

*Lifelong learning and
English language teaching*

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What is different about ELT

- Teachers more qualified and more experienced
- Shift between sectors and contexts
- Lack of clear career pathways'
- More highs and lows in career
- Different motivations for entering profession

Professionalism and ELT

Professional because it is now a career with specialised knowledge through academic study; there are standards for teachers; there is a professional community

BUT

EL teachers also tend to be marginalised and in de-skilling contexts

Recent research locates professionalism in our classroom teaching

Knowledge of language and second language development

- Recent work combining psycholinguistic/ sociolinguistic
- Multicompetence – Cook et al
- Systemic functional grammar and other grammars

Practitioner knowledge

- Knowledge of methodology and teaching approaches
- Reflective teaching ability
- 'mental lives' of teachers – beliefs attitudes and identity

Professional development

- Traditional meaning as tertiary and formal study
- Recent focus on practitioner knowledge

ELT learning is lifelong and emerges out of and through experiences in social contexts, as learners in classrooms, as participants in professional development programs and as teachers. L2 teacher learning is socially negotiated and contingent on knowledge of self, subject matter, curricula and setting. L2 teachers are users and creators of legitimate forms of knowledge: how to make decisions and how best to teach students in complex contexts.

Karen Johnson 2008

So what?

- Not a matter of accepting or rejecting academic study and bases of profession

BUT

- Recognising importance of practitioner knowledge and how it develops
- Building professional devt. on this

ESL Action enquiry project report

- Year-long pd for schools (2003-2012)
- Based on ELT and subject teacher identifying, addressing classroom issue
- Initial workshops with external input
- In school planning days
- Two 10 week cycles
- Final presentation of research report

Findings

- Confidence and professional knowledge
- Length of project key to success
- In-school support and time for planning
- External support from consultants
- Theoretical input based on needs

Pre-service practicum in Beijing

- 2004 – 2008; 30 teachers each year
- Three week practicum in Beijing vocational schools
- 12 week preparation course
- NSW Institute of Teachers standards

Findings

- Local teaching standards met and more
- Working in situation without power in minority of one
- Evidence of reflective teaching
- More successful than local placements

Implications

- Tertiary models at present do not reflect importance of practitioner knowledge
- Importance of knowledge outside language and language development
- Reframe learning in the way we see our workplace