

Editorial Beginnings: Renewed Calls for Teachers-As-Researchers, Writers, and Readers

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A Call for a Beginner's Mindset

Will you let yourself unwind

Put your soul on the line

Striving for a beginner's mind

– Sufjan Stevens and Angelo De Augustine (2021),
"Beginner's mind"

Allowing oneself to be seen as a beginner seems to involve both humility and hubris at once; trying to grow in new directions, especially as an adult, can seem reckless and unseemly. The popularity of Tom Vanderbilt's (2020) recent book *Beginners*, however, suggests a broader respect for the possibility of taking this risk for indeterminate, even apparently useless lifelong learning. It is noteworthy that second language acquisition serves for Vanderbilt as a key metaphor for how one's fear of being a beginner can get in one's way (Szalai, 2020), a point that many language teachers and learners can recognize in their own experiences. A fear of making mistakes can become paralyzing, leading to fossilization and plateaus, in language learning and in life. As Mari Ruti (2014) emphasizes more generally about how people "narrow the field of existential options available" through unconsciously repeating the familiar, it is often the case that "we prefer the security of our misery to the insecurity of the unknown" (p. 64). A beginner's mindset, it is hoped, might be one way of disrupting this cycle and opening toward new potential, while not abandoning fidelity to what remains good from the past.

As beginner co-managing editors and as educators, Ryo Mizukura and I share this hope in new directions and unexpected potentials, in a shared condition of "natality" that for Hannah Arendt "is also the promise of a new beginning, of creativity" (Ahmed, 2014, p. 193). As Catherine Malabou (2019) notes in extending John Dewey's thought with new concepts of neuroplasticity, "Education is precisely what enables intelligence to dissolve and recreate its own habits, to imagine the multiplicity of possibilities, to put knowledge to the test of action and thus to act independently from official norms"

(p. 111). Intelligent growth without predetermined ends sometimes means repeating beginnings "to reopen the possibility of new possibilities" (Ruti, 2014, p. 139), both to learn from encounters with others and to produce our own "new ideals, values, goals, and ambitions" (p. 139); it means "recognizing 'what is' as a machined complex of *relations* that *might* have been assembled otherwise" (Wallin, 2010, p. 185).

This natality and transformative intelligence indeed seems assembled and sustained in relation to others, even if this involves "reaching for rather than assuming solidarity" (Ahmed, 2014, p. 197). It is not a matter of progress through creative destruction, of constantly jettisoning the old to chase the new, but thoughtful repetitions to revivify intelligence toward singular and collective ideals. As we turn our respective and collective intelligences to this new project, we have been inspired by the practitioner-researchers who have undertaken their own new projects in their contributions to this issue. While they have different levels of experience in writing for publication, they share a fresh energy of a beginner's mindset in trying something new or looking at their practice from a new angle.

One common thread in many of the articles in this Fall 2021 issue is a particular type of beginner's journey: these scholars have undertaken projects of becoming newly theoretical, that is, they have looked with fresh eyes on theories as internalized resources and tools for thinking in and about their teaching practice. The journal mission of supporting teachers-as-(becoming)researchers is expressed through these pieces, as well as in the still-apparent traces of their production. The aim, for writers and for readers, is a kind of continuous becoming as scholar-practitioners.

A Call for a Soft Scholarly

So give it all up, give it distance

Live it up for the path of resistance

– Sufjan Stevens and Angelo De Augustine (2021)
"(This is) The thing"

As a journal encouraging qualitative, post-qualitative, and reflective scholarship, *Explorations in Teacher Development (ETD)* asks for a more expansive, “hard-to-do” (Berliner, 2002, p. 18) rigor from more positivist, traditionally hard scientific research traditions; it calls for a path of resistance. In addition to more traditional mixed-methods research, the journal publishes narrative inquiry and theoretical reflections and explorations, in which the subjective quality of the writing can become a strength rather than something to expel in the name of scientific objectivity. Various sets of standards highlight the rigor of this less positivistic research, which serve as ideals and prompts for thinking rather than strict rules. One example is the American Educational Research Association’s (AERA, 2009) seven standards for humanities-oriented research, summarized as follows:

1. **Significance:** The research matters to readers and contributes to a scholarly conversation.
2. **Conceptualization:** The research draws upon the scholarly literature for concepts that align with the inquiry.
3. **Design:** The research follows a clear plan with justified flexibility.
4. **Evidence:** The research makes logical claims supported by research data and scholarly literature.
5. **Coherence:** The research has both internal and external coherence in its design and execution.
6. **Clarity:** The research conveys ideas and information for readers’ understanding.
7. **Ethics:** The research respects and protects participants, examines its own biases, and maintains a high level of integrity and honesty.

More specifically in terms of narrative inquiry, Clandinin, Pushor, and Murray Orr (2007) recommend “eight key elements” for inquiry that takes adequate account of temporality, sociality, and place (pp. 22-23):

1. **Justifications:** The research has personal, practical, and social importance, such that researchers can “answer the ‘So what?’ and ‘Who cares?’ questions” (p. 25).

2. **Phenomenon:** The research names the phenomenon under study and adopts a narrative view of it.
3. **Methods:** The research describes the particular methods used and why they were chosen.
4. **Analysis and interpretation:** The research uses and describes a clear framework.
5. **Positioning with other research:** The research reviews various relevant scholarly literatures and joins the conversations going on within them.
6. **Uniqueness:** The research provides a “sense of what it is that can be known about a phenomenon that could not be known, at least in the same way, by other theories, methods, or lines of work” (p. 30).
7. **Ethical considerations:** The researchers engage in especially complex relational ethics from start to finish, including thinking through the effects of how others might read their words.
8. **Processes of representation:** The researchers, from the outset, “work from a set of ontological and methodological assumptions and the questions of representational form” that address the entire rhetorical situation (p. 32).

Likewise, mixed methods research (MMR) standards include justified and complementary combinations of methods, approaches, and concepts; aligned research questions and answers; contextual, social, political, and ethical considerations; careful alignment of epistemological perspectives, “data collection methods, forms of analysis, interpretation techniques, and modes of drawing conclusions as appropriate in the logic of MMR” (Brown, 2014, p. 9); considerations of the relative merits of MMR compared to qualitative or quantitative research alone; and the paramount goal of creating “useful and defensible research results” (Brown, 2014, p. 9).

Whether in terms of social scientific, humanistic, or specifically narrative research, this kind of ambitious rigor seems also to demand a beginner’s mindset, a caring and careful reflexivity that refuses the easy comfort of the routine. For instance, rather than rest on assurances from following predetermined rules and procedures,

researchers must engage in relational ethics, constantly question their actions and interpretations, and develop their own situated ethical reasoning and judgment (Kim, 2016, p. 106).

Additionally, when conducting narrative research, teachers must move beyond just telling stories: “Moving from telling stories of our teaching practices to narratively inquiring into our teaching practices situates teachers and teacher educators in the known and the familiar while it asks us to make the known and the familiar strange and open to new possibility” (Clandinin et al., 2007, p. 33). Again, the point is to disrupt the normal fossilized routines of thinking, teaching, and learning in carefully considered ways, thereby creating openings for new potentialities for oneself and others.

For the rigorous “beginner” scholarship that *ETD* aspires to publish, it is thus not at all necessary to be an expert; what matters is simply for the research and writing to matter, both personally and socially. We hope that this journal promotes the kind of “lead learning” that Henderson et al. (2014) called for: rather than experts explaining what everyone else should do, lead learners might inspire others from their own particular integration of their subject learning, self learning, and social learning. We aim for the journal to continue to serve as a sincere community of inquiry into teacher development.

The point of this rigor is emphatically not exclusion or setting impossible demands, to set up “barriers that derail and dissuade” anyone from further pursuits (Jack & Sathy, 2021). The point is to encourage contributors and readers to take up precisely these further pursuits, to see in *ETD* articles opportunities to explore what others have written about their topics of interest, consider various sources of data, and reflect on the entire experience with the wisdom of hindsight.

In other words, writing and reading *ETD* articles can be seen as a form of reflective development for researcher-practitioners at any level of experience and confidence.

A Call for Papers

Speak out, speak out

The conversation may afford you

Wisdom of the wise

– Sufjan Stevens and Angelo De Augustine (2021)

“Reach out”

For the Spring 2022 issue of *ETD*, we invite any scholarship dealing with phenomena related to teacher development. We welcome articles using quantitative or qualitative data as well as theory. We above all urge authors to use their research as an opportunity to learn from—as well as speak out and join—the scholarly conversation about teacher development, sharing the wisdom they have gained along the way.

As we all continue to face the challenges of teaching and living well in a pandemic, we also especially encourage submissions related to the concept of *askesis*, or care of the self. This might also involve the above calls for a beginner’s mindset and a rigorous scholarly becoming. In Foucault’s conceptualization, this activity of caring for the self is not a passive or essentialized self-knowledge of something simply assumed to exist (Kim, Morrison, Ramzinski, 2019). Instead, “the self is formed only through the practice of freely transforming oneself to become something else” (Lightbody, 2008, p. 111). This involves rethinking one’s relations to oneself, to others, and to one’s context, with the greater aim of finding out what one truly thinks, how one acts accordingly, and how to become an ethical subject (Kim, 2019). It also involves establishing and systematizing a truth to commit to and live by, taking pleasure in oneself while remaining open and attentive to others (Kim, 2017).

This means not understanding oneself and others as atomistic individuals, as privileged subjects among objects, but as responsible formed-transforming selves who create their own conditions for ethical agency, attending to social norms and rules but committing to a more ambitious ethics and character to act ethically without guarantees. During the pandemic, ethically ambiguous situations might have become more apparent to many of us, but we might also have begun to notice—or actively attend to—how caring for the self in a radically relational ethics extends to the known and familiar now made strange.

We especially encourage scholarly inquiry of all kinds that estranges taken-for-granted practices and opens new possibilities for teacher development, transformation, or “sideways” growth (Stockton, 2009).

A Call for Readers

Get it right, follow my heart

Back to, back to Oz

Where I was born at the start

– Sufjan Stevens and Angelo De Augustine (2021),
“Back to Oz”

In this issue, seven practitioner-researchers offer their experience and learning for potential resonances. In different ways, they all provide a peak behind the curtain of the interrelated development of teachers, curriculum, and pedagogy. All reveal an active beginner’s mind at work of returning to start to get it right, whether through questioning prior assumptions and practices, imagining the position of a novice student to inspire potential lifelong learning journeys, or translating among theories and practices in novel ways.

Takaaki Hiratsuka delineates how Exploratory Practice (EP) and Fanelovian Premises (FP) are powerful concepts not only on their own but also in tandem in second language teacher education. This power is illustrated through successful models of each of these forms of professional development as well as a careful synthesis of how each might lead into and complement the other. This article not only justifies these language teacher development concepts for potentially skeptical and curious readers, but also proposes several promising directions for future research.

John Pryce describes a self-directed teacher development project (TDP) driven by the question of how to most effectively introduce poetry to novices in an L2 classroom. As Pryce emphasizes, he chose poetry for this TDP partly because he had no experience teaching this genre before and therefore pushed him into new territory, but he also chose it for well-founded pedagogical reasons. This article presents and discusses the resulting task-based learning structure, its behind-the-scenes development process, and its recorded results.

Denver Beirne interrogates his own process of developing a model for teaching metaphor, from its initial stages as merely potential support for an engaging activity involving songs to its evolution over multiple iterations into a theoretically sound, carefully scaffolded pedagogical approach to an especially confusing aspect of language. Beirne highlights adjustments in each iteration in response to feedback in the classroom as well as to engagement with the scholarly literature. This article presents a persuasive argument for why and how

language teachers should attend explicitly to metaphor, and in so doing, illustrates how linguistic theory can translate productively into innovative pedagogy.

Kyle Hoover explores the literature on the use of formulaic sequences as an empowering academic writing strategy, and he presents a mini-unit as a carefully developed praxis, demonstrating the translation processes between theory and practice. In this article, Hoover invites readers to take inspiration from this mini-unit not only to teach L2 university student writers how they can more effectively approach writing research paper introductions, but also to explore other ways to foster a broad repertory of sustainable writing strategies through one’s teaching.

Tom Batten reflects on his experience with using reflective diaries in two small junior high school classes, which opened a consistent channel for students to communicate their experience of each lesson to the teachers. This, in addition to Batten’s own reflective entries, prompted epiphanies about learning and teaching, which in turn fed back into his work as a teacher and as a scholar. This article offers inspiration and advice for other teachers to use reflective diaries to illuminate, interrogate, and improve their teaching.

Robert Remmerswaal narrates his own teacher journey, which will undoubtedly resonate with other teachers who have found transformational power in educational theory; but it might also provoke new perspectives on how seemingly detached theories can become creative resources for innovative teachers in concrete settings. This article explores how Remmerswaal moved beyond an apprenticeship of observation and constructed a coherent and meaningful pedagogical approach of his own through engagement with the concepts of situated learning, distributed cognition, and gamification.

Finally, Olya Yazawa investigates through mixed-methods research the effects that teachers have on language learning motivation in a Japanese high school context. This article explores the relationship between autonomy needs support and self-determined motivation and reports on survey results regarding student perceptions of autonomy and motivation. Yazawa encourages other teachers to reflect on the complexities of motivation and autonomy and how they might better promote students’ perceptions of freedom in their English

language learning.

We new editors are grateful for the work of all our predecessors and support team. For example, Bill Snyder was instrumental in shepherding many of this issue's submissions through their early stages, as were Matthew Turner and Ewen MacDonald. Reviewers including Daniel Hooper, Deryn Verity, Ewen MacDonald, Sam Morris, Guy Smith, Jane Pryce, Matthew Turner, Jo Mynard, Satoko Kato, Nick Kasperek, and Ryo Mizukura helped to ensure the articles' quality. Matthew Turner has continued the work of Daniel Beck and Lisa Hunsberger on this issue's layout. Finally, Andrew Hofmann and Rachel Patterson provided careful proofreading. Without this team, Ryo and I would likely have been at a loss of even how to begin.

Submission Guidelines

The Teacher Development SIG welcomes submissions for its publication, *Explorations in Teacher Development*, that address aspects related to the SIG's core mission of expanding and exploring issues in teacher education. We are interested in publishing the following categories of articles:

- Research Articles (4000-6000 words)
 - Narrative Inquiry
 - Reflective or Theoretical Inquiry
 - Action Research
 - Mixed-Methods Research
 - Arts-Based Research
- Explorations (1000-3000 words)
- Reflections (1000-3000 words)
 - Learning/Teaching Journeys
 - Teacher Reflections
 - Conference Reflections
- Book Reviews
- Interviews
- Columns (500-1000 words)

The TD SIG also publishes the proceedings of our summer *Teacher Journeys* conference as well as occasional special issues in collaboration with other JALT SIGs. If you wish to contribute to *ETD*, please follow these guidelines:

- Use APA Style (7th ed.).
- Submit at any time, but please check the latest call for papers for the publication schedules.
- Include the following with any submission:

- A brief cover letter indicating which category of *ETD* article your submission best fits
- Current affiliation and contact email (a short bio and photo are optional).
- Additionally, include the following with any research article submission:
 - An abstract of 150-250 words, including purpose, methods, and conclusions.
- Include visual aids such as images, graphs, and tables with your article if desired.

Please note that all accepted submissions for the research and explorations sections of *ETD* will undergo a peer-review process involving feedback and suggestions for improvement. Questions and contributions may be sent to the editors at: jalt.ted.ete.editor@gmail.com

Spring 2022 Issue Projected Schedule

- First submissions: 1/11
- First reviews and revisions: 1/12-1/31
- Second reviews and revisions: 2/1-2/15
- Proofreading: 2/16-2/28
- Publication: 3/15 (Explorations, n.d.)

Additional Guidance for Beginning Submissions

Finally, we also recommend that potential authors read three brief chapters from a recent open-access book on the scholarship of teaching and learning (SOTL) (Healey et al., 2020).

- Chapter 3, "Creating and contributing to scholarly conversations through writing" (<https://www.centerforengagedlearning.org/books/writing-about-learning/part-2/chapter-3/>)

This chapter unpacks the metaphor of "conversation" in scholarly writing.

- Chapter 20, "Sharing everyday lived experiences: Stories" (<https://www.centerforengagedlearning.org/books/writing-about-learning/part-4/chapter-20/>)

This chapter discusses the value of written stories as a scholarly and pedagogical genre for capturing situated human experiences and processes of becoming, and it offers "a flexible guide for organizing and writing

stories about learning and teaching" (p. 218).

- Chapter 18, "Revealing the process: Reflective essays" (<https://www.centerforengagedlearning.org/books/writing-about-learning/part-4/chapter-18/>)

This chapter outlines an intellectual and scholarly approach to writing reflections and explorations.

All three could provide helpful guidance, especially regarding the less traditional article genres that *ETD* publishes.

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