for them through our own actions.

In applying the Effective Model through the Application Model (Berlin, 2000, 2005), it is necessary to conduct a contextual analysis as part of any effort toward becoming a more effective language teacher. We look at each classroom on a case-by-case basis through an exhaustive look at the immediate context. Effective language instruction, then, is not so much a matter of replicating good teaching practices as it is a matter of customizing them.

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# PATHWAYS THAT INSPIRE US



## A Fence That Inspires

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Fences are designed to separate or confine. However, in the mid-70s, on California's Pacific coast, the artists Christo and Jeanne-Claude created a fence that brought a community together. Only photos and memories survive of the 6-meter high, 40-kilometer long wall of fabric consisting of posts, wire and white sheets that billowed like sails when the wind blew, which was almost always the case on this exposed, hilly stretch resembling parts of the coast just south of Çanakkale. The story of the *Running Fence*, as the work of art is called, is a metaphor for our many professional challenges in the English language teaching world, the heart of which – I believe – is creating a culture that embraces life-long learning, and modeling this culture for students. A major aspect of this entails facing adversity, taking risks, overcoming the challenges we face, finding work-arounds for the challenges we cannot overcome, and creating a supporting community. What follows is a brief description of a workshop conducted for English instructors in May 2018. The activities used to tell the story of the *Running Fence*, in turn, can be used in our classrooms, and include a public hearing, writing for an expanded audience, and visual storytelling.

Jeanne-Claude and Christo approached Marin County authorities in 1972 with their plan to build a work of public art. Over a period of more than three years, they participated in 18 public hearings, the outcome of which, eventually, was permission to construct a fabric fence. Opposition to the project was considerable, and many locals were suspicious of the pair, in part because they were artists as well as newcomers to the area. Among the few remaining video clips of these public hearings, Christo's team is seen explaining the project, and citizens voice their concern and, in some cases, mock the plan. The county commissioners – a body of elected officials – hear the pros and cons and eventually cast their vote.

During the workshop, participants took part in a role play of a public hearing as part of a fictitious academic community. They were asked to vote on the following motion:

Identifying effective English teachers for a university preparatory program is difficult. While such personal qualities as a positive, can-do attitude is important, the most important issue is a strong teaching credential. A bachelor's degree from a reputable university, followed by a Masters or, if possible, a PhD, is critical. I motion that our hiring criteria be reviewed and that much greater importance be placed on documentable criteria, such as educational credentials, and less on characteristics that cannot be measured, or what some refer to as the *art* of teaching.

An open-style debate ensued, with most arguing against the motion. Additional input was shared from various sources, including Akcan and team's 'Expectations of Stakeholders in Higher Education Sector from ELT Job Applicants,' who claim:

... most administrators agreed that personality characteristics of a candidate is the most important factor they were seeking when choosing a team member. Having self-confidence, being enthusiastic and creative, tolerant, patient, kind, sincere, having sense of humor, empathy, problem solving skills, and *openness for professional development* were stated as more valuable than having pedagogical knowledge...

Participants were then asked to reflect on the 'openness for professional development' and its connection to TESOL International's *6 Principles for Exemplary Teaching*. On a folded piece of blank, white paper, they then jotted down their ideas about what criteria should be used to assess an educator's employability for a specific program. A brief discussion in the workshop about Mezirow's 'How Critical Reflection Triggers Transformative Learning' emphasized the importance of a reflection phase during such activities.

The critical reflection stage was used again after participants viewed excerpts of the video about the *Running Fence* project. Before the viewing, the participants were asked to anticipate the arguments they might hear during one of the actual public hearings and to look for confirmation of their guesses during the viewing. They were also asked to take mental or written notes on who the players were in the courtroom. Once finished viewing, findings were discussed in small groups and then as a whole. The differences between the role-played public hearing in the workshop and the hearing in the video were discussed, and participants were asked to reflect on the benefits and challenges of adapting a hearing format to the classroom.

At this stage, curiosity about the actual outcome of the *Running Fence* project piqued. Having only seen plan-phase sketches of the project, as well as watched Californians in the hearing mocking the project, the participants were treated to a series of photos that showed various parts of the fabric wall. The group was re-introduced to one aspect of the debate that occurred during the hearing, namely whether the fence can be considered a work of art. After a few minutes to reflect on this question, the group was shown two quotes by Christo: 'The fence reveals the contours of a landscape that many consider non-descript or have long taken for granted,' and 'The art is not the fence, it is the togetherness... and you are part of it whether you are for or against it.' Follow-on discussions focused on the accuracy of these comments. As absurd as the *Running Fence* might have sounded during the planning stage, the fence indeed highlighted the contours of a hillside that were otherwise difficult to distinguish. And there is little doubt that the townspeople who were affected by the fence bonded, eventually resolving their differences. While not all detractors may have been won over, the majority appear to have accepted the project, as shown in voting results. Interviews conducted by the Smithsonian Museum more than thirty years after the project highlight the impact participation in this project had on individual's lives.

The group now had the opportunity to create its own ‘running fence.’ A participant sitting in one corner of the room held one end of a ball of yarn. The ball was tossed around randomly, with participants holding onto a piece of the string as it passed. Once the ball had fully navigated the room, participants held the yarn above their heads, and hung on it the paper on which they had jotted down their thoughts on employability criteria. This created a local ‘running fence.’ Participants were asked to reflect on whether Christo’s comments were relevant to this context. Specifically, they were asked to answer whether this ‘running fence’ revealed the contours of our profession and, if so, how. The pluses and minuses of making one’s writing public were also discussed. Comments about writing for a wider audience of peers, as opposed to only for an instructor, surfaced and led to a short, but rich, discussion.

The importance of building a professional community of English language educators starts with a team at an institution and grows to include other instructors, administrators, and parents in that educational community. From there it expands to other institutions and communities. As Işık explains, ‘Yabancı dil eğitimi bir fanusun içinde değil, bir toplumun içinde gerçekleşir.’ Turkey is fortunate to have a wide array of organizations trying to further the professionalism of the field, including INGED and TESOL in Turkey, as well as ELTER, ICRAAL, and a number of other entities that organize events during which professionals can exchange research and insights. Social media spaces such as ELT Turkey on Facebook also play an important role and help keep the community connected.

Central to the community’s dynamism is publishing research, and Turkey has no shortage of outstanding books and articles that describe the field’s challenges and successes. One particularly fertile area of research and debate is the practicum experience in the fourth year of in-service programs in universities around the country. This particular segment of the educational process is a vital link that creates a ‘running fence’ spanning the K-12 and higher education or pre-service sectors. Gokdemir, Bayraktaroglu, and Aydin have all referred to the practicum year as a “bridge” – a more appropriate metaphor than a fence, no doubt – that represents a huge opportunity for both sectors to benefit from the other’s involvement so that both share responsibility in equipping the future generation of English language with the necessary skills and attitude.

Other key opportunities exist in the new fifth grade pilot with an expanded number of hours of English, the numerous foreign language programs at every university in Turkey, CELTA and SIT Certificate programs, and English Language and Literature programs and American Culture and Literature programs that produce instructors with a deep appreciation for the culture behind the language. Recognizing and supporting these efforts will not only yield stronger polyglots, but also create opportunities for continued learning among the educators themselves. If educators can successfully model a healthy level of risk-taking, and openness to new ideas, this will have a positive impact on learners. This is a culture that must be nurtured at the professional community level, so that all feel part of this country’s English language learning ‘running fence.’

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## PATHWAYS THAT INSPIRE US



### Learning from Success in Teacher Education:

### The Village Institute Experience

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### Abstract

The Village Institutes, which were established in Turkey between 1940 and 1954, greatly enlightened their environments. They left their marks in our education history. Still, they are commemorated and considered as an education model unique to Turkey during those turbulent times. One can benefit from those practices in teacher education in Turkey. They taught us not to be in favor of a ‘parrot-like’ education model but combine theory and practice and keep students active in participation in all areas of their education including even management of the school.

**Key words:** The Village Institutes, education model, teacher education, enlightenment

### Introduction

As stated by M. Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic, ‘The Republic demands new generations who will possess free thought, free understanding and free conscience’. The Village Institutes were important cornerstones in the realization of this philosophy. As Ak (2016, p. 131) puts it ‘the education model adopted in the Village Institutes had been the story of an initiative to awaken and enlighten the Anatolian people from the dormancy, illiteracy, solitude and exploitation which lasted for centuries’. They were established on April 17 in 1940 with the aim of training teachers and peasants and helping the mobilization of education and mass literacy. They were one of the most successful applications in Turkish education history.

### Conditions During Their Establishment

The Village Institutes were established during the turbulent atmosphere of the Second World War. During those times, the majority of the public were living in the rural areas and there were not enough teachers in the villages. Over 80% of the villagers were illiterate (Basaran, 1990, p.3). Teachers were reluctant to go to villages and stay there. As Kırıl (2015, p. 46) summarizes, in those times, ‘there was a need for an educational move in order to turn this case positive, meet the educational needs of village children, improve the development level of the country, eradicate illiteracy and increase the rate of literacy’. The Village Institutes were seen as a solution to those problems. It should be noted that the Village Institute experience was more than encouraging mass literacy, building schools in the villages or supporting the village economy. In fact, it was a liberation project and facilitator of change by educating the villagers and making them aware of their exploitation. As Kocabas (2017, p. 50) pinpoints;

the common goal was to present intellectual teachers who were supposed to be a model for the people living in villages and were educated in crafts, in addition to teaching the people living in a village for the development of that village by themselves.

### Teacher Education in the Village Institutes

The Village Institutes were unique to Turkey and were in-place-training places for prospective teachers in 1940s' Turkey. A philosophy of 'Education within work' was applied. Ismail Hakkı Tonguc, known as the architect of the Village Institutes, believed in the implementation of education in real life. As Kucuktamer & Uzunboylu (2015, p. 395) state, Tonguc believed that 'school should be a place where students can learn by doing and by being given the possibility of vocational practice'. Likewise, in Arayıcı's terms (1999, p. 271), it was a 'conception of education based on production'.

There was no curriculum at first. In 1943, the first curriculum of the Village Institutes was put into practice. Students had 5 years of education. 114 weeks were allocated to culture lessons. Culture lessons included Turkish, History, Geography, Civics, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Natural and School Health, Foreign Language, Handwriting, Painting and handcraft, Physical Education and National Games, Music, Military, Housekeeping and Child Care, Teaching Knowledge (Sociology, Occupational Education, Pedagogical and Occupational Psychology and etc.). 58 weeks were allocated to agriculture lessons such as field agriculture, garden agriculture (nursery, fruit growing, etc.), industrial crops agriculture, zoo technics, poultry knowledge, apiculture and sericulture, fisheries and aquaculture, agriculture arts lessons. 58 weeks were allocated to technical lessons including blacksmithing (farriery, craft), village carpentry, village construction (brick and bricklaying, quarrying etc.), village and crafts (sewing, cutting, and embroidery, etc.) (Kıral, 2015, p. 48). The institutes organized their syllabus in accordance with their own region, the level of their students and the qualifications of teachers. The Village Institutes were given a piece of land and 'they were required to build for themselves (classrooms, dormitories and workshops), cultivate the land, bake bread, tend cattle, repair agricultural machinery, plant trees, dig canals, make roads, etc.' (Arayıcı, 1999, 272). Many training and education implementations were realized in the open air. They had 'training lessons not only on culture, agriculture and construction, but also training on health issues had covered a great variety in the curriculum of institutes' (Ak, 2016, p. 130). Another amazing thing for those turbulent years is that students were active within their education. Even buildings were constructed by the students themselves. Art and literature were not neglected. For instance, plays were performed on theatre stage by students. As Kocak & Baskan (2012, p. 5938) point out 'importance has been given to "free reading" times in the institutions. They have been able to introduce and discuss works that are appropriate for their levels by making them read'.

There was active participation of the students in the management, as well. Aytemur (2007, p.180) points out that;

everybody worked in the VIs, and so had the right to have a word in the functioning of the VIs, including work and lectures. This was explicitly seen in the meetings arranged at weekends where everyone had the right to criticize each other about the work in -and functioning of- the VIs.

In 1947, there were some changes in the curriculum. 'A principal change is a drift away from the freedom and flexibility provided to teachers' (Kucuktamer & Uzunboylu, 2015, p. 396). Another change was a decrease in the arts and crafts lessons. In 1953, their last curriculum was introduced. As Kiral (2015, p. 49) describes this curriculum;

art classes and workshops were removed in this curriculum. In this curriculum, foreign language teaching was also ended. With this program, it can be said that teacher training schools and the Village Institutes were not different institutes.

The political atmosphere paved the way for their closure. There were rumors and criticisms about the fact that they were co-educational (boys and girls in the same classroom), accusations that they acted as 'communist nests', or that they only accepted village children to the Institutes and appointing them to the villages, thereby creating a clear distinction between peasants and the urban population (Kiral, 2015; Kucuktamer & Uzunboylu, 2015). After all those rumors and attacks, unfortunately, they were closed in 1954.

### Conclusion

Although the Village Institutes were short-lived, they tried to achieve social development and raise public awareness. As Arayıcı (1999, p. 271) emphasizes 'as village institutes had aims other than literacy alone, their creation, activities and methods were an innovation on the world educational scene'. They made great contributions to Turkey and to the world. As Giorgetti (2009, p. 55) pinpoints 'the most important aspect was the teaching methods which were a radical departure from the usual Turkish school approach of obtaining knowledge from textbooks and in the classroom only'. They contributed to the development of the villages and increased the literacy rate sharply. As M. Kemal Atatürk, our head teacher, pointed out 'teachers are the one and only people who save nations'. In line with this philosophy, the Village Institutes can be seen as a great implementation that tried to take the nation to the level of developed countries through education.

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### Pathways that Inspire Academic Writers



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### Introduction

In order to master the complex productive skill of writing, it is very important for writers whose first language is not English to gain mastery of the English language. This gains more importance if second language writers have to compose academic essays in the educational contexts they are in. Increasing internalization of scholarship and the important role of lingua franca of academia have made it mandatory for writers from diverse cultural backgrounds to get familiar with academic literacy in English (Polovna and Dontcheva-Navratilova, 2014). However, writing academic essays is a challenge for second language writers who are not familiar with the Anglo-American academic writing conventions which require additional rhetoric, linguistic, and strategic competence.

It is very important for second language writers to increase their English language proficiency to be able to master different academic discourses in educational and research institutions for their “secondary socialization” (Mauranen et al, 2010, 184).

### Inspiring Academic Writers

This paper asserts the importance of “inspiring” second language writers to have the self-confidence to compose academic essays by strengthening their language proficiency as a major step. It asserts that when second language writers have confidence in their use of language, they will have more confidence to compose. Therefore, one of the ways we as instructors can inspire them is by empowering them to work on their language use in a more autonomous way by providing metalinguistic feedback on their written work. This paper mentions strategies as to how we as instructors can empower second language writers by helping them reflect on their language use and improve it with the help of metalinguistic feedback.

It is often claimed that inspiration should come from within when one is composing. We have heard many times that writers are born and not made, and those who have the inspiration compose well. This paper raises the question whether inspiration coming from within or provided by an external source is sufficient in writing academic papers, and whether writers who do not have sufficient use of language would have the inspiration to compose academic papers. I strongly believe that the academic writing process would be a bigger challenge for second language writers who feel insecure about their language proficiency and do not even know how to correct their own mistakes.

### Importance of Academic Writing in U.S. Higher Education Institutions

Academic writing is very important in the U.S. in higher education institutions. In 2012, I conducted a study in which I researched into which academic language skills were prioritized in teaching English to freshman domestic and second language writers in the Big Ten research universities in the U.S. The Big Ten schools consist of University of Michigan, Northwestern University, Wisconsin University, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Penn State University, Ohio State University, Michigan State University, Purdue University, University of Minnesota, Indiana University, University of Iowa, University of Nebraska, Rutgers University, and the University of Maryland. The findings of the quantitative methods research I conducted indicated that writing was the most important academic skill for all the Big Ten research universities (Atilgan, 2012). In addition, the most emphasized genre is academic writing skills across the curriculum. Another indicator that writing is such an essential skill in universities is that all universities have Writing Centers which aim to help undergraduate and graduate students with writing skills. These findings are generally applicable to most higher education institutions in the U.S.

In U.S. universities and colleges, students generally have to take first year composition courses. When this is the case, effective teaching of writing and the language gain utmost importance. The student profile in freshmen writing courses differs. Students place themselves, or are placed, into mainstream and ESL courses depending on their place of origin, mother language, and duration of stay in the U.S.

Mainstream classes usually have American and Generation 1.5 students (sometimes international students also) who are familiar with the Anglo-American writing conventions at recognition & sometimes production level. ESL classes usually have international and Generation 1.5 students who have less familiarity or no familiarity with Anglo-American writing conventions at recognition and production level so there are huge differences in terms of what the students know and do not know about language proficiency and academic writing conventions. It is important to recognize these differences in order for instructors to understand where students are coming from and to tailor their syllabi according to students' needs.

U.S. is the top nation hosting the most international students in the world. Currently, top countries that send international students to the U.S. include China, South Korea, India, Canada, Vietnam, Taiwan, Japan, Mexico, and Brazil (IIE, 2017). This rich variety creates a wealth of diversity yet causes many challenges in different areas in ESL classes. Silva (2014) states 'L2 is different from L1 rhetorically, linguistically, and strategically' and it is an undeniable fact that there are challenges caused by the salient differences between English and the mother tongues of the multi-lingual international students.

### Minimizing Linguistic Differences Through Metalinguistic Feedback

In this paper, I'd like to talk about the importance of prioritizing minimalization of linguistic differences of second language writers and argue that these multi-lingual students in freshman courses should be supported in terms of language in a more guided and systematic way. Once students start reflecting on their language mistakes, I believe they are capable of correcting their own mistakes with the help of metalinguistic feedback. I propose a more student-centered error correction approach to helping the writers gain mastery of English and this work expands on earlier research that I performed. Commonly, it is believed that if teachers give written feedback to students on their writing, students will write better. However, Zamel and Krashen argue that 'teacher feedback on SLW writing does not support a focus on surface error to help students improve their writing (Leki, 1991)'. Yet do students stop making mistakes after they receive written feedback from the teacher? The answer may be "no" for a variety of reasons. The feedback doesn't always help the student to learn the correct version and sometimes the student doesn't understand teacher's written feedback. Moreover, the student may just set aside the corrected draft with the feedback and forget about it. Therefore, it was felt that there was a strong need to change the practice and a new error correction technique was tried where the mistakes were circled or underlined. However, this new technique also failed the expected result as it was beyond the students' linguistic capability (Rana, Perveen, 2013).

### Error-correction Study

In order to see if metalinguistic feedback would serve as a more helpful error correction technique, I designed a study. The subjects were 20 international students in intermediate ESL writing classes at a U.S. university. The students wrote 6 short essays in different genres in class throughout the semester and I error-coded the mistakes on each essay. The students then had to review my error-coded feedback, correct the error-coded linguistic issues, and resubmit their essays to me. I rechecked if the students' revisions were correct and gave metalinguistic feedback for the second time, and the students revised the essay again.

Another task students were asked to do was to count the syntactic and lexical mistakes they made on the first draft, put in the numbers on a sheet I gave them, and come up with the three major areas of difficulty. Then they had to devise self-constructed strategies to work on these issues. I then held one-on-one tutorials with students where they told me their major areas of difficulty and what kind of strategies they would employ in order to work on these mistakes to improve their language use.

In this study, students worked with an error-code that I designed which I went over in class, so students knew what kind of mistake each code referred to. Students were informed that I would use this error-code to indicate the language issues on their essays. Students were assigned to view the codes on their essays, reflect on what the mistake is, and correct the mistake using online sources, grammar books, dictionaries, and thesaurus.

### Conclusion

The specific findings indicated that common mistakes were in the following syntactic & lexical categories: verb tense, word choice, article, and sentence ambiguity. Students were able to identify different types of mistakes in their written work, coming up with a list of their own linguistic needs, and correct most mistakes. This activity motivated students to produce better quality work. Later essays written by the students indicated that self-correction enhanced their linguistic competence, involvement, engagement, and self-confidence in their linguistic capabilities.

The findings indicate that providing metalinguistic cues has greatly helped students self-identify and correct their mistakes. Therefore, it can be concluded that a shift from the technique of traditional written feedback into a more semi-guided, learner-involved one might be more effective on language use improvement in the long run. Metalinguistic feedback may serve as a more effective and helpful one that would engage second language writers to work further on their language proficiency on their individual journey in writing better quality academic papers.

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## PATHWAYS THAT INSPIRE US



### Visionary Motivational Programme:

**“Dream It and You Can Do It”**

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### Abstract

Motivation stands atop many concepts in SLA and has captivated proponents of different schools of psychology. In this workshop the presenters present the educational relevance of Markus and Nurius’s (1986) idea of possible selves and how these possible selves integrate into Hadfield and Dörnyei’s (2013) visionary motivational program.

### Introduction

Language teachers frequently use the term ‘motivation’ when they describe learners’ success and failure. Key determinants of learners’ success are enthusiasm, commitment and persistence. If motivation is such a crucial feature of successful learning, teacher skills in *motivating* learners should be seen as central to teaching effectiveness (Hadfield&Dörnyei,2013).

### Motivation and the Self

This term refers to future-oriented aspect of our self-concept, describing our visions of what we *might* become, what we *would like to* become and what we *are afraid of* becoming (ibid). If we want to focus on what we really want, we should imagine ourselves there vividly and our beliefs should support that thought and that image in our mind. The main point here is to bridge the gap between our actual and ideal selves. (Fig.1)



### A Visionary Motivational Programme

The main purpose of language teachers is to help learners create a vision for their future language self. The six components of this motivational programme are seen in the Figure 2 below:

	Stage	Definition	Examples / Worksheets
1	Creating a vision	The first step in a motivational intervention is to encourage learners to construct their ideal L2 self -- that is, to create an attractive vision of their future. This could involve awareness-raising about and guided selection from multiple aspirations, dreams or desires.	Preparing worksheets that enable students to build on visions of their future possible selves that are attractive, desirable, elaborate, and vividly experienced. All in all, getting learners to write about their ideal future self.
2	Strengthening the vision	Here the teacher tries to promote the learners' ideal self-image. To enhance the vision, the teacher tries to help learners deepen and enrich their vision. For motivational purposes, it is important for a vision to be as vivid and elaborate as possible.	Methods of imagery enhancement have been explored in several psychological, educational and sports research in the past, and the techniques of creative and guided imagery can be utilized to promote learners' ideal self image.
3	Substantiating the vision	Effective visions share a mixture of imagination and reality and therefore, in order to go beyond mere fantasizing, learners need to anchor their future self-guides in a sense of realistic expectations.	Teachers can have learners use reality check to see whether the goals set can be achievable within the time frame they have set.

## Visionary Motivational Programme: “Dream It and You Can Do It”

	Stage	Definition	Examples / Worksheets
4	Operationalizing the vision	Future self-guides need to come as part of a ‘package’ consisting of an imagery component and a repertoire of approach plans, scripts and specific learning strategies. This clearly an area where L2 motivation research and teaching methodology overlap.	Preparing activities and worksheets to show how they could turn their visions into goals, goals to plans, from plans to strategies and finally move from strategies to achievement. For instance, you can prepare a strategies mind map for them.
5	Keeping the vision alive	This means extending the vision and deepening the sense of an L2 identity. You should try to appeal to the affective as well as their cognitive side of language learning. The goal is to help develop the vision in more detail and make sure it won’t be lost in the day-to-day business of doing grammar and vocabulary exercises.	Warmers and other classroom activities can all be turned into effective ways of reminding students of their vision and thus to keep the enthusiasts going and less-than enthusiasts thinking.
6	Counterbalancing the vision	We do something because we want to do it and also because not doing it would lead to undesired results. Regular reminders of the limitations of not knowing foreign languages as well as highlighting the duties and obligations the learners have committed themselves to as part of ought-to selves help offset the vision with a feared self.	Preparing a “What if ...” worksheet works well with this stage. Also, having the students describe a problem and write what gets in the way of learning is another good strategy.

Figure 2 Six Components of Visionary Motivational Programme (Hadfield & Dörnyei, 2013:5-6).

### Summary

As a conclusion, what we want is for our learners to become motivated and while doing this, they need to have a vision in their mind and they need to strengthen this vision and feed it with the similar thoughts of success. If we set a goal and if we live in it and focus well, there won't be big failures and on the road to success we interpret them as a phase in the formation of our ideal self.

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## PATHWAYS THAT INSPIRE US



### On Intersectionality and Academic Drag

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### Introduction

Think back to your university days. Do you recall a certain feeling to all of your classes; some kind of distance between you and your instructors? And when you gained your teaching certification, do you remember being told about professional boundaries? You are on one side of the classroom, detached, and your students will be on the other. The rules for your interactions are set – you have your place and they have theirs. This induction to everyone knowing their place is what creates academic drag.

### What is Academic Drag?

Drag itself is a performance, a deliciously queer performance. Academic drag is about hiding things such as queerness from professional personalities; you will be traditional and heteronormative the academy says.

As Samek and Donofrio (2013) noted, ‘Part and parcel of our academic socialization into the professortariat, our notions of intention and expression are shaped to comply with the standards of the profession’(p.30). We all know from experience that, whether you have eyes on a professorship or not, your politics don’t belong in the classroom. Except they do, because in truth, everything is politics and all the decisions we make about how to exist in the world are informed by our personal politics.

What is this academic drag actually consisted of? If we understand drag in the general sense to be the wearing of clothing designed for the opposite gender (assuming there are only two binary genders), then we can see it as a covering of one’s original identity. More than this, it is a performance; it is not a passive act. The performance requires suppression of one’s usual way of being, acting, dressing and deliberate reproduction of a seemingly opposite way of existing in the worlds.

Academic drag is no different. Here, the performance is the replication of ‘proper’ academic behaviour. Samek and Donofrio (2013), although never positing a precise definition [of academic drag] allude to it as a polite avoidance in the classroom. Although their work focuses on queer issues in the classroom, as experienced educators we know that queerness is only the only issue we avoid. Therefore, for the purpose of this paper, academic drag refers to any act of covering behaviour educational professionals undergo in order to conform to the academy rules.

‘The process of education is a quintessential site of cultural proliferation and acculturation,’ as Bryant K. Alexander stated (as cited in Samek and Donofrio 2013, p.30). As socializing institutions, schools force people into certain behaviours; you will be either praised or disciplined for the way you conduct yourself. You are not required, or encouraged to fully display all of your identities.

### Intersectionality

What is Intersectionality? The short answer is that it is the way in which our identities intersect. The long answer is that it is an unfamiliar term to most educators, which has its origins in legal and feminist thought, and describes the failure of movements to understand and address the needs of black women, as non-discrimination and feminist policies focus only on one factor of experience.

When she coined the term in 1989, Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) recorded that ‘the intersectional experience is greater than the sum of racism and sexism’ (p.140). Although Crenshaw’s focus at the time was limited to two oppressions, in noting that the ‘analysis that does not take intersectionality into account cannot sufficiently address the manner in which black women are subordinated’ (p.140), she paved the way for the opening of identity politics and the study of how multiple identities link together and overlap to form a whole person with a unique set of experiences and needs. When I speak of intersectionality today, I speak of this idea that it is the very condition of being human.

What do these concepts have to do with each other? The way in which we conduct and construct our identities is the very essence of academic drag. The rules of the academy determine that we behave in a certain way, that way can often require us to minimize one or more of our identities. Why do we have to minimize ourselves to play some game of academia? Professionalism: the great idea that there is only one way in which one can be professional. In the academy that idea means we can forget or identity it is a notion that dictates how we act, how we dress how we speak and how power relations affect who listens (and how well) when we do. We dress up, play a role, fit as we should but with no real hint of who we are behind the mask.

Part of the academic socialization process, Katherine Sang (2016) notes, is the induction into a value system that prizes ‘so called objective, knowledge whereby the researcher adopts a neutral, value free position’ (p.3). Sang highlights that feminist work, on the other hand, rather values the subjective and personal. (2016, p.3) This work, which can be prized in the community, can also be frowned upon in the academy.

Crenshaw noted that ‘intersectionality can help to understand the tensions between assertions of multiple identity and the ongoing necessity of group politics’ (as cited in Sang, 2016, p.4). We can understand this as a way to combine multiple identities with our professional identity. If we are working in academic drag, then the constructed image we present must necessarily form part of our identity, as by its very essence, it is a whole identity. Our institutions value us not for our uniqueness, but for our ability to convincingly play teacher, in whatever form they require.

### The Importance of Identity

Why does having a full identity matter? In work examining queer students, Cynthia Nelson (2010) found that to hide part of oneself requires the running of a meta-consciousness which she states is 'often experienced as a running meta narrative about how dynamics in particular spaces control...or provoke self representations' (p.445). The great self-censorship of what you can and cannot say begins once you walk through the doors of an institution. This censorship may vary in degree depending on who is around.

While my consciousness means I keep some things from my learners, it also guides me in how I teach. In looking at the gendered practices of our textbooks, and in the entrenched masculinity of the men in my classroom, consciousness and identity direct me to act. When men are so afraid of femininity that they object to playing a woman for a five minute assessed role-play, it needs to be examined. When students police each other's dating lives under some antiquated notion of morality, it too needs addressing. Any time the phrase 'real men' is spoken, action is needed. If we follow academic drag rules, we let these things slide – it is not the role of the teacher to deal with social attitudes, professionalism tells us just to control the class and teach. Perhaps that is a thing you can do; your professional/personal politics may allow you to just go on teaching. They will certainly dictate your response to such situations one way or another.

Who are you? This is a very simple question, we discuss such things every day; we introduce ourselves, teach our learners to ask and answer this question, drill them on the difference between 'I am...' and 'This is...'. Yet the question remains: who are you? When I ask this question, I want to know who you are as a person. What makes you tick? What makes you go through the world as you are? What makes you teach as you do? What is the essence of you? More than this, I am asking how you manage the daily performance of identity and academy.

They say you teach how you were taught. It's undoubtedly true. We all teach within the confines of academia and academic drag, but when you scratch the surface, we teach how our best teachers taught us: as humans, as whole, multifaceted and faulted people. I can name high school teachers from half a lifetime ago who are responsible for quirks and the very fact that I'm here. I am quite sure that my habit of talking to the computer came from my German teacher talking to the book cupboard when we were unresponsive.

The pathway that inspires us most is life. The key to surviving as an educator is to find a way to blend the identities that form your life with the academic drag that we are socialized into. From here, how do you make your teaching persona more you? That's my challenge to you, to leave here and try to incorporate more of yourself into your daily drag performance.

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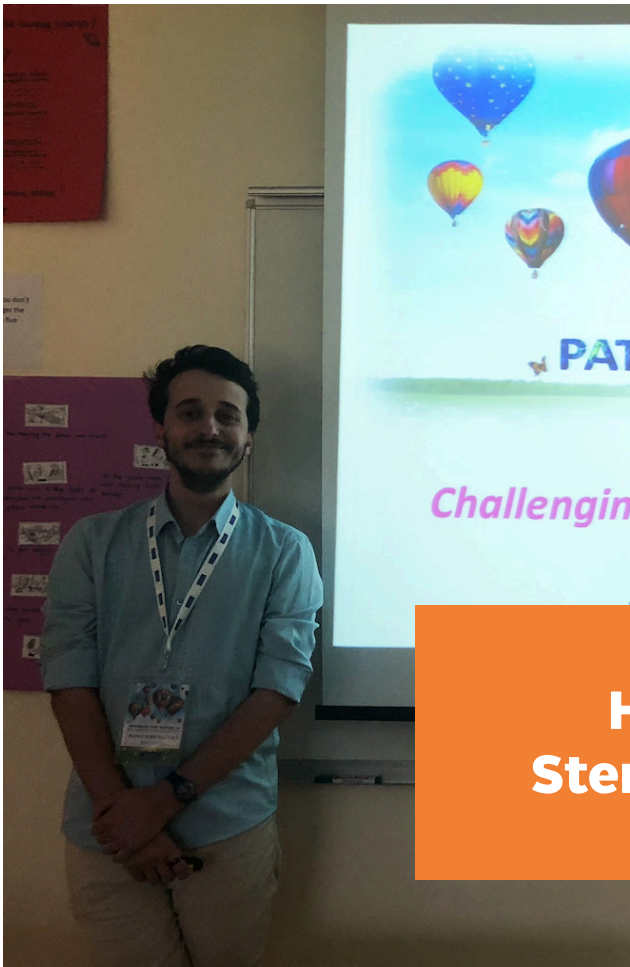
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## PATHWAYS THAT INSPIRE US



### How to Challenge Gender Stereotypes in EFL Classroom?

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### 1. Introduction

Stereotypes are inevitable constructs which exist in each and every part of our lives. Although they do not necessarily have to be negative, they have been ascribed negative connotations by a great majority today. Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary defines a stereotype as "a fixed idea or image that many people have of a particular type of person or thing, but which is often not true in reality". Stereotypes are rather prevalent in most societies and include cultural, racial, political, demographic groups together with genders and situations (Gennaioli and Shleifer 2010, Bordalo et al. 2016a, b). Over the last decades, stereotypes have been held under the microscope of many disciplines from science and psychology to sociology and education. However, the phenomenon has been examined intensively in social sciences.

#### 1.1. Language and Sexism

As indicated by many research studies and scholars, our thinking shapes our language just as our language affects the way we think. Pennycook (2001) states that language is part of the wider semiotic system within which it was shaped and is endowed with ideological, historical, and political symbols and relations. Likewise, Ansary and Babaii emphasizes that language is not merely a means of communicating information. Rather, it is an important means of stabilizing and maintaining social relationships with other members of a speech community. Using our languages, we do many things and operate a set of functions in our daily lives. Sex-based linguistic variation is a prime example of the sort of social function that is fulfilled by language (Ansary and Babaii 2003). In recent years, one of the major issues in the field of sociolinguistics has been the question of sexism and the relationship between language and sex as language can be a fundamental factor through which traditional, sexist and heteronormative representations are explicitly and implicitly executed and challenged (McClure, 1992, p.39). In sociolinguistic studies, many scholars stated that our languages are sexist and they represent the world from the perspective of men in addition to stereotyped beliefs about women and their roles. It has been a widespread notion that the problem is men having power over women and its reflection on the language we use.

#### 1.2. Gender-sensitive Pedagogy and the 'Teacher' Factor

What is more important than textbooks is how teachers use them and where teachers stand regarding this phenomenon. As Sunderland (1994) suggests, gender-based texts are not inevitably sources of discrimination if teachers prefer to use them in a critical way in their classrooms.

Moreover, a teacher can rescue a sexist or extremely heteronormative text while the most non-sexist book textbook can become sexist in the hands of a teacher with sexist attitudes. (Sunderland, 1994, p.64). A great number of studies have dealt with gender issues and stereotypes in EFL textbooks thus far. Most of them included quantitative analysis of gender-related roles and frequencies of both males and females as well as their representations. As indicated above, it is not adequate to get rid of gender-biased textbooks because what makes the difference here is “the teacher factor” and pedagogy employed by practitioners. Nevertheless, the studies carried out so far have not touched the pedagogical aspects of the issue, that is to say, in the literature there is not adequate emphasis on the pragmatic dimensions of eliminating stereotypes in EFL classrooms. This article aims to provide an overview of gender stereotypes in EFL classrooms and also suggest a framework including basic principles that can be implemented in EFL classes by teachers to challenge both sexism and stereotyping in conjunction with raising awareness of the issue.

### 2. Strategies to Cope with Stereotyping and Sexism in EFL Class

Teachers as educators are responsible for promoting equity, diversity and justice in their classrooms regardless of their student profiles including age, gender, race and level etc. Although some scholars underline that stereotyping and other social constructs are mostly developed outside classrooms or in students’ social lives and families, classrooms have a great potential to be places where these constructs, gender roles and stigma can be challenged or at least students can be given insights and awareness as well as an understanding of social justice. In order to achieve this goal, teachers can employ the following strategies:

#### i. Using Inclusive Language

As discussed earlier in the paper, language itself may include sexist representations or serve as a means to convey them during communication. In classrooms, teachers’ talk has a great place when it comes to amount and density of topic or themes. Thus, teacher talk can either reinforce or challenge gendered language. Pauwels (2003) identifies one of the major motivations for language change as “a desire to amend the present language system to achieve a symmetrical and equitable representation of women and men”. In this regard, teachers have a non-negligible role as both a source of input and a mediator of classroom communication. In their experimental study, Thomson, Murachver and Green (2001) demonstrated that gender-preferential language is not fixed or inherent to the individual, but is partly constructed in conversation. Moreover, there have been an appreciable number of research studies revealing that people accommodate to the gender-preferential style used by other people (Farry, 1999; Stephenson & Murachver, 1999, Robertson&Murachver, 2003). In their study, Robertson and Murachver revealed that children also accommodate their speech toward that of the experimenter.

### ii. Underscoring that There aren't 'Girls' and 'Boys' Stuff

As one of the aforementioned factors, schools are the settings where discriminatory language and actions can be challenged. For instance, labelling all nurses as female or all engineers as male is an implicit reinforcement of disempowering the women. Students in general develop their identities and also stereotypes not only at home or outside, schools are one of the places they spend most of their time. Thus, this can be turned into an advantage by challenging gender roles and labels. The very message and core that teachers can give their students that there is not such thing as “boys’ stuff” and “girls’ stuff”. This can be achieved with some concrete actions such as reversing in-class duties as opposed to the norms. For instance, instead of asking a girl student to clean somewhere in the class, this task can be given to a boy. On the contrary, a female student can be requested to carry out a duty which needs a bit of physical power. Above all, teachers should be able to generate their own ways of challenging gender labels and roles in classrooms by designing unique materials and activities.

### iii. Respecting and Affirming Unconventional Choices

As an inextricable part of society and our lives, schools are one of the places where human behaviors, good or bad actions, inequities and justice issues emerge. There are hundreds of products of human interactions and also viewpoints as well. Thus, diversity is of paramount significance. In our classrooms, we have as many personalities, ideologies and beliefs as the number of students. At the outset, it might be considered a problematic or sensitive issue, but indeed, it is up to people or, in particular, teachers themselves whether to watch the battle between the differences / dilemmas or celebrate it with others or finding ways of achieving this goal.

### iv. Intervening Stereotypes Immediately When They Occur

In connection with behavioristic psychology, emergent behavior patterns can be observed by teachers and they should immediately intervene when stereotypes occur, as it is the best time and place to study misconceptions and stereotypes. In other words, teachers as mediators of classroom interaction and as facilitators of learning can implicitly or explicitly intervene when stereotyping occurs in their classrooms, which can prevent future fossilized ideas about gender roles and social justice. Much like the case of the young learners’ teacher above, a teacher should make use of the event and turn it into an advantage to teach social justice.

These sort of interventions are likely to be made explicitly for adult groups while it would be more appropriate to make it as implicitly as possible without reinforcing negative behavioristic patterns and causing resistance in their classrooms. Actually, teachers have a great power in their hands which is material design. That is to say, instead of intervening the emerging stereotypes explicitly like a firefighter trying to extinguish a fire, they should place some reflections of anti-sexist thinking and social justice in their materials by both adapting and creating new ones.

### v. Putting Literature into Action

As cited in Hişmanoğlu's work (2005), over the last decade, using literature as a source of authentic texts and a means of teaching English has gained considerable popularity and significance, although there have been great debates among teachers and teacher educators about where, when and how to use literature in EFL classrooms. Regardless of this, many of EFL teachers find this technique as interesting, enjoyable and attractive both on learners' part and theirs. In regard to today's course books which hardly ever touch on issues of power, gender, inequalities and social justice, teachers are in need of appropriate materials to teach these sensitive issues or raise awareness about them.

Literary texts are quite fruitful for these issues both in young learners and adults and from beginner to advanced learners of English. A variety of literary forms can be employed including short stories, dramas, poems and novels. However, to serve the purposes of both teaching English and contributing to students' awareness at the same time, there should be some adaptations of materials and teachers should carefully select what genre is likely to be more suitable for their own learner profile. For instance, using short stories and drama can be a great fit to young learners or adolescents while novels are more likely to be successful with adult learners.

### vi. Employing Empathizing Activities

As social beings, people need to keep their relations and communication with others. However, differences sometimes distance people from each other because there is great lack of empathy. In this sense, classrooms should be perceived as opportunities for maximizing individuals' capacity to empathize. Since this article addresses teachers, again a teacher-centered approach is discussed in this section. Teachers who are caregivers, active listeners, problem solvers, mediators and material or activity designers need to reconsider their classroom procedures and activities. Role play and acting activities have been proven to work to promote the ability to empathize. Actually, in EFL classrooms, role plays and acting have a great place but the matter is how these activities are conveyed. To challenge gender roles, teachers can reverse gender roles during role play activities and create opportunities for students to empathize with 'other' or at least revealing that gender does not have the primary role. Some very typical reversals are; asking a boy to act a female character or vice versa, or during dialogue readings asking them to read the parts randomly without paying attention to gender.

With higher level students and older students, case scenarios are of great importance. They exactly provide them with a chance of thing differently and at least lead them to question some certain phenomena.

### vii. Discussion as a Tool of Learning and Teaching

In their book *Discussion as a Way of Teaching*, Brookfield and Preskill (2005) highlighted that no matter what name is given to critical interactions between individuals, it might be called discussion, dialogue or conversation, when participants of discussion take a critical stance, they are devoted to questioning and exploring even the most extensively accepted ideas or beliefs. In this regard, using discussion technique to question gender roles and sexist behaviors can serve as a very effective classroom activity for especially adolescent and adult learners. During these discussion activities, students also have the chance to promote their speaking skills a lot. Using the theme of gender roles and stereotyping in this way is likely to have a great potential to question the stigmatized ideas and inequalities synchronously with making room for speaking.

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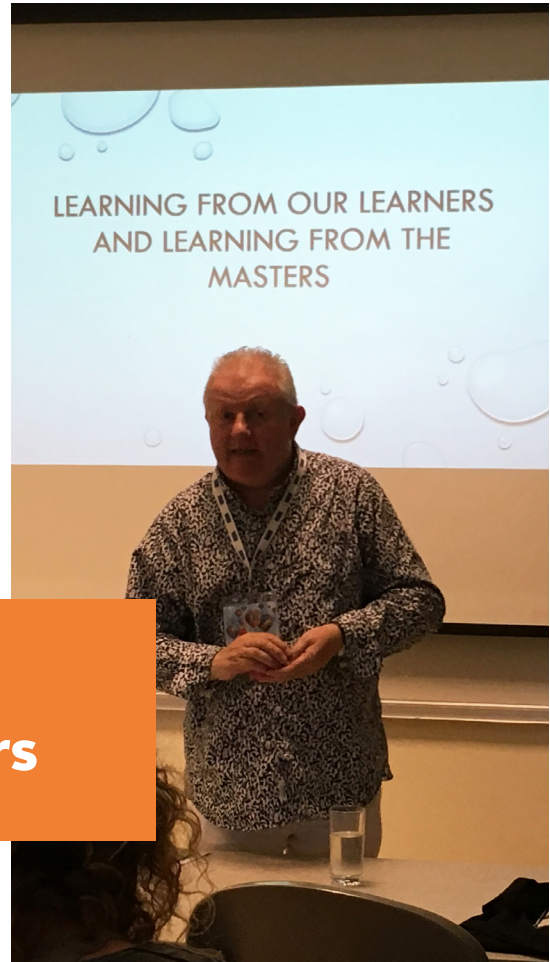
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### Learning from Our Learners and Learning from the Masters

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In this paper my focus is on some of the psychological interactions that take place in our classrooms using examples both historical and practical. The session aims to produce some practical solutions based on experience to promote learner autonomy in an achievable and realistic environment.

### The Raw Material: Our Students Profile, Abilities, Expectations and Targets.

As well as being a challenge in our teaching lives our students are also a resource for us to explore and identify strategies to achieve our teaching aims and objectives.

The groups of students that we all face in the classroom vary but usually exhibit similar characteristics – based on extrinsic and intrinsic factors there are a few willing to learn, some following through a process that life has led them to, while yet others have very little purpose or motivation for being in a classroom! However, we should recognise that our students are very talented – they have developed skills, techniques, strategies and tactics to use in the classroom – unfortunately these skills are usually employed in avoiding the task in hand that the teacher is guiding them towards so our challenge is to lead and guide them to the goal we have in mind. I am sure that you can think of some avoidance strategies used by students – some are more obvious than others!

We also need to recognise that like us our students carry baggage from the past. Their past learning experiences affect how they feel about their present situation – old resentments and negative feelings about the classroom are easily carried forward. We have to recognise our learners' expectations or lack of them and this can be affected by many influences based on their past learning experience, cultural and social influences. We can learn by observing our students' reactions and behaviour patterns which we should not be afraid to challenge. We have been through generation X, Y and Z – some say we are still in generation Z. Generation Z is a generation that is global, social, visual and technological. They are the most connected, educated and sophisticated generation ever. Now perhaps as a reaction to generation Z we appear to be in generation snowflake – narcissistic, passive and hypersensitive to their physical surroundings. Therefore, the challenge is as the title of our conference states to follow or lead in 'Pathways that Inspire Us.' We as teachers have a 'pastoral role' towards our students.

What is meant by pastoral care in schools? Health and wellbeing of students is increasingly being attributed to school conditions, school relationships, means of fulfilment, and health status. Subsequently, pastoral care has taken on a more inclusive function, being seen as inextricably linked with academic curriculum. The concept of pastoral care has its roots in the Christian church – indeed in some languages the priest or minister is referred to as pastor which means shepherd. This carries concepts of guidance, role model as well as discipline and security. Pastoral care also recognises the individual and offers a holistic approach to the classroom. This is becoming increasingly relevant to all stages of education up to and including university level.

### Creating a Classroom Atmosphere Conducive to Learner Autonomy.

Teaching perspectives and attitudes influence our classroom setting and atmosphere. What is your role in the classroom? It may be a combination of many roles leader, disciplinarian, encourager, instructor, role model, facilitator or even absolute dictator? Whatever our feelings on our positions as a teacher, this has a direct effect on how students perceive us and the classroom atmosphere. We should be in a place of continual reflection on what went well in a lesson – was it just a one off or can it work again and be developed and used in subsequent lessons? Students' perceptions may not always be accurate and we tread a fine line between popularity and effectiveness as teachers.

### Drawing on the Knowledge of the 'Old Masters': Piaget, Rogers and Others.

As well as drawing knowledge from observing our students and reflecting on our daily teaching practice we may also draw knowledge from the past. The experience of the masters of the past is still valid today. I would encourage all of you to take the risk and dust off some of the old books and sources and you may be surprised at what you find. Let us take a brief look at some of the educators of the past.

Firstly, Jean Piaget, who may be familiar to some of you. He lived from 1896-1980 and was instrumental in exploring how students acquire understanding. He felt that children had to have some physical interaction with what they were doing in order for learning to take place. One interesting point he made back in the 70s was that visual images are not enough. He said,

‘... many educators believing themselves to be applying my psychological principles, limit themselves to showing the objects ..... or worse still simply present audio-visual representations of objects in the erroneous belief that the mere fact of perceiving objects and their transformations will be equivalent to direct action of the learner in the experience.’

I feel this is particularly relevant for us today as we live in a visual age bombarded by images which either have no effect or have an anaesthetic effect. When we share images of happy occasions or disasters it does not from my observation lead to action. Social media does not appear to be followed by social action the emotive reaction experienced appears to be an end in itself.

Secondly, Carl Rogers 1902-1987. Again Carl Rogers was very much from the humanistic point of view focusing on the client or student. Three elements are essential for personal growth and development –these are achieved ‘within an environment that provides them with genuineness (openness and self-disclosure), acceptance (being seen with unconditional positive regard), and empathy (being listened to and understood). In the classroom we have the opportunity to exhibit all three of these.

Students are very quick to pick up on honesty and we can give them a level of openness and self-disclosure that encourages a similar response from them. Acceptance I believe should be a given: too often we are used to a rewards and punishment mentality. Punishment or withdrawing favour from students does not encourage participation in the learning process. Of course correction is part of learning but can be delivered in a positive manner; punitive controls and punitive marking versus positive encouragement and rewarding effort make all the difference especially in the language teaching environment when so much of our personality is invested in the use of language. Most importantly – empathy – this means giving our learners the right to be heard and a willingness to understand them. As Rogers says, ‘Without these, relationships and healthy personalities will not develop as they should, much like a tree will not grow without sunlight and water.’ Rogers stresses the importance of ‘Teacher’s Real-ness’: ‘This involves the teacher’s being the person that he is, and being openly aware of the attitudes he holds. It means that he feels acceptant towards his own real feelings. Thus he becomes a real person in the relationship with his students’ (Rogers, 1961).

### The Learning Community: Teacher to Student, Student to Teacher, Student to Student.

The learning community – when a suitable classroom environment is achieved then a learning community can be created. The definition of a learning community is one where ‘a group of people who share common academic goals and attitudes meet on a regular basis to collaborate on class work. Such communities have become the template for a cohort based, interdisciplinary approach to higher education.’ Basically the key word here for me is collaboration: working together with our learners with a common purpose to achieve specific goals. The idea of an exchange between the shareholders or participants in a group make it more likely that they will participate. The flow can be teacher to student, student to teacher and student to student.

### Conclusions and the Pathway Ahead.

In conclusion, I hope to have stimulated some thought as to how we manage our classroom and manage ourselves. We as teachers should be constantly revising and redefining our role. I hope that I have shown a few more pathways that may inspire us.

To borrow from the poet Robert Frost –  
‘Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –  
I took the one less travelled by,  
And that has made all the difference.’

May we find different paths on our teaching journey both to follow and to lead.

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## PATHWAYS THAT INSPIRE US



### Accompanying EFL Teachers from Theory to Practise

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### Introduction

In any teaching-learning situation success depends on giving proper consideration to both human elements, such as the role of the teacher, the nature of the learners, and also to non-human elements like the textbook, the syllabus, the number of hours allotted to the subject study and the like. With education reform, teaching foreign languages is the core of many debates and the agenda of almost all discussions. Thus, many questions on the subject are posed: should we teach scientific subjects in French or in English? Should we introduce both of them in primary schools? At what level? But the true questions are hardly raised, like those concerning the teachers, their qualifications and their training. Let us make no mistake about it, any tentative reform, and whatever its actions are, could not be achieved without prior action of teachers; they are the cornerstone and the secret of any successful educational system, for they contribute to a large extent in the achievement of all objectives. Therefore, priority should be given to teachers: how to prepare them for changes, innovations and reforms that are likely to happen.

### Problem Identification

The suppression of “I.T.E” and “Écoles Normales” has left a gap in the field of training, and the need for social peace has imposed temporary solutions for real problems such as the heavy recruitment of graduate students. This approach has its limits and has led in one way or another to a deficit of a pedagogical expertise and professional skills, in addition to the reduction of the duration of training practice and the insufficient mastery of needs planning. Thus, the diagnosis is unfortunately severe and negative: departments of English in some universities do not train efficient teachers of EFL, neither do they train competent “speakers” of English.

### The Pedagogical/Professional Training

This is done or supposed to be done in the form of some theoretical modules such as: TEFL, Psycho-pedagogy, and Psycho-linguistics, plus a training period of about five weeks in a secondary school in the third term of the fourth year. Most of the students do not see the difference between these modules because they deal with some theoretical aspects of teaching/learning process and some of the well-known approaches to language teaching. This remains abstract and the trainees cannot figure out their application in real classroom; many trainees confessed that have never been taught what a teaching or a thematic unit is, what its different phases are; they had never received the proper training to design teaching unit plans lessons, nor even methods of evaluating pupils' learning and their teaching.

The pedagogical training in secondary schools planned by the Algerian official texts has been unfortunately either cancelled in some parts of the country or neglected. First, it is done in a very short period (4 to 5 weeks). Second, the trainees are supposed to be supervised by their university teachers, inspectors and trainers in the secondary school. Yet it is this period where the gap between the university and the secondary school should be bridged, that it is widening, because the university teachers do not follow their students at schools, inspectors are not even informed of the operation and the trainees go to any available teacher because the “Direction of Education” does not do its job effectively. The trainees find it an interesting experience and although they have not enough time to observe, to learn and apply what they have learnt, they acknowledge that they learn more about the art of teaching in a classroom than at the university.

### The Teacher Training

Teacher training should focus its attention on classroom practice, and should have as its primary goal the improvement of teacher’s practical efforts to bring about effective learning on the part of learners. Experiences have shown that teacher development should be fostered not only in in-service training but also in initial training. The teacher training involves giving novice and experienced teachers alike readymade answers as opposed to allowing them to discover their own alternatives (Lucas, 1988). For Freeman (1989), training is defined as a strategy for direct intervention by the collaborator in teaching. The intervention is focused on specific outcomes achieved through a sequence of steps within a specific period. It is based on the assumption that through mastery of discrete skills teachers will be effective in the classroom.

However, for Davis and Plumb (1988), training entails a “pre-planned” agenda set by the workplace or syllabus as opposed to an “impromptu flexible agenda set by groups”, “needs of workplace” as opposed to “personal needs” “qualification” as opposed to career development and “standardization” as opposed to “innovation”.

### A Suggested Plan for the Future Training

For our university, the changes are occurring quickly and at a larger scale; the new situations are imposing urgent objectives for the teaching of English. Therefore, the mission of the Department of English should be clearly stated and not wrongly interpreted as limited to the production of teachers of English for secondary schools. From clearly stated objectives, the curriculum will be reformed to train efficiently motivated students willing to become teachers of English in Algerian schools and other university departments, and competent graduates who will use English in their work. The training for a “MA” could be planned in two parts: the first one would be a two-year study, which would re-enforce the linguistic competence acquired at the secondary school level. The second consists of three stages:

### a- The Observation Stage:

In this stage, trainees passively undergo a period of conditioning during which the “Do’s” and “Don’ts” of classroom practice are inculcated, a stage that obviously involves classroom visits. The student teachers are asked to produce elaborate systematic rigid plans – or a number of questions to answer. Special meetings between the trainees and the trainer are advisable to discuss the observed lessons. The observation stage lasts for about a month - a duration sufficient for trainees to attend the different phases of a teaching unit: Listening, Reading, Language Manipulation and Writing.

### b- The Demonstration Stage:

The trainees are rarely given a chance to perform and try out before the blocked training period. The demonstration stage is a vital element to imitate some ritual teaching behaviour. Discussion sessions are always necessary to assess trainees’ performances; it is preferable to have such sessions right after the lesson practice for adjustments, additions and refinements.

### c- The Blocked/Long Practice Stage

A stage that lasts for about four weeks, and in which student teachers do not study at the university but respect the trainer’s timetable. They are required to plan classroom tasks and/or activities appropriate to learners and with respect to the teaching programmes and objectives and apply them in a genuine leaning context. This is the vital stage of the training process and the pivot on which all else hinges –without application there is no training.

### The Trainer

There is no doubt that the role of the trainer in such an operation is of a paramount importance. Therefore the choice should be based on rigorous criteria. These teachers should be experienced, skilful and competent enough to ensure successful training practice. The trainer should focus on the trainee as a person. Like pupils, trainee teachers have individual needs, strengths, weaknesses, varying degrees of knowledge and experience. The trainers’ role as a facilitator is indispensable, they remain full partners in the education process; they should co-ordinate with trainees in lesson planning. They have to demonstrate patience and understanding to trainees, and encourage them by pointing out the good points, and suggesting other alternatives for less successful ones. They should also view their mistakes as a sign of learning and points to discuss in the post-performance sessions, so that they can help improve or eliminate certain behaviour like lack of confidence, shyness, anxiety or an air of superiority.

The trainer teachers need to be put at the heart the training process; they are the sole agent of effective behavioural improvement, because they help the trainees to be independent decision maker at all times.

### Conclusion

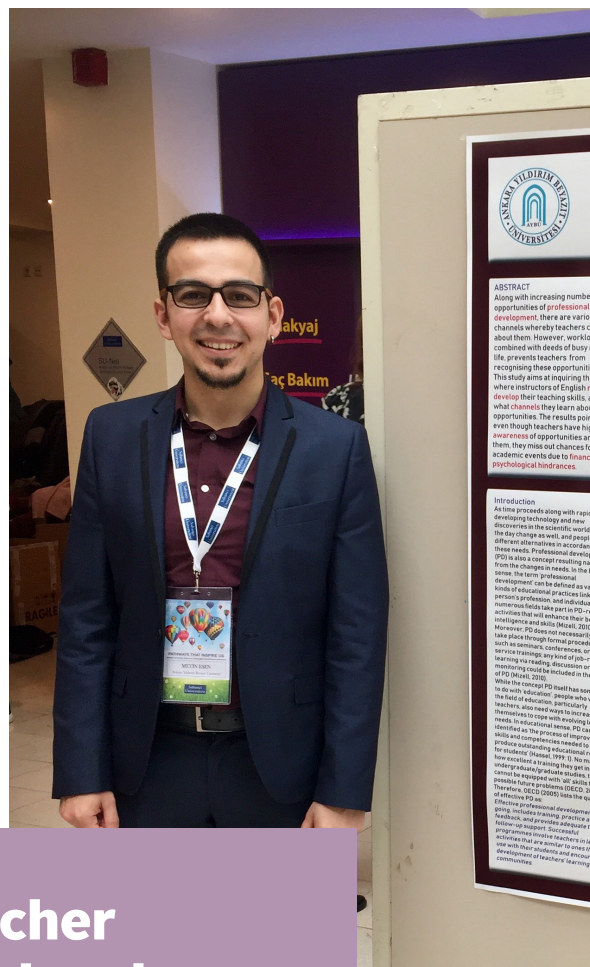
We are in the twenty first century; so our school should be oriented towards the future. In addition, if educating, instructing, socializing and preparing the child to acquire knowledge and a qualification constitute the essential duties of today's school, we wonder how we can achieve these goals without adequate training for teachers. All societies, nowadays, are entering the Internationalization Era: this urges future teachers, who should have to guide our children and develop their learning desires, to have a high knowledge level and competence. Tomorrow's world relies on real mastery and the effective use of "learning"; it is "grey matter" that constitutes the plain and true richness of any country. Good teachers are not born, but they are made.

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# PATHWAYS THAT INSPIRE US



## Need for Increasing Teacher Awareness about Professional Development Opportunities

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### Abstract

Along with an increasing number of opportunities of professional development, there are various channels whereby teachers can learn about them. However, workload combined with deeds of busy modern life prevents teachers from recognising these opportunities. This study aims to inquire into the areas where instructors of English need to develop their teaching skills, and from what channels they learn about relevant opportunities. The results suggest that even though teachers have a high awareness of opportunities around them, they miss out on chances for some academic events due to financial and psychological hindrances.

### Introduction

As time proceeds, with rapidly developing technology and new discoveries in the scientific world, needs of the day change as well, and people opt for different alternatives in accordance with these needs. Professional development (PD) is also a concept resulting naturally from the changes in needs. In the broadest sense, the term ‘professional development’ can be defined as various kinds of educational practices linked with a person’s profession, and individuals from numerous fields take part in PD-related activities that will enhance their both intelligence and skills (Mizell, 2010). Moreover, PD does not necessarily have to take place through formal procedures such as seminars, conferences, or in-service trainings; any kind of job-related learning via reading, discussion or monitoring could be included in the scope of PD (Mizell, 2010).

While the concept of PD itself has something to do with ‘education’, people who work in the field of education, particularly teachers, also need ways to improve themselves to cope with evolving learner needs. In educational sense, PD can be identified as ‘the process of improving staff skills and competencies needed to produce outstanding educational results for students’ (Hassel, 1999: 1). No matter how excellent the training they get in their undergraduate/graduate studies is, they cannot be equipped with ‘all’ skills to tackle possible future problems (OECD, 2009). Therefore, OECD (2005) lists the qualities of effective PD as follows:

Effective professional development is on-going, includes training, practice and feedback, and provides adequate time and follow-up support. Successful programmes involve teachers in learning activities that are similar to ones they will use with their students and encourage the development of teachers’ learning communities.



### Literature Review

There have been several studies carried out to understand how different teachers of English view PD, and to what degree they are aware of various strategies through which they can improve themselves. A study was executed by Hismanoğlu (2010) to clarify in what ways ELT teachers interpreted the term PD, and what their choices of strategy for PD were. The research revealed that the majority of the participant English teachers (84%) regarded PD 'as an important part of their profession' while the remaining group showed less enthusiasm due to handicaps like 'heavy work schedule, strict working hours, or funding' (Hismanoğlu, 2010: 994). Besides, the most preferred three strategies for PD were found to be mentoring, teaching portfolios, and in-service training, which is an indication that presence of communication and cooperation renders a PD strategy desirable (Hismanoğlu, 2010).

Another research by Yumru (2015) aimed to investigate Turkish secondary state school EFL teachers' perceptions about the most effective ways of teacher learning and their expectations of the in-service training implemented by the Ministry of National Education. The study identified self-monitoring through video and self-reflexion as the most preferred strategy for professional development. The reason for this preference seemed to be the strategy's being 'totally new', 'meaningful and enjoyable', and in a 'non-threatening environment' (Yumru, 2015: 180). The study also listed some of the teachers' main requirements regarding PD processes: active participation in the decision-making process, organised and sustained facilities, contact with teachers from other institutions within their cities, effective induction for novice teachers, and promoting self-monitoring among pre-service teachers. They also demanded the cooperation of school administrators as team-mates 'who know how to listen to teachers, their needs, and their proposals to further the quality of teaching' (Yumru, 2015: 182). Finally, the teachers made two suggestions on the content of in-service training programmes: the purpose of the initial activities in these programmes should aim to raise awareness for self-realisation as teachers, and the approach of the programmes should serve the target of the sessions (Yumru, 2015).

Chang, Jeon, and Ahn (2014), in their study with teacher educators in South Korea, investigated opportunities and constraints for continuous professional development (CPD). The majority of the participants, who were university professors and education officials, showed 'preparation for future education' and 'competency in task performance' as the reasons for the need for PD. However, according to both the professors and the officials, the biggest constraint blocking the way to PD was teaching and work load. In connection with this fact, their suggestion for an improved PD was a reduction in teaching and working hours. Finally, the participants considered 'research', 'publication', and 'an increased number of training sessions for professional learning' preferable for evaluation of CPD.

### Methodology

This study, in a parallel with the ones above, aims to inquire into teacher needs for and awareness of CPD facilities. Within this frame, this study aims to answer three research questions:

1. What are the teaching areas where English teachers need to improve themselves most?
2. What are the most common sources of advertisement for PD opportunities?
3. From the view of teachers, what are the responsibilities of PD units and administrations regarding PD?

To collect data, a mixed method was implemented via two research tools. An online survey of three sections (see appendix A), starting with background questions, investigated teacher needs regarding CPD and the channels by which they learn about PD opportunities. The items in the tool were derived from *Teaching and Learning International Survey* (OECD, 2009) and *The EAQUALS Framework for Language Teacher Training & Development* (North, Ortega, & Sheehan, 2010). A focus group interview (see appendix B), applied in both schools with two groups of five-six participants in each, intended to inquire further into teachers' attitudes to support the findings of the survey.

A total number of 47 participants, chosen by convenience sampling, were instructors of EFL from the English preparatory schools of a state and a private school (see Table 1). Permission was obtained from the ethics commissions of both schools so as to ensure the participants' well-being. The descriptive data obtained by the results of the survey was analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics 25, comparing the results in terms of five variables: gender, age, education, experience, and school type.

Table 1. Participant profile by variables.

State Institution							
Gender		Age		Education		Experience	
Male	Female	Under 30	Over 30	BA	MA/PhD	Under 10 years	Over 10 years
4	23	9	18	12	15	11	16
Total: 27		Total: 27		Total: 27		Total: 27	
Private Institution							
Gender		Age		Education		Experience	
Male	Female	Under 30	Over 30	BA	MA/PhD	Under 10 years	Over 10 years
10	10	10	10	16	4	15	5
Total: 20		Total: 20		Total: 20		Total: 20	

### Research Findings

The two different sections of the survey, needs for PD and channels to learn about PD opportunities, were found to be reliable, with Cronbach's alphas of .93 and .77 respectively.

As table 2 shows, one of the biggest needs for PD lies with information communication technologies, with 44.68% of the teachers (n=21) feeling moderate levels of need and 23.40% (n=11) feeling high levels of need. Teaching students with special learning needs is another area where 38.30% of the teachers (n=18) feel high levels of need and 29.79% (n=14) feel moderate levels of need. Finally, material and activity development are a significant area with 31.91% of the teachers (n=15) feeling moderate levels of need and 29.79% (n=14) feeling high levels of need.

Table 2. Need for professional development.

	High Level of Need	Moderate Level of Need	I am not Sure	Low Level of Need	No Need at All
1. Lesson planning and timing	9	14	2	13	9
2. Student assessment practices	9	18	2	9	9
3. Classroom management	9	13	4	11	10
4. Knowledge and understanding of my field (linguistic features of English)	11	10	7	8	11
5. Knowledge and understanding of instructional practices (methodology) in my field	8	12	3	15	9
6. ICT (Information Communication Technology) skills for teaching	11	21	4	6	5
7. Teaching students with special learning needs	18	14	8	5	2
8. Material and activity development	15	14	5	6	7
9. School management and administration	7	13	13	7	7
10. Teaching in a (mostly) monolingual setting	2	12	10	13	10
11. Student counselling	9	12	6	8	12
12. Implementation of learner autonomy in the classroom	10	13	9	11	4
13. Applying the Common European Framework for Reference	2	13	13	7	12
14. Handling relevant cultural issues as part of language learning	3	17	9	10	8
15. Self-assessment and teacher autonomy	6	18	4	8	11

Gender, education and school type do not reveal many statistically significant differences, but age does. The differences between teachers under 30 and teachers over 30 are significant in terms of lesson planning ( $U = 166$ ,  $p = .026$ ), student assessment ( $U = 161$ ,  $p = .018$ ), classroom management ( $U = 166$ ,  $p = .026$ ), and student counselling ( $U = 157$ ,  $p = .016$ ). Also, experience follows age in significance regarding student assessment ( $U = 143$ ,  $p = .004$ ) and classroom management ( $U = 162$ ,  $p = .015$ ).

In the second section of the survey (see table 3), the teachers seem to reveal a high awareness of PD since 40.43% of the teachers (n=19) agree there are a large number of opportunities, and 48.94% of them (n=23) agree there are various channels to follow PD opportunities. The teachers' main sources of advertisement for PD are their colleagues (63.83%, n=30), social media platforms (48.94%, n=23), academic publishing (44.68%, n=21), e-mails and administrations (each 40.43%, n=19), and PD units ((34.04%, n=16). However, 31.91% of the teachers (n=15) disagree with and 29.79% (n=14) are unsure about attending academic events such as conferences.

Table 3. Channels to learn about opportunities.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	I am not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. There are a large number of opportunities for Professional Development (PD) in my subject field.	2	3	9	19	14
2. There are various channels through which I can follow opportunities for PD.	2	2	8	23	12
3. I mostly learn about opportunities for PD through e-mails forwarded to me.	2	10	13	19	3
4. My peers and colleagues are among the sources of information related to PD opportunities.	2	3	5	30	7
5. Social media platforms are abundant in terms of opportunities for PD.	4	8	9	23	3
6. I regularly follow academic blogs or journals related to my job and PD opportunities.	7	7	7	21	5
7. The administration in my workplace occasionally advertises PD opportunities to follow.	2	9	11	19	6
8. I occasionally attend events (e.g. conferences, job fairs) to follow latest trends and needs in PD.	8	15	14	9	1
9. There is a Professional Development Unit in my workplace that informs me about opportunities for PD.	4	5	10	16	12
10. I receive quite rare or no advertisement regarding opportunities for PD.	15	15	9	6	2

### Discussion

#### *1. What are the teaching areas where English teachers need to improve themselves most?*

The survey shows that teachers need development in the areas of technology, material development, and teaching learners with special needs. The first one is quite understandable as developing technology creates new needs in the classroom. In fact, material development is also related to the former as both students and classrooms are equipped with the latest innovations such as smart phones, the internet, smartboards, computers, and projectors. Teachers need to create teaching material and activities so that these could be adapted into technology. Also 7 of the participants of the focus group interview mentioned “technology” and “innovations” while explaining why PD is important. To quote one teacher:

*Students and perspectives are also changing. We don't have the same students with the students we had five years ago. Maybe it's because of the technology, ... and I think it's a variable in our job.*

The last one, on the other hand, could be significant because of the fact that it has something to do with neither methodology nor linguistics. In her study, Pokrivčáková (2015) emphasises that teaching a foreign language to a learner with special educational needs is an area that requires attention from all educational figures to create an organised collaboration.

#### *2. What are the most common sources of advertisement for PD opportunities?*

The answer of the second research question is similar in both the survey and the focus group interview. The majority of the participants regard their colleagues as the best sources of news about PD opportunities. 13 teachers from the focus group interviews, who identified the most significant step in their careers in terms of PD, stated that they were informed about the particular opportunity by one or some of their colleagues.

#### *3. From the view of teachers, what are the responsibilities of PD units and administrations regarding PD?*

As mentioned in the research findings chapter, the teachers revealed a high awareness of PD opportunities around them. However, a considerable number of participants had negative attitudes towards attending academic events such as conferences. The reason behind this negative correlation between high PD-awareness and low event-attendance is touched on by the answer given to the last two questions of the interview which are about the responsibilities of PD units and administrations in terms of promoting PD opportunities. Some teachers complained that administration is not supportive enough when teachers have difficulty in attending such events due to financial or time constraints, and infrastructural handicaps. Quotes below are some examples of complaints by the teachers:



*If there are these opportunities, the administration should, you know, guide us through finances and through arranging our schedules, ...  
... and finding money is easier than finding a substitute for your classes, because it's psychological problem ...*

Finally, one teacher mentioned the administration's attitude towards the idea of PD in preparatory schools through these words:

*They (the administration) expect many things, physically and quantitatively, but quality is not required, I think. They just take this idea for granted that we are not an academic department. So, you don't have finish your master's degree; you are doing that for yourself ...*

As in Chang, Jeon, and Ahn's (2014) and Hismanoğlu's (2010) studies, mentioned earlier, workload is a considerable barrier to PD opportunities, and it seems that teachers deem administrations responsible, as they do not do their best to support teachers financially and psychologically. In the light of these conclusions, future studies might focus on the administration's point of view towards PD opportunities to shed light on different dimensions of academic events in preparatory schools.

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### Appendices

#### Appendix A: Online Survey Questions

##### A. Background Information

1. What is Your Gender?

Male	Female
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2. How old are you?

Under 25	25-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 and over
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3. What is the highest level of formal education that you have completed?

Bachelor's Degree	Master Degree	Doctoral Degree	Other .....
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4. How long have you been working as a teacher?

This is my first year	1-2 years	3-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	More than 20 years
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## B. Professional Development Needs

This section of the survey intends to determine your needs for professional development in terms of certain areas related to English Language Teaching. Please mark the relevant grade in the scale below between “No need at all” and “High level of need” considering your level of need in the area.

	No Need at All	Low Level of Need	I am not Sure	Moderate Level of Need	High Level of Need
1. Lesson planning and timing					
2. Student assessment practices					
3. Classroom management					
4. Knowledge and understanding of my field (linguistic features of English)					
5. Knowledge and understanding of instructional practises (methodology) in my field					
6. ICT (Information Communication Technology) skills for teaching					
7. Teaching students with special learning needs					
8. Material and activity development					
9. School management and administration					
10. Teaching in a (mostly) monolingual setting					
11. Student counselling					
12. Implementation of learner autonomy in the classroom					
13. Applying the Common European Framework for Reference					
14. Handling relevant cultural issues as part of language learning					
15. Self-assessment and teacher autonomy					

## C. Awareness of Opportunities for Professional Development

This section of the survey intends to determine your awareness of the professional development opportunities around you and the channels through which you hear about these opportunities. Please mark the relevant grade in the scale below between “Strongly disagree” and “Strongly agree” considering the validity of the statements on your side.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	I am not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. There are a large number of opportunities for Professional Development (PD) in my subject field.					
2. There are various channels through which I can follow opportunities for PD.					
3. I mostly learn about opportunities for PD through e-mails forwarded to me.					
4. My peers and colleagues are among the sources of information related to PD opportunities.					
5. Social media platforms are abundant in terms of opportunities for PD.					
6. I regularly follow academic blogs or journals related to my job and PD opportunities.					
7. The administration in my workplace occasionally advertises PD opportunities to follow.					
8. I occasionally attend events (e.g. conferences, job fairs) to follow latest trends and needs in PD.					
9. There is a Professional Development Unit in my workplace that informs me about opportunities for PD.					
10. I receive quite rare or no advertisement regarding opportunities for PD.					

### Appendix B: Focus Group Interview Questions

1. How would you define professional development?
2. What are popular professional development opportunities in your field (ELT)?
3. How important do you think professional development is for your profession?
4. In (at least) how many years of teaching should a teacher seek refreshment?
5. What is the most significant step you took in your career in terms of professional development?
6. How did you learn about this opportunity? What was the source of news?
7. On what platforms do you most come across such opportunities (e.g. internet, real life, journals)?
8. What aspects of these opportunities would make them appealing to you?
9. What do you think are the responsibilities of professional development units regarding promoting these opportunities?
10. What do you think are the responsibilities of administration regarding promoting these opportunities?



## PATHWAYS THAT INSPIRE US



### **A Continuing Professional Development Journey towards Assessment Literacy**

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### Introduction

Language assessment literacy (LAL) amongst teachers, or rather the lack of it, has become an area of major concern in English Language Teaching in the past decade. It has been well documented that unfortunately many English language teachers lack the knowledge and skills to write effective language tests, evaluate the effectiveness of their tests, and use their test results in meaningful ways (Tsagari & Vogt, 2017). The purpose of this presentation is to suggest ways that we can help teachers to become more assessment literate by drawing on the personal experience of the speaker. After defining what assessment literacy is, we will discuss why LAL is important for teachers, and we will examine some of the barriers to teachers becoming assessment literate (Stiggins, 1995). By drawing on the personal pathway taken by the speaker, teachers will be able to plot their own pathways to becoming assessment literate.

### What is LAL?

Inbar-Lourie (2008, p. 389), defines LAL as the capacity to ask and answer critical questions about the purpose for assessment, about the fitness of the tool being used, about testing conditions, and what is going to happen on the basis of the test results. Fulcher's (2012) oft-cited definition of LAL is perhaps the most broad and comprehensive to date:

“The knowledge, skills and abilities required to design, develop, maintain or evaluate large-scale standardized and/or classroom based tests, familiarity with test processes, and awareness of principles and concepts that guide and underpin practice, including ethics and codes of practice. The ability to place knowledge, skills, processes, principles and concepts within wider historical, social, political and philosophical frameworks in order to understand why practices have arisen as they have, and to evaluate the role and impact of testing on society, institutions, and individuals” (p. 125).

### Is LAL Necessary?

According to Coombe, Troudi and Al-Hamly (2012), teachers potentially spend as much as half of their time on assessment and/or assessment-related activities. It is therefore essential that English teachers have a solid grounding in language testing theory coupled with practical test-writing skills so that they can write tests that assess their students accurately and fairly. As noted by Gronlund and Linn (1990), teachers who assess their instruction can better understand their students' needs, monitor learning and instructional processes, diagnose student learning difficulty, and confirm their learning achievement.

There is also the growing acknowledgement that good assessment can facilitate student learning (Davidson & Mandalios, 2009; Green, 2017; Hamp-Lyons, 2017). When teachers know how to interpret test data, they can use this data to inform their teaching and to personalize their students' learning, and they may also use test results to make adjustments to their teaching syllabus, and to make improvements to the way that they teach (Xu & Brown, 2017). As noted by Harding and Kremmel (2016), LAL should be an integral part of a teachers' ongoing professional development.

### Barriers to LAL

One of the most significant obstacles to LAL, as noted by Stiggins (1995), is a possible accumulation of multiple layers of negative emotions associated with assessment. In other words, teachers may have had many negative experiences with tests when they were test takers. Such negative experiences may include doing poorly on tests, being asked test questions on content that was not taught, not knowing what is going to be tested, not understanding poorly written questions, being unfamiliar with question formats, not being given sufficient time to complete tests, teachers making mistakes in marking and totaling, a perceived bias in the rating of subjective questions, and not knowing what is going to be done with the test results.

Another potential obstacle to teachers becoming assessment literate is that for many teachers, language assessment appears complex with its own difficult concepts and language. Furthermore, some of the important concepts related to assessment such as reliability involve mathematics and statistics, which can be off-putting to language teachers with limited numeracy skills. Many teachers do not actually need to write tests as part of their job description. Rather, the tests for their students are written by specialist test writers in a testing unit, or they could come directly from the ministry of education. If teachers are given responsibility for writing tests, it may only be for small-scale, low stakes classroom tests.

### My Pathway to LAL

In this section of my paper, I will draw on my own personal pathway to LAL, which may help teachers to plot their own pathways to becoming assessment literate.

### Learning on the Job

My undergraduate degree and Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) contained no assessment modules, so the first time I was involved in assessment was when I was a Testing Coordinator for the English Language Support Unit (ELSU) at Bilkent University in Ankara. We did not receive a lot of on-the-job training in assessment, but we had a number of good model exams which we could base our exams on. Although I was only a Testing Coordinator in ELSU for one year, I learnt a lot of practical test-writing skills.

### MA Language Testing Module

While still at Bilkent University, I was able to study for an MA at Reading University during the summer vacations. Reading University was well known for having language testers like Arthur Hughes and Cyril Weir working there. The MA Testing Module I did was run by Don Porter and Barry O'Sullivan, and the two-week intensive course laid a good theoretical foundation in language testing.

### Language Testing Books

Now I had to build on this theoretical foundation, and a number of books were key. First up was *Testing for Language Teachers* (Hughes, 1989), followed by Bachman's (1990) *Fundamental Considerations in Language Testing*. A constant companion was the *Dictionary of Language Testing* (Davies et al. 1999), and Weir's (1993) *Understanding and Developing Language Tests*. Later, the series by Cambridge University Press also became essential reading: *Assessing Reading* (Alderson, 2000); *Assessing Writing* (Weigle, 2002); *Assessing Listening* (Buck, 2001); *Assessing Speaking* (Luoma, 2004); *Assessing Grammar* (Purpura, 2004); and *Assessing Vocabulary* (Read, 2000).

### Language Testing Journals

Language Testing journals have also been an essential way to keep up to date with the latest research in Language Testing. *Language Assessment Quarterly* and *Language Testing* are the two main journals, but other useful titles include: *Assessing Writing*; and *Papers in Language Testing and Assessment* (formerly the *Melbourne Papers in Language Testing*).

### Working as an Assessment Supervisor

Another steep learning curve in the development of my assessment literacy skills came when I worked as the Assessment Supervisor for two and a half years from 2000-2002 at Zayed University in the United Arab Emirates. This job entailed managing the team that was responsible for the production and analysis of all tests and final exams for 8 levels of students across two campuses in Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

### Attending Specialized Language Testing Conferences

In addition to presenting a number of conference papers on language testing at various international conferences such as IATEFL and TESOL, I have also been fortunate to have presented at specialist language testing conference such as the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) Conference in Berlin, and The Association of Language Testing and Assessment of Australia and New Zealand (ALTAANZ) Conference in Auckland. From 2001 to 2012 I helped to organize the Current Trends in English Language Testing (CTELT) Conference held annually in Dubai.

### Joining Language Testing Organizations

Another good way to learn more about language assessment is to join a Language Testing Organization, such as: the International Language Testers Association (ILTA); the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE); the European Association for Language Testing and Assessment (EALTA); and the Association of Language Testing and Assessment of Australia and New Zealand (ALTAANZ). Most language teaching organizations such as IATEFL and TESOL are likely to have Special Interest Groups (SIGs) devoted to developing the language testing knowledge and skills of language teachers. For 11 years, from 2001 to 2012, I co-chaired the Testing and Evaluation SIG of TESOL Arabia with Christine Coombe. In addition to organizing the CTELT Conference mentioned above, we also conducted many workshops on language testing throughout the Gulf and in other parts of the world, and we also developed an online course to help teachers improve their assessment literacy skills.

### Co-editing Testing Books

Lastly, (although not finally, as my pathway towards LAL is still continuing), I have co-edited a number of language testing books with Christine Coombe and other colleagues, including:

*Assessment in the Arab World* (Davidson, Coombe & Jones, 2005); *The Fundamentals of Language Assessment* (Coombe, Davidson & Lloyd, 2009); *The Cambridge Guide to Second Language Assessment* (Coombe, Davidson, O'Sullivan & Stoyanoff, 2012); and most recently, *Language Assessment in the Middle East and North Africa: Theory* (Coombe, Davidson, Gebril, Boraie & Hidri 2017).

## Conclusion

The lack of LAL amongst English language teachers is a major concern that English language testing specialists need to help address. The ongoing quest to help teachers improve their knowledge about and experience with different types of language assessment is a crucial one and one that can be enhanced with some of the professional development activities that have been discussed in this chapter.

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## PATHWAYS THAT INSPIRE US



### Powertech Touched MLD, METU!

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The Sabancı University School of Languages (SL) PowerTech Teacher Training (TT) Program is a program which can be a 'life boat' to help English language instructors navigate Web 2.0 tools that can be integrated into university level language courses. The training course is open to instructors from diverse universities of Turkey every year. In the summer of 2016, a group of instructors from Middle East Technical University (METU) also attended the SL PowerTech TT. This paper reflects on the contribution of the PowerTech program to the Modern Languages Department (MLD), METU by mainly referring to a rectorship-sponsored scientific research project, and also by exemplifying the classroom uses of some Web tools covered in the training through the restructuring process of a required speaking-oriented course offered to students from all departments at METU.

In the summer of 2016, Sabancı University School of Languages held a teacher training program unprecedented by any other institution. The program welcomes English language instructors from several different universities of Turkey. The program was a feast for technology-thirsty instructors, who needed some touch of practical and fun applications integrated into their teaching. One of the intentions behind the participation of instructors from different universities is that they can spread their insights to their colleagues on their return to their universities. Hence, the training program proved to be most useful in the Modern Languages Department (MLD) of METU in two main ways. Firstly, mini in-service training sessions were organized through the support of a rectorship-sponsored scientific research project at the MLD, METU. The objective of the initiative was mainly to shift attitudes toward the integration of user-friendly and free educational applications from neutral or resistant to positive and enthusiastic. Bearing the objective in mind, a computer assistant collaborated with the researchers and held sessions which instructors attended on a voluntary basis. The sessions aimed to provide each participant with hands-on experience with the assistance of a 'more knowledgeable other'. It is not uncommon for instructors who are not digital natives to feel intimidated and shy to ask questions in lecture type training sessions; however, in the MLD Web 2.0 tools sessions, the team of researchers paid utmost attention not to utter a single negative remark, but to constantly give positive reinforcement to the participants so that they would not shy away from the simple technology which is very difficult to leave outside our classrooms today.

When it comes to the selection of the applications, programs, cloud systems or web sites, the researchers were particularly careful about favoring the most practical and functional ones considering the courses offered at MLD. In addition, Web 2.0 tools that did not require uploading extra programs were preferred. The researchers were careful to choose free apps too.

The sessions lasted over the whole year, offered every two or three weeks at the department meeting room. The instructors were asked to join the sessions with their laptops, but an extra laptop was also provided by the researchers to share with the participants if need be. The Web 2.0 tools whose integration to MLD courses was covered during the sessions were Google Docs, Google Sheets, Google Slides, Google Drive, Google Forms, Kahoot, Edpuzzle, Padlet, Nearpod, Mentimeter, Mysimpleshow, Bitly web address shortener, Google shortener, Cue Prompter and QR codes creators.

The second contribution of the SL Powertech program to the MLD can be observed in the recent Academic Oral Presentation Skills Course (Academic Presentations Course) supplementary materials available on the course open courseware. The open courseware is an official platform of METU which can host a variety of course-related files that can be accessed without any log in information requested from users. Academic Oral Presentation Skills Course open courseware supplemented by custom-made input videos, custom-made brain storming and schemata-activating videos, sample student presentations, extra course practice material, extra listening material, relevant YouTube videos edited to fit the course content and objectives, Input slides and Input slides with voiceovers and Kahoot and pronunciation games using the content of the course, and thought-provoking Edpuzzle videos about student presentations (Balbay & Selcan, 2017). The open courseware initiative was triggered by the change in attitude towards the integration of online tools that make education more fun, practical and accessible which was the end result of the SL Powertech program at Sabancı University. According to the learner analytics of the open courseware (available at <http://ocw.metu.edu.tr/course/view.php?id=252>), the course material available there has been used by a range of countries other than Turkey (28%), including mostly the USA (39%), UK (36%), India (29%), and Germany (27%). The Mysimpleshow videos and the input videos made for the course are among the most popular videos used by students in the 4 semesters after the open courseware was launched. When it comes to the classroom use of the materials by the teachers, the teachers pause the videos in class where they feel the need to make comments or ask questions to the students. Kahoot games on course content make students much more attentive to details on parts of a presentation, audiovisuals and the APA citation format. The games do not require passwords to launch; they are available to both students and teachers or even outsiders on the open courseware.

Another major contribution of the SL Powertech program is to the standardization sessions at the MLD, METU. The standardization session of the Academic Presentation Skills course is where instructors teaching the course that semester watch and evaluate student presentations before the meeting so that discrepancies in grading can be discussed during the meeting. Google Sheets was first used for the teachers to enter their grades for each component of the rubric. The formulas entered could make the calculations for the average grade for each component of the grade breakdown even when entered 5 minutes before the meeting. However, the instructors could see the grades already entered by their colleagues, and were inevitable lenient towards agreeing with the other instructors' grades when Google Sheets was used. Another very simple solution that a Web tool introduced at the SL Powertech program came to the rescue of MLD; Google Forms are now being used for the pre-standardization meeting grading. Student videos are integrated on to the forms where there are sections for grading the presentations as if instructors are replying a survey. While the instructors cannot see the grades already entered by others, the calculations are still a work of but a movement when the data is exported to excel. Google Forms were also used to receive course-related feedback from both the instructors teaching the course and about 1000 students who take the course every semester. The fact that feedback was anonymous helped both instructors and students to reveal their true feelings without being anxious about offending each other, or for students without worrying about their grades if they needed to write negative remarks.



In Academic Oral Presentation Skills Course, thanks to the Powertech program, web address shorteners and QR codes too, were widely used when sharing materials with students. Mentimeter, a presentation tool that lets the audience in on the presentations, was another tool introduced to instructors during the Web 2.0 tools sessions, and that was used in some Academic Oral Presentation Skills Course sections depending on how open the instructor was to developments in presentation technology. This free online software was relatively less popular among the instructors. Yet, replacing the role of Mentimeter, Google Slides has already provided the presenters with a more user friendly option that lets the presenter receive audience questions or responses directly on the slides during the presentation, and probably in the future, teaching the presentation skills course will touch upon recently developing web tools as well. Apparently, web tools that make teaching more effective and practical are developing at an exponential pace; hence training programs for language instructors that allow the hands-on experience will definitely prove to be not only enlightening for the individual participants but also for the educational institutions in which these participants are employed.

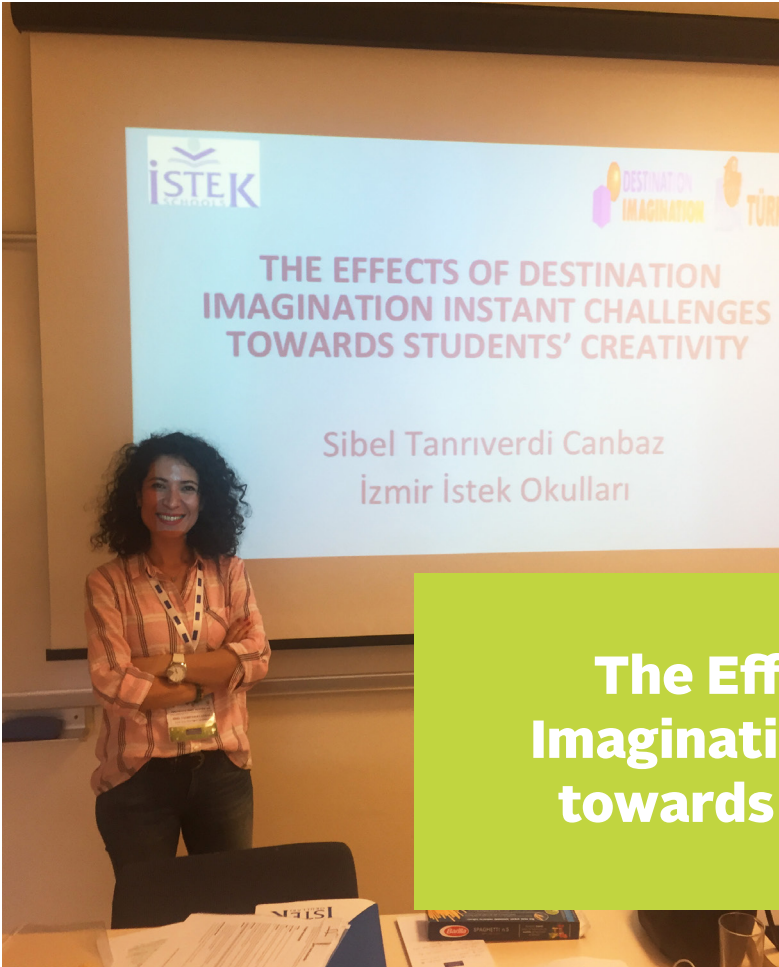
We would like to thank all the eager and energetic teacher trainers teaching on the Powertech program. They all have a foresight of the future of teaching where technology is intensely made use of. The intense changes made in the supplementary materials of Academic Oral Presentation Skills Course made it easy to share materials with a massive number of students (about 1000 each semester at METU), made materials easy to access, made classes more fun, made our instructors more eager and enthusiastic about their teaching, but most important of all, more interested in making use of simple, practical and free educational web tools. After all, a teacher who is not a student at all times, cannot be a good teacher. The whiteboard and board marker of today's classrooms are computers and projectors. Smart and creative use of what is available to us is one way to enhance learning and communication with our students.

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## PATHWAYS THAT INSPIRE US



### **The Effects of Destination Imagination Instant Challenges towards Students' Creativity**

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### Introduction

Destination Imagination (DI) is a tournament which is held all around the world, including Turkey. More than 3000 students attend DI every year in Turkey. The Instant Challenge (IC) part gives a real-life problem to students and expects them to solve this problem in a limited time by a performance. This study sought to reveal the efficacy of Destination Imagination Instant Challenge on students' perception of creativity.

### Literature Review: What is Destination Imagination?

Destination Imagination is a leading educational non-profit program dedicated to teaching students the skills they need to succeed in school, their careers and beyond (Destination Imagination, 2018). It aims to develop project-based learning programs that blend STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics) education with social entrepreneurship. The students are expected to use their creativity and imagination during the process including their ideas and research skills. The program improves students' creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, team-building, risk-taking, project management and perseverance skills as well as their self-confidence (Destination Imagination, 2018). 200,000 students annually spend approximately 2-5 months working as teams to find solutions to the challenges that encourage the development of out-of-the-box thinking (Karslen & Calkin, 2014). There are six challenges that involve solving a problem with a combination of technical, fine arts, structural, improvisational, scientific and service learning. In order to achieve this goal, DI organizes 200 tournaments around the world. The students show their talents and creativity as they compete against other teams from various kinds of places. The programme is regarded as the global leader in teaching the creative process from imagination to innovation (Karslen & Calkin, 2014).

All the teams start practicing their DI challenges at the beginning of September. They are expected to choose a challenge from the following fields: technical, fine arts, structural, improvisational, scientific and service learning and at the same time they are to practice instant challenges. Until February or March, they give an eight-minute presentation of their solutions. The teams with the best presentation of their solutions to the challenges are certified to attend the DI Global Finals. The students gain a lot of experience of teamwork, problem-solving and creativity in the process.

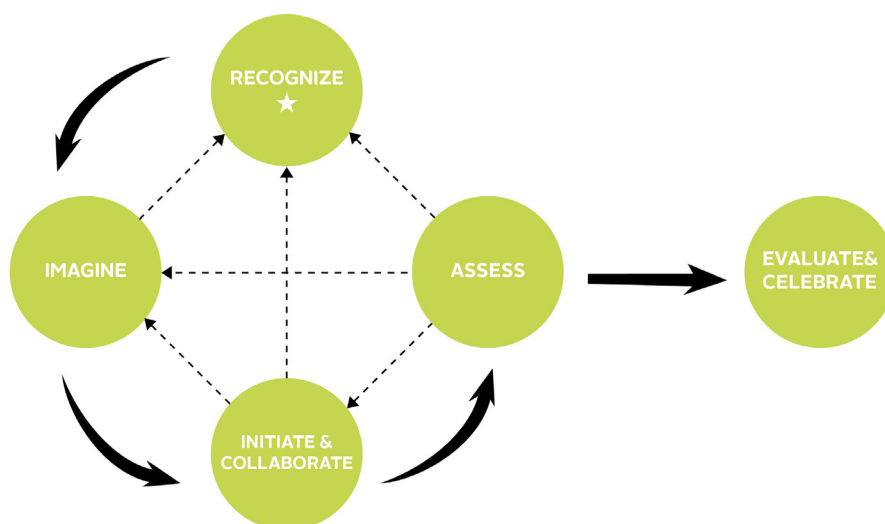
As DI is a non-profit entity, there are many volunteers who support the organization. More than 38,000 volunteers work for DI organizations including DI alumni.

### Destination Imagination Pedagogy

Destination Imagination is a learner-centered model focusing on the creative process of the learners and engaging in deep inquiry and research in the area of STEAM and critical thinking while getting prepared for the challenges. DI aims to prepare the learners for future success in education, career, and life in a changing world (Roadmap for Teams, 2017).

#### (a) Creative Process

The aim of Destination Imagination is to help students learn and engage with the creative process from imagination to innovation (Roadmap for Teams, 2017). It has similarities with Bloom's Taxonomy in some ways; however, it has its own different path.



*Creative Process (Destination Imagination 2017:4).*

The path of the stages is circular and if necessary, the teams can go back to the previous stage. The team manager can lead the students but cannot interfere with their work at any stage.

### (b) Project- Based Learning

Project-Based Learning (PBL) is defined as a model that organizes learning around projects (Thomas, 2000). That's why Destination Imagination utilizes PBL which gives complex tasks including challenging problems or questions that involve students in design, decision making, problem-solving or researching over extended periods of time. At the end of the period, the students are expected to present their work to be assessed.

### (c) 21st Century Learning

All the stages of creative process outlined above aim to teach and apply 21st century skills in multiple ways. The creative process fosters collaboration, communication, creativity and critical thinking.

According to Partnership for 21st Century Learning (2015), 'Learning and innovation skills are getting more recognized as those students who are prepared for a more complicated life and work environments in the 21st century and those who are not.' In order to prepare the students to those environments and the future, creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration skills are crucial.

### (d) TeamWork

McEvan & Ruissen & Eys & Zumbo and Beauchamp (2017) describes teamwork and taskwork accordingly:

"Within teams, members' behaviors can be categorized in terms of both taskwork and teamwork processes. Marks et al. [2001] differentiated between the two by suggesting that "taskwork represents what it is that teams are doing, whereas teamwork describes how they are doing it with each other" (p. 357).

Destination Imagination aims for the students to work as a team by interacting and understanding each other in order to find the solutions to the challenges.

### The Importance of Instant Challenges in Destination Imagination

Instant Challenges (ICs) are designed to help the students solve the given problem in a short, limited time (approximately 5 minutes) by working collaboratively. The reason is that Destination Imagination aims to foster quick, critical and creative thinking skills. ICs have a vital role in DI as it accounts for 25% of the team's tournament score. ICs are divided into three categories: Task-Based, Performance-Based and combination of two. The tasks require different kinds of every-day life materials such as spoon, paper clips, cotton balls and mailing labels. All of these materials seem irrelevant, but that is the point which makes it interesting.

### V. The Results of the Study

This study was carried out at Izmir Istek Schools, Destination Imagination Club. 18 students participated in the study and answered self-reflection questions. They were 11-12 years old and it was their first year in DI.

At the beginning of the semester, they were insecure and felt anxious about not being able to succeed. After a while, as they learned about DI and the process, they felt more comfortable and they had fun while learning.

Here is one of the self-reflection statements and a few students' answers about the process after some IC practices they studied (The students were free to use English or their mother tongue while answering the questions):

*Statement 1: I believe that I could use my creativity in depth in this IC practice. Choose Yes / No.*

- Yes, because we managed to find a solution to this practice even though it was both task-based and performance-based. We did it!
- Yes, because we had limited materials, but we created something on our own!
- Yes, because we created an earring by using paper clips.
- Yes, because it is so fun to try to create something in 4 minutes.
- Yes, because day by day I feel that I am getting more creative. Teamwork and sharing ideas with friends support my creativity as we imagine together.
- Yes, because I am used to ICs and I find the solutions easier.
- No, because I couldn't adopt the idea first, it was very different. But I want to try it again!

The team manager in Izmir Istek Schools also answered a question given below:

*Statement 1: Do you think IC we practised at school had an impact on the creativity of the students?*

- Yes, because the students have a limited time and material to solve a problem. After a while, they were automatically more creative as they used their imagination.
- Yes, the critical thinking and quick-thinking skills improved a lot.
- While trying to solve the problems, they should think out-of-the-box. They should think differently. They should have quick, strategic plans and solutions. That's why, yes, it had a great impact.

### Conclusion

Destination Imagination Instant Challenge practices teach the students how to activate the creative process to get prepared for the challenges in the future. They also teach students how to work as a team, how to deal with the given challenges in a limited time and how to focus and think creatively and critically. The students learn to evaluate their performances, to be open-minded and to be open to feedback to improve themselves and their team. As individuals, they become more aware of their skills and improvement, and they learn to contribute to be a better team. They get the taste of creating something and trying something new while having fun, and that is the whole aim of Destination Imagination.

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### **An Academic Odyssey:**

### **Creating a Course Book**

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The medium of instruction at Sabancı University is English. All undergraduates are required to take the English Language Assessment Exam (ELAE) or bring an external exam score specified by the University. Those who do not meet the standards of English language proficiency enrol in the School of Languages (SL) until they reach roughly around B2 level, based on Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The educational system of the University is based on the Common Foundations Development Year. During this period, regardless of their subsequent program choices, all students study University Courses such as Natural Sciences or Social and Political Sciences to develop a foundation of knowledge, critical reasoning and an interdisciplinary approach.

In the SL, we apply content-based, integrated-skills instruction to provide students with the necessary foundation skills and knowledge to excel in their interdisciplinary academic studies. University Courses taken by all students give us a clear picture of the skills students will need in their future studies. This allows us to design tailor-made courses, and base our objectives, assessments, vocabulary lists, and themes on the needs of our students.

As our needs are quite specific, existing commercial course books cannot fully meet the needs of our students. Therefore, SL created a series of coursebooks called *Beyond the Boundaries* (<http://sl.sabanciuniv.edu/projects/beyond-the-boundaries>), which have served their purpose well. It is now time for us to write a new series for SL. We have currently been working on our exit-level course book that will equip our students with knowledge and skills they will need in their academic studies.

Our work on the new series started two years ago. In order to address the needs of our students fully, we invested in a lot of time and resources for planning. The first stage began with literature review. This stage was crucial for us because we wanted to make sure we reflected the most recent research findings and innovative ideas in our new series. The literature review group consisted of voluntary instructors who did research on one of the language knowledge and skills areas: reading, listening, speaking, writing, grammar and vocabulary. Apart from these main areas, the group also read about other areas that may be useful, such as critical thinking, EAP curriculum, and study skills. After their research was completed, the group presented their findings to the writers. The writers also did their own research on areas they would focus on while writing the book. We also made use of training opportunities. The writers attended in-house and external training sessions. This process enabled the writers to make key decisions, such as how to approach strategy training. Although this process took a lot of time, it was a valuable and rewarding stage that informed many decisions taken for the book series.

Following literature review, another group of volunteers conducted needs analysis with faculty students and instructors as well as SL students and instructors to identify both future and immediate needs. Needs analysis allowed us to make key decisions such as prioritising certain skills over others, and determining the themes of the course book.

Prior to the process of writing the book, several decisions regarding the content had to be taken based on literature review, training sessions, and the needs analysis results. The first issue concerning the content of the book was to determine the number of reading and listening inputs in each unit. The feedback which was received from most faculty students indicated that students tend to have difficulty in taking effective notes during lectures. Therefore, it was decided that the number of listening inputs would be increased.

The book is based on an integrated skills approach. However, in the SL, writing is particularly important as students are required to submit all their assignments and take exams in English at Faculty. Our needs analysis indicated that students are expected to use a variety of writing forms in faculty exams and assignments, such as summary writing, response paragraph and classical essay. Another issue with writing is that expectations about writing at Faculty courses sometimes change. To be able to reflect these changes in SL courses, the book project team decided to have a separate writing booklet. Keeping it separate allows the flexibility to reflect any major changes in faculty course writing requirements in SL.

Theme selection has been another important part of the book project. While deciding on the themes, feedback from faculty teachers and the content of faculty courses were taken into consideration. Although in the needs analysis survey given to SL students some students stated that they would like to study popular themes ranging from popular TV series to social media, the themes in the book have been chosen to be the brain, AI, energy and history, which are related to the content of faculty courses.

During the implementation stage of the book project, the challenges we have encountered have driven us to learn more as teachers. We have found that being committed and organised as well as working in harmony as a team have been indispensable to such a demanding and challenging project.

One of the challenges was finding appropriate texts to be used in the inputs. At the beginning of the project, our team decided to use authentic texts for the reading inputs, the rationale of which was that our students will need to deal with authentic texts when they do research for their academic studies and should get used to coping with such texts. This decision poses a challenge not only for the students but also for the book writers as we, the writers, are well aware of the fact that the text we decide to use needs to be suitable in content, organisation, length, difficulty level and in many other ways since there will be no editing afterwards. For the sake of being standard, some web tools have been used, which helped the writers to see the Lexile Level, the length and difficulty of the texts to be used in each input.

One of the things which we learned a lot from has been the process of requesting copyright for the texts we have decided to use. Our team has come across some obstacles that have not been foreseen. We have found out that time is an issue when it comes to getting copyright as we sometimes had to wait for a reply to our request for a very long time. This, we have learned, necessitates having a contingency plan; that is, finding more than one text for each input and sending copyright requests for all of them. We have come to understand how important it is to pay attention to the details in terms of use as even a minor mistake is likely to cause legal issues.

One of the most significant decisions has been to determine which writer would focus on which skill in the book. This decision led us to think about our preferences as well as our strengths and weaknesses as material developers and teachers. One option was that each writer could write one unit so the work could be shared unit by unit but in this way, it would have been harder to attain consistency throughout the book. That is why we decided that each writer would focus on one skill.

In every phase of the book project, we have learned that group dynamics is of utmost importance to the success of the project. As the project has required the writers to continue to work after work hours and during the weekend, being available, patient, flexible and committed have been key to this project. Communication among the writers has been a crucial aspect of this. Many emails have to be exchanged and ideas need to be shared. In order to do so in an orderly manner and to keep track of all the communication among writers, a paid online platform that serves as a record of all documents created as well as any messages sent among writers has been used. Feedback has been definitely at the core of this process. A feedback team that consists of teachers from the SL has been formed. This is necessary although each writer also gives feedback on each other's work because after working on the same project together for a long time, it seemed to be a better idea to have other teachers who are not involved in the writing process to provide feedback.

Some guidelines for feedback have been prepared so as to inform the feedback group about what is expected of them in a clear way. The materials are continuously edited according to the feedback we receive from the feedback team.

The next step is to pilot the units with SL students before the book, which is scheduled for spring semester in the coming year, is published. Despite its challenges, this project has been motivating, inspiring, and professionally rewarding as we have had a lot of experiences which we can reflect on. These reflections, we believe, are certain to inspire us on a professional and personal level.

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### My Marathon As a Lifelong Learner



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“The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn.”

Alvin Toffler

### My Marathon Training, My Lifelong Learning Teacher

Five years ago I discovered the world of running. When I first started, I did not have a clue: I had no idea how it feels to run a kilometre. I started with shorter distances and then my focus became running longer distances like half marathons or marathon distances which led me to focus more on running as a serious activity. I realised I needed to structure my training to build up the mileage. I had to practice and learn about pacing, nutrition, energy consumption and how to run longer distances. I have always had to challenge and improve myself. It has not been easy.

Just like lifelong learning, running has helped me to become a better version of myself, to grow continuously and to develop mentally. In time, I gained more and more confidence, learned more about myself and developed a positive attitude. In a marathon there is a finishing line, where you might think that it is all over - finally you made it! This is how some of our learners see their university education: “once you graduate it is over”. However, it is just the first step of a long and often challenging journey. My marathon training has helped me to understand the value of Lifelong Learning and how I can implement the skills that make me a lifelong learner in my classrooms.

### What is a Lifelong Learning Mindset?

In a growth mindset, people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work—brains and talent are just the starting point. This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment (Dweck, 2014).

A growth mindset curriculum, which we have implemented in our PROJ course, helps learners to be more engaged in class through intensive and extensive inquiry and increases their level of motivation, digital literacy, self-motivation and communication skills.

### Philosophy of Sabancı University (SU)

The philosophy of SU is to ‘adopt an interdisciplinary approach of learning to learn to cultivate knowledge, support education and facilitate social advancement’ (Sabancı University website). To meet this educational goal, as School of Languages (SL) teachers, we promote the idea of Lifelong Learning by instilling the qualities of a lifelong learner into daily instruction and making it accessible to all our learners.



### SL PROJ Course

Project Based Learning (PBL) is an instructional approach which prepares learners for academic, personal, and career success. The teacher plays the role of a facilitator, working with students to generate questions to solve authentic problems grounded in real world contexts, engaging them in investigation and assessing what they have learned from the experience. As a result, students develop deep content knowledge as well as digital literacies, problem solving, creativity, and teamwork in the context of doing an authentic project.

For the past 3 years we have applied a Project Based Learning (PBL) approach at Sabancı University in our PROJ course to promote English through a classroom culture which values learning over performance. It is a collaborative, learner-driven project where the learners are actively involved in all stages taking initiative and responsibility for their learning. Our SL PROJ is a 16-week course based around a real academic research project and in general it helps our learners to prepare for the type of projects they will undertake in their faculties and careers beyond their university studies. More directly, it helps them to learn and develop the skills they will need as freshman students when they undertake the compulsory PROJ 102 course.

### Overview of the 4 Phases of Project Work in SL

The project itself is divided into four phases. In the first phase teams are chosen and research questions are set. Through the next two phases students research an area of interest and in teams create webpages and present their results through poster presentations to their peers and the university in a public setting. The final stage is devoted to structured reflection, of which they experience at previous phases, and is an essential aspect of the PBL learning framework.

### Lifelong Learning Skills through the Project Work

According to the World Economic Forum, future jobs will require certain skills such as problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, social skills and digital literacies to be successful in the professional world (Future of Jobs Report, World Economic Forum). The underlining principles of our PROJ course try to focus on these skills to better prepare our learners for their future studies.

### Digital Literacies

Using technology effectively is an important aspect of our PROJ lessons. Our students are asked to do their research by using digital learning platforms. Each team creates an online platform to present their ongoing work, store their documents, and share their project. Communication among the students plays an important role in all phases of the course and it is not always possible for them to get together physically. Therefore, they use digital tools for their virtual meetings and to design and present their research.

### Problem Solving

Our learners come across a variety of problems during the course. They may have difficulties working with team members, meeting the deadlines, deciding on their research question or experiencing technological problems. They are expected to take responsibility in all phases of their learning and a greater level of autonomy is granted them by the instructors to work through these obstacles as teams rather than relying on intervention for a solution.

### Creativity

Our learners are faced with situations where they are required to use creative thinking skills which they do not usually apply in their normal learning experience. They are continuously involved in this active process and apply their imagination to form ideas, ask questions and evaluate the ideas of their peers to find innovative solutions to the problems they encounter during the course. Teachers also develop these skills through different methods and activities to encourage the learners to think in diverse ways and head in directions that are not conventional.

### Team Work and Collaboration

Our learners work in groups and are expected to coordinate and negotiate with each other throughout the course. The project work requires responsibility and self-management skills that demand team work. They share their ideas, generate solutions to the problems and as a result have better motivation to learn and to be actively engaged in the learning process.

### Teachers as Lifelong Learners

In order to inspire our young learners who are the citizens and workers of the 21st century, as teachers we need to adopt a lifelong learning mindset. The best examples instructors can set are in empathising with our learners.

To step out of our own comfort zones and determine to undertake a course that is different in structure, application and outcomes is a lifelong learning experience that we must agree to do along with our students. Many of the PROJ teachers have experienced similar journeys as their students when grappling with the stages and complications of the course. The resulting achievements of the learners has thus been an even more rewarding experience as it has come hand in hand with the satisfaction of pushing ourselves further and in new ways in our professional capacities. Like crossing the finishing line after running for hours without stopping while your mind, legs and lungs have all been screaming out to you to quit, the final steps and the eventual rest are all the more satisfying.

In so many aspects of our lives, how we perceive our own success or failure depends on having a positive mental outlook; our happiness and growth will be translated into the success of our students, not only in school and work, but in life. Helping them become more aware of their talents and passions is important for their learning as well as having a life of purpose, success and authenticity.

As Dweck points out (2006), we always have the potential to change and grow through application and experience. As I did the PROJ course, it gave me an opportunity to reflect on my own relationship with learning. Within a relatively flexible framework, it has fostered both learner and teacher autonomy by this 'new way of doing things' in class and the excitement to experience how this type of learning changed our role as teachers, motivated both us and our learners.

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## PATHWAYS THAT INSPIRE US



### Instructors' Opinions About a Modular Approach At a State University

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### Introduction

Even developed countries still face several problems in running language policies at macro or micro levels. In this respect, Turkey has been integrating English into its educational system to ameliorate language policy from primary to higher education for decades (Kirkgoz, 2007). However, British Council (2015) reports that the students attending English Prep-Programs have low English proficiency and their motivation is still low although they are exposed to English from elementary school. Similarly, Sakiroglu and Dikilitas (2012) found in Turkish tertiary EFL context that 'proficiency is a significant factor that affects motivational level of the FL learners' (p. 3219). This problem might stem from Turkey's national policy which is established for serving 'political and socioeconomic ends' and contextual micro language policies cannot meet the demands of macro language policies (Kırkgöz, 2009, p. 681). To reach institutional aims, Turkish EFL prep-programs pursue either a Progressive Approach (PA) or Modular Approach (MA). Both approaches cover a whole year of intensive EFL education; however, in PA students move forward with a placement exam at the beginning of the year while in MA they move forward or repeat a module in accordance with module exit exams (Erarslan, 2018). Therefore, MA sounds more target-oriented for institutions to apply. Considering poor levels of students at a public university, Kahramanmaraş Sutcu Imam University (KSU), shift was made from PA to MA. The institution identified several necessary conditions such as number of classrooms and EFL instructors, class sizes, appropriate textbook and extra materials. Until the 2014-2015 academic year, KSU operated with 20 classes with approximately 550 students enrolled in the Prep-Programme. For MA, placing students with different levels of English to a various number of classes seemed impossible. However, a shift from a compulsory to an optional prep-programme was put into place which resulted in a relatively lower number of students. In the 2015-2016 academic year, the institution switched to MA but no evaluation was applied. In the 2016-2017 academic year, the researchers of the study conducted semi-structured interviews and evaluation forms consisting of open-ended questions to obtain the instructors' views on MA. The aim was to reveal the EFL instructors' perceptions on the MA as presented in the following research question:

- What are the EFL instructors' views towards the Modular Approach in the English Preparatory Program?

### Methodology

This research employs a descriptive study with a qualitative approach to gain participants' views about an educational programme. The participants were 7 EFL instructors (Mean Age = 38.57). Two of them were female. Three of them were enrolled in PhD Degrees (2 = ELT; 1 = ELL). The data collection tools - evaluation forms and the semi-structured interviews - were implemented in 2016-2017.

The evaluation forms covered following subjects: syllabus (i.e. distribution of student book/ workbook and Self-Access-Hours in the weekly schedule) and use of extra materials in (repeat) classes. Semi-structured interviews covered topics on the advantages and disadvantages of MA. The results collected from these qualitative data collection tools underwent conceptual content analysis with emerging common themes and categories.

## Findings

The study encompasses two aspects of the participants' perspective as insiders in the system: (1) their views towards the syllabus; (2) their perceptions towards the system change. Regarding the first one, the table below represents the participants' views on the distribution of Student Book load (St Book), Workbook load (WB), Weekend Worksheets (WEWs) – designed by staff backing up students on their syntactic accuracy and writing skills – , Self-Access hours (SAC) and Extra Materials (EM) over the Modules: Beginner (A1), Re-Beginner – for students who repeat beginner class – (Re-A1), Elementary (A2), Pre-Intermediate (B1) and Intermediate (B2) based on CEFR.

Table 1. *An overview of instructors' views on the syllabus*

	Beginner (n = 7)	Re-Beginner (n = 5)	Elementary (n = 7)	Pre-Int. (n = 6)	Intermediate (n = 3)
St Book	Applicable	Applicable	Not Applicable	Applicable	Applicable
WB	Applicable	Applicable	Not Applicable	Applicable	Not Applicable
WEWs	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
SAC	Not Sure	Not Sure	Not Sure	Not Sure	Not Sure
EM		Not Sure			



Table 1 illustrates that the distribution of two units a week on St Book with 25 class hours on a week was applicable in all modules except for Elementary class which was established with the first module and getting students familiarized with the syllabus was demanding. It had a negative effect on running WB in class hours although it was found applicable in other modules except for Intermediate. Most of the participants favoured WEWs in A1, A2 and B1 levels for the content but not in B2 level. They called for a change in the design and an increase in class hours. Only two participants did not favour WEWs in that they conceptualized a non-grammar driven approach even for homework. Following are three most common excerpts on that:

*It is a tiring job to check all the weekend homework at two class hours and cure students' grammatical problems. (P3)*

*Time is not enough on providing feedback to students' writing tasks. (P2) Similarly: P4, P5, P7 reported on time insufficiency.*

*I had to call many students to my office to provide further feedback on their writing which I believe the most important skill in English. (P7)*

Regarding SAC class, which was 2 class hours a week, 6 of the participants did not report any views as there was only one responsible participant for this class for gaining control over all the classes. However, participants asked for running SAC hours by themselves to make visible reflections on their own students' development. Nonetheless, they had an agreement to decrease two class hours to one to place a room for one class hour for WEWs. Participants advocated inclusion of EM in Re-Classes but most of them suggested replacing EM with a different Student Book. Below are example excerpts:

*I'm happy that we cover more grammar and vocabulary exercises with extra materials but I would be happier if we replace the whole documents with one student and workbook series in repeat classes. (P5)*

*It is very hard to ask the students to do what was already done! However, using extra materials does more good not only for the teacher but also the students. The best solution should be replacing with a very similar student book in design to our system. (P7)*

The above excerpts shed light on the need for inclusion of a new book into the repeat classes for two reasons; the difficulty of running the classes and the need for a break in the routine. Apart from these views collected through the evaluation forms, the below table illustrates the participants' views from the semi-structured interviews:

## Instructors' Opinions About a Modular Approach at a State University

Table 2. *Instructors' views on the MA*

Advantages	Participant Codes	Disadvantages	Participant Codes
Not monotone	P1, P2, P3, P4, P7	Heavy workload	P1, P2, P5, P6
Motivating	P1, P3, P5, P6, P7	Constant need for EM	P3, P4, P5, P7
Compatible levels for students	ALL	Rush	ALL
Success-oriented	ALL	No freedom	P1, P2, P3, P7
Contributes to professional development	P1, P7	Burden	P2, P3, P4

As Table 2 shows, the number of participants favouring MA was greater than those with unfavourable views. The participants found MA to be less monotone which breaks the routine with an aim to motivate both the instructors and the students. P4 commented on this:

*I think modular approach facilitates both us and our students all the time and helps us not getting bored.*

They also developed positive views by stressing on the correct levels that students were in. Additionally, participants found MA success oriented as the overall goal was to attain each module's CERF descriptors and not letting students' to move back from their classmates' pace.

*It really motivates me to teach my students in bettered ways especially in repeat classes. (P3)*

The above comments indicate that MA facilitates teachers' professional development in repeat classes. On the other hand, participants commented on the disadvantages of the heavy workload which caused a burden for material development and testing offices. It was also found to be demanding to follow the pace of syllabus and attend the mini-meetings weekly and develop EMs constantly. They also criticized MA because of the rushed pace for teachers and having no freedom in implementing their own classroom procedures due to time limitations. In addition, three participants found MA a burden since dealing with repeat classes was a very challenging job as articulated below.

*I never want to run repeat classes in which there is no motivation, discipline or learning. (P4)*

Briefly, some instructors were on the verge of burnout and felt pressure to follow the pace. However, shifting to MA assisted the instructors to hold mini-weekly meetings in which they initiated sharing their experience in dealing with repeat classes or evaluating WEWs in alternative ways. They also seemed to be inspired by their colleague's different techniques.

### Conclusion

Employing a pathway as a shift from PA to MA, the EFL instructors seemed more motivated by decreasing burnout level, sharing teaching ideas, becoming solution makers and asking for a professional development unit which could offer support on how to teach and assess specific skills better and apply new trends in their own classroom environment. These changes might well represent the very beginning stages of building an institutional culture that would undoubtedly meet its apparent aims and objectives apart from only the CEFR attainments. Accordingly, Kırkgöz (2009, p. 679) favours the responsibility of language teachers in making institutional policies 'at the implementation level of the policy issues'.

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