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EDITORIALS

Redefining Teacher Development for the Next 50 Years

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The 51st Annual International Conference on Language Teaching and Learning & Educational Materials Exhibition (JALT 2025) convened from October 31 to November 2, 2025, at the National Olympics Memorial Youth Center Sports Building in Tokyo. Under the theme, "LanguageS: Learning, Teaching, Assessing: JALT 50 Years Challenges and Perspectives," the event celebrated a half-century of progress. On November 1, various SIG events were held. Although I could not attend the Teacher Development (TD) SIG session this year, I would like to extend my thanks and appreciation to the TD officers and all participants who contributed to its success.

As JALT enters its 51st year, our profession stands at a significant milestone. For decades, teachers and educators have sought the "best method" to solve teaching challenges. However, the future demands a shift from external solutions to internal inquiry. Redefining TD requires moving beyond the acquisition of new techniques to the deepening of reflective practice (RP).

While often reduced to solitary reflective journals or diaries, effective reflection must evolve to meet the demands of a rapidly changing world. Johnson and Golombek (2018) argue that increasing societal diversity and globalization necessitate a transformation in teacher preparation. Drawing on a Vygotskian sociocultural perspective, they propose redesigning pedagogy to address the inequitable and mobile nature of modern student populations. As a result, reflection ceases to be a merely personal experience and becomes a critical component of responsive teaching.

To be transformative, this reflection must be rigorous and grounded in reality. Yuan et al. (2020) highlight the efficacy of technology-enhanced reflection, particularly through video analysis. Their study of pre-service teachers reveals that recording and editing one's teaching is a complex and dynamic process rather than a simple technical task. Engaging with video data forces teachers to explore how their decisions and actions interact with the various elements within the classroom context, thereby bridging the gap between what they believe is true about teaching (their personal or internal beliefs), and the actual classroom environment in which they are teaching.

The process of reconciling these elements forces a critical inquiry into professional identity: specifically, who we are in the classroom. Teachers typically focus on how to deliver instructional content, using reflection as a mechanical tool to "fix" instruction. Farrell (2025) reiterates the stance he established a decade prior: "we are who we want to be and our actions should reflect who we are" (Farrell, 2015, p. 13). He advocates for a more holistic model that integrates teachers' inner lives (i.e., philosophical views, principles, and moral values) and the development of classroom instructional strategies. True RP requires examining oneself as a complete human being rather than a technician.

This holistic identity is inextricably linked to professional well-being. Hofstadler et al. (2021) reframe teacher well-being as an ecological concept rather than a solitary attribute. Their research on content and language integrated learning (CLIL) teachers demonstrates that well-being emerges from a dynamic network of interconnected factors, including national policies, social

feedback, student–teacher interactions, and personal convictions. Ignoring this ecological context undermines the ability to support both oneself and one's students.

Looking toward the next fifty years, Farrell (2015) argues that teachers must use their RP to evolve beyond the consumption of new methods and to "become generators rather than consumers of knowledge" (p. 13). This agency is vital today. In an age increasingly defined by AI and automation, the uniquely human ability to reflect and think critically is the one skill that distinguishes human practice.

In this issue

Brief Summaries of the Articles

Roland Waller explores how task-based learning (TBL) and task repetition can enhance memory retention in Japanese university EFL classrooms. Drawing on cognitive psychology, particularly theories of working memory, distributed practice, and the production effect, he connects these concepts to classroom-based review activities. He also proposes three guiding principles: integrating multiple skills, making review interactive and meaningful, and using strategic repetition to design engaging, communicative tasks that promote long-term retention and bridge theory with practical teaching.

Daniel Hooper, Alexander Dodd, and Erik Tsuchiya discuss a teacher-led approach to continuous professional development (CPD) through data-driven, dialogic reflective practice. Alex and Erik, two in-service teachers, analyzed video recordings of their lessons using Walsh's Self-Evaluation of Teacher Talk (SETT) framework and engaged in peer discussions guided by Edge's Continuing Cooperative Development principles. The process deepened their understanding of classroom interaction, enhanced confidence, and highlighted the emotional and collaborative dimensions of reflective practice in fostering teacher agency and professional growth.

Anthony Sellick and James Bury discuss the routes they took to obtain public works doctorates by distance learning, from initial application to final submission. Being based in the same tertiary institution in Japan and having a shared body of publications allows them to compare and contrast their doctoral journeys, highlighting their similarities and differences, and showing how each is distinct and unique. The presentation of their journeys allows readers to gain insights that can inform their own doctoral journeys.

Yuri Imamura and Ami Yamauchi explore how cross-institutional collaborative reflection supported two English language educators during career transitions in Japanese higher education. Using shared journals, Zoom meetings, and SNS messages, their collaboration created an emotionally safe space to discuss challenges and exchange perspectives. The process fostered openness across institutions and roles, enhanced reappraisal and emotional belonging, built new professional communities, and helped participants recognise emerging burnout.

Finally, Cam Hill shares notes and reflections on the experience of participating in the Teacher Development SIG Forum at PanSIG2025.

We welcome your contributions to our upcoming issue (Vol. 32, Issue 1). Please ensure your papers are submitted by June 30, 2026. Full submission guidelines are available on our website at https://td.jalt.org/index.php/etdjournal/. Feel free to email: jalt.ted.ete.editor[at]gmail.com with any questions.

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EXPLORATIONS

An Approach to Language Learning Review

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In my pre-intermediate English communication classes last semester, I noticed a troubling pattern: students could actively use new vocabulary and grammar during a lesson, for example, vocabulary quizzes and grammar exercises, but by the following week, much of it seemed to have vanished, specifically when it came to actually using it in the form of productive skills such as speaking and writing. As an English language teacher at a Japanese university, I work with students who are often balancing heavy academic schedules and part-time jobs, so their opportunities for out-of-class review are limited. For this reason, I began to ask myself: How can I help students retain more of what they learn without placing an unrealistic burden on their already busy schedules?

This question led me to explore research on memory retention in learning, particularly within the field of cognitive psychology. The "forgetting curve," first identified by Ebbinghaus in the 19th century and later replicated by Murre and Dros (2015), illustrates how quickly information can be lost without review. While this concept is obviously well known, I was struck by how directly it mirrored what I was observing in my own classrooms. This observation motivated me to consider not only if review was happening, but how review was being carried out, and how it could be improved?

Rather than rely solely on rote memorization, which has its place, but often fails to engage learners, I became interested in how a combination of task-based learning (TBL) and task repetition might offer a more engaging way to reinforce lesson content. In addition, could TBL be a more effective method of supporting memory retention? According to Ellis (2017), TBL puts the emphasis on meaningful communication as the central focus of language learning, and encourages the integration of multiple skills, while repetition, when applied strategically, can strengthen both accuracy and fluency (Bozorgian & Kanani, 2017). Combining these approaches, I began to experiment with review activities designed to be interactive, motivating, and at the same time grounded in authentic communication where possible.

This paper is a reflection on that exploration. It begins with a brief overview of relevant research on memory and language learning, followed by a set of guidelines that emerged from connecting cognitive theory with classroom practice. It concludes with practical examples of review activities that integrate TBL principles and repetition, aiming to support long-term retention of lesson content in an EFL context like my own.

Theoretical Framework: Language Learning and Memory

This section examines how memory processes intersect with language learning, particularly in the areas of information processing, storage, and retrieval. In SLA research, the concepts of "information" and "retention" have been explored through various theoretical models and empirical studies, offering complementary perspectives on how learners internalize and recall language over time.

Definitions

Before turning to specific theories of memory, this section clarifies how the concepts of *information* and *retention* are understood in the context of language learning. *Information* refers to linguistic elements such as vocabulary, grammatical structures, and communicative patterns that learners must internalize to perform specific communicative tasks. This understanding reflects the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), in which grammar and vocabulary are presented in context and directly linked to meaningful communicative use rather than taught in isolation (Richards, 2006).

Retention is the learner's ability to store new vocabulary in long-term memory and retrieve it for later use. It is also important to note that retention depends on the strength of the initial connection between a word's form and its meaning. Research suggests that the more deeply and meaningfully a word is processed, through activities that involve analysis, use, or contextual engagement, the more likely it is to be retained in long-term memory (Gablasova, 2014).

While these definitions establish what learners need to internalize and retain, the methods used to achieve this can vary widely in their effectiveness.

Why Rote Memorization Falls Short

One common but often limited approach is rote memorization. While rote memorization may have some benefit for short-term recall, it often fails to support communicative fluency. Nation (2013) points out that memorizing lists or isolated rules does not equip learners to use language flexibly and appropriately in real-world situations. In other words, knowing the language in the classroom rarely transfers smoothly into using the language outside the classroom if rote memorization is the only method of learning applied.

To address the limitations of rote learning, it is useful to examine what cognitive research reveals about how memory actually works in the context of language learning.

Cognitive Theories Supporting Retention

Ebbinghaus's classic forgetting curve illustrates how unreinforced memory decays rapidly shortly after learning. Contemporary replication studies confirm this pattern: the greatest amount of forgetting occurs soon after learning, particularly within the first 24 hours, after which the rate of loss slows but continues gradually over time (Murre & Dros, 2015). This highlights the need for timely and spaced reinforcement.

These cognitive principles are supported by a growing body of empirical research that explores how different review schedules affect language retention and fluency.

Distributed Practice and L2 Fluency

A recent empirical study with a randomized sample of 116 Japanese L2 learners compared the effects of short-spaced (1-day) and long-spaced (7-day) repetition intervals across four fluency training sessions (Kakitani & Kormos, 2024). Although the two groups followed different rates of fluency improvement during training, their performance on delayed post-tests, administered 7 days and 28 days later, revealed equivalent fluency gains. This outcome highlights the pedagogical strength of distributed practice in supporting lasting communicative gains in L2 learning contexts.

While these findings emphasize the importance of how learning is distributed over time, another crucial dimension involves the cognitive architecture that supports processing and storage.

Baddeley's Model of Working Memory

Baddeley's model divides working memory into the central executive, phonological loop, and visuo-spatial sketchpad, with a later addition of the episodic buffer (Baddeley, 2000). An understanding of this model helps to explain how learners process, store, and retrieve language information through different channels.

According to Baddeley (2000), at the core of working memory is the central executive, which acts like a control system, directing attention, deciding what information to prioritize, and coordinating the other components. The phonological loop deals with verbal and auditory information, such as spoken words or sounds, while the visuo-spatial sketchpad handles visual and spatial information, like images, shapes, and locations. The episodic buffer serves as a temporary storage space that integrates information from the other components and links it with long-term memory (Baddeley, 2000). This model explains how short-term mental processing relies on multiple specialized systems to manage different types of information and integrate them into long-term memory.

In language learning, working memory is particularly relevant, as it aids in maintaining and manipulating verbal information during complex tasks like speaking or listening (Unsworth & Engle, 2007). Stronger working memory, as stated by Miyake and Friedman (2012), correlates with better accuracy, lexical complexity, and fluency in oral production.

Beyond the structure of working memory itself, certain types of processing can further enhance retention.

Production Effect

One such phenomenon is the "production effect," which highlights the memory benefits of saying information aloud. It refers to the advantage gained in memory retention by saying information aloud versus reading silently. This dual-mode encoding, motor output plus self-auditory input, makes words more memorable (MacLeod et al., 2010). Research suggests that this additional processing step, which involves both speaking and hearing the information, leads to stronger memory retention. In other words, saying words out loud and hearing yourself at the same time helps you remember them better.

These cognitive insights provide a strong theoretical foundation for designing effective classroom practices.

Bridging to Task-Based Learning (TBL)

Task-Based Learning (TBL) offers a pedagogical framework that naturally incorporates these memory principles into communicative classroom activities. Spaced, meaningful repetition in TBL emphasizes the importance of meaningful tasks rather than mechanical drills. More specifically, TBL tasks typically cycle through three phases: input, where learners are exposed to new language; interaction, where they engage with others to negotiate meaning, ask questions, and clarify understanding; and output, where they produce language through speaking and writing. This cyclical structure supports distributed practice by spacing learning over time and across different contexts, which is essential for retention (Ellis, 2003).

Designing tasks that engage working memory can lead to deeper encoding and an enhanced capacity to store and remember a second language (Baddeley, 2000; Unsworth & Engle, 2007). TBL tasks are well suited to this because they require learners to hold and process language in real time, forcing them to actively store and manipulate information rather than passively receive it. For example, learners may need to recall a dialogue they have just read or heard, plan what to say in a role-play or conversation, or summarize a story in their own words

Production-based encoding plays a key role in TBL because the approach requires learners to use language actively through speaking and writing, thereby applying the production effect to strengthen retention (MacLeod et al., 2010). The output phase of TBL naturally involves this kind of active language use. For example, students may describe a picture, role-play a conversation, or write a short story or summary using new vocabulary and structures.

Taken together, these perspectives illustrate that retention in language learning is shaped by both cognitive mechanisms and pedagogical design. By connecting these insights to classroom practice, we can create review activities that support deeper, longer-lasting learning.

Task-Based Learning and Task Repetition as Review Tools

Task-based learning (TBL) offers a pedagogical approach that aligns closely with principles of long-term learning discussed in the previous section. Rather than focusing solely on isolated grammar or vocabulary drills, TBL organizes learning around communicative tasks in which language forms are practiced and applied to achieve clear, meaningful outcomes. According to Ellis (2003), a well-constructed task typically includes three necessary elements: (1) an information gap, where learners need to exchange information to complete a task; (2) a choice of language resources, requiring learners to select vocabulary and grammar suited to the specific communicative purpose; and (3) a non-linguistic outcome, such as problem-solving, decision-making, or negotiation. These elements make TBL inherently interactive and purposeful, thus supporting learner motivation and, in turn, increasing the likelihood that new language will be internalized and effectively used.

In EFL contexts, fully authentic communicative situations may be challenging to replicate. Lynch and Maclean (2000) note that creating truly authentic contexts in the classroom can be difficult, however, adapting the principles of TBL within the constraints of the teaching environment can still provide significant benefits. When learners engage with tasks that require meaningful interaction, they are more likely to retrieve and apply previously learned language, strengthening both recall and functional use.

A further addition to TBL in the review context is the strategic use of *task repetition*. Bygate and Samuda (2005) define task repetition as having learners perform the same or similar tasks more than once, typically separated by an interval of time. It should also be pointed out that repetition is not equivalent to rote learning, rather, it offers learners an opportunity to refine their performance, increase fluency, and improve accuracy through increased familiarity with the demands of the task. Zaccaron (2019) expands on this by distinguishing between immediate and delayed repetition: immediate repetition consolidates newly acquired language forms, while delayed repetition strengthens long-term retention by prompting retrieval after a period of forgetting.

In relation to students' difficulty in recalling lesson content over time, the combination of TBL and task repetition offers a promising solution. TBL creates opportunities for learners to use target language in realistic, goal-oriented exchanges, while repetition ensures that the same language items are revisited in varied contexts at variable intervals. This dual approach not only encourages retrieval from memory but also fosters a sense of automaticity, or at least moves learners closer to fluent effortless use of the language. By maintaining higher levels of engagement through purposeful communication, these strategies help bridge the gap between initial learning and long-term retention.

Guidelines for Effective Review in EFL Contexts

The combination of cognitive principles, task-based learning, and task repetition provides a framework for designing review activities that go beyond rote memorization. Drawing from the

research discussed earlier and from my own classroom practice, three guidelines emerged for making review both effective and sustainable in EFL contexts such as Japanese universities.

Integrate Multiple Skills

Memory research that I explored indicates that information is more likely to be retained when it is processed through multiple channels (Baddeley, 2000; Kelly et al., 2022). In language learning, this means engaging learners in tasks that require speaking, listening, reading, and writing in combination, rather than in isolation. For example, a review task might involve listening to a peer's description (listening), taking notes (writing), and then reconstructing the description orally (speaking). This multimodal approach increases the number of retrieval pathways for the target language, making it easier for learners to recall and use it at a later date.

Make Review Interactive and Meaningful

As shown in studies on learner motivation (Miller & Unsworth, 2024) and the production effect (Kelly et al., 2022), active participation in learning tasks strengthens encoding and supports long-term recall. These findings imply that review activities may be more effective when they have a communicative purpose, rather than relying solely on mechanical repetition of drills. In my teaching context, incorporating elements of problem-solving, information gaps, and role-play helps students engage with the material at a deeper level, which increases both motivation and retention.

Use of Strategic Repetition

Revisiting the same or similar tasks at planned intervals reinforces language retention and promotes spontaneous recall (Bygate & Samuda, 2005; Zaccaron, 2019). Immediate repetition allows learners to consolidate new forms while the memory is still fresh, whereas delayed repetition requires retrieval after some forgetting has occurred, which strengthens long-term memory. In my classes, I have found that blending both timings of repetition, such as repeating a task later in the same lesson and again a week later, helps students move from tentative use of the language to more confident, fluent application.

By grounding review in these three principles, teachers can design classroom activities that actively promote retrieval, integrate multiple modalities, and maintain learner engagement. The following section will illustrate how these guidelines can be applied in practice through a series of adaptable classroom activities.

Review Task Examples

The following activities demonstrate how the guidelines outlined above can be applied in practice. Each is designed to promote retrieval, integrate skills, and sustain engagement while reinforcing lesson content. The activities described in this section are not theoretical exercises; they were implemented and refined in my own university EFL classrooms over the course of one semester. This practical experience shaped the guidelines and examples that follow.

1. Picture Recall (Speaking and Listening)

- Guideline Link: Integrate Multiple Skills; Make Review Interactive and Meaningful
- Rationale: Learners must recall and describe a picture using previously learned vocabulary and grammar, while a peer reconstructs the description. This multimodal exchange strengthens encoding by combining speaking, listening, and memory retrieval (Baddeley, 2000; Kelly et al., 2022).

- Procedure: Pair students. Student A describes a picture related to the lesson's target language and topic while Student B listens without seeing it. Student B then retells the description. Both check accuracy by looking at the picture together. Switch roles and repeat with a new image.

2. Picture Recall – Changing the Medium (Speaking, Listening, and Writing)
- Guideline Link: Integrate Multiple Skills; Strategic Repetition
- Rationale: Changing output mode from oral to written increases retrieval strength by engaging different memory pathways (Baddeley, 2000). The shift also introduces a form of repetition by requiring learners to reprocess the same content in a new modality.
- Procedure: Student A describes a picture. Student B takes notes, then reconstructs the description orally and writes a short paragraph. Paragraphs can be posted on a shared board (e.g., Padlet) for peer review.

3. Picture Recall – Time Limits (Speaking and Listening)
- Guideline Link: Make Review Interactive and Meaningful; Strategic Repetition
- Rationale: Gradually shortening the time available for each retelling (from 90 to 60 to 30 seconds) forces learners to focus on essential language and recall it more efficiently. This mirrors retrieval under real communicative pressure, which strengthens long-term recall (Bygate & Samuda, 2005).
- Procedure: In groups of three, Student A describes a picture for 90 seconds, Student B retells it in 60 seconds, and Student C retells it in 30 seconds. Rotate roles and repeat with a different image.

4. Picture Recall – Verb Tense Variation (Speaking and Writing)
- Guideline Link: Integrate Multiple Skills; Strategic Repetition
- Rationale: Revisiting the same content with different verb tenses creates repeated retrieval opportunities while expanding grammatical control. This builds both accuracy and fluency (Zaccaron, 2019).
- Procedure: Describe the picture in the present tense. Then repeat in past and future tenses. Optionally, extend to a written version of each.

5. Information Gap – Mystery Drawing (Speaking and Listening)
- Guideline Link: Make Review Interactive and Meaningful
- Rationale: Information gap tasks naturally stimulate negotiation of meaning, requiring learners to retrieve and use target vocabulary in real time (Ellis, 2003).
- Procedure: One student describes a picture while the other draws it without looking at it. Provide the describer with a vocabulary list from the target lesson to ensure review of key terms.

6. Class Mingle (Speaking, Listening, and Writing)
- Guideline Link: Integrate Multiple Skills; Strategic Repetition
- Rationale: Repeatedly asking and answering the same questions strengthens retrieval while the variety of partners adds fresh communicative contexts (Bygate & Samuda, 2005).
- Procedure: Students circulate, asking the same set of review questions to multiple classmates, noting down answers. Optionally, compile responses into a brief written summary.

7. Mini-Debates with Role Switching (Speaking)

- Guideline Link: Make Review Interactive and Meaningful; Strategic Repetition
- Rationale: Arguing both for and against an issue forces learners to retrieve and reorganize language multiple times, reinforcing both content and flexibility of use.
- Procedure: Students first argue in favor of a position, then against it, and finally from a neutral stance. Use topics related to the lesson content for maximum relevance.

From my experience of using the review tasks in a classroom setting, I discovered that each one had different outcomes and required adjustments. For example, review task 1 worked better with more scaffolding, such as writing the target vocabulary on the board and gradually erasing it as the students became more accustomed to the task. Likewise, in review task 2 students needed more support with developing note-taking skills, as many of them tried to write full sentences from the start, rather than keywords. In terms of feedback, students seemed to enjoy the time constraints of review task 3 and the challenge of changing tenses in review task 4. In contrast, and based on observing students' performances and engagement, review task 7 was too difficult for a pre-intermediate level class. It could work better with higher level students who have a more expansive access to the L2.

Conclusion

The challenge of helping learners retain lesson content over time is one that many teachers, both within and beyond EFL contexts, encounter on a daily basis, yet the solutions are not always straightforward. In my own teaching context at a Japanese university, observing students' difficulty in recalling material from previous lessons prompted a closer examination of how review activities could be made more effective. This exploration brought together cognitive perspectives on memory, the communicative principles of task-based learning (TBL), and the reinforcing potential of task repetition.

While each of these elements is well established in language teaching theory and practice, their integration offers a practical framework for addressing memory retention in EFL classrooms. The guidelines that emerged from this process: integrating multiple skills, making review interactive and meaningful, and using strategic repetition, are intended to be used as adaptable principles that teachers can shape to fit their own learners' needs and their specific teaching contexts.

The activities described here illustrate one way to utilize these guidelines and should not be considered the only way, as the use of the guidelines is open to interpretation. They aim to move beyond rote repetition, and instead engage learners in purposeful, multimodal tasks that require active retrieval and reprocessing of previously learned language. In doing so, they support memory by providing repeated opportunities to retrieve language, while also ensuring that practice takes place through meaningful, communicative interaction.

Overall, I strongly believe the review tasks were an effective method of supporting memory retention. However, it is unclear how effective. The next step in this exploration is to design a method of data collection and analysis to determine the effectiveness of the approach I have explored here.

Ultimately, this approach reflects an ongoing dialogue between theory and practice. It acknowledges the importance of established research while focusing its application on the realities of classroom teaching. This experience suggests that when review is treated not as an afterthought but as an integral, interactive part of the learning process, teachers can better help learners consolidate classroom learning and transfer it into long-term communicative ability.

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RESEARCH ARTICLES

A Mille-Feuille of Learning: Layered Reflective Practice in Language Teacher Development

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This study examines a teacher-led approach to continuous professional development (CPD) grounded in data-led, dialogic reflective practice (RP). Two in-service language teachers participated in a graduate TESOL course intervention combining Walsh's Self-Evaluation of Teacher Talk (SETT) framework with Edge's Continuing Cooperative Development principles. Each teacher video-recorded their own lessons, identified significant moments, and transcribed selected excerpts for collaborative analysis. Peer discussions centered on interactional features such as scaffolding, teacher echo, extended wait time, and reformulation. These dialogues validated instinctive teaching practices, fostered greater classroom awareness, and encouraged alignment between visible behaviors and personal pedagogical beliefs. The process also revealed the emotional dimensions of RP: initial apprehension about sharing classroom data shifted to increased confidence through non-judgmental, empathetic peer support. The findings underscore the potential of integrating classroom data with supportive peer dialogue to bridge theory and practice, enhance teacher agency, and foster sustained professional curiosity, provided that safe, collaborative spaces and common analytical tools are available.

Keywords: professional development, reflective practice, practitioner research, cooperative development, dialogic reflection

Continuous professional development (CPD) in language teaching refers to continued formal and informal development of professional knowledge and skill repertoires across teachers' careers. More formal varieties of CPD in language teaching might include invited seminars from experts in the field, institutionally sanctioned workshops, and lesson observations, whereas informal varieties may be grassroots initiatives organized by groups or individual teachers such as peer observation and dialogue in critical friendships and keeping a reflective diary (Cirocki & Farrell, 2019; Hayes, 2019). Particularly in the case of bottom-up initiatives, focusing on areas selected by teachers based on professional curiosity, CPD has been argued to positively contribute to teachers' sense of agency and empowerment, as well as their motivation within the field (Cirocki & Farrell, 2017; Mercer & Pawlak, 2024). More specifically, reflective practice (RP) approaches based on dialogic analysis of classroom data with peers (Mann & Walsh, 2017) certainly represents one way in which teachers may highlight issues of personal value to them while also maintaining a culture of non-judgement so as to cultivate positive and efficacious

identities within a professional community of practice. Due to the importance of positive professional self-image in cultivating and maintaining teacher wellbeing and the established connection between teacher wellbeing and learners' psychological and academic success (Briner & Dewberry, 2007), dialogic reflective practice based on teachers' interests may represent a positive contribution impacting teacher and student alike. Unfortunately, it has been reported that a great deal of CPD initiatives remain fundamentally top-down and transmissive in nature (Hayes, 2019) and are often conducted from a deficit perspective in which external authorities are brought in or institutional mandates are implemented so as to "fix" teachers' "problematic" practice.

In order to explore an alternative transformative approach to CPD grounded in teacher curiosity, strengths-based learning, and peer support, this paper focuses on one reflective practice intervention that was conducted with two in-service teachers combining analysis of classroom data and supportive, non-judgmental peer discussion. In this paper, we share Alex and Erik's discoveries and reflections throughout this teacher-driven CPD intervention.

Literature Review

Reflective Practice

Based on existing studies in the area of language teacher CPD (Cirocki & Farrell, 2017; Godínez Martínez, 2018; Uchida & Rothman, 2023), RP appears to represent one way that teacher-driven and -administered CPD can take place. There are many previously documented benefits that RP can offer both pre- and in-service teachers such as enhanced self-efficacy and greater understanding of the theory-practice connection. In addition, reflective CPD initiatives also allow teachers to explore their pedagogical beliefs and examine the links between those beliefs and their actual classroom behaviors (Watanabe, 2016). This means that RP can act as a grassroots developmental tool that teachers can use to interrogate their personal sense of plausibility (Prabhu, 1990), i.e., what they (rather than an institution or outside expert) believe is important for their students and what they can do to bring their own actions into alignment with these beliefs.

A Call for Data and Dialogue

Despite the numerous advocates of RP as a teacher-led CPD approach, definitions and standards for RP were called into question around a decade ago by Mann and Walsh (2013), who claimed that it had become "bloated and riddled with inconsistencies" as it lacked a "detailed, systematic and data-led description of either its nature or value" (p. 292). Therefore, reflection that draws on classroom data through conversation analysis (CA) (Hale et al., 2018; Wong & Waring, 2010) has been suggested as a way of meeting the challenge over more robust and evidence-based RP.

One well-known data-driven RP approach is the Self-Evaluation of Teacher Talk (SETT) framework developed by Walsh (2006). SETT allows teachers to analyze their classroom discourse through two main lenses: distinct classroom modes (managerial, materials, skills and systems, and classroom context) and specific interactional features such as scaffolding and increased wait time (see Table 1 for a detailed list). Rather than framing classroom practice in "good" or "bad" terms, SETT encourages teachers to understand the specific features of their classroom interaction and judge for themselves whether their discourse aligns with their stated pedagogical goals and beliefs.

Table 1
Interactional feature types (Walsh, 2006, p. 141)

A) Scaffolding	*1) Reformulation (rephrasing a learner's contribution)* *2) Extension (extending a learner's contribution)* *3) Modeling (providing an example for learner(s))*
B) Direct repair	*Correcting an error quickly and directly.*
C) Content feedback	*Giving feedback to the message rather than the words used.*
D) Extended wait-time	*Allowing sufficient time (several seconds) for students to respond or formulate a response.*
E) Referential questions	*Genuine questions to which the teacher does not know the answer.*
F) Seeking clarification	*1) Teacher asks a student to clarify something the student has said.* *2) Student asks the teacher to clarify something the teacher has said.*
G) Extended learner turn	*Learner turn of more than one utterance.*
H) Teacher echo	*1) Teacher repeats the teacher's previous utterance.* *2) Teacher repeats a learner's contribution.*
I) Teacher interruptions	*Interrupting a learner's contribution.*
J) Extended teacher turn	*Teacher turn of more than one utterance.*
K) Turn completion	*Completing a learner's contribution for the learner.*
L) Display questions	*Asking questions to which teacher knows the answer.*
M) Form-focused feedback	*Giving feedback on the words used, not the message.*

In addition to their original call for RP to be more data-driven, Mann and Walsh (2017), along with other authorities on RP, have also advocated for teachers to engage in dialogic RP with peers (Farrell, 2015, 2022), which is carried out in teaching communities of practice and smaller-scale, informal "critical friendships" (Farrell, 2018). Utilizing RP approaches such as SETT in collaboration with peers can foster richer insights, guard against self-centered reflection and "navel gazing", and promote shared understanding (Gill & Hooper, 2020; Mann & Walsh, 2017; Uchida & Rothman, 2023).

Non-Judgmental Dialogue in RP

Despite the numerous claimed benefits accompanying dialogic RP, it must be noted that this type of collaborative CPD may represent a face-threatening act for teachers due to the risk of judgment from peers and challenges to their professional knowledge and identity (Edge, 2015). Overly prescriptive or judgmental dialogue in RP may negatively impact both teachers' willingness to share their experiences and perspectives and the amount of reflective value they are able to derive from such dialogue. In recognition of this, Julian Edge proposed a dialogic RP approach called continuing cooperative development (Edge, 2002). This approach is grounded in the principles of respectful acceptance, empathy, and sincerity and asks that those participating in reflective dialogue take on one of two roles: the Speaker or the Understander. As the Speaker shares and reflects upon their classroom beliefs, experiences, and quandaries, it is the Understander's responsibility to open up as much interactional space as possible for the Speaker while also allowing them to make the most of that space. This can be done through techniques such as restating, asking open questions, attending with supportive body language, and simply staying silent. Edge summarizes the Understander's role as underpinned by the notions of humility and acceptance borne of recognizing that numerous paths may lead to the same goal in terms of "good" teaching.

> As Understander, in the full knowledge that we each have different paths to tread in order to become the best teacher that we each can be in the process of becoming, I want to put that knowledge into practical use by laying aside my own experience in order to help someone else shape their own. (Edge, 2015, p. 69)

Based on these non-prescriptive, exploratory principles of CPD, we outline below a data-based and dialogic RP approach that we conducted within a graduate TESOL program in order to stimulate in-service teachers' deeper understandings of their own classroom interactional patterns. Drawing on both CA and reflective analysis of classroom data, we then illustrate the ways in which this particular approach may have contributed to our continuing development as language teaching professionals and the viability of such an approach in the wider field.

Methods

Participants

At the time of this RP intervention, Alex and Erik were in-service teachers enrolled in an elective Sociocultural Theory (SCT) course taught by Daniel within the MA TESOL program at Nagoya University of Foreign Studies in fall 2024. Alex was working in a private after-school program and Erik was a teacher at a public elementary school at the time of writing (see Table 2 for background information). During the SCT course, both participants showed interest in collaborating as participant-authors on this reflective study based on the RP process they engaged in during the course.

Table 2
Participant Information

Participant	Nationality	Years of teaching experience	General teaching context
Alex	Canadian	10	Elementary (grade 3-5), private after school class
Erik	American	17	Elementary (grade 4), public school

Procedure

In contrast to a previous study (Hooper et al., 2024), in which teachers were forced to reflect on mock "microteaching" sessions with peers in the SCT course, we were able to obtain ethical and institutional approval to collect classroom data from our respective teaching contexts. This meant that we were able to observe and analyze far richer and more representative samples of their teaching practice. Both teachers chose to video record their selected classes in order to include both linguistic and paralinguistic features of their teaching within their subsequent data transcriptions and analyses. Alex worked at a private school for elementary-age children and, in line with the school's policy, received permission from the school and the students' parents before any class recordings were made. Erik worked at a public elementary school and obtained approval from both the school and the Board of Education to record classes for training purposes and action research projects. Furthermore, in line with ethical guidelines, all students' names have been removed from any data excerpts appearing in this paper.

Alex and Erik were instructed to watch the videos of their classes multiple times at home just after they had recorded them and take extensive notes on their impressions and feelings. They subsequently analyzed the interactional features they had used in their classes as well as the impact this might have had on students' interactional space based on Walsh's SETT model. They were also encouraged to reflect on the extent to which their "visible behaviors" (Farrell & Vos, 2018) were in alignment with their personal teaching beliefs and goals. Following the CA approach to reflective action research proposed by Hale et al. (2018), the teachers also selected short segments from their recordings that they found particularly meaningful—whether interesting or problematic—for deeper exploration. These segments were transcribed using CA conventions (Appendix) based on an approach from Hale et al. (2018). Alex and Erik brought their CA transcripts and any personal notes they had taken to the following SCT class. We then engaged in collaborative discussion, grounded in principles of continuing cooperative development and language learning advising, based on these data and reflections. Audio recordings of these discussions formed an additional source of data and reflective stimuli that contributed to Alex and Erik's understanding of their own development and, ultimately, the writing of this paper. In the following sections, both Alex and Erik outline their respective classroom analyses and the various influences on their teacher cognition and emotions throughout this reflective process.

Alex's Perspective

My Lesson Recording

When I reviewed the video of my teaching, I was struck by a wave of self-criticism. I initially reacted by focusing on every possible flaw, awkward pause, or moment where I felt I saw opportunities for improvement. This made it difficult to appreciate the positive aspects of my teaching. While analyzing the video, I noticed that certain interactional features were more prevalent than others: teacher echoes, scaffolding (Lines 53 and 56), and extended waiting times (Line 56). For example, this excerpt is taken from a listening activity where students are engaged with both a worksheet and my instructions simultaneously:

Excerpt 1

51 (T)eacher: my two sisters taught me how to play the saxophone
52 Student A: whats saxophone
53 T: my two sisters taught me how to play my big yellow saxophone
54 Student A: oh
55 Student B: Alex what is what is saxophone

56 T: my two sisters taught me how to play my big yellow saxophone big and yellow do you see something that is big and yellow {20.0} ready

I was self-conscious about sharing this video with my peers because it appeared that the students were having trouble with the materials and my verbal instructions. The thought of exposing my teaching to scrutiny was daunting and I worried about how my peers would interpret the long silences and the restlessness of my students in the video. Knowing that my classroom environment was not the most vibrant, I feared that it could be interpreted in ways that diverged from my intentions. My hope was that my peers would see the same potential and engagement that I experienced in the classroom.

Discussion Amongst Peers

After the class discussion about my teaching video, I felt a significant boost in both my motivation and confidence. It appeared my initial trepidation about sharing was unfounded. Engaging with my peers and teacher in this reflective space allowed me to see my teaching from a new perspective, and their supportive feedback made me feel more validated in my efforts. One of the most encouraging aspects was that my peers seemed to recognize what I was attempting to achieve in class. The focus of the discussion was particularly refreshing; we concentrated on what actually happened in the classroom rather than dwelling on what should have happened. It felt empowering to discuss the realities of my classroom experience without the pressure of perfectionism. When analyzing the video as a group, the interactional features mentioned before were viewed as positive features. The other teachers commented that these features were beneficial to my students. Frequencies and lengths of time were viewed as appropriate and, judging by the needs of the students, required. Other parts of the video, such as Excerpt 2 below, were also discussed, which I was surprised to find that they were of interest to my peers.

Excerpt 2

49 T: okay {10.0} well you can guess also and I can tell you the you can look at the read the people and you can make a guess if you want or do you want a hint {1.9} do you want a hint {11.9} oh {8.0} in in australia I really like to listen to music {4.0} I love listening to music in australia

This excerpt was perceived by my peers as unique because it was an extended teacher turn that contained many pauses. I thought that this was something that was not going to be viewed well considering that the students were not talking. However, I was pleasantly surprised to hear that my actions were discussed positively in that I used different interactional features such as extended wait time and referential questions to convey information to students without forcing engagement through things like display questions and unwanted help. Again, this was a huge boost to my confidence especially since these actions were based more in instinct rather than self-awareness. The main takeaway from the discussion was how closely tied my teaching experience was to my emotions. Initially, I felt anxious about how my peers would respond to my video, but as the conversation progressed, I transitioned to a state of excitement about sharing more about my class and other videos. I believe this shift in my emotional state was directly linked to the positive mood of the discussion.

Recording of our Peer Discussion

Upon listening to the recorded audio of our peer discussion, I found myself becoming critical again. It was interesting to observe how my self-perception shifted as I revisited the conversation on my own. I realized that my explanation of my research was not as clear as I would have liked it to be. This realization was somewhat disheartening, as I had hoped to communicate my ideas more effectively during the discussion. I realized that the activity was understood by all parties beforehand, which made detailed explanations unnecessary. In listening to the discussion later, I was able to rediscover moments of learning about my own teaching. In this excerpt, a colleague used a new term to describe how I was assisting my students.

Peer Discussion Excerpt 1

Alex: Uh, yeah. I think you can look at that as him being like, "I got this."
Daniel: Yeah, actually I picked that as a really important point. I said you were "drip feeding."
Alex: Ah…
Daniel: Like scaffolding.

I found this insightful especially considering that I seemed more concerned with how my students were learning rather than my own teaching. This moment served to heighten my own classroom awareness.

Erik's Perspective

The reflection and lesson recording we did were of immense learning value to me. Two salient benefits I identified through this process were: (1) confirmation of my classroom teacher talk and (2) identification of opportunities to improve classroom interaction and lessons. It was from my lesson recording that I could recognize and analyze the quality and quantity of my language use. For example, I originally considered my classroom English usage to be appropriate for the level of my students, and this was confirmed in the peer discussion. In my teaching context I am the primary teacher with a Japanese homeroom teacher supporting me. As a language teacher for young, beginner learners (nine to ten years old), I use English as much as possible to provide comprehensible input, while simultaneously attempting to avoid an excess of teacher talk and teacher centeredness. My peers supported my teacher talk strategies, especially noticing my use of language scaffolding, paralinguistic scaffolding, voice pitch, teacher echo, and speed. An example can be seen below in Excerpt 3 where I had just started the lesson and was reviewing with students the month, day of the week, weather, and time of day.

Excerpt 3

10 (T)eacher: what day is it? ((pointing to a thursday card on the blackboard))
11 Student A: {2.0} sunday
12 T: {2.0} $what day is it?$ ((gesturing with outward arms))
13: Students: ((various answers))
14: Student B: thursday {2.0}
15: T: It's <<thursday>> {2.0} <<thursday>> ((pointing index finger towards mouth while emphasizing use of the tongue on "th" utterance)

After reviewing my lesson audio, I returned to this segment and noticed my use of reformulation and direct repair of Student A's utterance as well as a modeling teacher echo of "Thursday." My reflection and the lesson recording reaffirmed to me that my teaching approach

was indeed appropriate for my teaching context. Reviewing my lesson and discussing it with my peers helped me to realize my own particular teaching approach and that "this is how I teach" (Hooper et al., 2024). A teacher can write notes during/after lessons, audio/video record their lessons, have someone observe them, etc. Teachers can then reflect on and/or discuss the lessons with peers. In these ways, SETT deepens reflective practice, looking at a lesson through multiple layers.

My peers also highlighted some areas in the lesson that could maybe be experimented with or enhanced. I considered my classroom language use good. I do not always use complete sentences, but I try to make my language use comprehensible for my students, who are complete beginners. This was confirmed by my peers. They also noticed opportunities to potentially further improve classroom interaction. My peers pointed out the Japanese homeroom teacher's interactions with students as being one such opportunity. In Excerpt 4, I am modeling the input task and using display questions to verify that students understand the English vocabulary. The purpose of the task is for students to listen to the English language and vocabulary I use, then move one of several picture cards on their desk to a pre-determined section of their desk based on what they understood.

Excerpt 4

33 T: ((pointing to "I don't have" on blackboard)) I don't have a randoseru {2.0} I don't have a randoseru ok? (gestures ok sign)
34 Student C: yes
35 T: I have a= in Japanese ((puts hands on hips))
36 Students: mottemasu
37 T: ok good
38 HRT: motteru {3.0} motteru ka mottenai kara
39 T: I don't have:: ((pointing to blackboard))
40 Students: mottenai
41 T: I don't have a randoseru ok::? ((gestures wearing a backpack))

My peers iterated that the students understood the vocabulary, therefore perhaps negating the need for confirmation in Japanese by the homeroom teacher. There was a tendency by the teacher to explain some of my utterances in Japanese. This is to make sure students understand and follow the lesson but could be preventing students from having an opportunity to understand my simplified spoken English. In other words, we teachers could, inadvertently, be denying students the opportunity to learn English.

Peer Discussion Excerpt 2

Alex: So uh the first thing I thought was I've heard you in the past talk about negotiation of meaning and having that CLT classroom. But if you were saying something and he is explaining it afterwards in Japanese there's no opportunity for the kids to say [anything]. For you to reformulate your responses or anything like that. He's taking that away.
Erik: Uh, yes, and I agree…

While I had noticed the homeroom teacher's frequent explanations in the video recording and transcription, I had not considered how this could affect language learning. My peers and I concluded that this could be improved by giving students a few more seconds after hearing classroom language in English before a Japanese explanation is given (extended wait-time).

Extended wait-time would afford students time to negotiate meaning, which is necessary to develop their communicative competence. While I could identify one of the modes and some of the interactional features on my own by recording, watching, and transcribing a part of my class, my peers noticed modes and features I did not, helping me to better understand my classroom, and provided me with ways that my classroom interaction could be improved. It is true that through self-reflection I can notice, identify, and make some teaching adjustments on my own. Furthermore, analyzing the lesson recording added even more details that I had ultimately missed, not noticed, and/or could not identify. However, my peers were instrumental in taking it that one step further by pushing my reflection beyond what I could do on my own.

This kind of dialogic reflective practice based on lesson recordings feels very deep and layered to me, like a mille-feuille. Some of the reflective layers include video recording a lesson, watching it, transcribing it, watching it with your peers, dialogically analyzing the lesson recording, and finally reviewing the peer discussion and writing on it. Each layer adds depth, and I was able to learn more about my classroom interaction at each of these layers. These layers of reflection also extend and expose us as teachers and how we teach and interact in the classroom. Teacher reflection can be daunting as we must make a conscious effort to review ourselves. At every layer, from video recording to peer discussion, I felt exposed as my peers observed my teaching approach. This exposure was negated, however, by my peers focusing on understanding and exploring my teaching and classroom talk, rather than criticizing it. I was originally hesitant to have others watch my lesson and give feedback, but I am now grateful as I could learn and grow because of this type of lesson analysis. Therefore, based on this experience, I feel data-based and dialogic reflection is a useful method to improve classroom instruction and interaction and further teacher professional development.

Summary

Looking back on Alex and Erik's reflections, we can observe a number of dynamics in action. In Alex's case, we see a perspective shift, with his self-criticism of his classroom data and his anxiety over sharing it with his peers gradually transformed into a realization of his strengths as a teacher. Recurring features of his interactional style that he viewed negatively or ambivalently such as teacher echo and extended wait time were reframed by his peers as strengths that scaffolded student participation. Consequently, this appeared to deepen his understanding of his own teacher talk and boost his confidence as a professional. Looking at Erik's experience, the multilayered process of self- and peer-analysis of classroom data led him to delve deeper into the minutiae of his interactional style (such as scaffolding and teacher echo) and gain reassurance by confirming the congruence between his "visible behaviors" (Farrell & Vos, 2018, p. 2) and teaching beliefs. Furthermore, through peer dialogue, he also became aware of previously unconsidered contextual factors that may be facilitating or constraining interaction in his classroom.

Discussion

This practitioner-driven, exploratory study centered on a CPD intervention grounded in classroom data and supportive peer dialogue. In particular, we examined how this intervention contributed to the professional development of Alex and Erik, two in-service language teachers. By reflecting on classroom conversational data analysis utilizing Walsh's SETT framework and peer discussion influenced by Edge's notion of continuing cooperative development, we interpreted numerous ways in which this CPD approach positively contributed to deeper understanding of classroom practices and teachers' professional identities and needs. In the following discussion, we present the key implications of the study in relation to the value of classroom data and peer

interaction, issues relating to teacher emotion and identity, and challenges relating to the sustainability and transferability of CPD.

One of the most salient takeaways from this study was the apparent value and enhanced insight that Alex and Erik derived from data-based analysis of their own teaching practices through the SETT framework. Both teachers were able to refer to concrete examples of different interactional features in their own teacher talk, such as scaffolding, teacher echo, extended wait time, and reformulation. Without the transcribed CA data that they collected from their classrooms and the SETT guidelines that allowed them to collaboratively discuss their findings with a shared terminology, various interactional idiosyncrasies may have simply passed by unnoticed. By engaging in what Mann and Walsh (2017) call dialogic and evidence-based reflective practice, Alex and Erik moved beyond surface-level generalities and helped each other to reach new realizations about their "visible behaviors" (Farrell & Vos, 2018, p. 2) in the classroom. Erik described the process as a "mille-feuille" of learning, with each layer of reflection throughout the SETT process adding nuance and depth to his understanding of classroom interaction. This type of enhanced understanding then has the potential to catalyze future CPD by stimulating informed pedagogical decisions rather than teachers being guided solely by "impulse or routine" (Farrell, 2015, p. 8).

A further theme apparent from Alex and Erik's reflections was the emotional dimension of reflective practice and CPD. Alex's initial self-criticism and anxiety about sharing his video with his peers exemplify the vulnerability and emotional labor that may come with exposing one's teaching to others. However, through our non-judgmental approach that focused on areas of interest identified by each teacher, and which highlighted strengths and opportunities rather than taking a deficit perspective (Hayes, 2019), we can observe how Alex's apprehension changed to validation and enhanced curiosity. With the other members of our group taking on a role as empathetic "Understanders" (Edge, 2002) as opposed to a more top-down, judgmental role, Alex unearthed previously unnoticed value in instinctive actions, such as the "drip feeding" of scaffolding, that he had previously dismissed. These teacher reflections reinforce the notion that RP or CPD should not merely be a technical exercise, but a socio-emotional process that carefully takes into account a teacher's sense of self and professional worth.

Conclusion

The practical implications of this study primarily concern the benefits of utilizing classroom data (either audio or transcribed CA) integrated with robust analytical frameworks like SETT in order to encourage teachers to identify personally-relevant points of interest in their classroom interactions and to analyze them in collaboration with supportive peers. It also bridges the gap between theory and practice by highlighting techniques such as scaffolding, extended wait time, and teacher echo as theoretically-sound features of intentional, student-sensitive teaching, thus reinforcing teachers' sense of plausibility (Prabhu, 1990) as professionals.

In terms of theoretical implications, this paper responds to Mann and Walsh's (2013, 2017) call for more systematic and robust accounts of RP. In integrating data-led analysis with emotional and dialogic facets of teacher reflection, we adopted a grassroots approach to CPD based on teachers' professional curiosity rather than the sterilized "box-checking" (Walsh & Mann, 2015, p. 353) that often takes place in top-down CPD initiatives. Furthermore, Alex and Erik's reflections on their underlying feelings of insecurity and the resulting need for emotional safety embedded in this CPD intervention further reinforced Edge's (2015) argument that truly developmental dialogue must be grounded in empathy, humility, and non-judgement.

The small scale and context-specific nature of this intervention naturally limit the degree to which our findings and experiences can be generalized to the field as a whole. Only two

teacher-participants were involved, and both operated within the supportive environment of a graduate MA TESOL course. However, the depth of insight gained suggests the potential value of expanding such interventions to larger groups or more diverse teaching contexts. Furthermore, it could most certainly be argued that the considerable work required for data collection and analysis, as well as the potentially face-threatening nature of data sharing, could greatly impact the applicability of this particular RP approach in contexts beyond graduate school programs. Potentially valuable future studies could focus on developing less intense, teacher-friendly iterations of this type of intervention which are realistically implementable for teachers struggling with heavy workloads, and who are perhaps skeptical or apprehensive about externally mandated PD. From a research perspective, investigating long-term effects of dialogic RP on teacher development via longitudinal case-study research or examining RP's impact on teacher and student learning or wellbeing could be fruitful areas for future engagement.

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Appendix

Conversation analysis transcription symbols

.	(period) Falling intonation.
?	(question mark) Rising intonation.
,	(comma) Continuing intonation.
-	(hyphen) Marks an abrupt cut-off.
::	(colon(s)) Prolonging of sound.
wo:rd	(colon after underlined letter) Falling intonation on word.
wo:rd	(underlined colon) Rising intonation on word.
word	(underlining)
word	The more underlying, the greater the stress.
WORD	(all caps) Loud speech.
°word°	(degree symbols) Quiet speech.
↑word	(upward arrow) raised pitch.
↓word	(downward arrow) lowered pitch
>>word<<	(more than and less than) Quicker speech.
<<word>>	(less than & more than) Slowed speech.
<	(less than) Talk is jump-started—starting with a rush.
hh	(series of h's) Aspiration or laughter.
.hh	(h's preceded by dot) Inhalation.
[ ]	(brackets) simultaneous or overlapping speech.
[ ]	
=	(equal sign) Latch or contiguous utterances of the same speaker.
{2.4}	(number in parentheses) Length of a silence in 10ths of a second.
(.)	(period in parentheses) Micro-pause, 0.2 second or less.
( )	(empty parentheses) Non-transcribable segment of talk.
((gazing upward))	(double parentheses) Description of non-speech activity.

(try 1)/(try 2)	(two parentheses separated by a slash) Alternative hearings.
$word$	(dollar signs) Smiley voice.
#word#	(number signs) Squeaky voice.

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REFLECTIONS

A Fistful of Papers: Two Doctoral Journeys

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The acquisition of a doctoral qualification has become increasingly important for academics at the tertiary level. Unlike some countries, such as the UK and Australia, Japanese tertiary institutions generally do not cite a doctorate as a condition of academic appointment. However, for academics seeking to enter higher-level faculty positions, a doctorate is a common requirement and possessing one can enhance access to funding opportunities. These benefits have led to an increased demand for doctoral qualifications. Responding to this change, developments in the job market, and a diversifying student cohort, a greater range of doctoral pathways have emerged (Peacock, 2017). Among these, public works doctorates are an increasingly popular route to acquiring a doctorate, alongside taught doctorates and research doctorates (Mason et al., 2024).

In a public works doctorate, the candidate assembles a portfolio of their public works, which can range from peer-reviewed papers and book chapters through to works of art and business management projects, and then writes a short thesis, which may be referred to as a critical review, critical commentary, or context statement. These are typically between 10-30,000 words, depending on the program, and serve to contextualize the candidate's public works and demonstrate that they form a coherent body of work which contributes to the relevant field. The coherent nature of the public works may be clear from their content, with the candidate discussing and extending the themes found within them, or it may require the public works be problematized to identify and draw out the themes that underlie them.

Between 2020 and 2025, we embarked on public works doctorates by distance learning at different universities in the UK. As we have a shared body of published works as well as our own individual portfolios, we felt we were in the unusual position of being able to evaluate how our doctoral theses progressed, highlighting their similarities and differences. We chose to present our journeys using a dual-narrative approach to illustrate how, despite being based in the same tertiary institution in Japan, having a shared body of publications, and both pursuing public works doctorates, our experiences were distinct. We believe that this approach allows readers to compare and contrast our doctoral journeys and gain insights that can inform their own doctoral journeys.

The Programs

As public works doctorates (also known as PhDs by Publication or PhDs by Published Works) have become more widely available and well-established (Frick, 2016), candidates have more choice. However, as each program and route has different benefits and drawbacks (Bury, 2024), deciding which program to apply to can be difficult. Each candidate will have different priorities, and various factors, including time constraints and financial limitations, inevitably play stronger or weaker roles in the decision-making process.

Anthony: I enrolled as a candidate in a Doctorate of Professional Studies by Public Works program. While all public works doctorates critically review the public works to generate new learning, a DProf by Public Works places emphasis on the candidate's professional context and how the public works serve as inflection points in the candidate's professional development journey as well as how they contribute to the field and professional practice.

This focus on the candidate's professional development journey means that a DProf by Public Works can allow a greater range of public works to be considered than might be entertained in a PhD by Public Works, such as professional projects that have not undergone peer review, but which are central to the candidate's professional practice. These can include computer programs, reports prepared for public bodies, translations, collections of artefacts, audio-visual records, musical scores, and diagrammatic representations (Middlesex University London, 2025).

This was important for me as I write textbooks alongside my research, and I wanted to be able to discuss the impact of my textbook writing on my professional development and career.

However, while a DProf context statement contains considerable contextual richness, this also means that they can be longer than other public works doctorates (up to 45,000 words at my institution).

James: I enrolled as a candidate in a PhD by Published Works program. These programs are often completed in a shorter time frame and are less expensive than traditional PhD programs.

The program allowed me to partition my PhD into smaller, more manageable pieces of work by combining my published works with a context statement to earn the PhD award.

This was important to me as I was able to work with more flexibility and autonomy than would have been possible on other programs.

Public works can encompass more than published academic papers, and a prospective public works doctoral candidate should reflect carefully on their career and interrogate their resume to identify any potential public works they may be able to include.

Application Process

Having identified the best programs for us by evaluating the practical suitability, the connection of our research to that of the university departments we entered, and the suitability of potential supervisors, we needed to embark on the application process. While each university has its own application process, for a public works doctorate many ask for a full résumé or curriculum vitae which includes all the candidate's publications and research outputs, a brief summary of the publications they intend to include in their doctorate (this will usually be provisional), and a statement which includes the proposed title of the work and contextualizes the selected publications, demonstrates their coherence, and identifies their contribution to the advancement of knowledge in their chosen area of research. Most will also require a candidate to attend an interview to discuss the content of their research and public works before deciding to admit them as a doctoral candidate.

Anthony: The application process for my DProf program had three stages.

The first stage required the submission of a complete curriculum vitae, including references to my public works, so that my suitability for the program could be assessed.

The second stage was submitting the application form, copies of and/or links to my public works, a matrix which summarized my public works, my contribution to them and their impact in the field, and a justification statement (roughly 1,000 words) which outlined who I was as a professional, the relevance of my public works to my field, the public works I intended to review in the context statement, and the themes I wished to explore and develop in the context statement.

The third stage was an interview with two members of the DProf team to discuss the program and my proposed project.

The application process was complex, but various resources and guidelines were made available by the university. It is essential to follow these carefully to maximize the likelihood of a successful application.

I also found it useful to visit the university's doctoral repository and review the context statements of previous successful candidates when preparing my justification statement.

James: After I had selected the university and program that I thought fitted my goals and research background best, I formulated a basic proposal which included my résumé and the main aim of the PhD. I then drafted a list of my publications that I felt best represented the journey I had undertaken to reach the aim outlined in the proposal.

After this, I contacted the program director and discussed the proposal before submitting it formally. While I did not have an interview before joining the program, the initial discussions via email were very helpful in clarifying my aims. The interactions were also key in checking whether my choice of university and program were suitable and they helped all of the people involved to better understand each other's philosophies and approaches at an early stage.

While the application process can be daunting, carefully considering the course requirements and having open and honest interactions with potential supervisors and course leaders at this stage is essential in ensuring the successful completion of a doctoral program.

Selecting the Public Works

According to Maxwell and Kupczyk-Romanczuk (2009), "the focus of professional doctorate work is upon the community of practice, as opposed to the community of academics" (p. 138). This is a useful guideline when considering which public works should be incorporated into the final work as each potential selection of works will present your professional journey and practice in different ways. Consequently, deciding which public works should be included in a public works doctorate is a core part of the process.

However, choosing both which public works and how many to include can be very challenging. Mason and Merga (2018) found that the average number of public works included in a public works doctorate was 4.5, with a range of three to 12 publications, and this helps place some constraints on the selection. In addition, 99 percent of candidates included at least one peer-reviewed journal article and 40 percent of candidates submitted at least one sole-authored article. Furthermore, they found that the majority of submitted articles were co-authored, with the vast majority (85 percent) listing the candidate as the lead author of the public work, and six percent listing the candidate as a co-author.

Anthony: As I had amassed nearly 40 public works, created for varied reasons, over a 25-year teaching career when I began my doctorate, deciding which and how many public works to include left me nonplussed initially.

Mason and Merga's (2018) analysis was helpful as it gave me the confidence to include a publication for which I was not the lead author, but which had particular significance to my career.

I originally selected 11 public works but, on the advice of my supervisors, reduced this to nine, for which I was the sole author of one, the lead author of seven, and co-author of one.

To select which of my public works I would include in my context statement, I adopted an iterative process, with the criteria at each iteration serving as an ever-finer sieve, until the final set of public works to be included was determined.

When selecting which public works to include in my context statement, it was important to consider which of my public works represented key inflection points in my career, as well as their impact in the field, and their contribution to the underlying theme of the context statement.

The relative ranking of the journals I submitted my research articles to seemed to be of less importance than their value in illustrating my professional development journey. In my oral examination I was not asked to justify where I had submitted my articles, but was asked to justify my methodology and epistemology, particularly my preference for collaborative work, which was a key theme of my context statement.

James: The publications included in a PhD by Publication can take many forms, but I only included research articles as I felt that they best represented my journey towards the aim of my PhD.

I submitted ten articles for which I was the sole author of four, lead author of five, and co-author of one. Most institutions emphasize quality over quantity, and one of the issues that the examiners highlighted regarding my submission was the inclusion of too many publications.

For the publications of which I was not the sole author, it was necessary to outline my precise contribution, in terms of both the contribution percentage and the details of the tasks I undertook.

To help with this task, when writing and publishing articles, it is important to keep well-labelled records of article drafts as determining and agreeing on authorship and level of contribution at a later stage can be problematical (Paltridge & Starfield, 2023).

When I was selecting which publications to include, it was important to identify which had made the most substantial contribution or impact. The articles' relevance to the overarching theme and their importance as exemplars of my journey as a practitioner-researcher were also significant factors.

The ranking of the journals in which my articles had been published was not questioned during the development of my context statement. However, in my oral examination I was asked to justify why I had submitted my research to particular outlets.

A candidate's public works are like a set of building blocks, and each assemblage of them reveals a different facet of the candidate's career journey. One of the central challenges of a public works doctorate is to overcome the temptation to use them all, and instead to select the smallest set of public works that can adequately delineate a coherent narrative of the candidate's career journey.

Supervisors

The relationship between a doctoral candidate and their supervisor(s) is an important one as it is through this relationship that the development of the candidate's thesis is guided.

High-quality supervising provides candidates with the informational, emotional, instrumental, and co-constructional support that they need (Anttila et al., 2023). For distance education candidates, their relationship with, and frequency of feedback from, their supervisor(s) may be their only connection with the university. Consequently, it is important for candidates to get the most out of these sessions and for their supervisor(s) to encourage and scaffold independent learning and inquiry (Mullen, 2020).

While each doctoral candidate traditionally had a single supervisor, it has become common for a candidate to have multiple co-supervisors (Pyhältö et al., 2023). Co-supervision allows candidates to benefit from diverse perspectives and can create multiple opportunities for learning but can also lead to communication and scheduling issues. Olmos-López and Sunderland (2016) report that harmony among supervisors, especially in their feedback, is a key issue of concern among doctoral candidates.

Anthony: I had three supervisors, all from different countries and with different educational and teaching experiences. This meant that we could learn a lot from each other.

However, while my supervisors were all education experts, none had experience teaching in Japan or in teaching EFL. A result of this was the frustrating, but ultimately rewarding, process of having to make my tacit knowledge of living and working in Japan explicit.

My supervisors also challenged me to systematize and problematize my knowledge and philosophical position, as this is an important part of the construction of a professional doctoral thesis. This was difficult, and sometimes left me doubting myself, but forced me to clarify my thinking so that I could clearly state and justify my positions.

One downside of working with such a diverse range of supervisors was that our different contexts and backgrounds meant that we sometimes found ourselves talking past each other. This could be extremely frustrating (for us all) but, when the source of confusion lay in my writing, it forced me to reformulate what I had written to ensure clarity of communication.

Feedback from my supervisors was mostly harmonious, in that they tended to identify the same areas needing more work and pointed in much the same direction, which was extremely useful and valuable in guiding my writing. However, I also feel that some of the most interesting developments in my writing came from when their feedback differed and was disharmonious.

Unfortunately, my doctorate spanned a period of significant upheaval in the UK tertiary education sector, which placed great stress on my supervisors and resulted in one of them being made redundant.

James: I had two supervisors, and I was very lucky that we were able to establish a good working relationship early in my candidacy. I had actively read potential supervisors' publications before making a formal application and this helped me understand the research of my selected supervisors and some of their perspectives before working together.

I felt comfortable being open about my ideas and concerns, and my supervisors were willing to give me the space I needed to develop my ideas autonomously and in a way that fitted in with my work and family schedule.

It was also beneficial that my supervisors had worked together before as this helped us work better as a group of three. Therefore, I strongly recommend considering the research backgrounds of potential supervisors, the style of their publications prior to appointment, and their previous co-authors and collaborators, before applying to enroll in a program.

A public works doctoral candidate's relationship with their supervisor(s) is a key factor in

their overall success. It should be viewed as a relationship between peers and establishing a good rapport based on mutual respect as equals is essential. In addition to a candidate's supervisor(s), the value of a critical friend cannot be overstated. Having a peer with whom you can discuss ideas, share frustrations, and who can proofread your work, can help to alleviate stress, keep you grounded, and result in better overall work. This can be even more the case when undertaking a public works doctorate since a critical friend who was a collaborator on those public works can have even greater understanding and insights to offer you.

Structure and Style

While doctoral dissertations can come in many formats, public works doctoral theses commonly take the form of an introduction and conclusion sandwiching the public works, which are linked together by an explanatory narrative that provides context, accompanied by appendices of varying volume (Solli & Nygaard, 2022).

Anthony: As I wanted to include one or more of my textbooks as public works in my context statement, I chose to put my public works in the appendices. As I was pursuing a DProf, with its emphasis on my professional development, this freed me to write a narrative that contextualized and critiqued my public works, and developed the themes underlying them, which read more smoothly than if I had interrupted its flow with the long public works I was discussing.

While it was relatively straightforward to group my chosen public works into the themes I had identified in my justification statement, locating my work in the field and demonstrating its contribution to the field was considerably more difficult, requiring me to critically review my work and my assumptions.

My context statement became a critically reflective piece of work providing detail of the professional and educational contexts in which my public works were embedded, the themes they represented, and identifying the centrality of reflective practice and practitioner research in my professional development journey which bound those themes together.

My final context statement contained nine sections:

1. Introduction
2. Educational context
3. Theory, Practice, Methodology, and Ethics (focusing on my philosophical and theoretical development, the methodology used to select my public works, and ethical issues arising from my research)

4-8. Themes 1-3 (where my public works were critically reviewed)

9. Conclusion (focusing on theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical contributions, recapitulating themes and conceptual threads, and considering future directions).

James: I was initially unsure in which voice my context statement should be written. I began writing in the third person as that is what was used in the majority of articles that I included, but after realizing that I was documenting my own personal journey, I found it more apposite to write in the first person.

The most challenging part of writing the context statement for me was demonstrating the originality and unique contribution of the articles, instead of simply introducing them and setting the context. To do this, it was essential to not only establish a coherent overarching theme, but also reflectively critique my approach to the research I was including.

For my thesis, I felt it was important to detail the educational context and the background to how the teaching interventions included in the articles were developed, explicitly state the

contribution to knowledge, outline my journey as a practitioner-researcher, and critically reflect on the significance of the included articles.

To cover those points in sufficient detail, my final context statement contained eight sections:

1. Introduction
2. Educational context
3. Background to interventions (i.e., the research projects discussed in the articles)
4-6. Research themes I-III
7. Discussion (focusing on practical, theoretical, and methodological contributions)
8. Conclusion.

A public works context statement describes the candidate's personal career journey. Therefore, there is flexibility in both structure and style. However, it is important to remember that it is not a simple narrative, but a critical review in which the public works are problematized to clarify how they represent a coherent body of work and identify the contributions to theory and practice they make.

Examination and the Viva Voce

While public works doctorates are becoming more well-known, they are much less common than traditional thesis-based prospective doctorates. Consequently, examiners may have limited experience in assessing public works doctorates and there can be considerable variation in what they consider to be acceptable as a thesis (Kemp et al., 2013).

Anthony: My program had an independent internal progress panel interview midway through the DProf. This consisted of a 20-minute presentation followed by a 90-minute Q&A session. This was an important inflection point in the DProf program since it determined if I would be able to continue with the program and was also useful preparation for the oral examination.

After submitting my context statement, I prepared for the oral examination by planning for a 15–20-minute presentation, attempting to predict questions that the examiners might ask, and having several practice examinations with my supervisors.

My submission was assessed by two external examiners who were experts in the thematic areas my context statement examined but did not have experience of living or teaching in Japan.

The viva was tough (and punctuated by someone inadvertently shutting down the Zoom session 45 minutes in) but intellectually stimulating and interesting, and I quite enjoyed the experience.

However, while some of my predicted questions were asked, the examiners identified areas in my context statement that they felt needed greater depth and contextualization. The result was the requirement for major revisions and expansions to my context statement, and I was given a year to revise and resubmit it, after which it was re-assessed by the same examiners, approved, and the DProf awarded.

James: My submission was assessed by one internal and one external examiner. The level of input candidates have on who is approached to examine their work may be limited, but it is common for their opinions to be sought.

The examiners may be leading authors in the field, which can be intimidating, but it is important to remember that if they accept the offer to assess your work, it is usually because they are genuinely interested in what you have produced.

Once I had written and submitted my context statement, I prepared for the oral examination by planning a 2-minute and a 5-minute introduction to my work and predicting potential questions that I may be asked. This preparation was invaluable in the oral examination, not just because two of my predicted questions were asked, but also because it gave me the confidence to know that I was as well versed with my work and the connected concepts as possible.

Thanks to the generous approaches of my examiners and the support of my supervisors during my preparations, I enjoyed the viva experience, and I encourage others to view it as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that should be cherished.

Following the oral examination, the examiners required minor revisions to my submission, which is the most common outcome. Once the suggested changes were made, the revised thesis was approved and the PhD awarded.

A viva voce is something few people do more than once, and each is a unique experience. As the candidate is presenting their work, the importance of thorough preparation cannot be overstated. However, while it is an examination, a viva voce should also be seen as being a collaborative exercise in which the candidate works with the examiners to produce an improved final context statement.

Final Thoughts

Undertaking a doctorate is one of the most intellectually challenging and rewarding things you can do. It represents a rare opportunity to deeply explore the topics that interest you and learn more about yourself. However, it is a major undertaking and one that should not be entered into without full consideration of factors such as financial pressures, time constraints, support networks, and the balancing of studying and writing with paid work.

When considering which kind of doctoral program to embark on, it can be easy to assume that a public works doctorate is an easier route. However, a public works doctorate is no less challenging than the other doctoral routes, if for no other reason than that the public works must be produced before the program is begun. While the journey toward gaining a public works doctorate can be destabilizing and uncomfortable, the opportunity for deep self-reflection, the chance to draw previously published research together into a single body of work, and the great satisfaction gained when finally receiving the award can make it a rewarding process overall.

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REFLECTIONS

Collaborative Reflection on Career Trajectories: Perspectives from Practice

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Various challenges arise in educational institutions seeking to establish university-wide English language education systems. Although each university faces its own specific issues, many of these are shared across institutions. Therefore, cross-university collaborative reflection is particularly valuable, as it enables participants to share emotions and explore diverse perspectives. This paper reflects on how cross-institutional collaboration, facilitated through multiple tools, supported two English language educators navigating career transitions in Japanese tertiary education. By reflecting on this process, we highlight the benefits of collaborative reflection beyond institutional boundaries – including the value of dialogue among different institutions and positions, the enhancement of reappraisal and emotional belonging, the formation of new professional communities, and the recognition of burnout.

Keywords: collaborative reflection, professional development, shared journal, cross-institutional collaboration, reciprocal relationship

University-wide English language education in Japan is generally managed within institutional frameworks, and coordination of programmes is most often entrusted to tenured faculty. According to Hata (2023), the roles of tenured and full-time university faculty extend beyond research and teaching; they are also expected to contribute to university administration and social services. In other words, tenured and full-time contract faculty members are required to juggle multiple responsibilities in order to manage the university at various levels and provide more consistent and equitable learning opportunities across classes. Despite these institutional roles and responsibilities, quality assurance in language education remains a persistent challenge for many Japanese universities (Young, 2021). According to Prichard and Moore (2016), Japanese universities tended to grant individual teachers high levels of autonomy in pedagogical decision-making, and faculty members were less inclined to adopt a top-down approach to language programme coordination. This tendency may contribute to considerable variation in the quality of instruction, highlighting a systemic issue in the Japanese higher education context. Although every course has its own description and objectives within university-wide English language education, teacher autonomy allows teachers to interpret them as they wish. In the case where there are not enough shared understandings between full-time and part-time faculty, teaching approaches and areas of focus could differ significantly. While the full-time course coordinators emphasise quality assurance, the inadequacy of collaboration and communication between teachers makes it difficult to achieve.

Tenured and full-time faculty carry administrative burdens; in contrast, part-time faculty experience a different set of challenges, largely shaped by their limited institutional involvement.

First, they are more likely to have difficulties in grasping the broader picture of university operations and following changes. Even though guidelines and information are shared, their access can be limited because many part-time faculty work at multiple institutions. Another relates to emotional struggle. Part-time lecturers often face isolation that emerges from a lack of information and communication between other part-time and full-time lecturers. In that case, they need to deal with worries concerning classroom management and student behaviour issues independently. Lastly, they might feel insecure because their position is not guaranteed due to annual contracts. This uncertainty can make them feel less connected to institutions and occupied with additional work and job hunting during their part-time employment. These factors add complexity to part-time teachers' lives and could hinder communication with full-time colleagues.

These institutional dynamics informed our own professional experiences. As co-authors, we acknowledged the challenges outlined above before engaging in collaborative reflection. However, the degree of our awareness of the challenges deepened through collaborative reflection and career transitions. Although we were not novice teachers, working in a new institution often meant that our previous approaches were no longer effective, and adapting to the culture of a new workplace became essential. This process, however, is not always easy and can diminish educators' sense of efficacy and confidence as well as lead them to experience emotional upheaval. For example, a communication method between teachers that was effective at a previous institution failed to develop teacher relationships in the new environment. In such circumstances, collaboration and a safe space to have one's voice heard are particularly important. In this article, we demonstrate how collaborative reflection beyond institutional boundaries can support full-time faculty members in not only surviving but also thriving in their professional roles.

Reflective Practice

Reflective practice plays a pivotal role in teaching development and is widely regarded as a key professional competence (Farrell, 2022). Regarding the systematic framework of reflective practice, Boud et al. (1985) proposed a reflection-in-learning model consisting of three stages: returning to experience, attending to feelings, and re-evaluating experience. They explained that a person can prepare themselves for a new experience through these three stages. More specifically, the first stage helps them to reflect on the actual events, the second facilitates reflective process by fostering a positive affective state, and the third involves associating new knowledge with prior knowledge, integrating the two types of knowledge, testing for internal consistency between them, and personally appropriating new knowledge. Reflective practice at these stages can be approached from either a subjective or an objective perspective. The subjective perspective allows practitioners to focus on their own voice and experiences, whereas the objective perspective provides opportunities to broaden or reshape their understanding of their experiences.

Writing is one of the activities that serve as an aid to the reflective process. By describing events and expressing honest feelings, writing can help individuals recognise their affective aspects and provide an objective account of the events (Walker, 1985). Previous research has demonstrated positive effects of journals on novice language instructors. For example, Yoshihara et al. (2019) found that solo journaling can be beneficial for processing emotions and recognising difficulties and challenges. However, they cautioned that the benefits would be limited to the situation where supervisors are unavailable because feedback can play an important role in reevaluating experiences.

On the other hand, collaborative reflection has gained increased attention as a primary tool for reflection, particularly following the socio-cultural turn, which emphasises learning

through social interaction (Tajeddin et al., 2022), whereas forming a reflection group with peers at a similar level can facilitate transitions to new contexts and help avoid professional isolation (Farrell, 2016). Group or collaborative reflection is considered particularly effective, as engaging with diverse perspectives enables teachers to critically reevaluate their experiences from both subjective and objective viewpoints. According to Walsh and Mann (2015), dialogic reflection can contribute to richer analysis than written forms of reflection because a practitioner can reflect on practice while discussing it with another. This approach is particularly valuable because the dialogic reflection can provoke collaborative sense-making and mutual learning among practitioners.

Contexts

Backgrounds

This collaborative reflection took place from April 2022 to the end of September 2023. The initial plan for the collaborative project was shaped when we learned of similarities in our teaching philosophies in the 2022 academic year. That was the time one of us asked the other to participate in her research project, which helped us to learn about our perspectives intensely. We decided to invite one more collaborator who could provide a different insight into reflection. After the third person joined, we conversed about duties and job opportunities via social media group chat (Facebook Messenger) and started journaling. Those topics allowed us to develop a reciprocal relationship because all of us were eager to pursue academic career development. After the 2022 academic year, we (the authors) decided to continue our collaborative reflection voluntarily. Looking back, one of the key reasons for sustaining this collaboration was that both of us were experiencing career transitions to new teaching contexts, roles, and positions at that time. One of us previously worked as a part-time lecturer while pursuing doctoral studies, and the other balanced a full-time contract position with part-time teaching. As we both transitioned into tenured roles, we anticipated that continuing our collaborative reflection would support us in navigating the professional and institutional adjustments required in our new environments.

The universities where we worked full-time have several faculties, having medium-sized student populations. Both of us held responsibilities to coordinate university-wide English language education programmes, including supporting and recruiting part-time lecturers, providing faculty development (FD) workshops for part-time lecturers, allocating teachers and students to classes, designing curriculum, and verifying the effects of the coordinated programmes where teachers used shared syllabi. While the university-wide English language education programmes consist of both mandatory and elective English courses for all first- and second-year university students in the universities, both of us had only one or a few additional colleagues who managed the programmes. Additionally, each of us belonged to several committees within the universities, which focus on university administration. While the time for research during working hours tended to be limited, personnel evaluation consisted of not only teaching and administration but also research publications in most cases. Consequently, we pursued teaching, administration, and research in a well-balanced manner.

Collaborative Reflection Tools

Multiple tools were used to collaboratively reflect on our experiences as teachers in higher education. We collected journal entries at our own pace in shared Google documents during the 2022 and 2023 academic years, and we also provided comments on each other's writing. Zoom meetings were held four times to verbally share our experiences and identify similarities and differences in our work. Each Zoom session was recorded and automatically transcribed using the Zoom function. We read the transcribed data before and/or after a Zoom session for review.

Moreover, Facebook Messenger was used for casual communication, such as scheduling meetings and handling everyday inquiries related to teaching practices.

In the process of reflecting on our collaborative reflection, we reviewed all the data sets including our journaling, Zoom meeting transcripts, and social media chats collected between 2022 and 2023. We analysed the effects of collaborative reflection inductively and created four themes.

As for data reporting, we anonymised ourselves as Author A and Author B to protect our anonymity. Revealing personally identifying information in qualitative research could lead to negative judgments from colleagues or undesired career consequences, even though storytelling that includes researchers' real names might have a stronger impact on readers' perspectives (Lapadat, 2017). Considering the potential vulnerability of researchers, we do not disclose which of us corresponds to Author A or Author B. Furthermore, we did not use these anonymised labels consistently across all excerpts; in other words, "Author A" does not always refer to the same individual in order to ensure anonymity.

Effects of This Collaborative Reflection

In this section, we demonstrate four effects of our collaborative reflection conducted between the 2022 and 2023 academic years. These effects include: (1) being able to share openly due to working in different institutions and holding different positions, (2) fostering reappraisal and emotional belonging through collaborative journaling, (3) the expansion of a community apart from existing ones, and (4) recognising burnout through reflection.

Different Institutions and Positions Helped Us Be Open

Working at different institutions and in different positions turned out to be a positive aspect of this collaborative reflection. Our differences encouraged us to be honest about each individual's questions. For example, Author A raised a question on Facebook Messenger about how to increase part-time lecturers' involvement in a university FD workshop. Author B highlighted the challenges she faced, such as working at multiple universities and having limited time to focus on a single institution. The following extract illustrates our exchange:

> Author A: Quick questions for you as a part-time lecturer. If your workplace offers some professional development workshops for part-time lecturers, would you like to learn something from the university except information such as attendance policy and a way to do hybrid classes? If yes, what kinds of topics are you interested in?
>
> Author B: As a part timer, I find it hard to attend FD sessions because of the time restrictions. And I usually ask for help in the lecturer's rooms, so I wouldn't attend it unless I'm desperate [grinning face with sweat emoji]. But in the case of using designated textbooks, I would like to learn how others use them to adjust the difficulty for the students or to make it related to them [smiling face emoji]. (2022, May 31)

Through this honest exchange, we developed a deeper understanding of the situations faced by part-time lecturers and reflected on what types of FD workshops could be effective. Moreover, the dialogue enabled us to engage with the inquiry without fear of negative evaluation from colleagues or threats to our professional reputation. Author B described herself as a good teacher, normally directing herself to work for the students; thus, not participating in FD made her feel guilty. However, she could confess that participation without pay would be less fair for part-time lecturers who were busy with teaching different types of courses.

In many cases, accepting criticism can be emotionally challenging. However, in this instance, Author A, who asked the question, described the event as insightful, accepted the critique, and reflected on it as a positive experience in her journal. Although her natural personality as an honest person was one of the factors to reinterpret the event, the discussion with Author B, working at a different institution, could be another factor to make it easier for Author A to realise that part-timers had reasonable reasons not to participate in the FD workshops actively. Additionally, her reinterpretation in the shared journal allowed Author B to learn how an opinion as a part-timer could be acknowledged. Conducting collaborative reflection across different institutions is a useful way to share honest opinions on experiences. Moreover, occupying different positions makes us more aware of diverse perspectives depending on employment status. This episode illustrates how collaborative reflection created an emotionally safe space.

Collaborative Journaling as a Pathway to Reappraisal and Emotional Belonging

We found shared journaling to be an effective tool for self-reflection. Through these shared journals, we were able to read each other's experiences and events, which allowed us to rethink our own experiences more objectively. This process also provided us with new perspectives. When both of us wrote about our struggles in the journals, we experimented with a cognitive behavioural therapy practice known as reappraisal. According to Uchida (2023), reappraisal is a psychological strategy where a person pauses when experiencing negative emotions and reassesses the situation to determine whether or not those feelings are necessary. By reevaluating the situation or emotion, they aim to shift their response in a more positive direction. This idea of the reappraisal approach came from Author A's journal entries, who was influenced by Uchida's book regarding reappraisal:

> I recently came across a section on reappraisal in psychology in a book I am reading, and it reminded me of our discussion last Saturday. [...] It seemed that both Author B and I engaged in several instances of reappraising negative experiences objectively. In addition, by reading each other's journal entries, we were able to indirectly experience the other person's situations, which also contributed to our reappraisal processes. (2023, June 12)

Applying the reappraisal approach to our journal entries and discussing them in an online meeting helped us transform negative experiences into meaningful ones. Author B had picked up the reappraisal attitude in Author A's journal entry, which had made her want to embrace it in her journal before learning about the concept during an online meeting. In Author B's journal, she wrote "I read Author A's journal entry, particularly the section on reappraisal. For someone like me who is prone to subjectively interpreting situations negatively, having professional connections beyond my institution served as an important source of support and reassurance" (2023, August 5). In other words, collaborative reflection created two steps to learn about the reappraisal approach, consisting of reading entries and discussion. Indirect experience by reading entries helped Author B reflect on her attitude and prepare to make a change before learning about a new concept explicitly. Adopting a new concept to bring about change can be challenging when people find it unrelated. However, she could benefit from the preparation stage to make the experience relatable. Additionally, the explicit explanation from her partner in the meeting allowed her to conceptualise the approach and share her learning with the partner. In short, Author A naturally explored a certain part of Boud et al.'s (1985) reflection-in-learning model through the process of reappraisal, and her journal entry encouraged Author B to implement it through collaborative reflection.

Moreover, sharing not only positive but also negative thoughts in our journals and online meetings fostered a safe space that made us feel, "*I'm not the only one experiencing this* (2023, April 28)", "*I felt calm by reading my partner's journal* (2023, April 28)", and "*I can relate to it, so I can learn from you* (2023, September 13)". This sense of safety and mutual trust enhanced a sense of emotional belonging between us. As Farrell (2016) pointed out, we both could avoid isolation through collaborative reflection. In particular, the shared journals were a powerful tool that allowed us to resonate with each other's stories within this secure environment, deepen emotional connection, and eventually develop a more positive outlook.

Expanding a Community Apart from Existing Ones

This new community also helped us interact with each other, especially through Facebook Messenger. Both of us often felt difficulties and guilt about sharing our negative thoughts and worries with members of our existing communities. However, because we gathered around similar educational philosophies and interests, this environment allowed us to share everyday topics, including job-hunting struggles and classroom practice ideas. Our community continued to evolve as we experienced career transitions. When we eventually found ourselves in similar positions, we viewed the community as a more valuable place to share emotions and difficulties. We were not constrained by institutional group dynamics, which allowed us to remain open in our collaborative reflection.

For our reflective practice, we thought that connecting with communities outside our existing networks facilitated easier consultation and reflection, which is consistent with Burt's (1992) structural holes theory. This theory highlights that non-redundant contacts provide access to more diverse information compared to contacts within a dense network where contacts overlap, such as those in competitive business environments. This framework is also applicable to higher education, where individual research competitiveness or economic contribution is emphasised. In such universities, open discussions within institutions are sometimes challenging, especially regarding workload for the following reason. Many academic positions are characterised by a high degree of autonomy, allowing employees to manage their working hours. Consequently, a certain portion of work is considered to be under individual control. As a result, excessive workloads are sometimes regarded as matters of personal choice rather than structural issues, making it difficult to address workload inequalities internally. In contrast, in our cross-institutional collaboration, we were not bound by institutional obligations or contracts.

Cross-institutional collaborative reflection served as a platform for us to discuss the roles we shared in common. We could discuss events and experiences displayed in the journal entries, sharing different features of our workplaces, which promoted critical discussions. By comparing differences and similarities, we analysed problems and possible causes. Notably, our evaluation of the events and experiences ended with positive remarks, including suggestions for a different view or a future step. This sense of mutual support was captured well in our reflection shared in a Zoom meeting:

> Author A: I thought that after moving to a new place to work, the connections that I had built would be weakened or lost. But we continued this project so I could exchange information and share emotions with you. If I had kept journals alone, I would not have seen this positive effect.
>
> Author B: I see your point. It's like we were going beyond our institutional boundaries.

> Author A: And then I started to recognise good points in the new place. (2023, September 12)

While moving to another university can certainly broaden one's academic network, one of us initially perceived such connections as fragile, worrying that physical absence from a community might lead to a loss of belonging. Nevertheless, collaborative reflection through online tools allowed us to stay connected and keep up with each other's changes. Maintaining a sense of belonging to a community beyond our institutions helped one of us view the new environment more positively. This experience demonstrates that communities created across institutional boundaries can play a valuable role in sharing information and cultivating a positive mindset. Moreover, it illustrates that mutual support and shared reflection can foster non-redundant contacts, thereby strengthening a sense of community.

Recognising Burnout

Yahiro et al. (2022) point out that human service professionals, such as educators, are particularly susceptible to burnout as an occupational stressor. Through reviewing our collaborative reflection, we realised that we both experienced burnout. According to the World Health Organization (2019), burnout has three dimensions:

- Feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion
- Increased mental distance from one's job or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job
- Reduced professional efficacy

In our cases, Author A felt energy depletion and exhaustion when she tried to complete every task perfectly, which forced her to work even on weekends. This struggle led her to lose confidence and to become impatient in pursuing research. In contrast, Author B experienced reduced professional efficacy when she was required to manage ambiguous tasks and roles without adequate support. As a result, she also lost confidence in her role as a full-time lecturer. Both authors documented journal entries and discussed their experiences during Zoom meetings. For example, Author A reflected on the moment she was suffering from burnout in a Zoom session on 12 September 2023:

> When I compared myself to others, I realised that I used to push myself to give my full effort in every task, and as a result, I often ended up exhausted. I stayed late in my office, worked on weekends, and overworked myself to the point that I didn't allow my private time to be restorative. I put pressure on myself in that way. It negatively affected my other work as well, and I noticed that I hadn't been managing the balance well.

Looking back, we realised that during the process of collaborative reflection, we had overlooked moments when we were actually experiencing burnout. In retrospect, however, we also recognise that without engaging in collaborative reflection, we might not have become aware of our burnout at all. Burnout often builds gradually through layers of stress, and once someone is in that state, it can be difficult to notice or acknowledge it. Thus, our collaborative reflection played a significant role in helping us reflect our burnout and perceive it as a lesson. This reflection suggests that recognising burnout through collaborative reflection is a crucial step toward maintaining teacher well-being, as it allows educators to restore balance, reaffirm their professional purpose, and continue engaging meaningfully in their work.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this collaborative reflection had a significantly positive impact on us during our career transitions. At a mid-sized university, English language education programmes often recruit only a small number of faculty members, which limits opportunities for collaborative reflection and mentoring. In our case, there is only one other faculty member—or at most a few—in the English language education programme, and the situation has required us to manage multiple complex tasks such as curriculum coordination, working with and recruiting part-time lecturers, and other tasks, which are not related to curriculum coordination. These common challenges made our cross-institutional collaboration especially meaningful.

Engaging in collaborative reflection beyond our institutions provided an emotionally safe space where we could openly share questions, struggles, teaching practices, and research ideas without hesitation. We also recognised that this process helped us avoid dwelling on negative thoughts and prevented us from carrying them into our classrooms. Some of the reasons our collaborative reflection was successful include maintaining dialogue through Zoom meetings, casual conversations at the Japanese Association for Language Teaching (JALT) conferences, and in-person meetups in Tokyo. Furthermore, our shared backgrounds—as English language educators with similar teaching philosophies and research interests—helped sustain our collaboration. For example, we often shared information about academic conferences and events. Ideally, all language lecturers at tertiary education should have access to such peers, and we believe that attending JALT conferences and SIG gatherings can be valuable opportunities to find colleagues with shared interests and similar teaching philosophies.

Nowadays, university educators are expected to juggle various professional and personal tasks. Therefore, collaborative reflection with peers may sound like extra work. For those who find it challenging, we would like to share our secrets. We were honest about our progress, and when deadlines were difficult to meet, we adjusted by rescheduling meetings or extending timelines. These proactive attitudes helped sustain our reciprocal relationship. Rather than worrying about delays, we focused on continuity and flexibility, which enabled us to keep our collaboration alive. In a divisive and complex world, we found that collaborative reflection provided us not only with practical strategies for managing tasks but also with a sense of belonging.

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Forum

PANSIG 2025: Notes from the Teacher Development SIG Forum (Saturday May 17)

Cam Hill
British Hills

It was a small, intimate vibe at the gathering of the Teacher Development SIG Forum late on a rain-swept Saturday on the Kanda University International Studies (KUIS) Campus for PANSIG 2025. The morning had started strong with a thorough presentation from Dr. Johnmarshall Reeve on facilitating autonomy-supportive teaching, agentic engagement, the importance of invitational language, and success as defined as 'thriving'. It was great to see in the TD SIG's two presentations some of Reeve's key themes become actualised in real time and in workshop form. This forum happened to be the only workshop-style session I attended that weekend, reflecting that TD is all about developing through doing and, most importantly, doing together. A feeling of togetherness seems to be at the heart of the SIG and, as it turns out, autonomy-supportive teaching.

Throughout her presentation "Developing Teacher Autonomy Through Reflective Practices: Intersubjectivity and Communication", Joan Kuroda spoke effervescently about her love of mentorship training (and what it could do for autonomy), shared reflection, and John Dewey (whom she dubbed "the godfather of reflection"). Behind all of this, sometimes explicitly stated but deeply imbedded, was a deep respect for the chance of learning, developing through recognising mistakes, and vulnerability. Evident throughout her talk was a study of reflective practices, being ensconced in approaches such as Max Van Manen's hermeneutic phenomenology. However, she said she was tired of only studying about this and how for the last couple of years, it had truly been time to "get going" with reflective practice. She detailed her experiences with a small reflective group of educators, which I later learned had morphed over time but was happily charging along in a very intentional and purposeful way. At the heart of her presentation was an incident about three high-energy boys, seemingly off-task and overly jocular in a classroom that was otherwise on point. The crux of the issue, however, was being addressed with the possibly over-familiar diminutive '-chan', which caused the teacher quite a bit of distress. Taking a phenomenological approach to analyse this incident, the reflective approach used begins with a teacher collecting data about an incident, creating a narrative about it, and then beginning a line-by-line analysis of this narrative in what Joan called a "crafted story". The word choice here is key—it is not a retelling or description of events: it is a creative act and what Joan called "the making and re-making of reality". Reflection is not a one shot and you're done act—it is built on the foundation of plausibility, a "suspension of judgement", empathy (with the students and with other teachers), and it is a creative act defined collectively.

The small groups of reflecting teachers were then further guided to wonder about what might have been happening in that classroom, what could the teacher do, and the teacher's own decision for what could be done. In our own particular group, we spoke of the possibility of under-challenged students, why some teachers have thicker skin than others, why this seeming incident of disrespect would be bothersome (or not even disrespectful) to some teachers and not others, and the likely previous experiences some students had with ALTs. It was curious to hear that, in the end, the teacher approached the students directly to find out about the issue, which

was a student desire to be closer to the teacher. As it also turns out, following on from this chat with the students, the classroom rapport and performance was enhanced. I would have loved to enquire more about the wording of that chat with the students, for I assume that it involved quite a lot of emotional vulnerability on the part of the teacher in admitting his/her taking offense at the use of the diminutive. I also wondered about the value of reflecting 'what if' and 'what could' (phrases Joan instructed us to use when attempting our own reflections) if you could just get the 'real' answer straight from the students' mouths. However, while Joan did not say this explicitly, I'd like to think that the process of collective and reflective exploration of events (with other teachers prior to consulting the students) prepared the teacher for open-minded discussion and for a potential answer that a student may give. In a word, it gave the teacher the confidence to be vulnerable in a safe space with other teachers first and thus hopefully recreate that safe-space with the students in a similar conversation.

Later in the session, Joan and I wondered about how often teachers do the tasks that we ask of students, and we agreed that the frequency is probably a lot lower than we would like to admit. I also asked Joan why she insisted that this reflective process had to be about a 'problem', rather than a win. Joan contended that you could use this process for wins, however it was problems that brought about vulnerability, and it is vulnerability that brings teachers together, which is the training ground for bringing teachers and students together. In this sense, this reflective practice linked back nicely to Reeve's contentions in the morning session about how, in an autonomous supportive environment, more invitational language is needed ('you may want to/ you could', as opposed to 'you must/you should') and also, that it is equally important, if not more important, for the students to reflect on their autonomous actions with each other, as compared to explaining their autonomous decisions to the teacher. Autonomy is an act defined by sharing with equals. It was here that I was very much reminded of the first TD SIG Forum I attended at JALT 2023, in which current TD President Jon Thomas gave a deeply personal talk about how, in the classroom, there is no 'them and me' when it concerns the teachers and the students, despite how often teacher-talk contains notions about how 'they' (the students) didn't get it. It was a truly motivational speech, so it was great to see some of these unifying themes come together in a TD Forum once again.

The proceedings then moved from reflecting collectively to creating collectively with Anthony (Chuck) Glovia's "Lyrics as Language: Collaborative Songwriting for Expressive Agency in the Classroom". Chuck opened the presentation with the think-pair-share on the question "Why do lyrics stay in our memory?", before outlining the agentic elements of creating music in class. Namely, he highlighted how students choosing lyrics demonstrated an expressive side of autonomy, the cultural agency of choosing themes, and also how the performative element in lyric creation demonstrated linguistic competence. This was a great verbalisation of some of the agentic themes of the conference, but it was the subsequent stages that made for an interesting experience. After demonstrating a sample 3-line verse song in a blues format, Chuck then had TD attendees gather into small groups to make a similar song. Themes were suggested and attendees were invited to collaboratively create a 3-line verse. Thus, we are returned to the former question concerning how often teachers do what they ask their students to do. What followed revealed some curious sensations about creativity, anonymity and collaboration. It felt far easier to create the 3 line-songs as a group than individually. As a group, the sense of pressure and accountability seemed far less, even though we all contributed one line. This reminded me of the plenary session in the morning; in a brief comment, Reeve talked of the value of anonymity in autonomy when asking for student feedback via apps such as Mentimeter. The notion of anonymous autonomy was implied in this lyric creation act, and I would have liked Chuck to explore ideas how creating music in class could be both authentically agentic, equally

anonymous, and potentially more free of anxiety for language learners when creating a 'performer' identity.

What was equally interesting was how, mid-presentation, Chuck was directly challenged with a question about why we were doing this (a question that could be aimed at why would students do this activity and also why as teachers we were we doing that right then). I found this fascinating for three key reasons. Firstly, I would like to think that the TD is a SIG that has effectively created an atmosphere where teachers feel comfortable challenging one another. Secondly, this moment also brought me back to another key point from the plenary session of the morning. It was so refreshing to see Reeve stipulate the benefits of explicitly stating why students are being 'invited' to do something, something I have always felt is vital to purposeful learning. Thirdly, even if I felt that Chuck had actually stated the 'why' of the activity, I loved the fact that it was asked again and that it could be answered again. As a matter of fact, I would be happy to be asked that question every 10 minutes in a lesson, as if to keep the raison d'etre of all learning alive and burning and always in our minds.

Some 10 minutes into the session, after the songs were made, there was sadly no time to share them despite attendee desire to do so. I would like to share the lyrics that were made in our group for a couple of reflective reasons. The stanza went a little something like this:

It's so hard to make a decision (I chose my clothes today)
I can't make a decision to save my life
So I've decided to save nothing at all.

Despite the original impetus for the lyrics being an inability to choose clothes, the collaborative writing of this stanza came very quickly. In my own classes, I am often ambivalent about how the collaborative process can make some tasks take longer than if done individually, but often know that interpersonal skills being developed are equally as important as the linguistic. In this case, however, it was very quick, connected, and authentic. The song resonated quite deeply with all group members. Perhaps we felt a creative union coming together as a group, that we had created, and we felt one as agents. If the song was right, then perhaps that's because, as Joan had illustrated in the collaborative reflection, we are often wrong about what we think is happening, that our decisions might not be as important as we think they are, and that is how things get done. Or maybe we just wanted to thrive. And like a successful, thriving shoe company, maybe sometimes you 'just do it …. together'.

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