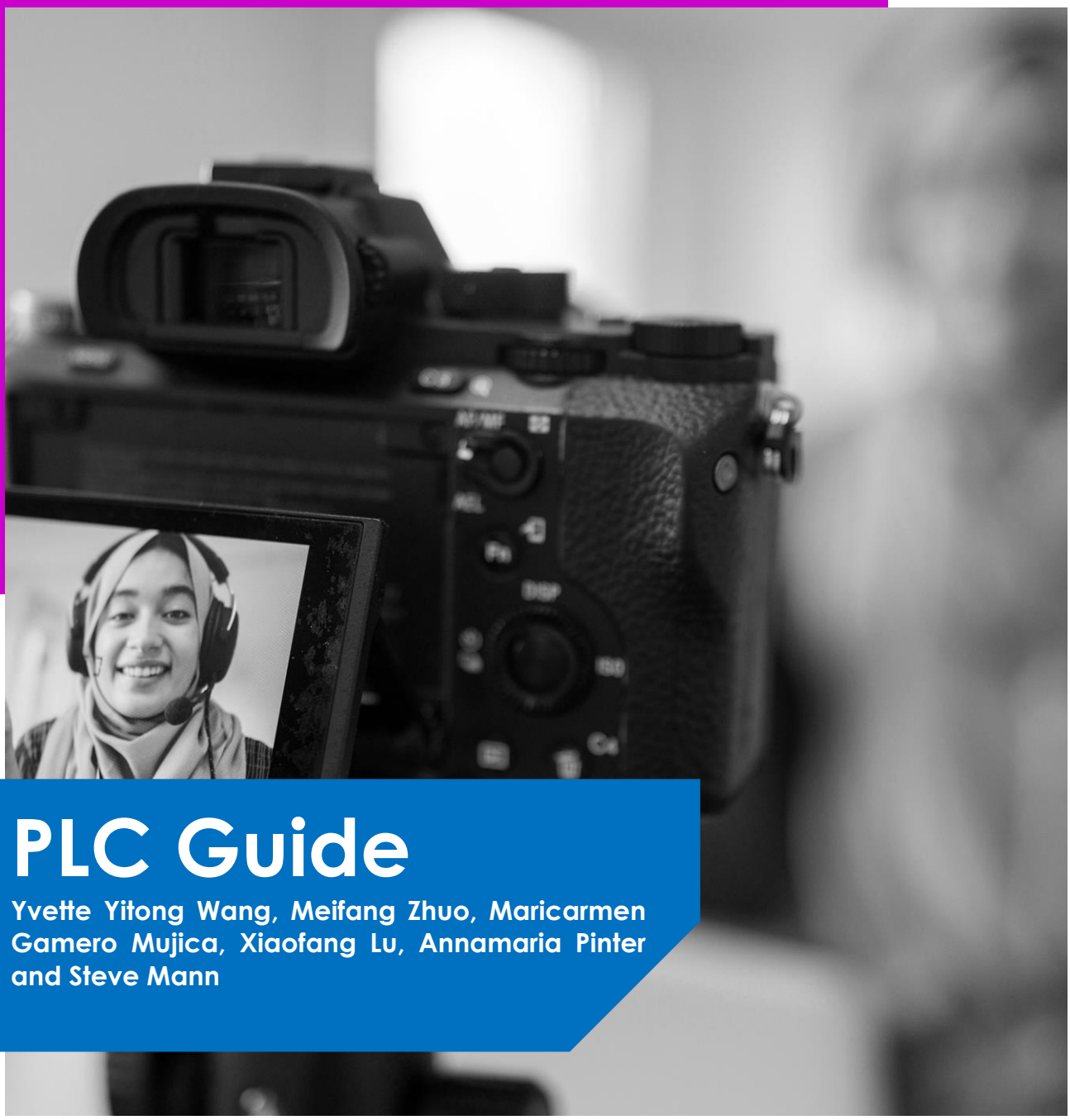

PLC Guide

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Additional Information

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INTRODUCTION

This document is a guide to this set of resources which will help you both consider your role as an expert teacher in facilitating your PLC and provide some possible content for you to run your PLC sessions. This document provides links to video resources and some books and articles. It also provides a short introduction to the concept of PLC and the value of getting teachers to work collaboratively.

Key elements of PLC resource

- Four recorded PLC sessions (these can be used to reflect on your aims and goals in working with you PLC)
- 10 Additional videos (these can be used as content/input for your PLC sessions)
- Articles/Books (these can be used for you to reflect on your role leading a PLC but some of them can be used to support the additional videos and can be read by teachers)
- Introduction to PLCs and their value (i.e. this document)

Four recorded PLC training sessions

In 2022 and 2023 University of Warwick and Yunnan Normal University provided four sessions for expert teachers. These are recorded and can be watched to get an idea of some fundamentals for running and supporting PLCs. The recordings of these sessions are available to you. Each recording begins with a short introduction from either Annamaria Pinter or Steve Mann which helps you to understand what the facilitators were trying to achieve:

- Recorded Session 1 (Topic: Leadership of PLC - sustainable CPD) Neil Murray, Yunjie Hou and Steve Mann. This session focuses on how to lead a PLC. It considers how you can use your role as ‘expert teacher’ to unlock the potential benefits of PLC.
- Recorded Session 2 (Topic: Learner-centredness and experiential learning) Annamaria Pinter and Penny Mosavian with Yun Fang from Yunnan. This session establishes the importance of learner centredness, experiential learning and wellbeing in all classrooms and it demonstrates step by step how to implement experiential learning in any session.

- Recorded Session 3 (Topic: Reflective practice and online offline) Steve Mann, Yuan Gang and Maricarmen Gamero. This session establishes the importance of reflection. It suggests ways to develop teachers' capacity to draw effectively on their experience, reflect on their own practice, and implement change. It also considers different platforms combining online and offline elements (e.g. hybrid learning and flipped content).
- Recorded Session 4 (Topic: Teacher Research) Annamaria Pinter and Jason Anderson with Ruirui Wang . The session considers a wide range of possibilities for engaging in researching teachers' own classrooms.

Additional videos

These videos have been made collaboratively by University of Warwick and Yunnan Normal University and can provide content and input for your PLC sessions. The videos cover three main areas: Skills, CLT, Research for teachers. Here is the full list of the additional videos:

- Guiding groups of teachers - Communities of Practice
- Integrated Skills
- Listening Skills
- Speaking Skills
- Action Research
- Reflective Practice
- Classroom Dynamics
- Differentiation
- Task-based learning and teaching
- Group Work

There is a good introductory video at the top of the list (Guiding groups of teachers - Communities of Practice). This is a helpful recording of Ana García Stone's session for the British Council on Communities of Practice. It is useful in thinking about the work you do, as there is a lot of overlap between the ideas of CoP and PLC. Many of the aims are the same: We want to share and discuss practice with teachers and provide resources and information whether the group is called PLC, CoP or TAG.

The purpose of the additional videos listed above is to provide resources for you to use with the teachers you are working with in the PLC. They explain both well-established and

innovative ideas. The videos are primarily designed for use with experienced teachers but could be used for pre-service teacher education or MA programmes at university level.

Digital Library

We have provided books and articles that might be helpful for you in two ways. First of all, some resources will help you think about PLCs and their possible aims, processes, and outcomes. Secondly, there are resources which you can share with your teachers.

Author(s)	Title
Ahlquist, S. (2019).	Motivating teens to speak English through group work in Storyline.
Burns, A., & Siegel, J. (Eds.). (2017).	International perspectives on teaching the four skills in ELT: Listening, speaking, reading, writing.
Mann, S., & Walsh, S. (2017).	Reflective practice in English language teaching: Research-based principles and practices.
Marzano, R. J., & Marzano, J. S. (2003).	The key to classroom management.
McNiff, J. (2013)	How do we do action research? Planning and doing a project
Nunan, D. (2001).	New ways in teaching listening.
Oxford, R. (2001)	Integrated Skills in the ESL/EFL Classroom
Pinter, A. (2015).	Task-based learning with children.
Taylor, S. (2017)	Contested Knowledge: A Critical Review of the Concept of Differentiation in Teaching and Learning.
Van den Branden, K. (2016).	Task-based language teaching.

You may be particularly interested in reading some of the following research about PLCs in China.

Author(s)	Title
Chen, L. (2020)	A historical review of professional learning communities in China (1949-2019): some implications for collaborative teacher professional development.
Qian Haiyan & Walker Allan (2021)	Creating conditions for professional learning communities (PLCs) in schools in China: the role of school principals
Qiao, X., Yu, S., & Zhang, L. (2018)	A review of research on professional learning communities in mainland China (2006-2015) Key findings and emerging themes.

Sargent, T. C., & Hannum, E. (2009)	Doing more with less: Teacher professional learning communities in resource-constrained primary schools in rural China.
Wang, D., Wang, J., Li, H., & Li, L. (2017)	School context and instructional capacity: A comparative study of professional learning communities in rural and urban schools in China.
Yin, H., & Zheng, X. (2018)	Facilitating professional learning communities in China: Do leadership practices and faculty trust matter?
Zhang J, Huang Q, Xu J. (2022)	The Relationships among Transformational Leadership, Professional Learning Communities and Teachers' Job Satisfaction in China: What Do the Principals Think?
Zhang, J., & Pang, N. S. K. (2016)	Exploring the characteristics of professional learning communities in China: A mixed-method study.
Zhang, J., & Sun, Y. (2018)	Development of a conceptual model for understanding professional learning communities in China: a mixed-method study.
Zhang, J., Yuan, R., & Yu, S. (2017)	What impedes the development of professional learning communities in China? Perceptions from leaders and frontline teachers in three schools in Shanghai.
Zheng, X., Yin, H., & Liu, Y. (2021)	Are professional learning communities beneficial for teachers? A multilevel analysis of teacher self-efficacy and commitment in China.

Here are also some readings about PLCs in China written in Chinese.

Author(s)	Title
陈准	基于 QQ 平台的大学英语教师协作发展模式研究
陈先奎	网络实践共同体对高校英语教师科研领导力发展的影响：一项多案例研究
邓幸俊	论 U-D-S 教师教育共同体建设_以农村义务教育师资均衡发展的视角
杜志强	当前中小学教师专业发展虚拟共同体建设的痼疾与应对之策
高长	基于组织学习的大学英语教师专业发展路径探究
郭遂红 陈准	基于 QQ 平台的大学英语教师协作发展模式研究
郭燕	专业学习共同体对外语教师教学能力发展的影响研究
郭燕	我国大学英语教师专业发展共同体建设研究
胡志雯	项目实践共同体中教师合作学习及其对专业发展的影响
金卫东	教师专业共同体建设和运行机制的校本化探索
李征娅	专业共同体下的高校英语教师专业发展

梁宇学	建设教师学习共同体有效促进教师专业发展
孙钦美	共同体视域下高校英语教师个性化学习的个案研究
亓明俊	学习共同体视域下大学英语新手教师专业认同个案研究
亓明俊	学习共同体视域下的大学英语新手教师专业认同_内涵_模型与路径
亓明俊	反思性思维视阈下大学英语教师探究共同体的支持系统建构
彭红	学习共同体视域下英语教师专业发展路径探究----评《学习共同体视域下高校英语教师专 舒悦-基于学习共同体的中小学组织文化变革探讨》
苏秋萍	创设教师教育共同体_实现大学与中小学的共同提升----对中西部农村中小学教师置换脱产研修项目实践的思考
宋维华	跨校共同体框架下的日语教师专业发展_基于山东省高校与中学合作实践的考察
王京华	基于专业学习共同体理论的教师团队建设实践研究
王凯	试论中小学教师专业发展共同体建设路径
王天晓	教师教育共同体建设三题
王天晓	治理视野下的教师共同体建设
文秋芳	大学外语教师专业学习共同体建设的理论框架
熊英	小学英语教师专业发展共同体的构建与发展
薛正斌	基于自然合作文化的教师专业学习共同体建构
张佳	我国教师专业学习共同体发展现状的实证研究_以上海市中小学为例
张丽萍	对基于微博的中小学教师学习共同体的调查研究
张立平	拓展性学习_教师专业发展的共同体视角与实践意涵
张露月	信息技术背景下基于网络学习共同体的高校英语教学与教师发展研究----评《信息技术环境下大学英语及其教师专发展研究》
郑燕林	构建中小学教师在线教学技能发展共同体的需求调查

A BRIEF REVIEW OF PLC AND CPD

Importance of CPD for teachers

CPD stands for 'Continuous Professional Development' and there are a few different terms that capture a collaborative way of working for teachers. The following are some acronyms that may be used in this introduction. The terms in bold are particularly relevant to collaborative ways of working with teachers:

AR Action Research
CoP Community of Practice
F2F Face to Face
PLC Professional Learning Community
TAG Teacher Activity Group
TGS Teacher Study Groups

PLCs are an important way to sustain CPD for teachers. As Maslach and Leiter (1999) put it, we must prioritize the professional wellbeing and development of teachers, who are the most valuable part of the educational system. If they are able to reflect and grow as a group in their PLC this will help their CPD. CPD prevents burnout and keeps teachers' motivation and engagement in the profession.

Involvement in PLCs can have a really beneficial effect on teachers' professional development. This developmental aspect of CPD is emphasised in this quote from Díaz-Maggioli, it is:

> … an ongoing learning process in which teachers engage voluntarily to learn how best to adjust their teaching to the learning needs of their students. Professional development is not a one-shot, one-size-fits-all event, but rather an evolving process of professional self-disclosure, reflection and growth that yields the best results when sustained over time in communities of practice and when focused on job-embedded responsibilities. (Díaz-Maggioli, 2003, p. 1)

The PLC can be a way to enable teachers to reflect on the activities and choices in their work. It is best seen as an evolving process that is partly shaped by the teachers themselves.

The PLC can engage teachers actively. This might be by discussing and trialling lessons, materials and activities or it might be by conducting a small-scale research project. In such cases, the PLC can help teachers to reflect on the activities in which teachers engage during the course of a career' and this will 'enhance their work (Day& Sachs, 2005, p. 3).

The PLC is a good site for thinking about both teacher learning and student learning. It will inevitably focus on aspects of language classrooms. In other words, the PLC can foster ongoing teacher learning while encouraging them to notice and document their interactions with their professional context and their learners (Kelchtermans, 2004).

Your role as a facilitator of the PLC is to plan collaboratively with your teachers. What are they interested in improving? Are there any puzzles that they want to overcome? Answering and discussing such questions and coming up with viable responses and plans can help them develop: This is a what Padwad and Dixit emphasise in this quotation:

> … a planned, continuous and lifelong process whereby teachers try to develop their personal and professional qualities, and to improve their knowledge, skills and practice, leading to their empowerment, the improvement of their agency and the development of their organization and their pupils. (Padwad & Dixit, 2011, p. 10)

A PLC can help teachers develop and share knowledge. To conceptualize, plan and analyze CPD, Cochrane-Smith and Lytle (1999) put forward three conceptions of teacher learning: a) knowledge for practice; b) knowledge in practice; c) knowledge of practice. You can consider the balance of these kinds of knowledge in your PLC process:

> "Knowledge-for-practice" assumes that university-based researchers generate what is commonly referred to as formal knowledge and theory (including codifications of the so-called wisdom of practice) for teachers to use in order to improve practice.
> "Knowledge-in-practice" assumes that teachers learn when they have opportunities to probe the knowledge embedded in the work of expert teachers and/or to deepen their own knowledge and expertise as makers of wise judgments and designers of rich learning interactions in the classroom.
> "Knowledge-of-practice" assumes teachers learn when they generate local knowledge of practice by working within the contexts of inquiry communities to

> theorize and construct their work and to connect it to larger social, cultural, and political issues. (Cochran-Smith& Lytle, 1999. p.250)

If there is too much formal theory and knowledge presented in the PLC it is likely to lead to boredom and lack of engagement. It is essential to draw out the teachers' experiences (the experiential knowledge from their practice that they can reflect on).

It is also important to remember that teachers are not machines. They will have frustrations, emotions, hopes and fears. The PLC can be a site for articulating these emotions and dimensions of self and identity. Day and Sachs (2005) argue that the fact that teachers are human beings with emotions, has a considerable role to play in their professional life and therefore, it is imperative allow space for articulation of 'knowledge of self' within the process of PLC management. You can help teachers explore their self and identity: "Knowledge of self": generated by teachers engaging regularly in reflection in, on and about their values, purposes, emotions, and relationships. (Day& Sachs, 2005, p. 9). Barkhuizen (2017) believes that language teacher identity is a core and essential part of a teachers' CPD and Guan and Huang (2013) explicitly stress that teachers' cognition and emotions, like willingness and eagerness are strongly associated with effective CPD. If you can help teachers explore 'the intersection between emotions and identity' this contributes to a better understanding of teachers' own professional development (Miller& Gkonou, 2019, p. 58).

Benefits of involvement in a PLC

If you can provide a programme of suitable CPD within your PLC there can be several tangible benefits:

Enhancing teaching and learning

A collaborative approach to the PLC will enable teachers to share successful aspects of their teaching and learning. It will also help them share and respond to challenges. To be more specific, Díaz Maggioli (2004, p. 2) points out that teachers' CPD can 'directly tackle teachers' teaching styles—the patterns of decisions teachers make when mediating their students' learning'. Improving teaching can benefit language learners' experience in the classroom. Indeed, 'quality teaching is vital for improving student learning' (OECD, 2015, p. 2). We can expect that reflection on teaching styles and decisions in a PLC will contribute to better outcomes for students' learning.

Empowering teachers

Prince& Barrett (2014, p. 22) argues that teachers can develop 'a stronger sense of self-awareness and accountability' by involving themselves in effective CPD activities. The critical self-reflection skills can also be nurtured during the process when teachers make efforts to take notice of both what happens in the classroom and how they respond to it and contemplate strategies for better alternatives. As Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) point out, teachers are more likely to be dedicated to what they have confidence in. In this sense, the valuable skills gained through various CPD programs can help to empower teachers not only professionally but also mentally.

Moreover, chances for teachers to meet/collaborate with other like-minded teaching professionals are often created during CPD process and this is an important contribution of a PLC. Generally, teachers are more vulnerable when working in isolation but by 'forming alliances,' they can empower themselves not only knowledge wise but also in their effectiveness in enacting their roles (Miller, 1999, p. 142).

Finally, research has shown that teachers express feelings of 'empowerment, renewed energy, and importance' when they can participate in decision making in an authentic way (Miller, 1999, p. 149). By taking part in CPD projects, teachers can at least contribute feedback to the content and delivery of the project, which will in turn help to shape or improve the CPD initiatives for future participants. If they are engaged in CPD focusing on teacher research, they can have an impact on local or even national/international teaching practices in similar circumstances. To conclude, the chance of contributing their opinions for the CPD projects and disseminating their research findings to the wider public is empowering. Indeed, teacher empowerment becomes a biproduct of effective CPD programs.

Preventing teacher burnout

Providing teachers with opportunities for professional development has been suggested as an effective means to prevent teacher burnout (Kievit& Vandenberghe, 1993; Little, 1993). It is worth noting that teacher burnout may sound like an 'end-product' but it can also be a temporary state where external support may be needed (Chang, 2009, p. 197). Research on teachers has shown that, engaging in a PLC can also help those experiencing burnout to revitalize their enthusiasm for the career and return to the growing state (Fessler and

Christensen, 1992, as cited in Chang, 2009). Therefore, either for supporting teachers throughout their career to keep their career frustration and burnout at bay or for assisting them in getting back on track for career commitment, CPD and being involved in a PLC can have an essential role to play.

Improving teacher retention

Although teacher burnout may not necessarily lead teachers to leaving teaching posts, it is a fact that they can be inextricably linked to one another. Woods (1999) argues that teachers with a strong commitment to their teaching career are among the group of teachers who are more likely to burn out. Indeed, teachers, as 'the most significant and costly resource in schools' and 'being central to school improvement efforts,' may decide to leave the career due to a variety of reasons (OECD, 2015, p. 1). Whatever the causes are, it would be a great loss to the education system as a whole; when talented, highly committed, and motivated teaching personnel leave the teaching profession. An analysis of a past study (Vanoost, 1994; Vandenberghe& Vanoost, 1996) about some talented and highly committed teachers voluntarily leaving the teaching profession concludes these teachers' perspectives of insufficient opportunities for their personal and professional development as the primary cause of this disquieting issue. Also, research exploring reasons for leaving teaching has revealed that teachers themselves suggest 'greater focus on professional development' as a potential solution for encouraging them to stay in the profession (DfE, 2018, p. 50). Based on the arguments outlined above, we can see how CPD may be an effective measure to keep good teachers and improve teacher retention.

Some general principles to consider in thinking about PLCs

In working towards designing sessions to support teachers in PLCs, we should draw on both literature in related fields of teacher education (e.g. CPD, CoPs, TAGs) and also literature that is specific to PLCs in China. The literature suggests that there are five key design elements. Teacher development initiatives should be systematic, collaborative, innovative, reflective and digital.

Systematic, Collaborative, Innovative, Reflective, and Digital

Although interesting and well-structured content is always important, transmissive and top-down approaches to CPD should be avoided. The content is always important and 'anchors everything' (Bates & Morgan, 2018, p. 623) but opportunities for collaboration, peer-talk, and connecting theory and input to classroom events and experiences are essential if participants are to be engaged. A didactic model 'in which facilitators simply tell teachers what to do or give them materials without providing them opportunities to develop skills and inquire into their impact on pupil learning is not effective' (Cordingley et al., 2015, p33). When such approaches are avoided, trainers can focus on connecting input and tasks to teachers' context (Moon, 2001) with a view to bridging the gap between practice and theory (Wallace & Bau, 1991). The PLC can be a valuable way to connect theory and practice.

New knowledge should be connected to existing experiences, beliefs and 'personal theories' (James, 2001) because this can help to ensure the content of a CPD course is relevant to teachers' actual roles (Weston et al., 2019). If content is example based and data led rather than concept or theory driven it will better connect to the classroom (Mann & Walsh, 2017). To achieve this, vignettes, narratives, learner-feedback, transcripts, real teaching materials, demonstration lessons, peer observations, case studies of teaching and videos can be included. If we can locate and utilise the majority of such data and material from the Yunnan context it will be ideal for the PLC sessions.

The synchronous sessions are clearly the most important aspect of PLC session design. While it is important that the interaction in the actual synchronous process should be engaging, it is important to build in opportunities for follow-up reflection and communication beyond the synchronous session too (Wright & Bolitho, 2007). Such follow up and extension helps avoid 'one-shot' or 'one-off' top-down approaches to CPD (see Joyce & Showers, 2002) and will ensure more effective long-term impact (Wedell, 2009). In other words, if trainers, mentors, e-moderators or coaches can offer ongoing encouragement and support, the CPD processes will be more effective (Lamb, 1995).

An environment in which teachers are positioned as active participants in the learning process is also essential for effective PLC work. This can involve examining learner data and classroom materials as well as helping participants to grapple with aspects of practice (rather than prioritising theory and conceptual information). Within such an environment, opportunities for the sharing of different kinds of teacher knowledge can be created (Freeman, 2002). What teachers already know and believe will filter new information and thus needs to be acknowledged, otherwise it may form a basis of resistance (Wright & Bolitho, 2007). When teachers work in such a way, where there experience is acknowledged and an important part of the PLC, they can establish what Desimone calls an 'interactive learning community' (2011: 69).

We should think about different dimension of CPD when we design and run our PLCs (see the figure above). The first key dimension of CPD is that it should be systematic. The second dimension is that CPD is usually more effective and valuable if it is collaborative. The third feature of CPD is that innovation is at its heart. But innovation is not applying others' new ideas; it is transformative, seeing innovation as something which starts with or at least involves practitioners. The fourth dimension is that reflective practice is essential and supports the first three dimensions mentioned above. The final dimension is that digital literacy and the appreciation of digital tools and platforms are now both inevitable and an integral dimension in the delivery and support of good quality CPD.

Systematic

While there is no one-size-fits-all approach to CPD more generally and PLC sessions in particular, there have been a number of influential reviews where good practices for CPD have been identified (Broad & Evans, 2006; Orr et al., 2013; Timperley et al., 2008) and these are worth considering in designing a systematic approach to PLCs:

- Evidence from suggests effective teacher education programmes should be systematic (Allier-Gagneur, et al. 2020)
- The closer the activities are to the classroom and being school-based, the better (Walsh, 2002; Borg, 2015a; Allier-Gagneu et al., 2020).
- PLCs work better if they incorporates peer support and engagement and have a vision for motivating teachers (see Lamb & Wyatt, 2019).

- Sessions should be structured around practice-based cycles of trial and refinement and have opportunities for reporting back on classroom innovation (Hayes, 2019).
- Face-to-face and online sessions should include a focus on pupil learning outcomes; share effective teaching practices using modelling; acknowledge teachers' existing knowledge, views, and experiences; and build on this existing knowledge (Allier-Gagneu et al., 2020).

PLCs work better if they have a systematic clear policy (Borg, 2015a) with support and recognition (e.g. from teachers' institutions and Ministries of Education).

Collaborative

Teachers are more likely to have positive experiences when a social environment is established, group dynamics are fostered and interaction is central (Moon, 2001; Hadfield, 1992). Furthermore, PLC sessions will work better if there are varied opportunities for peer collaboration and talk. Such collaborations allow teachers to take risks and address instructional issues or dilemmas with one another. Therefore, collaboration is 'necessary, but not sufficient' (Cordingley et al., 2015: p33) and needs to be closely aligned with structured input and appropriate and achievable goals. Fostering a collaborative trusting atmosphere is key and 'establishing a trusting relationship is instrumental to creating a support group that works together to solve problems of practice' (Bates & Morgan, 2018: 624). Such collaborations allow teachers to take risks and address instructional issues or dilemmas with one another.

Evidence shows that top-down approaches are less effective than programmes which are constructivist, dialogic and actively include sharing between teachers (see Mann & Walsh, 2017). Wyatt and Dikilitaş (2016) show that engaging teachers in more constructivist CPD positions them as knowledge generators and makes them more likely to engage in research and gain deeper practical knowledge. Furthermore, when CPD is done collaboratively, it fosters an environment of openness, trust and support among teachers, which facilitates the sharing of ideas, doubts and difficulties (Forte & Flores, 2014). Collaborative CPD takes many forms, including team teaching; collaborative planning; peer coaching, mentoring and observation; collaborative project writing and co-operative development. While the context that teachers are working in may make one of these forms more appropriate than another,

it is important that collaborative CPD is a bottom-up, teacher-led process, as this can help promote professional learning (Mann & Walsh, 2017). In other words, collaborative CPD is best when teachers in their own contexts decide how to work with one another (Desimone, 2011). Consequently, some element of choice can help foster collaboration.

One way to establish a form of collaboration in the PLCs might be to include some element of peer-observation. Although most teachers have, at some point in their careers, been observed, this is typically for assessment and/ or appraisal purposes. Peer observation for development differs fundamentally from traditional types of observation because it enables teachers to research areas of their choice with the observer playing essentially a supportive and reflective role. While there is a wide variety of models that teachers can adopt when engaging in peer observation (see Cosh, 1999; Freeman, 1982; Gosling, 2015), it is vital that there is mutual trust and respect among peers (Gosling 2002; Wang & Day 2001; P'Rayan, 2013; Ahmed et al., 2018). Although research has yet to ascertain what, if any, benefit exists between peer observation and student learning/ achievement (Gosling, 2015; Donnelly, 2007), teachers report that the process is useful for 'self-assessment and improvement of teaching skills' (Donnelly, 2007: 127). Teachers who engage in peer observation practice new skills and apply new strategies more frequently than colleagues who work alone (Showers & Joyce, 1996) and peer observation has a positive impact on camaraderie and collegiality (Hamilton, 2013; Atkinson & Bolt, 2010).

In designing collaborative elements of PLCs, we can look to other related forms of collaborative CPD. For example, there has been a lot of recent attention on the benefits of teacher activity groups (TAGs). The benefits of this kind of collaborative CPD are thus multifaceted (Borg et al., 2020). Through collaborative practices, teachers work together proactively to reflect on and respond to local problems, which, in turn, can enhance learning and promote collegiality. Communities of Practice (CoPs), PLCs. TAGs and Teacher Study Groups (TSGs) have positive benefits for student learning (see Firestone et al., 2020 for a fuller review) where teachers collaboratively work on issues of contextual relevance, reflect on affordances and constraints and develop action plans to work towards solutions and innovation. Such groups can facilitate critical reflection and teacher agency (McAleavy et al., 2018).

The latest international evidence shows that a highly effective option for CPD is the formation of Communities of Practice (e.g. Al-Habsi et al., 2021). CoPs are groups of people who 'share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly' (Wenger, 2011: 1). In such groups, teachers collaborate on their professional development. The concept has been widely adopted for professional groups of various kinds within language teacher education (Hayes, 2019). CoPs offer important forms of professional collaboration as well as social and emotional support. Johnson (2009: 241) confirms that 'collaborative teacher development is an increasingly common kind of teacher development found in a wide range of language teaching context'.

Innovative

Innovation is a key element of CPD goals and processes. When we talk about innovation, however, we usually think about new innovations which someone else (e.g., companies such as Sony, Apple, Cambridge English) makes available to us. However, in CPD terms, the powerful way to think about innovation is that it starts with or at least involves the practitioner. This view of CPD as an innovative process is reflexively tied to context and it is worth making some points about the importance of keeping a constant connection between innovation and context.

Innovations are not easily generalizable, because each context has its own constraints, affordances and dynamics. This is something that Adrian Holliday recognised in his influential book on 'appropriate methodology' (Holliday, 1994). There is no point in adopting a 'best method' or 'innovation' from some organisation or expert if the context in which it is being used has not been considered. In other words, an in-depth appraisal of the context is vital before introducing an innovation. The 'hybrid model' (Henrichsen, 1989) provides a thorough system for identifying contextual factors likely to facilitate or hinder the change process and this gives us a good start in responding to Holliday's call for the recognition of the importance of a detailed, ethnomethodological understanding of the innovation situation in making judgements of appropriacy. It is practitioners who have that detailed up-close understanding of teaching context (both constraints and affordances).

When we strive for appropriate methodology in terms of what we aim for our teacher-trainers to achieve, we move away from the idea of generalised 'best practice' towards 'praxis'. This is essentially where we currently 'live' in a period of 'post-method condition'

(Kumaravadivelu, 2001). This is a time when there needs to be a renewed and corresponding recognition of the importance of situated learning and appropriate methodology. In order for appropriate and situated methodology and learning to happen, tools need to be sufficiently flexible that they can be tailored to specific contexts and facilitate the kind of up-close professional understanding that CPD was originally designed to foster. For example, Kurtoğlu-Hooton (2013) shows how innovative tools enable close-up and data-led attention to teaching and CPD potential. Furthermore, teachers need to develop a healthy degree of skepticism towards so called 'best practice' and more importantly, they need to be positioned as innovators and problem solvers.

Continuous quality improvement is practised within one's teaching;
Innovation is based on many small changes rather than radical changes;
Ideas for change and improvement can come from teachers and students themselves;
Teachers take ownership for their work and related improvements.

Reflective

We have already stated that a teacher becomes an active learner only by trying new things in the classroom as this creates an opportunity for reflection. This is important because reflective practice (RP) is essential to teacher development (Farrell, 2019; Mann & Walsh, 2017). Teachers learn about their own practice by systematically reflecting on their experiences (Richards & Farrell, 2005). While the latter has been known for some time, questions still remain over how opportunities for reflection can be systematically provided. In the words of Bailey and Springer (2013, p. 120), developing 'programmatically feasible forms of support for reflective practices that do not detract from a sense of personal initiative, autonomous choice, and ownership by teachers' is challenging. Yet, this is not the only challenge because transmissive styles of education, which were once prevalent, may have made it so that teachers are unfamiliar with reflecting in explicit ways (Mann & Walsh, 2017). In fact, in our experience, we have found that reflection can be difficult to get used to for both novice and experienced teachers. Thus, reflection needs to be appropriately operationalised and it needs to be supported and scaffolded. This is particularly important for novice teachers in pre-service teaching programmes. They need to understand that real reflection and not pseudo reflection (Hobbs, 2007) is an important part of their ongoing CPD. Therefore, before detailing some of the operational aspects of reflection for CPD, we think it is important to make clear that we believe that 'reflection is a skill that should be fostered

from the beginning of the learning-to-teach process' (Lee, 2007: 321). That is to say, it should happen in pre-service preparation programmes and is not only something in-service teachers should be encouraged to do. To highlight the importance of this, we would like to return to our earlier point about 'becoming' and 'continuing'. If teachers are familiarised with reflection from the beginning of their careers, then it is much more likely that they will understand the benefits of reflection, which, in turn, will increase the likelihood that they engage in it for their continuing development. Furthermore, proving this opportunity early on will enhance understanding of 'what reflection is and how it might be enhanced for maximum effect' (Hammersley-Fletcher & Orsmond, 2005: 222). Videos can be particularly helpful in bridging the gap to the classroom. Short videos have higher positive evaluations from teachers than whole lessons in PLC work (see Mann et al., 2019).

Russell Stannard provides an example of how screen-capture can be used to foster reflection in this video (https://vilte.warwick.ac.uk/items/show/33).

As mentioned above, embedding reflective elements in CPD can be challenging as it requires flexibility. If teachers are forced from the top down to engage in reflection in a prescribed manner, then it is likely that it will become a chore and the result will be superficial engagement and/or inauthentic reflection (Mann & Walsh, 2017). Furthermore, not all tools are sufficiently orientated to a teacher's particular contextual needs. As such, when possible, teachers should be given agency over the tools that they use to reflect. Some of the main reflective tools used to encourage and facilitate reflection are discussion (including teacher discussion groups and post-observation conferences), journal writing, classroom observations, video analysis, and action research, (see Farrell, 2016 full range of reflective tools).

Giving teachers ownership over the way they engage in reflective practice can help to ensure that it serves as a means for improving teaching and aiding teachers' professional development. However, when teachers reflect on their own, they face no challenges to their thinking and therefore their reflections can be superficial or shallow (Day, 1993). For this reason, we take the position that reflection is more effective when it is done collaboratively. As highlighted above, collaboration facilitates 'new understandings to emerge, current practices to be questioned and alternatives to be explored (Mann & Walsh, 2017: 190). It is also more effective when it is data-led and systematic.

Data-led reflection requires some kind of evidence. This does not have to be evidence from hours and hours of observation or weeks of research. In fact, the kind of data-led reflection we are proposing is 'small-scale, localized, context-specific, and private, and conducted by teachers for their own ends' (Walsh & Mann, 2015: 354). One of the emerging and promising areas of developing reflective practice is the use of e-portfolios (see also Chapter 7). In fact, this has the capacity to develop reflection and our next dimension, digital skills. Developing as a professional requires a lifelong commitment to learning and research (Day, 1999) and a portfolio approach to working with novice teachers helps with professional identity building and improvement of reflective skills. It provides a space for pre-service teachers to develop and document good teaching practices and innovation. It also encourages them to make connections between theory and applications, and to sustain professional networks and CoPs beyond the immediate education programme (see Gulzar & Barrett, 2019). Embedding tools like e-portfolios and cooperative development helps foster reflection as an essential part of CPD. These tools also make evident that inquiry and reflection are valued as central professional learning processes by those organising CPD. This, as highlighted by Borg (2015a), can ensure that CPD achieves positive and sustained impacts on teachers, learners and organisations.

Digital

Integration of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is an important element of most recent approaches to CPD. ICT can help to shift the power, control and agency to the teacher to make decisions about where to place their focus, and improve the inclusivity of professional development (Lightfoot, 2019). It can also make CPD more accessible, as it is not 'constrained to a particular time or place' (Ally et al., 2014: 48). To put it another way, it can facilitate the type of CPD that we have been promoting throughout this chapter, in the sense of being 'site-based' and 'self-directed' (Gaible & Burns, 2005: 15f.). Over the last few decades, as the world has become ever increasingly digitised, it has become more important to integrate technology in teacher education and development programmes. This is because exposing teachers to such technology will have the impact of improving their digital literacy, which, in turn, can facilitate effective use of technology with learners (Ally et al., 2014).

While there is a large variety of tools (e.g. e-portfolios, blogs, videos) and platforms (e.g. online, mobile, social media) that can be used in the delivery and support of good quality

CPD, geographic factors and resources will need to be taken into consideration when deciding which is most suitable for a particular context.

The use of digital video can also provide concrete examples of instructional practices that avoid much of the ambiguity of written descriptions (see Masats & Dooly, 2011). A video extract is not just a 'model' but can provide a strong stimulus for discussion and associated reflective thought for viewers. Hiebert and Hollingsworth (2002) also argue that the educational community lacks a shared language for describing aspects of teaching and that video has a particular role to play here. For example, key phrases such as 'problem-solving' or 'language experience' often mean different things to different teachers. Videos of lessons therefore offer the possibility of pinning down aspects of classroom experience so that the teacher has a clearer frame of reference and can therefore be more specific about their own actions and intentions. Video extracts also offer the possibility of co-constructing knowledge through interpretation (see Mann et al., 2018 for more examples from the Video in Language Teacher Education project).

Conclusion

In this guide we have argued that in order to ensure that PLCs are effective and valued, they should be systematic, collaborative, innovative, reflective and digital. For each dimension, we have given several concrete examples to illustrate the kind of activity that we are arguing it is necessary to promote. Flexibility over the tools and platforms used for your PLC and the way in which activities are organised and carried out will need to be tailored to the specific local and national context. We have reiterated the idea that when possible, teachers should be given the choice over the way they engage in their PLC, and stated that it should be a collective enterprise that is supported by schools and educational systems. When done in this way, we believe that teachers are more likely to have positive perceptions of involvement in their PLC and that it will therefore have a greater chance of becoming an ongoing process rather than a periodic event. This, in turn, will increase the likelihood of CPD having a sustained impact on the teachers themselves, the learners they work with and the organisations in which they work.

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INTEGRATED SKILLS

Topic

- This session will introduce your teachers to the key aspects of integrated skills. The two videos are chosen to help you emphasise the importance of teachers sharing activity and lesson ideas, as well as combining receptive and productive skills.
- There are two videos for this session. **Video Part 1** by Siobhain introduces what are integrated skills. **Video Part 2** 'Integrated Lesson Plan' by John offers more insights into a lesson which is consciously trying to integrate skills.
- The reading, Oxford (2001), explicates how it is important to integrate the four skills in the English language classroom and provides two forms of integrated-skills instruction: content-based and task-based instruction.

Quote

"Integrated Skills focuses on the four main English skills - reading, writing, speaking and listening - through a "Communicative Language Teaching" methodology. New grammar patterns are learned in the context of a conversation or a real-life situation."

From Nunan, D. (1993). From Learning-Centeredness to Learner-Centeredness. *Applied Language Learning*, 4, 1-18.

Suggested Procedure

Suggested procedure for a 90-minute session. It would be a good idea to break up the video into different sections:

- **Part 1** starts at 3:33
- **Part 2** starts at 14:42

Video Part 1

➢ **Before watching**

Ask the group:

- What do they understand by 'integrated skills'?
- Do they have any experiences of trying to design activities or materials that combine receptive and productive skills?

- **After watching**

  Carry out discussion and recall questions for your teachers: 'What are the key features of teaching in an integrated way?' and 'what is the connection between integrated skills and real world communication?' Ideally, put them in groups/breakout rooms and get one member to report back key discussion points. You could further discuss advantages and possible disadvantages of using an integrated skills approach (if you have time).

Video Part 2

- **Before watching**

  Elicit some of the teachers' ideas about lessons they have taught that integrate skills. Make a list of some common activities or tasks (this is something that you could add to after watching John's video too).

- **After watching**

  Ask the teachers to discuss these questions in groups:

  - How does each task in John's lesson build on the last one?
  - How much teacher-talking time compared with student-talking time is there?
  - Is the lesson primarily focused on writing skills, speaking skills or reading skills?

Additional Ideas

- Ask them to read the article by Oxford (2001).
- Ask them to design an integrated lesson that combines different skills in a task cycle. They could use John's video as a starting point.

List of suggested readings

- Oxford, R. 2001. Integrated Skills in the ESL/EFL Classroom. *The Jounral of TESOL France, 8*, 5-12.

LISTENING SKILLS

Topic

- This session will introduce your teachers to the key aspects of listening skills.
- The video has been made by a trainer at International House London (Richard Chinn). His video will help you explore with your teachers both difficulties of listening and also how to deal with listening texts and develop strategies for making listening easier.
- The reading (Wah 2019) will help to further share and develop ideas beyond the session (e.g. having more variety of listening in their teaching and developing listening strategies).

Quote

"Listening is the most important and fundamental of the four skills in language learning although these skills are least stressed skills in the classroom. In general, the weakness of students' emphasis and the time limitation lead the students to be late in developing these skills". (Wah 2019)

From Wah, N. N. (2019). Teaching Listening Skills to English as a Foreign Language Students through Effective Strategies. *International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development (IJTSRD)*, *3*(6), 883-887.

Suggested Procedure

Suggested procedure for a 60-minute session. It would be a good idea to break up the video into different sections:

- **Part 1** starts at 5:02.
- **Part 2** starts at 7:52.
- **Part 3** starts at 13:22.

➢ **Before watching**

Discuss:

- What do they understand by 'listening skills and strategies'?
- Do they have any experiences of trying to design activities or materials that develop specific listening skills?
- Brainstorm with the group to make a list of things that can make listening difficult.

- **After watching part 1**

  Ask teachers to compare their list of difficulties with the ones that Richard mentioned in the video. Make sure you cover 'assimilation', 'elision', and 'reduction'.

- **After watching part 2**

  Elicit from teacher what strategies Richard talked about.

- **After watching part 3**

  Carry out discussion:

  Ideally, put them in breakout rooms or groups and get one member to report back key discussion points. Ask them to recall what Richard said about 'decoding' and what he said about 'different steps'. They should also talk about and share ideas of whether and how they adopt such procedures in their classes.

Additional Ideas

- Ask them to read Wah (2019) paper. In particular ask them to reflection the ways they have a variety of listening in their teaching (C. Identifying Different Types of Listening) and try to set up a sharing document for different ideas they have tried to develop listening strategies (D. Effective Teaching Listening Strategies).

List of suggested readings

- Wah, N. N. (2019). Teaching Listening Skills to English as a Foreign Language Students through Effective Strategies. *International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development (IJTSRD),* 3(6), 883-887.
- A more advanced reading would be: Burns, A., & Siegel, J. (Eds.). (2017). *International perspectives on teaching the four skills in ELT: Listening, speaking, reading, writing.* Springer. (You can recommend chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 but if you want to choose just one then choose chapter 3 which focuses on China)

SPEAKING SKILLS

Topic

- This session will introduce your teachers to the key aspects of speaking skills and strategies.
- There are two videos for this session. Video 1 has been made by a trainer at International House London (Richard Chinn and William Morrow). His video will help you explore with your teachers both difficulties of listening and also how to deal with listening texts and develop strategies for making listening easier. Video 2 (by Eric Johnson) is useful for widening the teachers' range of possible speaking activities.
- The reading (Wah 2019) will help to further share and develop ideas beyond the session (e.g. having more variety of listening in their teaching and developing listening strategies).

Quote

"Learning to speak in another language is complex, as reflected in the range and types of sub-skills that are involved in L2 oral production (Richards2008; Goh and Burns 2012). For instance, speakers must attend at the same time to content, morphosyntax and lexis, discourse and information structuring, the sound system and prosody, plus appropriate register and pragmalinguistic features (see Hinkel 2012;Burns 2013)." (Tante 2019: p84)

Tante, A. C. (2018). 'I Can Talk About a Lot of Things in the Other Language but not in English': Teaching Speaking Skills in Cameroon Primary Schools. *International Perspectives on Teaching the Four Skills in ELT: Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing,* 81-95.

Suggested Procedure

Suggested procedure for a 90-minute session. It would be a good idea to break up the video into different sections.

- Video 1 starts at 4:01.
- Video 2 starts at 14:20.

Video 1

- **Before watching**

  Ask the group:

  - What do they understand by 'speaking skills and strategies'?
  - Do they have any experiences of trying to design activities or materials that develop specific speaking skills?
  - Brainstorm with the group to make a list of things that can make speaking difficult for their learners.

- **After watching**

  Task 1 (Elicitation):

  Concentrate on trying to elicit from teacher what strategies Richard talked about?

  Task 2 (Main discussion talk):

  Ideally, put them in breakout rooms or groups and get one member to report back key discussion points. Ask them to recall what Richard said about 'decoding' and what he said about 'different steps'. They should also talk about and share ideas of whether and how they adopt such procedures in their classes.

Video 2

- **Before watching**

  Ask teachers to predict 10 different kinds of speaking tasks.

- **After watching**

  Ask teachers to compare their lists to the 10 Eric suggestions.

  Carry out discussion:

  Which of Eric's 10 suggestions would teacher like to try?

  Ask them to plan to a possible speaking task and trial this before your next session with them. You can then get them to report back on this in a future session. Alternatively, you might set up a padlet or online page for them to upload their ideas and reflections.

Additional Ideas

- Ask them to read Wah (2019) paper. In particular ask them to reflection the ways they have a variety of listening in their teaching (C. Identifying Different Types of Listening) and try to set up a sharing document for different ideas they have tried to develop listening strategies (D. Effective Teaching Listening Strategies).

List of suggested readings

- Burns, A., & Siegel, J. (Eds.). (2017). *International perspectives on teaching the four skills in ELT: Listening, speaking, reading, writing*. Springer. (You can recommend chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9 but if you want to choose just one then choose chapter 7.)

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Topic

- This session will introduce your teachers to the key aspects of reflective practice. We will emphasise collaboration, appropriate tools and planning in this session.
- There are two videos for this session. The first is introductory and the second offers more insights into the connection between reflective practice, evidence and innovation. We also cover the importance of 'context' and 'situated learning' in considering innovation and reflection.
- The reading, Mann and Walsh (2017), will help to understand how to do reflective practice in a dialogic, collaborative, evidence-based way.

Quote

John Dewey (1933) viewed reflection as both a process (systematic) and a product (problem-solution). For Dewey the process begins with a teacher experiencing a situation where he or she finds problematic and considers some vague suggestions as possible resolutions of this situation. This reflective process involves the teacher engaging in reflective inquiry that has five steps: 'suggestion' followed by 'intellectualization', 'hypotheses, 'reasoning' and finally 'hypothesis testing'.

From Farrell, T. S. (2020). Professional development through reflective practice for English-medium instruction (EMI) teachers. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 23(3), 277-286

Suggested Procedure

Video 1 (starts at 04.12)

➢ **Before watching**

Ask the group:

- What experiences do you have of doing reflection/reflective practice?
- Has this been as an individual or with other colleagues?

- **After watching**

  Carry out discussion and recall the question 'What are the key features of reflective practice'? Ideally, put them in breakout rooms and get one member to report back key discussion points.

Video 2 (starts at 07.25)

- **Watch and pause at 9:18**

  Carry out the video task: innovation in China: Think of an innovation in China in recent years in the way that English is taught. What innovations have you made in your teaching?

- **Watch and pause at 20:22**

  Carry out the video task: Gǎishàn: Discuss the concept of 'kaizen' (Gǎishàn in Mandarin). Why is this a good model for teacher reflection and innovation?

- **After watching**

  Carry out the video task: Narcissus and Icarus (reflection and action): Show them the pictures of Narcissus and Icarus and get them to think about the connection between these two stories. How are the two characters different? Is there a connection with teaching itself?

Additional Ideas

- Ask them to read the chapter from Mann and Walsh (2017). Perhaps chapter 4 might be the best one. **Links** mentioned in the talk:
  - https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/news-and-events/eltons-innovation-awards
  - https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/publications/resource-books
  - https://www.teachertrainingvideos.com/

List of suggested readings

- Mann, S., & Walsh, S. (2017). *Reflective practice in English language teaching: Research-based principles and practices*. Routledge.

ACTION RESEARCH

Topic

- This session will introduce your teachers to the key aspects of action research (AR). It will raise your teachers' awareness of how engaging in AR can be useful in developing practice and working collaboratively.
- Action research helps our profession to record and detail complex choices and decisions. A great number of teacher actions are unconscious and routinised. Indeed it would not be possible to do all the things that a teacher does in the classroom if all the actions were conscious. In other words much good practice has become second nature.
- Action research is a way to engage with classroom teaching and bring more of it to a conscious level; a way to uncover what has become invisible. Once teachers feel engaged and more conscious of these everyday choices and decisions they are in a better position to frame appropriate research questions.

Quote

> Action research is seen as a means towards creating meaning and understanding in problematic social situations and improving the quality of human interactions and practices within those situations. It now pervades numerous disciplinary fields and national contexts, including the field of applied linguistics. (Burns 57: 2005)
>
> **From** Burns, A. (2005). Action research: An evolving paradigm? *Language teaching*, *38*(2), 57-74.

Suggested Procedure

Suggested procedure for a 90-minute session. It would be a good idea to break up the video into different sections.

- **Video 1** starts at 4:47.
- **Video 2** starts at 13:05.

Video 1

- **Before watching**

  Ask the group whay they think Action Research involves. See if anyone has any experience of being involved in an AR project. Alternatively, have their colleagues conducted any AR?

- **Watch and pause at 6:22.**

  Ask them to talk in small groups about these two questions:

  - What do they feel passionate about in their teaching?
  - Is there anything they are bothered about in their teaching?

- **Watch and pause at 9:09**

  Put teachers in breakout rooms. Ask them the following question: What are the key features of Action Research? Then collect in as many features from the group as possible.

Video 2

- **After watching**

  Ask them to list the main features of Mariana's action research and experience. Could they do anything similar? Develop some possible ideas for possible action research on puzzles or problems in their teaching.

Additional Ideas

- Ask them to read the chapter. Ask them to design a task based lesson that combines speaking and listening in a task cycle. As an example show this: https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/teaching-resources/teaching-adults/activities/intermediate-b1/task-based-speaking

List of suggested readings

- Hussain, S. (2017). Teaching speaking skills in communication classroom. *International Journal of Media, Journalism and Mass Communications*, 3(3), 14-21
- Nunan, D., & Miller, L. (1995). *New ways in teaching listening.* Alexandria, VA: TESOL.

CLASSROOM DYNAMICS

Topic

- This session will introduce your teachers to classroom dynamics and classroom management decisions in English language teaching sessions. Classroom management involves a set of teacher decisions and actions to shape a learning environment within the classroom. Classroom dynamics is about the ways the people within a class interact with each other and behave as a group. Successful classroom management can help shape positive dynamics between teacher and student, which in turn can help foster positive learning atmosphere.
- The video for this session is given by Erika Osváth, a teacher trainer and co-author of *Mixed-Ability Teaching* published by Oxford University Press in 2016. Her video will offer some examples and key principles of successful classroom management and dynamics.
- The reading, Marzano and Marzano (2003) will help to identify the key characteristics of the type of teacher behaviours that help shape effective teacher-student relationships.

Quote

"In an ecological perspective, the teacher is an active and involved participant in the creation of classroom realities. For this reason, what teachers bring to the teaching process – in terms of their own view of language teaching, their own value system and interpersonal preferences and also their personal investment in their tasks – are all significant components of classroom dynamics." (Tudor, 2001: 214)

From: Tudor, I (2001). *The Dynamics of the Language Classroom*, Cambridge University Press.

Suggested Procedure

➢ **Before the session**

Ask teachers to think who they are as teachers:

- 'What kind of teacher am I? What kind of teacher would I like to be?'
- 'How do I see my teacher identity in terms of my everyday classroom practice, classroom arrangement, responses to learners, rules and procedures I established for my classroom?'

- **During the session**
  - Carry out plenary discussion:
    Ask teachers to share their ideas about the pre-session task/ questions;
  - Watch the video:
    Follow the instructions of the presenter about when to pause and give teachers the opportunity to think about their own classrooms and discuss their answers/ ideas in small groups;
  - Carry out a plenary discussion:
    Ask teachers to share what has been learnt from the video in terms of strategies about organizing an effective classroom.

- **After the session**
  - Teachers are asked to think about one change to make to their classroom management strategies and report back any observations next time

Additional Ideas

- Encourage teachers to record one lessons and analyse one/ or two aspects of their classroom management
- Observe a colleague and note down classroom management strategies that are new the observer;
- Explore what students think and how they feel about classroom management issues.

List of suggested readings

- Marzano, R. J., & Marzano, J. S. (2003). The key to classroom management. *Educational leadership, 61*(1), 6-13.

DIFFERENTIATION

Topic

- This session will introduce your teachers to the idea of differentiation. It is the process by which learners' varied levels, needs and backgrounds are taken into accounts in the planning and teaching of lessons.
- The video for this session is given by Mark Bartram from the Department of Continuing Education in University of Oxford. His video provides some ideas of how to operate differentiation in classrooms.
- The reading, Taylor, S (2017), provides a critical understanding of differentiation and its contested nature. It also helps to identify some key factors that impact differentiation and suggests building more inclusive differentiated learning.

Quote

"Differentiated instruction combines flexible grouping of students with adjustments to the learning tasks; in some instances, whole group instruction is the most appropriate delivery model, while in other instances, students work in small groups or individually to complete tasks that are targeted to their own levels of readiness, interests, and learning preferences.' (Reis and Renzulli, 2018: 89)

From: Reis, S. M., & Renzulli, J. S. (2018). The Five Dimensions of Differentiation. *International Journal for Talent Development and Creativity*, *6*, 87-94.

Suggested Procedure

➢ **Before the session**

- Ask teachers to watch the video and divide them into three groups (A, B, C). Each group of teachers will be invited to do a different task while watching the same video:
  Group A: to make a mind map for oneself about the content .
  Group B: to make a list of 'do' and 'don't' suggestions about differentiation.
  Group C:to choose a specific text and note down some ideas about how to make this text accessible to different levels of learners.

➢ **During the session**

- Carry out plenary discussion:

Explore the different task types (A, B, C) and the teachers' preferences and reflections, in order to model for teachers a way of using the principle of differentiated tasks abed on the same video input.

- Give teachers a chance to practice 'differentiation':
  Take vocabulary learning as an example. Ask teachers to brainstorm and share different ways in which they can give some choices to learners when it comes to vocabulary practice activities.

➢ **After the session**

- Ask teachers design and implement short questionnaires to understand their own learners better, so that they can use differentiation strategies more effectively in the future.

Additional Ideas

- Explore links between differentiation and autonomy/ motivation;
- Discuss ways in which learners can create materials and activities that can be used to give to those who finish early;
- Establish buddy-systems where learners from more advances classes work with less proficient learners;
- Discuss how to cultivate a growth mindset and encourage everyone to progress by making an effort; appreciate both stronger and weaker students' efforts.

List of suggested readings

- Taylor, S. C. (2017). Contested knowledge: A critical review of the concept of differentiation in teaching and learning. *Warwick Journal of Education-Transforming Teaching*, *1*, 55-68.

TASK-BASED LEARNING AND TEACHING

Topic

- This session will introduce your teachers to task-based learning. In task-based learning, learners are expected to complete communicative tasks first and then acquire linguistic resources that they need in order to communicate in a more effective and appropriate way. This is in contrast with traditional language learning in which learners start with learning decontextualised linguistic items like vocabulary and grammar and then practice using this knowledge to communicate.
- The video for this session is given by an experienced teacher trainer, Melissa Lamb. Her video will discuss the commonly asked question 'Why can't I get my learners to speak' and show how to implement task-based learning to encourage students to speak.
- The readings, Van den Branden (2016) and Pinter (2015), will further help to understand the opportunities and challenges of implementing task-based teaching and some task design issues with learners.

Quote

"In carrying out a task, a learner's principal focus is on exchanging and understanding meanings, rather than on practice of forms or pre-specified forms or patterns. … There is some kind of purpose or goal set for the task, so that learners know what they are expected to achieve by the end of the task , for example, to write a list of differences, to complete a route map or a picture, to report a solution to a problem, to vote on the best decorated student room or the most interesting/ memorable personal anecdote……" (Willis, 2005: 3)

From: Edwards C and J Willis (2005) *Teachers Exploring Task in English Language Teaching.* Palgrave Macmillan.

Suggested Procedure

➢ **Before the session**

- Ask teachers to reflect on their experiences (both positive and negative) about using interactive speaking tasks.

- **During the session**
  - Carry out group discussion:
    Ask teacher to share in their group their experience of a range of tasks that they are familiar with;
  - Introduce the topic of the video:
    Ask teachers to think about why students don't speak in class;
  - Watch the first part of the video (until the survey is fully explained):
    Pause and ask teachers to discuss in groups why the survey task is effective and what other survey topics may be relevant to their learners;
  - Watch the second part of the video:
    Then distribute a PPP lesson plan and ask teachers to work in groups and turn it into a TBLT lesson plan. Then, ask all groups to report back, share and compare their designs.

- **After the session**
  - Teachers try out a 'new' interactive task of their own choice in one of their classes and bring along their observations/ reflections about how it went to the next session.

Additional Ideas

- Consider other types of tasks (not just interactive speaking tasks), such as short monologic tasks or tasks that incorporate other skills, such as reading, listening and writing;
- Discuss the benefits of task repetition;
- Explore technology-mediated TBLT, such as the use of dynamic tasks, online tasks, games;
- Collect learners' opinions, views and experiences about different tasks;

List of suggested readings

- Van den Branden, Kris (2016). Task-based language teaching. In Hall, G. (Ed.) *Routledge Handbook of English Language Teaching*, pp. 238-251.
- Pinter, Annamaria (2015). Task-based learning with children. In Bland, J (Ed.) *Teaching English to Young Learners*. Bloomsbury, pp. 113-127.

GROUP WORK

Topic

- This session will introduce your teachers to how to use group work effectively. The video for this session is given by Susan Hillyard, a teacher trainer in British Council in China. Her video introduces how to plan and conduct group work productively.
- The reading, Ahlquist (2019), will offer an example of the use group work in a Storyline project to motivate students to speak English and enhance their self-confidence in speaking.

Quote

"Building cohesiveness within the group is clearly an important managerial role for the teacher. It can be at least partially achieved through attention to seating arrangements, through a progressive introduction of interaction activities from simple pairwork on a short task to more complex role play activities through training learners in peer feedback, and through careful management of group size." (Hedge, 2000: 62)

From: Hedge T (2000) *Teaching and Learning in the Language* Classroom. Oxford University Press.

Suggested Procedure

➢ **Before the session**

- Ask teachers to watch the video by by Susan Hillyard on their own beforehand;
- Ask teachers to list 5 benefits and 5 challenges with groupwork according to their own experiences.

➢ **During the session**

- Put teachers into groups and carry out group discussion:
  Ask teachers to work in small groups ranking the benefits and challenges relating to groupwork. Then, ask all groups to report back and share their views.
- Create new groups (according to the students' age groups that teachers are working with) for the next task. Changing the groups models for teachers the practice of how to create new groups within the same session.
- Carry out group work:

Assign a task (one of the tasks mentioned in Susan Hillyard's video) to each teacher group. Depending on the age of the students' the group is working with, the teachers are invited to create a lesson plan. Then, ask all groups to report back and share.

- **After the session**
  - Teachers try out new ways of grouping their learners and new types of group activities and report back in the next session.

Additional Ideas

- Organise a debate about the use of L1 (and or other languages) versus the use of the target language during groupwork;
- Think about the challenges of evaluating groupwork;
- Get learners feedback about their experiences of working in groups.

List of suggested readings

- Ahlquist, S. (2019). Motivating teens to speak English through group work in Storyline. *ELT journal*, *73*(4), 387-395.