

Second Language Learning and Teaching

Aymen Elsheikh
Christine Coombe
Okon Effiong *Editors*

The Role of Language Teacher Associations in Professional Development

 Springer

Second Language Learning and Teaching

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The Role of Language Teacher Associations in Professional Development

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Foreword

The teaching of a foreign language can be a lonely business. For sure, opening students' minds and mouths to new ways of making meaning, new ways of producing sounds and communicating ideas can be exhilarating, but ultimately you are left trying to bridge two cultural worlds that often seem incompatible and that are separated by a chasm that cannot be captured in any language. Upon reading this inspiring edited volume on the anniversary of TESOL and IATEFL, I was reminded of my beginnings as a French teacher of German in my hometown of Versailles. I had had 2 weeks of basic training in classroom pedagogy and was left to discover on my own what it meant to teach my students the language of a people who lived beyond our borders and had been our "hereditary enemy" for a long time. I was not a native speaker of German. My greatest fear was making grammatical mistakes and losing my legitimacy in the eyes of my students. I had no one to share my qualms with. My 8 years of graduate study in German language and literature did not help me one bit to understand my French students and explain to them why they should learn German. Little did I know that I was launched on a trajectory of self- and other-discovery that would last a lifetime.

As I moved to the United States and continued to teach German there, I discovered a whole community of practice among foreign language teachers and got to build my own professional contacts. I discovered by chance the field of applied linguistics and was much inspired by the community of British, Australian, and North American applied linguists, most of whom were members of TESOL and were teaching English. Their work provided answers to many of the questions I had regarding the relation of language, culture, and identity. When I came to UC Berkeley, these English teachers inspired me to found a community of language instructors and scholars, the Berkeley Language Center, that serves as a resource and research center for the teachers of the 65 different languages taught on the Berkeley campus. This professional family has helped me deal with the difficult task of harmonizing my private and my professional self, the needs of my family and the needs of my students. They have given me a forum to discuss the growing gaps between my students' generation and my own, and between my local working conditions and the larger world of my research. Lihua Zhang, the coordinator of the

Berkeley Chinese program, and I have described some of these discussions in our recent book *The Multilingual Instructor. What foreign language teachers say about their experience and why it matters* (OUP, 2018).

As Aymen Elsheikh, Christine Coombe, and Okon Effiong argue eloquently in their introduction, language teachers can benefit tremendously from joining professional associations, and through them, from comparing notes and gaining various perspectives on what they are experiencing in their own school. In the same way as I, a teacher of German, gained much wisdom from the insights of TESOL scholars in second language acquisition, applied linguistics, bi- and multilingualism, and sociolinguistics and got to understand my students and myself better, so can teachers of English around the world gain enormously from meeting teachers of English from different countries and different school systems and from getting to know teachers of languages other than English.

I have myself benefited tremendously from the contacts I was able to make with language teachers and scholars, first as president of the American Association of Applied Linguistics (AAAL), and recently as the president of the International Association of Applied Linguistics (AILA). I wish to thank the three editors for putting together this wonderful collection of voices from the field and I wish the book the wide distribution that it deserves.

Berkeley, USA
April 2018

Claire Kramersch
Emerita Professor of German
Professor of UC Berkeley Graduate School

Acknowledgements

An edited book will not come to fruition if there are no contributors. It is, therefore, our duty to acknowledge and express our heartfelt appreciations and thanks to the contributors in this book. We would also like to thank our dear friend and colleague Professor Claire Kramsch for writing the Foreword of the book. We are forever thankful for the support and words of encouragement we received from our families, friends, and colleagues.

“In the ever-changing global landscape of language education, English language educators have witnessed dramatic transformations in the demands placed on their profession, regardless of context. To respond appropriately to these changes, to find their voice at the policy making table, and to reassert agency in their field, ELT professionals, more than ever before, need organizations that can support, represent, and advocate for them. LTAs embody the collective power of ELT professionals. This book provides research-based strategies for LTAs to increase their body of knowledge, deliver relevant professional development to their constituents, strengthen their leadership capacity, and flex their advocacy muscles. A must read for anyone engaged or interested in the ELT profession in any context”.

—Rosa Aronson, Ph.D., *FASAE, CAE, Former Executive Director, TESOL International Association*

“This pioneering collection draws on historical, theoretical, research and practical insights to develop critical ideas on the subject of language teacher associations (LTAs). The 22 chapters, each written by experienced professionals with long standing involvement in national and international English language TAs, address a range of themes around the place and role of LTAs in harnessing, supporting and sustaining the professional and personal development of TESOL professionals. The book provides overwhelming evidence of the power of professional collaboration through TAs”.

—Harry Kuchah Kuchah, Ph.D., *University of Leeds, UK, IATEFL Vice President*

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Christine Coombe has a Ph.D. in Foreign/Second Language Education from The Ohio State University. She is currently an Associate Professor of General Studies at Dubai Men's College. She has published numerous books and articles in the areas of language testing/assessment, research, teacher effectiveness, leadership, and task-based teaching and learning. Her most recent books include *The Cambridge Guide to Research in Language Teaching and Learning* (Cambridge University Press, 2015) and Volume 8 of the TESOL Encyclopedia of ELT (Wiley Blackwell, 2018). Her forthcoming books are on innovation in the MENA, and professionalism in education. Most recently, she served as President of the TESOL International Association (2011–2012). In 2018, she was the recipient of the James E Alatis Award for exemplary service to TESOL.

Okon Effiong has a varied academic background with Ph.D. and graduate qualifications in Applied Genetics, Management, Information Technology and Applied Linguistics/TESOL. He teaches English at Qatar University and has taught in Nigeria, United Kingdom, and Japan. He is also an experienced Special Needs Teacher (Autistic Spectrum Disorders). He is a full-blooded TESOLer. He founded Africa TESOL and is the current President. He served TESOL International Association as a member of the Nominating Committee (2017), Chair of Diversity &

Inclusion Committee (2013–2015), Chair-Elect of EFL-Interest Section (2015–2016), and Newsletter Editor of EFL-IS Newsletter (2014–2015). He was President of Qatar TESOL (2014–2015). He is a regular presenter at TESOL International Convention and other internationally recognized conferences. His research interest is in foreign language anxiety, corrective feedback, and language teacher associations.

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Introduction

The impetus for this book was TESOL Quarterly's (TQ) 2018 call for a special issue. One of the main reasons our proposal for a special issue on Language Teacher Associations (LTAs) did not get selected was a perceived lack of literature in the field of language teacher associations (LTAs). Therefore, the most important aim of this book is to contribute to the dearth of scholarly work on LTAs in general and English language teacher associations (ELTAs) in particular. Although the contributions in this book are relevant to and provide valuable insights into the work of LTAs, the main focus is on ELTAs. The authors come from diverse backgrounds and the associations discussed are found all over the world. What is interesting is that the chapters are written by both leaders of ELTAs as well as regular members. In addition, while some chapters are based on reflective and autoethnographic research, others are empirical studies and incorporate different theoretical frameworks.

The book is divided into four parts and here is a summary of each chapter. Part I examines the history and structure of LTAs, and it also provides a roadmap for LTAs that aspire to grow, learn, and become more effective. Part II explores the most basic and fundamental aspect of LTAs which relates to the different forms of professional development activities these associations engage in. It is this service that LTAs provide to their members in order to contribute to their professional development. Part III includes chapters that report on different forms of collaboration between and within LTAs. Expanding the network of teacher associations aids in the professional growth of both the associations and the members of the associations in the network. Part IV deals with the benefits reaped by members and leaders. As leaders enhance and hone their leadership skills, members aspiring to become leaders also have the structure and support system within their respective associations to become future leaders.

Part I, The History and Structure of Language Teacher Associations (LTAs), starts with the chapter entitled *The History of Language Teacher Associations* which takes the reader back two centuries to the period where no formal structures of the language teacher associations that we know today existed. Garon Wheeler, the author of the chapter, states that, over time, with the rise of international

communication, what started as guilds gradually transformed into modern language teacher associations. The author highlights this rather slow transformation which occurred in the Western world to the birth of the first language teacher association in 1883. The chapter ends with the emergence of modern language teacher associations in the 1960s.

Pakiza Uludag, in her chapter *Examining the Organizational Structure of Language Teacher Associations: A Report on Strategic Direction and Functionality*, primarily informs the LTA members who wish to become more familiar with LTAs' organizational framework and grasp both internal and external dynamics that impact LTAs' functionality. The author begins with a broad discussion of the factors that would shape LTAs' strategic direction. She then provides an overview of language organizations' structural framework with reference to local, regional, and international associations. Learning about LTAs' organizational framework is supreme to understanding the functions of the bodies and predefined roles inherent in these organizations.

Ahmar Mahboob and Liz England's chapter, *Realities and Potential: English Language Teacher Associations in the 21st Century*, provides definitions of ELTAs that are both broad and inclusive to recognize the differences in the varied contexts of ELTAs. Through examples from different parts of the world, the authors aim to assess and address the factors that affect the strength of these ELTAs to further maximize their potential.

In his chapter *Language Teacher Associations that Learn*, Dudley W. Reynolds examines the application of Peter Senge's five disciplines to Language Teacher Associations (LTAs). This application is intended to understand how these five disciplines can function to provide a thinking rubric to prepare for changes within LTAs. Additionally, Reynold's chapter provides a framework for which LTA members can utilize to engage in change within their respective LTAs.

Nikki Ashcraft's chapter *Engaging Future Professionals: How Language Teacher Associations Facilitate the Involvement of Student Members* examines information from the websites of 124 LTAs in the United States to explore the involvement of student teachers in LTAs. Her chapter reviews and identifies the processes by which LTAs recruit, engage, and facilitate student teachers' needs.

Part II, LTAs Forms of Professional Development, starts with the chapter entitled *Teacher Development Through Language Teacher Associations: Lessons from Africa*, authored by volume co-editors, Aymen Elsheikh and Okon Effiong. Results of a mixed methods study which investigated the role of Africa TESOL and its affiliates in providing for and improving the continuous professional development of teachers in their constituencies. Survey findings suggest that professional development events help teachers to develop professionally and improve their teaching overall. The interview data further indicates that despite the challenges affiliates have, many still make it possible for teachers to avail themselves of professional development opportunities.

Chapter co-authors, Fauzia Shamim and Zakia Sarwar, in *Killing Two Birds with One Stone: SPELT's Professional Development Programs*, investigate the impact of the Society of Pakistan English Language Teachers (SPELT) ICELT program on its participants' personal and professional skills and attitudes and their motivation

and experience regarding their volunteer work with SPELT. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the ICELT program participants to gather and share information about their personal leadership journeys.

In his chapter entitled *Developing Communities of Practice Through Language Teacher Associations in Oman*, Junifer Abatayo explores how language teachers in Oman develop communities of practice through their involvement in language associations. Junifer's chapter draws from his own managerial experience in education as organizer of language associations and delves into the strengths and limitations of teachers' involvement in language associations through analyzing their own reflective practices.

Kashif Raza, in *The Alignment of English Language Teacher Association Conference Themes to Research Agendas: An Investigation of TESOL International Association and IATEFL*, provides an analysis of the ELTA conference themes of the past 5 years. More specifically, the author has investigated the empirical alignment of ELTA conference themes with the associations' respective research agendas. The two largest English language teaching associations in the world, TESOL International and IATEFL, are the focus of this chapter.

Part III discusses Collaboration between and within LTAs. As many English language teachers lack the knowledge and skills to write effective language tests, evaluate the effectiveness of their tests, and use their test results in meaningful ways, Christine Coombe and Peter Davidson address this issue in their chapter entitled *The Impact of a SIG on Assessment Literacy* which is the first chapter in Part III of this edited volume, Collaboration between and within LTAs. The authors conclude by reporting on a number of initiatives that the Testing, Assessment and Evaluation SIG of TESOL Arabia has implemented to improve LAL amongst English language teachers in the region.

In *Professional Development in Low Resource Environments: The Role of Africa TESOL, TESOL France, and IATEFL GISIG*, Roy Bicknell and Anta Hane Lo use the concept of communities of practice to explore and analyze the development phases of the collaboration between TESOL France, Africa TESOL, and IATEFL GISIG. This is done through reviewing the recent literature on teacher associations and its application on the collaboration at hand.

The chapter, *Bringing Language Teacher Associations Together*, deals with the concept of strengthening language teacher associations and offering improved service to the profession by working collaboratively. Laxman Gnawali refers to his local LTA and examines the dynamics and intricacies that lie within attempts by various LTAs to build working relationships. With little documentation on potential collaborations and the perceived challenges, this chapter therefore attempts to fill the gap by reporting on a regional LTA meeting which tried to envision a short-term and long-term collaboration between Asian and African LTAs. It also shows the challenges and successes of the different LTAs in the endeavor.

Arifa Rahman and Fatima Shahbuddin examine the issue of networking among LTAs in the South Asian region with an aim to promote professionalism and to share best practices and thus strengthen the associations in the process. Their chapter, *Strengthening South Asian LTAs: Networking and Challenges*, includes a

discussion of recent initiatives undertaken to promote regional networking by some South Asian English language teachers' associations, including BELTA (Bangladesh) and SPELT (Pakistan). The lessons learned from these initiatives form the basis for a framework to guide future directions for regional networking.

Part IV, Personal, Professional and Leadership Development, begins with Lauren Stephenson's chapter in which she uses narrative inquiry to explore and examine five LTA leaders' development of their leadership skills. *Developing Leadership Capacity Through Leadership Learning Opportunities* provides insights and recommendations for other LTA members through exploring and analyzing data from written interviews to understand the leadership framework of these five leaders.

Leticia Araceli Salas Serrano and Ulrich Schrader provide a leadership development empirical study of six MEXTESOL leaders in their chapter *Leadership Emergence Within MEXTESOL*. Serrano and Schrader identify four stages of development and emergence of the six leaders both at the local chapter and the national level in order to identify the motivations and challenges of their experiences within MEXTESOL.

Ali Fuad Selvi, Luciana C. de Oliveira, and Lía D. Kamhi-Stein in *Leadership, Mentoring and Transformation in Language Teacher Associations: A Tripartite Dialogue* detail the experiences of three TESOL professionals from Argentina, Brazil, and Turkey in the Leadership Mentorship Program (LMP) offered by TESOL International. The chapter explores the impact of mentorship programs on the roles of TESOL professionals and aims to provide directions both at the individual and the ELTA levels.

In the chapter, *Emotional Intelligence Growth Through Volunteering with Language Teaching Associations*, Patricia Szasz and Kathleen M. Bailey use Goleman's model of emotional intelligence, the literature, and personal experiences to highlight the development of emotional intelligence of LTA volunteers. Their model includes both intrapersonal and interpersonal components to examine the relationship between volunteerism, emotional intelligence, and leadership skills development.

The experiences of two past presidents of TESOL International Association (TESOL) are highlighted in *Formalizing Language Teacher Association Leadership Development*. Andy Curtis and Ester de Jong provide a brief and select review of different ways new members are apprenticed into a profession, i.e., through a "buddy system", "coaching", and/or "mentoring", and then go on to describe the leadership and leadership development opportunities within the TESOL International Association. The chapter attempts to differentiate between a "buddy system", "coaching", and/or "mentoring", and gives a detailed account of the leadership structure of TESOL. It also outlines the development of a gradual and organic but simple system that enabled them to meet the criteria of a systematic and structured coaching-mentoring relationship. The criteria emerged as the process unfolded, rather than being defined from the beginning.

Tanya Tercero, in her chapter *Opportunities for Leadership Development in the Service of Language Teacher Associations*, examines the author's reflections of her participation in and service to Language Teacher Associations (LTAs), primarily TESOL International Association, one of its large, regional affiliates, and a smaller state affiliate. Reflecting on her own 14 years of ESL teaching, research, and service, she narrates her personal experience on the continuum of developing leadership skills through participation in LTAs as a member, presenter, and in official leadership roles. Newcomers to the ELT field may find the reflected experiences presented here useful in developing and encouraging professional development and leadership opportunities at various levels and stages in their careers.

In his chapter entitled *Representativeness and Development of Leaders in Korea TESOL*, Robert Dickey discusses the challenges that LTAs often face in terms of leadership continuity and representativeness. These issues include those affecting all volunteer associations like leadership development and officer turnover. The author then takes a retrospective, descriptive, and document-based look at the case study of Korea TESOL and analyzes representativeness of its leaders through the gender, nationality, workplace, and education of leaders and members across two decades, as well as the continuity (retention) and development of leaders across the organization's leadership ranks.

Many language teacher association volunteers bring leadership and management skills from their careers and see such volunteerism as a means of developing these skills further. In *The Impact of LTA Volunteerism on Leadership and Management Development: An Autoethnographic Reflection*, Mick King shares the results of an exploratory study, informed by autoethnographic and pragmatic principles, and provides insights into the extent of this impact by reflecting on emergent themes emanating from the qualitative analysis of introspective reflective narratives.

Balancing Personal Responsibilities with Association Altruism: Three Professional Development Histories in LTAs provides details of the autoethnographic narratives of three different TESOL professionals who have worked in language teacher associations in different global contexts. Each of the authors, Kevin Knight, Septina Nur Iswanti, and Tim Murphey, has provided a personal story describing what they have contributed to LTAs as well as what they have gained from the experience. The chapter concludes that LTAs can promote personal and professional growth because they provide members with access to local and global communities of practice.

As exemplified in these chapters, LTAs do not only come into existence to provide service, but they can also be the subject of research and other scholarly discussion. In addition to providing general knowledge about the history, structure, and forms of professional development offered by LTAs, several chapters in this book are based on empirical research using different approaches, theoretical, and analytical frameworks. As there is an intricate, and, at times, indispensable, relationship between theory, research, and practice, we argue in favor of conducting research on, about, and for LTAs in order to enable them to provide more informed professional development opportunities to their members.

It is our hope that this book will be of use and benefit to a wide range of audiences. As the core of the book is the inward look at the work and impact of LTAs, these associations will find it helpful in terms of improving their structure and the quality of the services they provide to their members. As most members of LTAs are language teachers, great insights into how to develop and professionalize teachers' practices can be gleaned from the contributions in this book. Claire Kramsch's personal and professional experience eloquently stated in the foreword of this book is a case in point. Teacher educators can also use the book for raising their students' awareness of the unlimited and life-long learning opportunities that LTAs offer before and after completing the teacher education program. LTAs is also a ripe area for research, and therefore researchers (be it scholars, practitioners, students, LTAs members or leaders, etc.) can use this book as a springboard for future research emanating from different issues and topics discussed in the chapters. Finally, language policy and planning officials can also gain more informed insights into the ins and outs of LTAs, so they are more receptive to and accepting of the role of LTAs in influencing language policy and planning in different socio-economic, cultural, and political contexts.

Part I
The History and Structure
of Language Teacher
Associations (LTAs)

The History of Language Teacher Associations



Garon Wheeler

Abstract The teaching of languages is undoubtedly one of the world's oldest professions but was oddly one of the last academic fields to organize professional associations. The guilds of medieval Europe were the forerunners of today's professional societies, as certain occupations banded together to protect their interests. In the sixteenth century there emerged the first organizations to watch over the development of national languages in Europe, but these had little to do with pedagogy. However, true professional associations, based on education rather than manual skills, appeared at about the same time for a few mainly scientific fields. It was not until the final decades of the nineteenth century that the first professional societies were founded for the advancement of education in general and specifically for the teaching of languages. The chapter looks at the opening days of one of the first associations in 1903 in France. It then traces the impressive proliferation of language teaching organizations throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries until today, when nearly every country in the world has some sort of organized group that provides the opportunity to interact with colleagues, exchange ideas for teaching in the language classroom, promote research, and advance language teaching as an international profession.

1 Introduction: An Old Profession

The history of language teacher associations (LTAs) is actually quite brief. This is remarkable, considering how old the profession is. How old is it? It is impossible to say. Writing was created about 5000 years ago, so it is not until then that we have any records. There is evidence, in fact, to show that foreign language study was taking place in Mesopotamia five millennia ago (Wheeler, 2013, pp. 9–11). It is unlikely that anyone would seriously suggest that in other civilizations of that era, such as India or Egypt, that no one was interested in learning a second language. Knowing

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that there are innumerable reasons for learning another language, from facilitating business and trading to dealing with the population of your latest military conquest, just plain common sense tells us that people have been studying foreign languages for a long time—much before there were any written records. Common sense also tells us that where there are language students, there must be language teachers. This is not meant to imply that thousands of years ago, in pre-historic times, there were classrooms of eager students guided by dedicated, professional language teachers. There is no way for us to know, but it is much more likely that most language lessons were carried out on an improvised basis, the students being lone individuals and the teachers just native speakers of the target language. The point here is that as language teachers today, we are members of one of the oldest professions in the world. You might expect, therefore, that language teaching was one of the first fields to organize a professional society. It wasn't.

2 The Earliest Professional Organizations

Before there existed what we are referring to as modern professional associations or societies, there were guilds, or “[associations] of craftsmen or merchants formed for mutual aid and protection and for the furtherance of their professional interests” (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2017). These can be found as far back as ancient Rome and have existed in many civilizations, but they are best known to us as an integral part of medieval and early modern European society (ibid.). Practitioners of the same skill or occupation would band together for mutual benefit. Among a variety of responsibilities, they would strive to maintain standards of product and service quality and ensure that business practices in their own field were honest. Among the many tradesmen who typically established guilds were professionals such as bakers, butchers, leather workers, blacksmiths, and stone workers. Notice that these are occupations that required a degree of skill and produced an important, tangible product in everyday life.

Although there were plenty of language teachers working during these centuries, teaching was not a field that lent itself to the creation of a guild. An obvious reason is that there was no tangible product in the end; there was no result that could be easily regulated for quality and delivery. In addition, though, there was the centuries-long problem of the reputation of teachers. Those who taught at the higher levels, especially in universities, were respected and reasonably well paid. In contrast, teachers of younger students and lower levels were often looked down on, and in Europe at least, their poor reputation persisted well into early modern times. These were often poor souls who were down on their luck or simply passing through town. It was not a prestige profession. As late as the 1500s, the famed scholar Erasmus, in writing about the proper education for children, expressed his disdain for teachers: “There are teachers whose manners are so uncouth that even their wives cannot have any affection for them... I should scarcely think such men fit to look after my horses”

(Erasmus, 1990, p. 324). It's no wonder that language teachers were not leading the way in professional self-organization.

Guilds gradually lost their usefulness and faded away with the rise of ever-increasing international communications and a changed economic system. At the same time, though, a different kind of professional society was beginning to appear. This is the one familiar to us today. Superficially, they resemble the guilds of earlier centuries, but these professional associations are typically formed as nonprofit organizations intended to advance the profession and the interests of their members (which sounds like a guild) but also to provide an opportunity for colleagues to interact—which would have been an odd objective for a guild of bakers, for example, who all lived in the same area. These new professional societies usually represented not skills for creating a tangible product, but knowledge. They represented the results of formal education, not of training.

However, the transition from guilds to modern professional societies was astonishingly slow.

3 The First Language Societies

If we are looking for the first language societies with real histories, we must start in Italy in 1540, with the *Accademia Fiorentina* (the Florentine Academy) and *Accademia degli Infiammati* (Academy of the Burning Ones—burning with knowledge, that is), both of which consisted of philosophers and writers who discussed what form the Italian language should take. These somewhat informal groups led to a more regimented and formal organization that still exists, the *Accademia della Crusca* (Academy of the Bran, a metaphor for sifting the errors and corruptions from the language), in 1583. The job of the Academy, as Italy remained disunited until the 19th century, was to guard the integrity of the language, especially as applied to literature.

The French Academy, which they in the Academy will tell you, no doubt, should be referred to by its proper name, the *Académie Française*, was created in 1634, and is the most famous organization of its type. In those days many nations were worrying about their languages as spelling, grammar, and usage showed distressing inconsistencies. It was the mission of the *Académie* to “preserve and protect” the French language, to set rules, and to decide what was acceptable and what was not. It does not at all fit our idea of a language teaching association, however; though well represented by poets, novelists, and an occasional 18th century grammarian, not one of the 729 members in its long and distinguished history ever taught a language (including French) in a classroom, it appears.

The success of the *Accademia della Crusca* and the *Académie Française* inspired other countries to form their own regulatory bodies in the next century and a half: the Royal Spanish Academy (*Real Academia Española*, 1713), the Russian Academy (*Akademia Russiskaya*, 1783), and the Swedish Academy (*Svenska Akademien*,

1786). Today many languages have similar institutions, watching over languages as diverse as Yoruba (Nigeria), Guarani (Paraguay), and Cherokee (USA).

4 The First Modern Professional Societies

These were not what we would call genuine “professional societies.” But during this same era, suppose you were a scientist in England in 1660: you would now be eligible to become a member of the newly created Royal Society, which is self-described today as “the world’s oldest independent scientific academy, dedicated to promoting excellence in science” (Royal Society, 2017). If you were accepted (quite an accomplishment, of course), you could pat yourself on the back not only for your esteemed reputation but for being a member of the oldest scientific association in the world. The establishment of this society was a tremendous step in the Western world in encouraging and facilitating the exchange of ideas.

One would be forgiven for expecting this to be the beginning of a deluge of similar associations. It was an excellent idea, one that deserved emulating. Nevertheless, the Royal Society was far ahead of its time.

In the 1700s, if you were a physician in France you could meet your colleagues and present your research at the Société Royale de Médecine, founded in 1730, a remarkable gap of seventy years after the founding of the Royal Society. Even though the French physicians were late, it suggests nevertheless that scholars in the physical sciences were significantly ahead of everyone else.

A staggering one hundred twenty-seven years later, we as teachers at last have some good news with the creation of the National Education Association in the United States to promote the cause of public education. “Since 1857, NEA has crusaded for the rights of educators and children,” their website informs us (National Education Association, 2017). For language teachers, it is at least a start. And it indicates that the humanities are finally becoming involved in this trend of professional self-awareness.

Historians made their own history when they founded their association in the United Kingdom in 1884. Mathematicians and teachers of mathematics followed suit in 1888 (US) and science teachers were close behind in 1900 (UK). Most intriguing, perhaps, was the news that British teachers of dancing had created their own professional organization in 1892 in England.

4.1 Language Education Associations

Probably the first society devoted entirely to language teaching was the Modern Language Association of America, founded in 1883. The organization, they report today, “has worked for more than a century to strengthen the study and teaching of languages and literatures” (Modern Language Association of America, n.d.). A glance at their quarterly journal *Publications of the Modern Language Association*

of America from January–March 1890 (Modern Language Association of America, 1890, p. lxxix) reveals, however, that their interests initially were of a decidedly out-of-classroom, linguistic sort. Typical articles in this issue analyzed and discussed the use of negation by Chaucer, vowel measurement, and Scandinavian lexicography. Perhaps that qualified as guidance in language teaching in some late nineteenth century universities, but it is not what we are searching for.

At this point, more and more language education societies were seeing the light of day. In the final decade of the nineteenth century, the Modern Language Society of Great Britain (not to be confused with the similarly named organization founded ten years earlier in the United States) opened its doors in 1893. Some of the earliest editions of their journal, named *Modern Language Teaching* (founded in 1905), are available online. This journal, compared to that of the American MLA, deals mostly with actual classroom teaching: “On the Direct Method,” “My Little French Class,” and “Suggestions for a Modern Language Curriculum,” for example. (Modern Language Society of Great Britain, 1905, p. ii) Remember that this was fifteen years after the American MLA’s first issue, and that times were changing in just those few years.

As the 1800s ended, one could look back on a century of remarkable progress in education and science. The physical sciences had made great advances, especially in the earlier part of the century, and set the tone for academic studies and procedures. For centuries, teaching had most often been an art, not a science, but with the rise in prestige of the hard sciences, teaching a foreign language became a quest to find the best method, a means of language acquisition that could earn the respect of science. The latter years of the century saw the emergence of social sciences like linguistics and psychology, which lent respectability to foreign language education. The new century saw an explosion in the number of professional associations, and language teaching was no exception.

It was France and the United States that led the way in this trend. The French, of course, have always been famously proud of their language and had been creating and enforcing rules on it for nearly 250 years. It is no surprise that they also were leaders at this time in language pedagogy. The United States, on the other hand, whose population has certainly never been renowned for language acquisition skills, was in the middle of the greatest wave of immigration in its history. Moreover, the American government had taken a keen interest in this era in the state of foreign language teaching and learning. It realized the need for the non-immigrant population to have at least minimal exposure to a foreign culture and language, knowing that in those days the great majority of Americans could never even dream of traveling to another country.

Trying to devise an accurate history of language teacher associations is not easy. Specifically, we face three problems:

- (1) Undoubtedly, some organizations have disappeared: it is possible that a very early LTA has been forgotten because there are no easily accessible records. Other LTAs did not really vanish but instead merged with another group or underwent a substantial name change. For example, the Association for Lan-

guage Learning (ALL) in the United Kingdom seems a newcomer, founded in 1990. In fact, it was the outcome of the merger of seven UK single-language teacher organizations and two general language teacher associations. It swallowed up the previously independent groups of teachers of Italian, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, and Russian, as well as the British Association for Language Teaching and the historic Modern Language Association (Association for Language Learning, n.d.). Some of these were probably very old, but if one looks up the Association of Teachers of Italian, for example, there is no information and no history. The few references to it simply lead you to the ALL website.

- (2) Some language teacher associations simply are not outwardly interested in their own history. Perhaps their history is short, maybe it is long, but some organizations do not mention their founding date. This is not a great surprise because a fundamental characteristic of language pedagogy has been to look to the future, not to past practices, which are often considered to be embarrassingly outdated.
- (3) Most organizations understandably focus on their goals of today. Have they always had the same objectives? In other words, each association describes itself looking through a modern lens, making it problematic to have a clear idea of its founding and development.

4.2 The Creation of an Early Language Teacher Association

We have one real opportunity to observe the creation of one of the first language teacher associations. In Paris in 1902, a call went out to language teachers in the area to gauge their interest in developing such an organization. The response was highly enthusiastic so on Thursday, February 19, 1903 at 4:30 in the afternoon, 120 language teachers from the Paris area gathered in an auditorium at the Sorbonne with excitement and tremendous anticipation, for the inaugural meeting of the Society of Teachers of Living Languages and Public Education (la Société des Professeurs de Langues Vivantes et de l'Enseignement Public, or SPLV for short). They taught at all levels of education (a requirement of the new organization) and were overwhelmingly instructors of English and German. The great majority were men, who filled 22 of the 24 places on the provisional organizing committee. We know all these details because the society began publishing a "Bulletin" within three months of its founding. Several of these bulletins are available online today, and the glorious day was described in detail in the first issue from May 1903 (Société des Professeurs, 1903).

The meeting opened with a keynote speech from the new president of the SPLV, a Monsieur Sigwalt, a German teacher at a secondary school in the Parisian suburbs. A key inspiration for the creation of the SPLV, he explained, was a colleague who had attended a teaching conference in Germany the previous year and came away impressed enough to record his impressions and publish them as an article. His admiration was understandable, really, because German scholars had been in the forefront of an attempt at reforming language teaching in the 1880s; the movement

had its roots in the new fields of linguistics and psychology. The Frenchman noted during his visit that in Germany it was teachers who initiated reforms in the classroom, whereas in France, all directives and procedures were imposed by the federal government. In summary, said Monsieur Sigwalt, in Germany, when teachers meet, “all the problems related to teaching are raised, discussed and resolved, not by accident, not forcibly under extreme circumstances, but on a continuing basis, regularly and peaceably; it’s the normal manifestation of the thinking of the teaching corps” (ibid., p. 5). As envisioned in the proposal of 1902, the SPLV was going to be “... an exclusively pedagogical association that shall study questions related to the teaching of living languages, such as the application of the practical method using various exercises, professional training, pedagogical developments abroad, etc. The society shall set up meetings and conferences followed by discussions; it shall collect for publication the studies and the experiences of the teaching corps. It shall furnish each of its members the means to express his personal opinions with complete freedom, and shall become, for matters of teaching, the intermediary of teachers of living languages” (ibid., p. 5).

Now that the SPLV was a reality, the president elaborated on the vision: “The practical goal of our association will therefore be to research and to study the numerous didactic procedures to which our efforts can lead. Whether we are young or old, we can neither be familiar with all of them nor find them on our own. We shall create a sort of pedagogical academy that will record the various techniques devised by personal ingenuity. At the same time, we shall serve as an information bureau in which any teacher may familiarize himself with various solutions offered for his benefit” (ibid., p. 4).

How did Teachers of Living Languages in Public Education fare? The society has been quite successful, thank you. Aside from adjusting the name to the *Association of Teachers of Living Languages in Public Education* in 1912, they have continued to study and discuss the teaching, learning, and promotion of “living languages” (that is, not Latin or ancient Greek) at all levels and to publish hundreds of editions of their bulletin, renamed in 1907 as *Les Langues Modernes*.

4.3 The Increase in the Number of LTAs

This was a scene that played out more and more frequently in the first three decades of the twentieth century as professional societies of all types became common. In language teaching many were, like the SPLV, for teachers of all languages. In Prague in 1910 the Klubu moderních filologů (the Club of Modern Philologists) was formed, which continues today as the Circle of Modern Philologists. In 1911, Dutch educators formed the Vereniging van Leraren in Levende Talen, or Association of Teachers of Living Languages, which is still going strong more than a hundred years later.

It was at this time that we begin to see associations devoted to the teaching of a specific language. In the United States, the American Association of Teachers of Spanish was founded in 1917; other languages soon followed: the American Associa-

tion of Teachers of Italian (1924), the American Association of Teachers of German (1926), and the American Association of Teachers of French (1927). Teachers of Slavic Languages dawdled until 1941. In the United Kingdom, remember that several language organizations merged in 1990 along with their histories. However, the Association for German Studies in Great Britain and Ireland, from 1932, remains.

But to return to LTAs of a wider scope, 1931 saw the creation of one of the largest organizations today. The International Federation of Teachers of Living Languages (Fédération Internationale des Professeurs de Langues Vivantes), or FIPLV, thrives today. It is notable because it is not an organization for individuals; it is a society of language teacher associations. It refers to itself as “the only international multilingual association of teachers of languages” (Fédération des Professeurs, n.d.). Its membership today ranges around the world, including groups as diverse as the International League of Esperanto Teachers, the Philippine Association for Language Teaching, the New Zealand Association of French Teachers, and the Bulgarian English Teachers’ Association. Several other LTAs saw their first days in this era, such as the Modern Language Association of Poland (1929), the National Association of Language Schools (Sweden, 1938), and l’Associazione Nazionale Insegnanti Lingue Straniere (the National Association of Foreign Language Teachers, or A.N.I.L.S.) in Italy in 1947, and the Association of Finnish Language Teachers (1957).

Remarkably, it was not until the 1960s that some of the largest language teacher associations were founded. TESOL International Association (formerly Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) was formed in the United States in 1966; the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL) was created in 1967 in the United Kingdom. Today TESOL has about 12,000 members, not counting the 40,000 or so of its affiliates. IATEFL, meanwhile, has more than 4000 teachers as members and approximately 120 affiliates. At approximately the same time, the International Association of Applied Linguistics was founded in France in 1964 and today claims a membership of 8000.

4.4 More Recently

Since roughly 1970, the number of LTAs has increased steadily, making it difficult to offer a coherent and chronological list. Giving examples of these newer organizations runs the risk of offending those not mentioned, while viewing a complete list would be impressive but boring and undoubtedly accurate for only a short time. Fortunately, the internet makes it simple to search for language organizations; Facebook is an intriguing measurement of how active an association is.

We have heard little about East Asia, Latin and South America, and Africa, but they have become well represented in recent decades. Africa is of particular interest because it is the fastest growing region for language teacher associations. Until very recently there was a patchwork of LTAs covering the continent; depending on how you wanted to count them, there were approximately thirty of them. A few have been around for more than twenty years, but the majority have emerged in just the

last ten years or so. Many are thriving, judging by their websites and Facebook pages, while others seem frozen in time from several years ago. Nevertheless, they demonstrate the will and determination to be part of the worldwide applied linguistics community. The latest development is the creation of Africa TESOL, which held its first conference in 2016 and aims to become an agent for uniting teachers from across the continent.

We should note that being a newer LTA does not necessarily mean taking a back seat to the more established groups. TESOL Asia can certainly take pride in its accomplishments since its founding in 2004: it publishes fourteen journals in our field, offers a 120-hour ESL teaching training certificate course, and runs the world's only TESOL internet radio station (www.tesol.fm).

5 Conclusion

So, what do language teacher associations contribute? The mission statement for the Japanese Association of Language Teachers (JALT) says it simply and elegantly: “[The organization] promotes excellence in language learning, teaching, and research by providing opportunities for those involved in language education to meet, share, and collaborate.” Any language teacher association, at a minimum, is expected to hold conferences and to publish at least a newsletter on a regular basis. Depending on the size and resources of the group, it may also engage in teacher training, promote research, post job openings, and act as an advocate for policies related to language education.

Just as importantly, they make us feel that as teachers, we are members of an international profession. There are not many professions that can claim peers around the world as colleagues. These organizations, therefore, play a vital role in building camaraderie among language teachers. Though the history of LTAs is relatively brief, the tremendous increase in their numbers in recent decades strongly demonstrates their value; no doubt they will play an increasingly important role in our profession in the future.

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Examining the Organizational Structure of Language Teacher Associations: A Report on Strategic Direction and Functionality



Pakize Uludag

Abstract Language Teacher Associations (LTAs) represent the enhancement of the quality of language teaching practices all over the world. They achieve their mission through organizing professional development events, establishing special interest groups, and supporting their members through publications and scholarships. Most of the LTAs serve as volunteer and charity organizations, and their emergence and evolution depend on the contributions and involvement of their member groups. So, this chapter was written primarily to inform the LTA members who wish to become more familiar with LTAs' organizational framework and grasp both internal and external dynamics that impact LTAs' functionality. The chapter opens with a broad discussion of the factors that would shape LTAs' strategic direction. Then, it provides an overview of language organizations' structural framework with reference to several of the specific local, regional and international associations. Written descriptively, this chapter could also serve as a guide for the members of the ELT community who wish to set up a new language organization with the aim of advocating language teaching and learning activities.

1 Introduction

LTAs take over the responsibility of contributing to the personal and professional development of language teachers and providing a base for networking among their internal members and external bodies (Lamb, 2012). With this purpose and promise, language teacher organizations have been prospering and growing in numbers worldwide. LTAs' commitment to educate and enrich professionals requires a strategic plan and outcomes that might vary across organizations. The successful attainment of the strategic plan, on the other hand, depends on many factors within an LTA. One of these factors is employing an efficient organizational structure at the foundation stages of an LTA and improving that structure constantly to become more inclusive

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and representative through special interest groups, chapters, and affiliates that will be discussed and exemplified within this chapter. I believe that comparing and contrasting the organizational structure of international and regional LTAs that serve as umbrella organizations is fundamental to providing a backbone for the arguments of the strategic direction and functionality of LTAs. Thus, descriptions of a number of LTAs' organizational framework are included in this chapter.

2 Factors Affecting Structure and Organization of LTAs

An organizational structure is the allocation of tasks and responsibilities across a pre-defined framework to achieve the functions of the association. Lamb (2012) specified those 'interrelated' functions as promoting advocacy, contributing to the professional development of members and empowering spaces for networking, which could be either internal or external. The structure of an LTA impacts the information flow and communication among the members of the organization and the executive council. So, it is vital for language associations to work on their organizational framework by taking a number of factors into account.

LTAs employ a variety of structures based on a number of contextual (external) and organizational (internal) factors. Contextual factors that affect the structure of an organization have to do with the sociocultural parameters and language policies within the area that a certain LTA aims to thrive. Often, contextual variables are dependent on outside factors, which are not easy to change or control; however, they are essential to take into account when forming a professional organization. For example, Australian Association for the Teaching of English (AATE) has a position and policy paper on the ESL and Aboriginal Englishes (n.d.) that virtually promotes sensitivity towards students' cultural and linguistic identity. Thus, sociolinguistic differences between Standard Australian English and Aboriginal English is a contextual parameter that AATE needs to be aware of in planning their objectives, mission and organizational structure. Another example is the organizational framework of English Language Teachers' Association of India (ELTAI) which is a charitable organization that depends on donations from people and/or institutions. The 'Patron' is one of the 10 Executive Committee members of ELTAI and is not a typical member to have in any other LTAs' organizational charts. Indian national culture operates through accepting authority and promoting philanthropy. The function of the Patron within the structure of ELTAI is to use his or her connections to raise funds for the annual conference and workshops in addition to negotiating with policy makers to establish ELTAI as the recognized authority (Padwad, 2016).

Organizational factors, however, are associated with the size and the strategic plan of an association. Based on their size, LTAs have been categorized as formal and informal depending on their being local or regional/international ("Developing an Association", 2006). The number of people who are forming the association, and the financial resources are important driving factors that define an organization as formal or informal. Formal teacher organizations require a more

inclusive framework for their organizational structure in terms of their strategic plan and direction. For example, collecting and disbursing money might become a more intense task as an LTA grows. This requires a dedicated financial subcommittee within the organizational structure of formal associations. International Association of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL), for instance, holds an annual conference and hosts more than 2500 attendees from six continents (The IATEFL Annual General Meeting Report, 2016). In parallel with the large membership and conference participation, the executive council of IATEFL has a strong financial management system and a finance committee to conduct needs analysis, resource assessment and keep reports of the tools available in order to plan the organization's budget effectively ("Running an Association", 2011). Therefore, the size of an organization is an indicator of its organizational structure.

It is true that the impact on the structure of an LTA becomes more significant as the organization expands. Indeed, having a series of layers (hierarchy) within the structure becomes indispensable especially when LTAs affiliate officially with regional, national and international associations. As associations spread out, the executive council will have more responsibilities such as advertising the association to a wider audience, providing awards and grants and promoting research by various means.

3 Working Parties Within the Structure and Organization of LTAs

An executive committee, which manages the strategic direction and mandate of the LTA, typically comprises the president (or a chairperson), the vice-president(s), (or president-elect acting as vice presidents), the past president, a secretary and treasurer. Depending on the method of elections, the executive committee members (or Board members) are either elected by the membership based on the application process or appointed to the position by a nominating body. Usually, LTA members are requested to vote and be involved in the election process. This way, a distributed leadership model is employed across larger and smaller units of the organizational framework (Paran, 2016).

The president serves as the leader who presides over and represents the organization. In some of the associations, the president might need to serve as a vice-president before being elected. TESOL France, for instance, apart from the Executive Committee, there is another entity called the 'Bureau' composed of the president, vice president, a treasurer and secretary. The president of TESOL France performs in the position of the vice-president and works as a coordinator or/and regional advisor before being elected. The Vice President(s), substitutes for the president and has basic oversight responsibilities depending on the needs of the LTA. The term vice-president is replaced by the president-elect (or chair-elect) in some of the LTAs including TESOL International Association. The treasurer is responsible for finan-

cial matters in many of the local and regional LTAs; however, a sub-committee is assigned to deal with finances in most of the international associations. For instance, the Finance committee in IATEFL is supervised by the Treasurer and Finance Committee Chair who review the financial documents, and report to the president on an annual budget. Finally, the secretary, as is the case in many organizations, keeps the agenda of the LTA, takes meeting minutes and works in harmony with the executive committee members to plan daily and weekly tasks. A number of other working parties and sub-committees that align with the organizational goals contribute to the coordination of tasks such as member recruitment and publications. Additional roles and positions are included as the strategic goals and need to evolve over time.

LTAs maintain their connections through regional sub-groups (or chapters), and international affiliates (or associate members). These connections are created to promote and retain membership and disseminate information and resources to those members who live in certain geographical regions in a country. For example, BRAZ-TESOL in Brazil is an international affiliate of TESOL International Association and IATEFL, and a member of Southern Cone TESOL along with Argentina, Chile, Uruguay and Paraguay. According to their website, BRAZ-TESOL has 12 regional chapters including one in Rio de Janeiro which was founded in 2003 as a non-profit sub-group with an executive committee of its own. The Rio chapter receives support from BRAZ-TESOL to organize events and workshops to cater for the needs of language teachers within the area. So, BRAZ-TESOL affiliates with TESOL International Association to promote common interests of the members in Brazil through some generic events, joint meetings and publications. Likewise, BRAZ-TESOL sustains membership and reaches out to external bodies through regional chapters.

LTAs, also, set up and promote Special Interest Groups (SIGs) to increase the communication and collaboration among LTA members on some of the specific areas of interest such as second language writing, intensive English programs, and adult education. This way, members and their professional interests are represented, and member reciprocity is achieved by means of online discussion groups, webinars, online courses and newsletters. The number of special interest groups might change depending on the size of the membership. As an example, while IATEFL has sixteen, NILETESOL in Egypt has only five SIGS. When the LTA members join any of the SIGS, they subscribe to their e-mail lists, gain rights of voting and become a SIG leader.

4 Sample Structure from Different LTAs

In this section, there is detailed information about the organizational structure of a number of LTAs selected to be representative of LTA communities in different parts of the world; 2 expansive international LTAs (TESOL International Association and IATEFL), a regional LTA which was formed recently (Africa TESOL), another regional association actively promoting ELT activities in Macedonia since 1998 (ELTAM) and LTAs in Germany.

4.1 *TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) International Association*

I choose TESOL International Association (TESOL) to cover in this chapter because TESOL is the largest professional development LTA of English as a second and foreign language with 12,176 members in 161 countries according to its March 2017 membership statistics, and also because the current governance model that TESOL employs has undergone major revisions over the past few years. TESOL's organizational framework employs a structure that is governed by the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee members are the President, President-elect, Past President and the Executive Director. The President-elect is elected annually by the membership, who then becomes the President the following year, and the Past President after the presidency. The Executive Director is hired by TESOL's Board of Directors. In addition, an elected board of directors take charge of TESOL and the executive director works as an ex-officio member of the board (TESOL's Website).

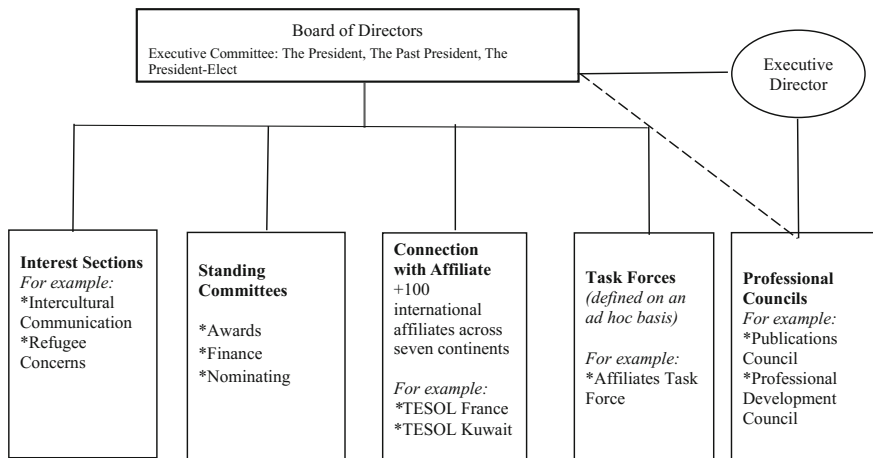
In terms of the structure, there has been a shift from a 'redundant' and 'bureaucratic' framework to a more responsive and dynamic governance restructuring of TESOL throughout the past three years ("TESOL International Association Proposed Governance Restructuring", 2015). Revisions, aimed at reducing governance layers and increasing volunteer work from the members of the association, were made to achieve the 2015–2018 Strategic Plan. For example, there were seventeen Standing Committees in the previous framework that were reduced to four in the 2015 model (Table 1) based on the recommendations by the Governance Review Task Force that was initiated in mid-2012. This table is adapted from 2015 because it reflects the proposed changes to the previous framework although it is not the very final version. It was stated in the TESOL 2016 Annual Report that Standing Committees will become governance committees and their number will go down to three. Instead, there will be eight Professional Councils. The reason behind the ongoing changes is to introduce a complete model as an alternative to the previous "spread thin and fragmented" structure which "mandates of many entities are vaguely or poorly defined and not strategically aligned" ("TESOL International Association Proposed Governance Restructuring", 2015, p. 3). Therefore, the roles within TESOL are being redefined to cope with the challenges of divisions and lack of consistency. Also, objectives and outcomes are given priority over the procedures in the new model to avoid redundancy. Considering the size of the association, it is inevitable to expect further updates on the organizational structure. The information here will give you an overview but TESOL's website would be the most reliable source of information for the latest reforms on the framework based on the task force reports and proposals.

As previously mentioned, Standing Committees within TESOL's governance structure, which include Nominating, Awards, and Finance, operate through contributions from the volunteer groups for the completion of major and essential tasks. Members of the Standing Committees usually aim to improve their leadership skills and to serve the field of ELT voluntarily. The Nominating Committee members are

elected by the general membership and they take the responsibility of proposing the most appropriate candidates for election to the TESOL Board of Directors and as President-elect. The Finance Committee is made up of the selected members of the Board of Directors. They focus on the management of the organization’s cash flow, preparation and presentation of the annual financial statements and completion of legal responsibilities. The Awards and Research Committee members are appointed by the president based on an application process. Awards committee members work on nominating the best candidates for the TESOL awards, including travel grants, the distinguished research award and professional development scholarships, and making recommendations to the Board. The Research Committee is expected to guide TESOL International Association’s research initiatives and priorities.

As can be seen in Table 1, there are three other core working parties within TESOL International Association that are connected to the Board of Directors. Interest Sections (a different title for SIGS) formed by the members according to the themes and topics of interest in ELT are also undergoing changes in the new model. They are addressed as Knowledge-based member groups/communities in the proposals and reports and are expected to subsume under broad categories (currently there are 21 Interest Sections mentioned on the TESOL website) to avoid redundancy and streamline communication between these communities and the Board. Connection with Affiliates maintains networking and facilitates communication among 100+ independent international and domestic affiliate associations and the Board. TESOL has 47,000 affiliate members all around the world, according to its website. Affiliate members can make use of the benefits and services offered to support ELT professionals within their geographic regions. So, connection with Affiliates takes on an important role to develop partnership with international LTAs. Members of the entity

Table 1 TESOL international governance model



(Adapted from: “TESOL International Association Proposed Governance Restructuring”, 2015)

are appointed by the Executive Committee. Task Forces, are responsible for completing short-term tasks and making recommendations to the Board. For instance, in 2015, the Board of Directors assigned 2 important tasks to the members of the Task Forces, which are *Interest Section Task Force*, and *Affiliate Task Force*, to review and prepare reports. Those reports were completed within a year and are currently available on TESOL's Website. Given the proposed changes to the Governance Model within the last few years, Task Forces play an imperative role in initiating and supporting the restructuring. Contributions of Task Forces and Standing Committees to the association are completed and enriched by the Advisory Councils which reinforce the function of other working parties and staff in TESOL through advising them on short and long term important issues including conference planning, publications, and professional development.

4.2 IATEFL (*International Association of Teaching English as a Foreign Language*)

The Governance of IATEFL will be briefly discussed to highlight its major differences from TESOL International with respect to their structural frameworks. Based in Britain, IATEFL was founded in 1967 as a registered charity organization and limited company. It is an International LTA with over 4000 members worldwide. Their mission is to “link, develop and support English Language Teaching professionals” as mentioned on their website and in the Memorandum of the association.

Eight members of the Board of Trustees are responsible for running the association in light of the organization's strategic direction. Compared to TESOL International Association, each member of the Board of Trustees in IATEFL functions as the chair of a sub-committee or working parties. The president, for instance, is the chair of the Conference Committee and is responsible for organizing the annual conference with other Conference Committee members. Similarly, the Vice President works as the chair of the Publications Committee. Other members of the Board of Trustees are the Treasurer (Finance Committee Chair), the Secretary, Marketing and Membership Committee Chair, Electronic Committee Chair, Associates Representative, and finally the SIGS Representative.

Apart from the Board of Trustees, IATEFL, which is a trading company at the same time, has a Head Office which employs a Chief Executive and 8 other officers. In addition, like TESOL International, there is an Advisory Council within the organizational framework with individual members and a Patron. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the function of the Patron in ELTAI is critical for the governance of the association and its adherence to the Indian traditional culture. However, a deliberate attempt was made to use the term 'Patron' in IATEFL in 1997 as a replacement for the 'Honorary President'. Since then, Professor David Crystal has been performing in that capacity and is advising the working parties on ongoing activities as a member of the Advisory Council (Stewart & Miyahara, 2016).

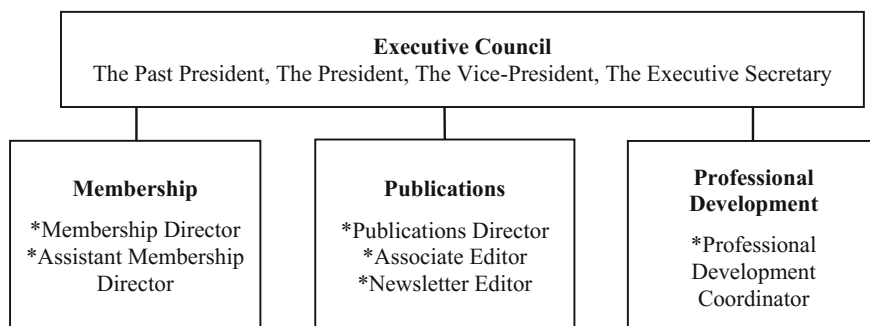
There are 16 SIGS within IATEFL that include but are not limited to Literature, Learning Technologies and Young Learners and Teenagers. TESOL International Interest Sections seem to promote general topics of interest, such as EFL Interest Section, to address the professional needs of member groups. On the other hand, IATEFL SIGS are concerned with more specific topics, as exemplified here, and in that sense, attract and represent slightly different member groups than TESOL International. Moreover, members of IATEFL pay annual subscription to join a SIG whereas TESOL International members can subscribe to several of the Interest Sections for no extra charge provided they are active members of the association.

One of the strategic goals of the IATEFL association is integrating the work of volunteers in committees, similar to TESOL International. According to Stewart and Miyahara (2016), involvement of volunteers in the governance of IATEFL is to “sustain the rich diversity of functions, services and projects within IATEFL” (p. 48). Moreover, an appreciation of organizational behavior is essential for the achievement of strategic goals not only in IATEFL but in any kind of association (Griffin & Moorehead, 2011).

4.3 *Africa TESOL*

Africa TESOL is a newborn regional professional LTA. The association held its first conference in Sudan in February 2016 and introduced the association to the world with the theme of “ELT in Africa: Striving for Excellence and Visibility”. Its second conference was held in Rwanda in May 2017. Africa TESOL has Nineteen ELT organizations as affiliates in eighteen countries in Africa namely Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cote D’Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, and Uganda (Africa TESOL website). These LTAs have large membership bases as they serve as umbrella associations in their respective countries offering professional development opportunities to English teachers in Africa.

Recognizing the fact that Africa TESOL has been launched recently and held its first business meeting in 2017, their management style is more situational. More specifically, in view of the GDPs of most African countries, the association is struggling with the challenges of initiating fee-paying membership and resorts to seeking fundraisers, which is true for most of the newly established LTAs. So, the steering committee that was formed is usually self-elected among the leaders of some of the affiliates of the association who work voluntarily to organize conferences and publish newsletters. Table 2 illustrates the organizational structure of Africa TESOL. Compared to many other ‘senior’ LTAs with larger membership, well-established resources and wider experience in the field, Africa TESOL has a smaller, less hierarchical but functional framework. For instance, having a Membership Director is wise at the initial stage as a priority of newborn associations is to prevail and increase the number of both local and external members. Also, as part of

Table 2 Africa TESOL organizational chart

its strategic vision, new committee roles will be identified and added to the steering committee of Africa TESOL such as Affiliates Director and/or SIGs Coordinator.

4.4 *ELTAM (English Language Teachers' Association of Macedonia)*

ELTAM has been promoting ELT and English Literature activities, including TESOL and the IATEFL Biannual Conference, training workshops, and State competitions, in Macedonia since 1999. The association is run by The General Assembly comprised of all the members of the association. They meet once a year to discuss and plan the annual budget in addition to the activities of the following year. They are responsible for appointing the President, as well, who is expected to serve and represent the association for four years. The Executive Board, coordinated by the President, oversees the advocacy through personal development events. The Board, also, is responsible for advising councils in other associations and making recommendations to the President and the General Assembly.

One interesting aspect about ELTAM's organizational framework is the post of National Coordinator for Competitions who is responsible for the associations' ELF competitions among primary and secondary school students within the region. Additionally, ELTAM is an associate of IATEFL and there is an appointed IATEFL Representative in their executive committee to liaise between IATEFL and ELTAM. The association has partnership agreements with many other LTAs in the region including BETA in Bulgaria, ELTA in Albania, RETA in Romania and TESOL France. Other members of the Executive committee include a General Secretary, Membership Secretary, Newsletter Editor, Local Coordinators, Treasurer, Webmaster, and SIGS Coordinators.

4.5 *Local LTAs in Germany*

In Germany, there are several local/regional LTAs such as ELTAS (English Language Teachers' Association Stuttgart e. V.), ELTAU (The English Language Teachers' Association Ulm/Neu-Ulm) and ELTAF (The English Language Teachers' Association Frankfurt/Rhine-Main-Neckar e. V.) that organize and coordinate language events and training workshops for teachers. Each of these associations aims to centralize ELT activities in their respective region; however, they establish cooperation with other international and regional LTAs. For example, ELTAF is an associate of IATEFL and so ELTAF members can have free access to the IATEFL Newsletter and Webinars; and they are eligible for a reduced rate if they want to attend the IATEFL annual conference.

Regarding the committee work, what struck me was the recruitment of coordinators for web-support and social media updates in both ELTAS and ELTAF. Obviously, those associations make use of online tools to attract membership, advertise events, and provide a base for the members to interact with each other. Furthermore, ELTAS, ELTAF and ELTAU all have an events coordinator/manager involved in planning small- or large-scale events. It would be helpful for individuals wishing to set up a local association or have already started one and would like to develop it further, to browse the respective associations' websites.

5 Conclusion

LTAs are the most powerful channels for raising professional awareness of language teachers to self-development opportunities and providing access to communication and cooperation all around the world. Most of the LTA members attend annual conferences where they could utilize networking opportunities. Many of them subscribe to the newsletters published by SIGs and look for publishing and funding opportunities. Some members are interested in online workshops and resources, while others choose to engage in leadership opportunities. Only a few, however, question what it takes to promote these professional development events and what goes on backstage of the promoted events by LTAs.

It is never an easy task to set up, develop, and run an LTA. I wrote this chapter reflecting on the amount of time dedicated by the volunteers within LTAs to plan and prepare strategic goals and organizational tasks. By reading this chapter, ELT community members should develop an understanding of LTAs' organizational framework, which is bound to and influenced by contextual and organizational factors.

The distribution of different roles and tasks across a pre-defined framework is the initial step of running a new-born LTA. However, as LTAs flourish regionally and internationally, they introduce new positions and tasks that are to be coordinated and promoted by the volunteer groups. Inevitably, it requires more time and energy to respond to the evolving needs of the ELT community, which might vary and

are linked to the needs and interests of the member groups. Creating new SIGS, affiliating with international and regional LTAs, and promoting the events through a website, social media, and publications are predominantly essential tasks for all regional and international LTAs for achieving their mission and strategic direction. These are achieved thanks to various levels of the governance of LTAs.

Learning about LTAs' organizational framework is key to understanding the functions of the bodies and pre-defined roles inherent in these organizations. In this regard, members of the LTAs could benefit from this chapter by searching for leadership opportunities. Besides, the sample LTA frameworks provided in the chapter can be used as a guide for new LTAs.

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Realities and Potential: English Language Teacher Associations in the 21st Century



Ahmar Mahboob and Liz England

Abstract Drawing on our collective professional experiences and on the research to date, this chapter offers suggestions to understand and address the needs of our professional and scholarly discipline in teaching English to speakers of other languages by focussing on the realities and potential of English Language Teacher Associations (ELTAs). In order to do this, the chapter provides a broad and inclusive definition of ELTAs. The chapter recognises the differences in the contexts and compositions of ELTAs and identifies factors that need to be considered in reviewing and/or guiding the development of ELTAs. The chapter considers how these factors impact the robustness (range of products and services offered by an ELTA) and vitality (frequency and availability of these products and services) of ELTAs worldwide. It includes examples from ELTAs from different parts of the world and highlights ways in which these organizations have addressed a range of challenges. In doing so, the chapter provides a way to understand the realities of each ELTA as well as ways of extending its potential—including the potential role that ELTAs can play in supporting the learning, teaching, and growth of local, minority and Indigenous languages.

1 Introduction

ELTAs are networks of teachers and teacher educators along with some or all of the following (potential) stakeholders: academic program managers, students, businesses (including, but not limited to publishers, test developers, and software developers), government, funding agencies, activists and/or other people engaged in language (education) issues. As such, they can be seen as communities of practice—“a semi-public setting in which members engage in discussion about all aspects of what and

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how they teach with an emphasis on issues of specific interest or urgency to one or more members or group of members” (England, 2018, p. 1).

One of the primary goals of ELTAs is to create opportunities for its stakeholders. These opportunities may come in many forms—both online and face-to-face, e.g., conferences, publications, workshops, short and long courses, book exhibitions, recruitment opportunities, funding, advocacy, lobbying, establishing guidelines, software promotion, and creating e-forums/listservs. By engaging in some/all of these, ELTAs bring together members and create opportunities to share and exchange their work.

ELTAs, while formed of individual members, represent a profession and need to consider the rights and role of all language professionals—not just its membership or a group within its membership. ELTAs have a responsibility to the profession, and cannot let any individual, personal, ethnic, linguistic, religious, sexual or other biases lead policy, procedures, or practices. Given the large number of people and the breadth of interests and needs of those involved, ELTAs must consider the ethical and legal rights of all its stakeholders; and they have to do so efficiently and transparently.

As ELTAs may have different realities and agendas, what they do and how they do it can vary greatly. ELTAs are also influenced by external factors, including political, economic and cultural aspects. As such, it is not always possible or necessary to compare two or more ELTAs in how, for example, they meet particular standards. What we can do, however, is to categorise ELTAs along a number of meaningful factors that can be used to understand, review, and guide the development of an ELTA. We will introduce and describe such a set of factors later in this chapter. However, first, it will be useful to share a broad review of the research currently available on ELTAs.

2 Earlier Studies

In doing the research for this chapter, we have been somewhat surprised to have found so little on ELTA issues. And obtaining even generally accurate and current information on ELTAs from different parts of the world has also been somewhat challenging. What follows is a brief review of what we were able to locate.

Lamb (2012) provides one of the first comprehensive studies of ELTAs and his methodological approach and findings offer a solid starting place for our analysis. Lamb identifies the extraordinary resilience and imagination in facing the extreme challenges of ELTAs. He describes both internal and external factors influencing ELTAs and identifies the following among the most significant issues: falling membership and recruitment, political structures, provision of member services and policy influence, curriculum making and delivery, and advocacy.

One key publication on ELTAs is the 2016 Special Issue of *English Language Teaching Journal*. Addressing the importance of ELTAs for assuring high quality of instruction in English language programs, contributors address a wide range of topics. Paran, in his introduction to the Special Issue, summarizes the content of the issue to show how LTAs define themselves and achieve their mission for researchers

and English language teaching practitioners. Smith and Kuchah advocate for more research into ELTAs “by and within TAs” (p. 212). With a focus on IATEFL, Motteram describes how ELTA membership provides for belonging and identity among English language teacher members and roles played by ELTAs in helping teachers to be a part of a professional community. Padwad presents a case study of an ELTA in India in which national culture and traditions of charity are analyzed as essential cultural factors in ELTAs. Herrero advocates for a designated ELTA for film studies. Moore, Fisher and Baber study the usefulness of ELTAs in terms of sponsored distance education (webinars and online conferences). Gnawli addresses the Nepal English Language Teachers Association (NELTA) and the reciprocity members have with the association. Stewart and Miyahara provide an historical overview (90 years’ worth) of ELTAs in Japan. Kamhi-Stein presents the case for non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) as a sociological movement; she describes the remarkable achievements of the TESOL International Association NNEST movement and declares a call for action to raise the status of NNESTs in ELTAs worldwide. And, Barfield’s work (in a context of both native and non-native English speakers) addresses a similar issue of collaboration strategies as the focus of ELTAs.

Elsewhere, there are many other publications addressing ELTAs; e.g., Lessing and De Witt (2007) studied (via self-report) teachers’ perception of ELTA-sponsored professional development workshops; Thiyagarajah (2009) lays out ways in which ELTAs might help teachers see themselves “as the source of professional development,” relying less on “bureaucratic training programs” (p. 141) in Malaysia; Ortactep and Ayse (2015) discuss the awareness-raising activities for professional development in Turkey; and Rimmer (2016) addresses the need for ELTAs to provide management training.

In summary, current literature addresses specific historical realities of ELTAs. In this chapter, we hope to add to this literature by providing a broader discussion of some of these issues and outline what we see as the potential of ELTAs today to address their mission with inclusivity, transparency and vision. We see ELTAs as serving individualized and unique contexts, where members and other ELT professionals are the focus of all activities. As such, ELTAs can vary a lot among each other and the realities and potential of each ELTA needs to be understood in terms of its own goals, context and characteristics.

3 ELTA Realities

Given the large number of ELTAs around the world, any discussion of their realities and potential needs to be based on an analysis of the ELTA. In our work, we observe that ELTAs can potentially be categorised in terms of two types of factors: Compositional Factors, and Benefits. Figure 1 identifies some of the elements that can be included in examining these factors. Please note that the list here is not exhaustive; it only includes some of the key factors that we have observed in our own work and/or in the literature.

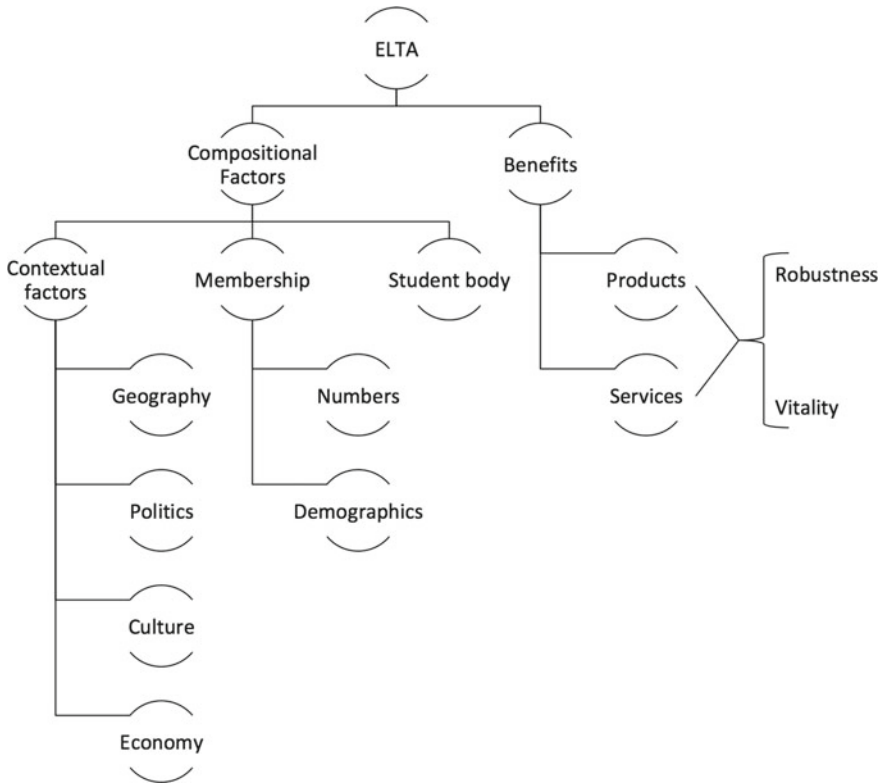


Fig. 1 Some factors influencing ELTAs

3.1 Compositional Factors

Compositional Factors of an ELTA include factors that inform us about the context of an ELTA. Some of these factors include: geographical, political, economic, and cultural features; membership features and demographics; and, aspects relating to the students who are supported by the members of an ELTA.

3.1.1 Contextual Factors

Contextual factors of an ELTA tell us about the context in which it operates, including its geographical, political, economic, cultural context. It needs to be noted that these factors are not independent of each other and interact with each other in numerous ways.

3.1.2 Geographical Factors

ELTAs are often described in terms of their geographical location. ELTAs may have a wide or even a global orientation, or a very local one. Generally speaking, most ELTAs can be categorised as either: international, regional, national, state/province, or local.

International ELTAs take a global perspective and have members and affiliates (for TESOL) and/or associates (for IATEFL) in hundreds of countries worldwide. The two most widely recognised international ELTAs are the United States of America-based TESOL International Association, commonly known as TESOL International, and the United Kingdom-based International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language, known as IATEFL. More information on these associations is available via their websites: TESOL: <http://www.tesol.org>, and IATEFL: <https://www.iatefl.org>. It needs to be noted that while TESOL and IATEFL have numerous affiliates and/or associates, these affiliates and associates are independent entities and are not regulated by or responsible to the international ELTAs. The global ELTAs support these affiliates/associates by sponsoring speakers and by supporting their professional, networking, and advocacy activities.

Responding to the needs of diverse individual, institutional, and affiliate/associate members, these two large international ELTAs provide space to almost all English language teaching professionals and stakeholders to engage in a wide range of issues through a number of channels: publications, conferences, workshops, institutes, sponsorships, grants, newsletters, online forums, etc. These two international ELTAs are both vital (they offer many services each year to a range of its stakeholders) and robust (they offer a wide range of services to cater to their diverse membership and community). To ensure a smooth working of all the different aspects of the organization, these ELTAs have an elaborate set of formal regulations and policies that they practice and promote and are laid out in official documents, many of which are shared on their websites.

On the other side of the spectrum, local ELTAs often work to support a very specific group of stakeholders. Some of these organizations can be quite robust and vital. For example, Abbottabad SPELT (Abbottabad is one chapter of the Society for Pakistani English Language Teachers) organizes regular conferences, symposia and lectures; it also publishes a newsletter, supports research projects, takes a role in public debate and advocacy, participates in national and international collaborations, and delivers workshops to teachers in the area. Similarly, in the United States, local affiliates manage sustainable affiliate partnerships (Michigan TESOL and WATESOL with ATE Czech Republic and Senegal, respectively), provide resources for those facing discrimination or legal issues, develop and participate in advocacy, and connect with universities, schools and other educational/vocational organizations to create joint projects, create academic exchange partnerships, and attend one another's conferences and online events.

3.1.3 Political Factors

ELTAs are affected by global, national, and local politics. For example, the politics of a country can impact whether people from other parts of the world attend a conference hosted in that country or not; participants and presenters from certain countries may not be able to obtain visas to travel to a conference in another country. In some countries, teaching material and curriculum are regulated centrally by the government and the government allows only certain publishers/authors work to be used (and may require publishers to follow specific guidelines).

In addition, ELTAs can have internal politics and may have conflicts with others outside the association. Discussing this issue, Lamb (2012) notes:

According to Dahrendorf's (1958) theory of conflict, clashes of interest are caused by authority relations between decision makers and those who are subjected to it. Professional associations have traditionally been perceived as a buffer between these two groups, but this has depended on them positioning themselves as a valid voice for the whole community. Both the research explored in the literature review and the data provided by the LTAs in this study provide some evidence that this is increasingly a challenge and could indeed shift the clashes of interest internally within the association itself. However, the LTAs also offer evidence that they are responding to this challenge by minimizing their identity as a professional institution, whilst enhancing their identity as a professional network (p. 21).

ELTAs recognize how politics affect them and have made some attempts to address some of these concerns. For example, TESOL International lobbies to provide language professionals and ELTAs to gain a (bigger) role in developing educational policies worldwide:

... TESOL urges that authorities encourage the active participation of teachers and their associations in the process of transforming education, and in educational planning and policy making. Authorities and teacher associations should actively seek and agree on the most effective ways to establish regular methods of communication, consultation, and coordination with one another in all aspects of education planning and policy. Particularly in regard to English language education, authorities should draw upon the expertise of English language educators and their associations, such as TESOL affiliates, in developing and implementing sound language education planning and policy (TESOL, 2007).

3.1.4 Economic Factors

Economic factors affect ELTAs, as they do all aspects of our professional and personal lives. ELTAs with more resources are able to offer more products and services; teachers, with appropriate pay and benefits, are able to engage in, contribute to, and benefit from ELTAs. On the other hand, a lack of funding can impact ELTAs and its stakeholders negatively.

Resources for education and teacher development are, unfortunately, falling in many parts of the world (Johnstone, 2010). This suggests that there is more competition for fewer resources. Access to funding and resources can impact the robustness and vitality of an ELTA: what products and services it offers, and how often and in which location(s). ELTAs, therefore, need to be financially viable. However, they

also need to consider their interests and goals when accepting any financial offer. For example, being sponsored by a few large publishers or test makers can provide funds for an ELTA but may compromise their mission by promoting particular (commercial) interests through their events. In raising and spending funds, ELTAs also need to work hard to manage (both perceived and real) transparency, ethics and fairness. If stakeholders of an ELTA question its integrity (or that of its leadership), then it loses credibility and becomes an easier target for opportunists and special-interest groups.

In addition to the effect that funding and resources have on ELTAs, economic factors also have significant impact on students and professionals (both members and non-members of ELTAs). ELTAs need to consider how access to English is often linked to socio-economic factors and how (standard) English can function as a hegemonic device. ELTAs also need to consider the linguistic ecology in their contexts and consider the relationship of English with other local languages. While ELTAs have a responsibility to support English language professional development, they need to consider the consequences of this on local, minority and/or Indigenous languages and consider ways of empowering local languages and communities.

Funding issues can impact participation in and access to the various products and services offered by an ELTA. ELTAs in different parts of the world have developed unique ways in which to try to provide accessible and inclusive services. For example, recognising that attending a single 'national' event/conference can be costly and can exclude people from attending the event, SPELT (Society for Pakistani English Language Teachers) has created a traveling conference—a conference that begins in one city and then travels to different parts of the country—to serve the needs of (some) teachers who are unable to travel elsewhere. Having agreed to a common conference theme, SPELT welcomes teachers who join for a weekend conference in a city to which they are able to travel and participate in a chapter-sponsored conference. With its chapters in Lahore, Karachi, Islamabad and Abbottabad, SPELT has devised a way to reach a large number of teachers, many of whom would not be able to attend a single national conference in a city far from them (for any or all of these reasons—geographical, economic, political, or cultural).

In recent years, technology has also provided some options to ELTAs to meet this challenge. Lamb (2012) considers use of technology by ELTAs as “innovative and sustainable efforts to maintain LTAs' functions” (p. 19). While some ELTAs around the world have developed ways in which to respond to their context, others are still developing these.

3.1.5 Cultural Factors

Local and organizational cultures affect ELTAs. In some locales, teachers are constrained in terms of the content of their instruction on sensitive topics because of cultural practices and/or government policies. Contributors to Wong and Mahboob (2018), who hold a range of spiritual and religious beliefs (including agnos-

tic/atheistic beliefs), discuss how their professional identities and practices are influenced by their belief systems.

Some ELTAs can also be formed based on a shared belief or practice. For example, the Christian English Language Educators Association has a specific goal “to promote Christian reflection and scholarly research in this field.” Other ELTAs may also have particular socio-political and/or religious orientations, but they may not be conscious of its influence in/on their work. The culture and belief systems that the stakeholders bring to an ELTA impact the ELTAs, even if the ELTA (or its members) are not conscious or aware of it (see Wong & Mahboob, 2018). Padwad’s paper (2016) noted above also addresses a cultural issue in ELTA development in India and provides a model for addressing cultural issues and traditions.

In countries where there may be an issue of particular local relevance, affiliates might join with local government and/or non-governmental agencies to respond to curriculum issues that are not being addressed elsewhere. In Morocco, for example, the TESOL affiliate (Morocco Association of Teachers of English, MATE) teachers joined with the Ministry of Health and the United Nations to create and distribute materials for high school students on health education. In its application for a funding grant (awarded in 1992) from TESOL International, MATE led Morocco (in its effort) as one of the first countries to offer AIDS and Health Education to the high school curriculum.

3.1.6 Membership

Membership features of an ELTA do not only include the numbers of members that it has, but also membership demographics. These demographics tell us about who the members of a particular ELTA are: for example, rural vs. urban; government school teachers vs. private school teachers; teachers from lower socioeconomic strata (SES) vs. teachers from higher SES. This information, although not always easy to access or collect, tells us about who forms an ELTA and hence the range or scope of the ELTA.

While becoming a member of an ELTA might be relatively easy, membership dues and other fees can potentially pose difficulties to teachers working in economically challenging circumstances. ELTAs therefore need to consider the financial implications of both their membership dues and other fees charged for services. ELTAs should be open to wider membership than those who have the money to pay (high) membership fees. Some associations acknowledge this fact and offer reduced membership fees. But too often, those without money are denied membership and access to resources and services due to financial constraints.

Some conferences/organizations have been trying to respond to this issue. One example of an annual conference that charges absolutely no registration fees and is the Free Linguistics Conference: www.flcgroup.net. Others provide free online access to some of the conference presentations and/or free workshops. However, while a step in the right direction, currently ELTAs are not doing enough to address these concerns and many of our colleagues in less developed areas or with limited access

to funds (to travel) and/or technology are often left unserved. There is much more that needs to be done in order to provide appropriate professional support to teachers from/in disadvantaged settings. We recommend that ELTAs worldwide take a careful look at their membership policies and, in addition, consider how their work impacts not only their members but also other professionals and potential stakeholders.

Aubrey and Coombe (2010) describe the efforts of one ELTA in creating possibilities for its stakeholders. As the breadth of institutional types expanded in response to an expanding market and educational reform were implemented in the United Arab Emirates, TESOL Arabia made a concerted effort to revise its conference program content to accommodate what had become a very different stakeholder base from what had been previously identified. In addition, TESOL Arabia made efforts to learn more about ways in which the association might serve the needs of an evolving curriculum delivery system which included a number of initiatives including community service and public speaking competitions and projects with Toastmasters International.

The demographics of an ELTA's membership can also influence the kind of support and services that it provides to its members. For example, recognising the needs of retired and senior professionals, TESOL International has been organizing a Retirement Redefined Forum since 2007. This Forum addresses career path development issues of professionals as they move toward the ends of their careers (Coombe, England, & Schmidt, 2012).

Even though there is considerable evidence of the role that ELTAs play, ELTA membership numbers appear to be falling in some contexts—this is especially the case with the global ELTAs. TESOL had over 20,000 members in 2004 and hovers at approximately 12,000 members today. At the time of this writing, the number of IATEFL members is approximately 3850. Political, financial and other external forces continue to place challenges in the paths of ELTAs.

On the bright side, national, provincial/state, and local ELTAs appear to be doing well and, in many cases, are growing. New ELTAs are in progress; and professional meetings are being organized by these as well as non-formal ELT entities (e.g. by colleagues at various educational institutions). The very existence of the current volume also provides evidence for the importance of ELTAs. Internally, ELTAs seem to be quite strong with both well-staffed infrastructures (e.g. TESOL and IATEFL) and volunteer-driven organizations (most other ELTAs), where the bulk of the work is balanced on the backs of hardworking and committed volunteers (of whom many are women with day jobs and families to manage) who donate their time, skills, and energy to build and maintain the ELTAs.

3.1.7 Student Bodies Served

A final factor that we have included here is the 'student body'. By student body, we don't only mean the grade or school level of the students that the majority of an ELTA stakeholders work with, but also specific sub-groups. The grade level of the students can influence the ELTAs membership demographics and the kind of products and

services that they offer. At the tertiary level, for example, faculty members (who are required to publish) receive funding to attend and participate in TESOL and IATEFL. And some K-12 schools provide financial support for teachers to participate in both TESOL affiliate and TESOL International conferences. The population groups—and their needs—influence the choice of themes, speakers, workshops, and other products offered by ELTAs. Specific subgroups such as students with learning disabilities also influence ELTAs. Students can also play a role within ELTAs. The relationship of students and student bodies and ELTAs has not been addressed much in the literature. Recently some publications have started to look into these issues, e.g., Kryszewska (2017) and Aschraft (this volume), but additional work is needed in this area.

3.2 *Benefits*

ELTAs can be categorised by focussing on the range and availability of benefits to its members and the professional community at large. These benefits include products and services that are offered by ELTAs to their stakeholders. The range of products and services on offer give us an indication of the robustness of the organization; whereas the frequency and availability of these products and services give us an indication of its vitality. Both the robustness and vitality of an ELTA need to be considered in relation to the specific goals and aims of an ELTA; and, with an understanding of its composition factors.

3.2.1 **Products and Services**

ELTA products include professional materials and goods, e.g., books, journals/newsletters, and informal offerings and access to new ideas and products (blogs and e-mail listservs). ELTA services are professional support and development opportunities that focus on specific education and/or training needs of members—conferences, guest lectures, coaches, mentors, trainers, just-in-time content-based webinars—and advocacy efforts.

The range and frequency of ELTA products and services are features of its members and stakeholders. ELTA leadership and members decide, given their context and understanding, what an ELTA should do or what its goals should be. For example, some ELTAs with large NNESTs (non-native English-speaking teachers) professionals have taken a proactive role to support NNEST professionals; NNESTs have too often been the victims of selective hiring that favors native speakers (Mahboob & Golden, 2013). In its efforts to meet member needs, WATESOL (Washington, D. C.'s ELTA) has provided a variety of advocacy efforts on behalf of NNESTs, including interventions in discriminatory hiring decisions.

The factors identified in this section can help us in developing a quick profile of an ELTA. By looking at an ELTA's contextual features, we can understand in what context(s) it operates; by looking at its membership demographics and the grade

levels or special needs of the student bodies that an ELTA membership works with, we can develop an estimate of the kind of issues that it might be interested in and the type of products and services that it might offer; by examining the robustness of an ELTA, we can identify the range of activities that an ELTA engages in; and, by reviewing the vitality of an ELTA, we can develop an understanding of the frequency of services and resources that an ELTA makes available to its members and other stakeholders.

4 ELTAs Potential

So, what does the future hold for ELTAs? While ELTAs offer significant programs of activities, the emphasis is often on current members and does not necessarily reach or address the needs of others. We believe that ELTAs cannot really achieve their full potential unless they take initiatives to provide support to all our colleagues—not just members, or, worse, a group within the membership. This implies that ELTAs, to realise their full potential, need to develop initiatives, products, and services to support non-members, especially those in disadvantaged settings and/or with limited resources. We offer the following suggestions to inform ELTAs in their efforts to address some of these issues:

Sponsoring research: More research needs to be done to understand and address the needs of non-member stakeholders. Further research might address how stakeholders are identified and served as well as ways in which ELTAs accommodate the needs of their stakeholders through their activities, documents, and products & services.

Expanded networking: More effective use of member networks to grow contacts and collaborative opportunities can be used to broaden the reach of ELTAs. Specific efforts might be launched to work closely with policy makers, government and non-governmental agents, and with employers.

More effective use of membership survey data: While organizations often survey members, the use of analysis and interpretation of findings might be better transmitted to members and as advocacy tools for the profession.

Taking advantage of technology: Technology can provide ways to engage stakeholders beyond current membership; it offers opportunities for ELTAs to extend their reach and to improve professional development opportunities for all ELT professionals.

Better coordination between ELTAs and teacher education programs: Generating common threads between ELTAs and graduate teacher education programs might better align efforts both for ELTAs and teacher education programs so that in the future, teachers will see the value of joining an ELTA. A better knowledge about contextual factors and linkages with teacher preparation can result in better products and services.

Transparency: ELTAs need to ensure that they operate in an ethical, fair and transparent manner. In addition to being financially transparent, they also need to be transparent in what products and services they offer, to whom, and with what outcomes.

In considering the potential of ELTAs, we also hold that ELTAs have a responsibility to and potential for supporting local, minority, and/or Indigenous languages and communities. Many ELTAs around the world operate in multilingual contexts,

where English is advantaged (because of the perceived and real economic benefits it can bring to individuals)—often at the expense of local, minority, and Indigenous languages. In addition, research on ELT is arguably more developed than for most other languages. Given this, ELTAs can take a more pro-active role in supporting and enhancing the teaching/learning of local languages. This can be done both by developing and providing more resources for this purpose as well as reconsidering some of the dominant ELT approaches; for example, considering the potential offered by the notion of Teaching English as a Dynamic Language (Mahboob, 2018).

5 Conclusion

ELTAs are, arguably, one of the most powerful channels for supporting ELT professionals across the board. For example, Mahboob's first step into the international world of ELT and TESOL was taken when he made contact with Tom Scovel at a SPELT conference in Karachi. Similarly, a teacher in Indonesia told us, "I would not have had a Fulbright if it hadn't been for TEFLIN and the people who have helped me through the process of applying, interviewing and getting to the United States." There are many other such stories, of course. We are confident that more ELTA research will reveal the extraordinary power of ELTAs in forwarding our profession and scholarly discipline.

To support such work—and to support ELTAs—this chapter identified a number of compositional factors (including contextual factors, membership, and student body) that affect ELTAs and the benefits, products and services that they provide to their members. In doing this, we discussed how context impacts the robustness and vitality of ELTAs worldwide. We included examples from ELTAs from different parts of the world and highlighted ways in which these organizations have addressed a range of challenges. In doing so, we hope to have contributed to an understanding of the realities of ELTAs and ways of extending their potential.

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Language Teacher Associations that Learn



Dudley W. Reynolds

Abstract Peter Senge's (1990) description of five disciplines (systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, and team learning) practiced in a "learning organization" provides a useful rubric for thinking about how Language Teacher Associations (LTAs) can prepare for inevitable changes and challenges. Systems thinking focuses attention on the componential nature of LTAs various subsystems, including interest groups and governance committees, which together generate the LTA's contribution to a larger educational system. Personal mastery emphasizes the role of LTAs in helping members to actualize their own visions. Surfacing the tacit mental models that shape understandings of what LTAs can accomplish can serve as a tool for removing roadblocks as well as identifying useful directions. Finally, a shared vision cannot be imposed by leadership but rather must be cultivated and achieved through productive team learning practices such as differentiating between dialog and discussion and regular work with potential scenarios. In addition to considering how Senge's disciplines apply to LTAs, the chapter provides opportunities for reflection that can be used by LTA members hoping to engage in productive change within their association.

1 Introduction

Over the course of my career, I have had a chance to learn about and serve LTAs in many parts of the world, and on a number of occasions I have observed the following phenomenon. Everything is going along fine. Members are happy; conference attendance is growing; the LTA is building a reputation for itself nationally. Then a problem hits. It may be an economic crisis in the country, or an important volunteer leader suddenly has to withdraw for personal reasons. Sometimes a board is selected who cannot get along, or maybe there is a natural disaster just before the annual conference and very few people end up attending. Whatever the crisis, my observa-

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tion has been that some associations are able to weather the storm as if nothing had happened; others simply fall apart. Why are some organizations able to adapt? What can be done to avoid falling apart?

In this chapter I draw on principles from organizational development specialist Peter Senge's book *The Fifth Discipline* (1990) to suggest ways that engaged members of an LTA can not only prepare for inevitable changes, but more importantly, grow and learn through them. How can LTAs be what Senge refers to as a "learning organization" (1990, p. 3)? As engaged members of LTAs, we believe that the LTA serves a valuable function for our society, and we are committed to seeing it serve society better. We may be current officers, members or leaders of a committee, or simply people who find a professional home in the LTA. As a result, we are willing to engage with other members to improve it; we are willing to spend time to understand the LTA, determine goals and a vision for its future, help it change to fulfill those goals and vision. This chapter offers a heuristic for thinking about what an LTA is as well as tools for becoming a learning organization. The chapter is organized around the five disciplines: systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, and team learning. Following the discussion of each discipline, questions are provided to help readers reflect on how Senge's ideas apply to their own context and identify ways that they can lead change.

2 LTAs as a System, LTAs in a System

Peter Senge is a Senior Lecturer in the Systems Dynamics academic group at the MIT Sloan School of Management and a leading proponent of "systems thinking" as a tool for improving how organizations operate and succeed. Packham defines systems thinking as "an approach to understanding and improving complex issues and situations. It attempts to deal with these as wholes rather than through the reductionism of conventional science" (2014, p. 753). Packham goes on to state:

In addition to its commitment to holism, systems thinking sees relevant systems as themselves being made up of systems—known as subsystems. It is the interaction between these subsystems that leads to emergent properties that make the whole different from the sum of its parts. These emergent properties cannot be predicted from knowledge about the subsystems. In the same way, the system's environment is a wider system of which the bounded selected system is a subsystem. Thus, there is a never-ending hierarchy (2014, p. 753).

Key to understanding systems thinking is being able to identify systems. Charlotte Roberts, writing in Senge and Kleiner's *The Dance of Change*, defines systems as:

anything that takes its integrity and form from the ongoing interaction of its parts. Companies, nations, families, biological niches, bodies, television sets, personalities, and atoms are all sets. Systems are defined by the fact that their elements have a common purpose and behave in common ways, precisely because they are interrelated toward that purpose (2011, p. 138).

If we follow Lamb's definition of an LTA as a "[network] of professionals, run by and for professionals, focused mainly on support for members, with knowledge exchange

and development as well as representation of members' views as their defining functions" (2012, p. 295), we can easily begin to see both the component parts and the common function that identify an LTA as a system. Seeing an LTA as a system entails recognition—and acceptance—of its complexity. LTAs comprise individual members, each with some degree of vision for what the LTA should be doing and reasons for joining, each influenced like the students in a secondary school by belonging to the LTA. These members can belong to multiple groups within the LTA. Some of those groups organize around special interests such as working with young learners or assessment. Other groups organize around activities of the association such as hosting conferences or providing professional development opportunities. Still others serve to regulate and perpetuate the association itself (e.g., a leadership council, finance committee, membership committee). These groups differ not only in terms of function, but also in terms of size, operating procedures, metrics for success, and the strength of their connection to other groups. Nevertheless, they all exist to fulfill the mission of the LTA, and they are connected to each other in ways that are both visible and invisible.

The association operating rules may specify, for example, that the leaders of a committee are appointed by the Board of Directors. The conference committee may be responsible for generating revenue that in turn allows a publications committee to provide members with materials at below cost. As a system, the vision, activities, successes and failures of any one component of an LTA influence the capabilities and directions of multiple other components.

It is very easy for engaged members to focus solely on building community in their special interest group or running a successful conference. Applying the system lens to an LTA, however, challenges us to think beyond our subsystem to the association as a whole. If we are on the professional development committee, for example, we should think about whether hosting a free event at a school in a city near the venue for the annual conference two weeks before the conference might cut into paid attendance at the conference, which in turn would have an effect on the association's ability to host future professional development events. Another example of a less visible system effect might be the influence of having a Board of Directors comprised solely of senior scholars from universities in the country. What message does this composition communicate to younger, primary school teachers who are thinking about taking on a leadership role in the young learner's special interest group? If it makes them question the opportunities they will have if they volunteer for the association, what future challenges will this create for the Board of Directors? One of the key tenets of systems thinking is that actions should be viewed not only in terms of the immediate reactions in a linear sequence, but rather as an emerging cycle of events unfolding over time—which can quickly spiral out of control (cf. Senge, 1990, pp. 68–92). Poor leadership on a Board's part may mean that ultimately there is no association to lead. This suggests the value of actually visualizing key cycles for associations related to topics such as membership, finances, and leadership. Senge refers to such visualizations as "system diagrams" (1990, p. 75). Figure 1 provides a sample diagram related to how the selection of Board members might impact future Boards.

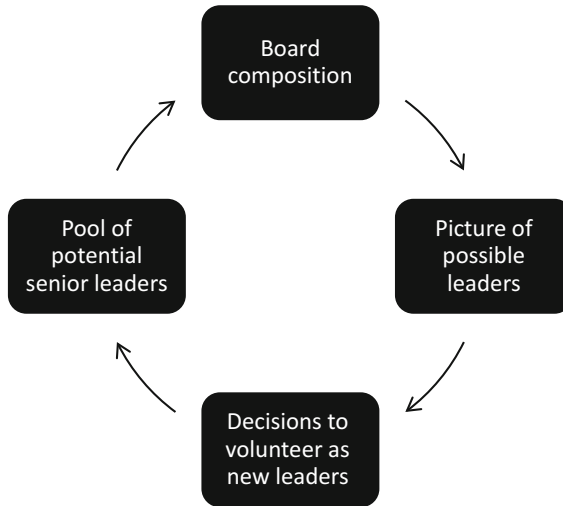


Fig. 1 System diagram for association leadership

Seeing an LTA as a system involves not only identifying the subsystems that operate within the association, but also recognizing that the association is a subsystem within a larger educational system (Paran, 2016). As such the LTA will affect—and be affected by—political agendas, government bureaucracies, school cultures, aspirations of the general population, world and regional economies, etc. Some of these subsystems will support the activity of the LTA; others will counteract it. Senge refers to these two types of relations as “reinforcing” and “balancing” feedback (1990, p. 79). If an education ministry asks an LTA to provide professional development workshops on assessing language proficiency in government schools, that would be reinforcing feedback for the LTA’s efforts to increase public-sector teacher membership. On the other hand, if the schools where the workshops are to be held complain that the ministry expects too much from their teachers, the LTA’s membership drive would experience balancing feedback. Figure 2 illustrates how we could visualize a system design for LTA membership growth that includes reinforcement feedback from the ministry. Balancing feedback is typically represented in the same way but with a double bar drawn across the cycle to indicate a slowing down or delay of the cycle (cf. Senge, 1990, p. 90).

Seeing the LTA as part of the larger educational system reminds us to consider the ecology of the landscape in which we operate. Membership size does not totally depend on the actions of the LTA. It is easy, especially if we are a large association, to become very inwardly focused. We think we can do anything and we can do it without anyone’s help. Systems thinking reminds us to be mindful of the forces over which we have no direct control, but which help shape what we can do and become.

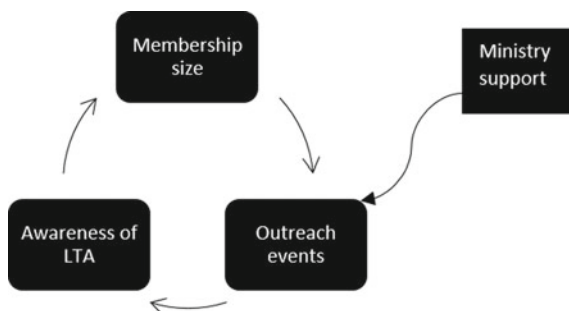


Fig. 2 System design for membership growth with reinforcement feedback

Points for Reflection

- What subsystems exist within your LTA?
- What systems interact with your LTA as part of a larger system?
- Consider a particular action your LTA takes related to membership, finances, or leadership. Draw a system diagram that places the action within a cycle. Be sure to carry the cycle through to the point where future actions by the group responsible for the action are influenced.
- Choose a strategic goal of your LTA. Draw a system diagram that depicts how you hope to change the status quo with respect to the goal. Then add in feedback forces from external systems that might reinforce the cycle or cause a delay (i.e., balance).

3 Practicing the “Learning Disciplines”

Systems thinking is one of the five “disciplines” making up Senge’s title. The other four are *personal mastery*, *mental models*, *shared vision*, and *team learning*. In his later work, *Schools that Learn*, Senge glosses ‘discipline’ as a “body of method and practice” followed in learning organizations (Senge et al., 2000, p. 24). As tools for development, these disciplines comprise ways of thinking about, in, and for organizations. In practice they encourage both reflection and forward thinking at individual and group levels. The following section considers how LTAs might use these methodological tools to better understand events happening in the association (current states) as well as plan to be the association members desire (envisioned states).

3.1 *Personal Mastery*

It may seem odd to suggest that the development of an association requires a focus on the personal thinking of individual members, but, the association is its members. This means their thinking is one of the forces that shapes how the association reaches decisions and acts. Senge writes that personal mastery is the “discipline of personal growth and learning. People with high levels of personal mastery are continually expanding their ability to create the results in life they truly seek. From their quest for continual learning comes the spirit of the learning organization” (1990, p. 141). The members who see the LTA as key to creating the results they seek are the ones we describe as ‘engaged’. They are the ones whose personal vision aligns with a picture of what the LTA can achieve and contribute for society. Realizing this does not mean, however, that the LTA should try to enforce some kind of group think; rather it means we should encourage individual members to think deeply about the reality they want and how the association can be part of achieving it. We also need to foster a climate where change can be imagined. Whether their future reality involves successful students, personal leadership opportunities, or respect for the teaching profession, individual members should be encouraged to think deeply about what a better world would look like. One effect of this encouragement is to promote a shift in member thinking away from “what should the LTA be doing for me?” and towards “what can I achieve through the LTA?”

At the heart of personal mastery is a focus on the tension between what we want and current reality. Clear understanding of where we are versus where we want to be provides direction and impetus for development. Noticing the gap should drive us to think more deeply about the current situation and how it might be changed. Senge cautions against framing current realities in ways that focus on external roadblocks or why we cannot achieve what we want. An issue that I have been personally concerned with for a number of years has been promoting teacher research. I believe a number of benefits accrue when teachers use research methodologies to answer questions about their classes. They understand better how their classes work; they are more likely to find answers that achieve the desired results; and they may begin to look more for guidance and help in the research literature. When I begin thinking about how teacher research could be encouraged, however, it is very easy to focus on all the reasons why it is difficult or uncommon for teachers to use research to answer questions. Research takes too much time. Unless they are universities, schools do not reward teachers for doing research. Limitations in the scope of what a teacher can research in an individual class mean that the findings are often not very generalizable. Such thinking quickly leads me to question whether I should even approach my LTA with ideas about materials or workshops to support teachers doing research. If I am good at personal mastery, however, I will begin to think about how LTAs can ‘balance’ some of these negative forces while ‘reinforcing’ the impacts of teacher research. I might suggest that the LTA facilitates teacher research networks where teachers work together on issues of mutual concern both to lessen the workload and to increase the

generalizability of the findings. I might also identify the need for advocacy around the issue with school leaders focusing on the benefits for student learning.

As with all the disciplines, personal mastery is not a goal that an LTA achieves but rather an operational process. It is a reminder that the LTA exists for the fulfillment of its members' aspirations. It is a call to support their individual growth and development, and a reminder that mobility and change need to be openly visible within the association (cf. Motteram, 2016). Making it an operating procedure within the association may lead to regular discussions and resources about career paths within the association, personal coaching networks, and town hall forums, where members can talk about their concerns.

Points for Reflection

- How does your LTA encourage member self-reflection and visioning? What resources for personal development and growth are available for members?
- How does your LTA listen to and learn from individual members' understandings of current reality and desired realities?
- What opportunities does your LTA make available for individuals to work on realities they would like to see? For example, imagine a member who is aware of a new and rapidly increasing population of language learners in their area whom they would like to see empowered. How could they turn to your LTA for help? How easy would it be for them to seek that help?

3.2 *Mental Models*

The next tool advocated by Senge to create a learning organization is to pay attention to mental models that exist within the organization. He writes:

new insights fail to get put into practice because they conflict with deeply held internal images of how the world works, images that limit us to familiar ways of thinking and acting. That is why the discipline of managing mental models—surfacing testing, and improving our internal pictures of how the world works—promises to be a major breakthrough for building learning organizations (1990, p. 174).

Managing mental models entails not only identifying and sidelining models that serve as roadblocks to innovation but also encouraging and finding new models. Whether roadblocks or inspirations, the biggest challenge for organizations is that mental models are often implicit and unstated.

Consider for a moment the annual conference that for most LTAs serves as their largest activity each year and principle source of revenue. What are the key components of a conference? Plenary speakers, papers and workshops, exhibitions, and association business meetings? Do you associate the conference with a certain time of year, days of the week, and even hours of operation on those days? What about how attendees should know what is happening during the conference? Do you have an idea for what should be on a website and what a conference program book should

look like? Finally, ask yourself if any of the answers you just came up with are prescribed by the operating rules of the LTA. They probably are not. If I ask you then why the conference has these components at this time in this form, you probably will say because that is “what people expect” or because “this is what works.” Whether the conference is designed around expectations or formulas for success, it is being designed based on mental models. These mental models have the power to stymie change and perpetuate archaic processes.

If we step back and think of the conference as a subsystem of the LTA that interacts with other subsystems such as professional development, member engagement, and financial sustainability, we will have to ask whether it is serving to reinforce or balance those subsystems. For example, there is a need for conference attendees to know what is happening when and where. Do we have to have a printed program to accomplish this purpose, however? Printing imposes a number of limitations. Once it is printed, it cannot be revised and so attendees are unaware of cancellations and changes after the print time. As a result, they may miss out on professional development opportunities because they are in the wrong place or time. Also, program book layouts are notorious for their complexity and the difficulty of navigating. This can be frustrating for attendees, which in turn impacts their desire to engage with the association. Finally printing costs money, which cuts into the conference revenue. Maybe the idea that each conference attendee needs a printed program is a mental model that we should surface and discuss.

If we were to ask members how they find out when and where something is happening, what might they answer? Online calendars. Reminders sent via social networking apps. Websites or downloadable programs. All of these can be easily updated, structured to provide manageable chunks of information, and cost less to produce than a printed book. If we are concerned that not everyone will have easy access to electronic sources, then we should ask why every attendee has to receive the program in the same format. Would it be possible for attendees to indicate if they want a printed book when they register?

Surfacing mental models requires both “reflection” and “inquiry” according to Senge. We must pay attention to how we move from observing that every conference we attend has a program book to concluding that printed books are an essential conference tool. Is the generalization valid? At the same time, we have to become good listeners. Does everyone plan their day the way we do? If not, what other options exist. Senge suggests regularly discussing scenarios as a way to identify and question assumptions and listen to others. He points out that “when inquiry and advocacy are combined, the goal is no longer ‘to win the argument’ but to find the best argument” (1990, p. 199).

Points for Reflection

- Discuss this scenario in a group. Your LTA’s list of members was stored on the laptop of one of the officers. The laptop has crashed, and the files cannot be restored. How will this impact the functioning of the LTA? What actions should the Board take? What opportunities might this open up for the LTA?

- What mental models about membership in your LTA surface during the above discussion? How do members conceive of membership, its benefits and responsibilities? Why does the LTA need people who are categorized as “members”? What differentiates members from non-members?
- What other important concepts does your LTA have mental models for? Create a scenario for discussion that might elicit opportunities to surface current models and envision new ones.

3.3 *Shared Vision*

It has become commonplace for both businesses and non-profit organizations to draft vision statements as a tool for giving the group direction and making judgments about actions to engage in (Bruden 2010; O’Brien and Meadows, 2001). For Senge, however, the key to creating a learning organization is not the drafting of the vision, but making it a *shared* vision with the power to overcome sedentary forces. He writes:

While adaptive learning is possible without vision, generative learning occurs only when people are striving to accomplish something that matters deeply to them. In fact, the whole idea of generative learning – ‘expanding your ability to create’ – will seem abstract and meaningless *until* people become excited about some vision they truly want to accomplish (1990, p. 206).

A vision of future reality is important because it drives and shapes change within an LTA. The shared vision of an LTA is not necessarily the same as the association’s official vision and mission statement, however; it is what everyone in the association agrees should or will happen, even when what they agree on is negative.

Sometimes I hear LTA leaders say things like “our members do not really understand what a professional association is” or “the concept of volunteering does not exist in our culture; members expect the leaders to do everything for them.” Regardless of their validity, these claims indicate for me a lack of shared vision. It would be a mistake, however, to assume that the LTA leaders have a vision while the members do not. It suggests, rather, that the two groups operate somewhat independently and do not really know a lot about what each other are thinking. It suggests that there is a need for serious discussion and listening. Imagine a series of focus groups involving leaders and members discussing three questions:

1. What policies would help our students make greater progress in the language?
2. What do we need in order to feel better about the job we are doing?
3. What actions can we take to help each other?

How would the product of these discussions differ from a discussion where the LTA leaders begin by announcing a series of programs “the LTA” would like to undertake in the next year and for which they are hoping people will volunteer? At some point decisions will have to be taken on what actions to engage in, but if we were to draw a system diagram around the action, member support would be an essential component of the diagram.

For many of us, our mental model of leaders is people who set the tone and direction. In hierarchical organizations, leaders give orders and people lower on the hierarchy comply. The social structure of most LTAs is flatter, however, and the hierarchical leader model rarely leads to positive results. Leaders in LTAs have to think instead how they can promote what Senge refers to as *commitment* or *enrollment*, not *compliance* (cf., 1990, p. 219). He suggests three techniques:

- *Be enrolled yourself*
- *Be on the level.* Don't inflate benefits or sweep problems under the rug. . . .
- *Let the other person choose.* You don't have to 'convince' another of the benefits of a vision. In fact, efforts you might make to persuade him to 'become enrolled' will be seen as manipulative and actually preclude enrollment (1990, p. 222).

Once a shared vision has emerged, leaders serve an important function in articulating that vision, making it explicit. If someone used a particularly powerful phrase during a discussion, they may seize on it as a way of reminding people that it was generated through joint discussion. They may connect the vision to guiding values or paint the vision as an engaging story. Most importantly, they constantly bring it up when speaking with members and acknowledge it when members refer to it. In a system, a vision is not a document created at a point in time, but rather a force that moves with and constantly undergirds the system.

Points for Reflection

- Describe your LTAs vision for its future? Do you think it is a shared vision? How was the vision generated? Who participated in crafting it? How is it articulated and justified? Do leaders and members refer to it on a regular basis?
- What actions might lead to greater commitment to the vision across the LTA?
- Are there negative shared visions that limit the potential of your LTA? Negative shared visions typically mean that people do not see their actions as being able to lead to change. What might be done to increase members' sense of their own power?

3.4 Team Learning

Inherent in the definition of "association" is an emphasis on how the members of the group relate to each other (cf. Lamb, 2012). The ideal for a learning organization is to operate as an aligned team. Senge describes such a team:

There is a commonality of purpose, a shared vision, and understanding of how to complement one another's efforts. Individuals do not sacrifice their personal interests to the larger team vision; rather, the shared vision becomes an extension of their personal visions. In fact, alignment is the *necessary condition* before empowering the individual will empower the whole team (1990, pp. 234–235).

Because LTAs comprise multiple subsystems, there are multiple teams operating within an association: committees, interest group leaders, advisory boards, etc. Each of these teams is tasked with thinking as a group about issues, coordinating responses, and complementing the work of other groups (cf. Senge, 1990, pp. 236–7). In contrast to businesses, where working groups may interact more frequently and expect to be a team for a longer term, LTA teams face frequent changes in membership. Moreover, members may expect to rotate off before any long-term change is achieved.

Senge suggests three tools for practicing the discipline of team learning. First, groups should distinguish between *dialog* and *discussion*. Dialog consists of “free and creative exploration of complex and subtle issues, a deep ‘listening’ to one another and suspending of one’s own views,” whereas “in discussion different views are presented and defended and there is a search for the best view to support decisions that must be made at this time” (1990, p. 237). My experience has been that most LTA team meetings focus on discussion rather than dialog because they are meetings where decisions must be made. There is a fear that if we are just talking, then the attendees will feel that nothing is being accomplished and wonder why they are there. It is possible, however, to imagine time set aside on an agenda for dialog with the rationale being the need to develop a shared understanding or vision in relation to an issue.

The second tool that Senge suggests is to develop strategies that minimize defensiveness. Senge notes that, especially when problems or disagreements arise within a team, there is a natural impulse to point the finger elsewhere, whether that is to another person or an event outside of the group’s control. Senge reminds us, however, that if something is going wrong, it is because of policies and directions that the group either put in place or failed to realize the need for. Pointing toward external entities will not allow the system to address and move beyond the current reality.

Consider an LTA that sets as part of its vision empowering teachers through enhancing their language knowledge and skills. The professional development committee decides that the LTA should address three themes: oral language for classroom management, STEM vocabulary, and grammar for advanced academic reading. They write a curriculum for each topic that provides for ten two-hour lessons, and they announce that the lessons will be offered over a series of 10 weekends. One week prior to the first lesson, they realize that five people have registered for the classroom management workshops, but the other two topics only have one registrant each. The committee chair sends an email asking them to meet for an online video call the next evening. It is very likely that everyone on the call will be feeling defensive. The chair may point out that information about the workshops was sent to the Ministry of Education, but the Ministry failed to distribute it to teachers in the schools. Someone will likely point out that there are not enough incentives for teachers to want to improve their language skills. Finally, someone else will probably point out that if they had decided to offer only one workshop, it might have had seven registrants, which would have been OK.

All of these defenses may be true, but none of them point towards a way that the association can enhance teachers’ language skills unless the group treats them as opportunities for learning. The group assumed that the Ministry would provide

the needed publicity, but it did not. They also assumed that the topics alone would motivate teachers to participate, and that there would be sufficient demand for three ten-week series offered simultaneously. These assumptions were built on mental models about what teachers want and who they listen to. The committee first has to accept that their assumptions were wrong, which is something that a good leader can model. Then they need to devise strategies for finding out from teachers the channels of information that they attend to and the topics and formats that would motivate interest.

The final strategy that Senge offers to promote team learning is practice. Boards, conference committees, and interest group leaders need to practice just as much as any sports team. They need low stakes opportunities to work together, engaging in both dialog and discussion where personal visions and mental models can be shared. Senge provides examples from a number of prominent corporations that ask leadership groups to work through scenarios and role plays, a strategy which Kloss (1999) also advocates for professional associations. As part of these dialogs, they may identify systems and their components, envision actions that would reinforce or balance a system cycle, or work to identify implicit assumptions. Because the discourse is about hypotheticals, there is less risk and less need for defensiveness.

Points for Reflection

- What teams exist in your LTA? What formal (e.g., regular retreats) and informal (e.g., going out together after meetings) mechanisms exist to support the alignment of the teams? How much attention does the LTA pay to mentoring groups as to their roles and responsibilities?
- Consider an activity or event where the LTA has been very successful. What factors contributed to the success of the planning for the activity or event? Are there lessons that could be shared with other groups? How could these lessons be shared without the other groups being put on the defensive?
- Identify a team that you participate in and write two scenarios: one for a dialog and the other for a discussion. Make one scenario about something positive happening, the other about an unintended challenge.

4 Conclusion

At the heart of systems thinking is a realization of the power that groups have if they are willing to learn. LTAs that learn can shape future opportunities for their members and the students they serve; they can change societies. To do this, they must not see themselves as static entities that put on conferences, offer workshops, and publish newsletters. Rather, they must see themselves as a complex system comprised of teams of individuals who contribute to the development of both teachers and students. This overarching vision of a better society propels them to influence educational policies, offer professional learning opportunities, and provide community for teachers. When they pursue these activities effectively, individual members

feel valued and encouraged to think about how being part of the association will allow them to create the future they desire, teams can engage in open dialog about implicit assumptions, and all can identify ideas that may lead in the directions they want. When that happens, a shared vision has been created that provides the basis for aligned action.

I started this chapter by sharing a personal observation about what can happen when LTAs encounter crises: some adapt and continue, others fall apart. When the crisis hits is not the time to become a learning organization, however. Becoming a learning organization is about building strength and flexibility in an association before it is needed, not in reaction to an unforeseen event. When we react, we focus on removing the immediate obstacle. If uncommitted individuals have been elected to the board, the executive committee may quickly move to minimize the responsibilities of the new members. If a conference fails to generate revenue, the board may become subsumed in discussions about cutting expenses and seeking new sponsors. There is nothing wrong with these actions. If they are undertaken without recognizing the nature of the LTA as a complex system, however, driven by the long-term vision and commitment of individual members, the leaders may fail to see the more substantive changes to election processes and financial processes that truly need to occur. At one time or another, all groups will face challenges. Whether the challenge becomes a crisis or an opportunity depends on the group's ability to do more than react.

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Engaging Future Professionals: How Language Teacher Associations Facilitate the Involvement of Student Members



Nikki Ashcraft

Abstract Little has been previously documented about the ways language teacher associations (LTAs) support the membership and involvement of student teachers. In this study, the publicly available information on the websites of 124 LTAs in the United States was reviewed to identify the strategies used by these associations to recruit student members, facilitate their involvement in association activities, and meet their unique member needs. Associations reviewed included language-specific associations (e.g., Spanish, English as a second language) as well as associations serving teachers of various languages. Findings indicate that the primary way LTAs encourage students to join is by offering discounted student memberships. However, there is a lack of consistency in how “student” is defined and the type of evidence required to prove student status. LTAs demonstrate that they value student members by allowing them to participate in association governance, giving awards which recognize student teachers’ developing pedagogical skills, and featuring students in member spotlights on websites and in newsletters. They also allow students to contribute to the work of the association through volunteering and to the knowledge base of the field through special presentation and publication opportunities. LTAs further strive to meet students’ financial needs by offering membership and conference registration discounts, grants for conference attendance, and scholarships for educational pursuits. Finally, they attempt to meet student members’ social and career development through the formation of student subgroups and career mentoring initiatives. The chapter concludes with recommendations on steps LTAs can take to more actively involve student members.

1 Introduction

I am an ESL/EFL teacher by profession. I joined the TESOL International Association in 1992 when I was a master’s student. My professor had handed out the

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application forms in class and stressed that this was an association for language teaching “professionals.” Of course, I wanted to be “a professional,” so I immediately joined. When I attended the international TESOL convention for the first time, I was overwhelmed by the enormity of the event. There were hundreds of presentations, and there were thousands of people! I was awed by the fact that these masses of participants, coming from countries around the world, were all English teachers. And I felt proud that I was one of them! I look back on this student experience as an important moment in my socialization as a language teaching professional.

Teacher socialization is “the process whereby the individual becomes a participating member of the society of teachers” (Zeichner & Gore, 1990, p. 329). For new teachers, socialization occurs in their teacher training programs, during their field experiences, and in the schools where they have their first teaching assignments. However, another potential space where teacher socialization can occur is within teacher professional associations. By participating in these associations, student teachers learn the values of their profession, become aware of professional concerns, are exposed to best teaching practices, and develop fluency in the discourse of the profession. They interact with peers and mentors, and they form their identities as professional teachers. Even so, little has been documented about the involvement of students in language teacher associations (LTAs).

To date, student members, and the ways associations engage with them, have been overlooked or obscured in the research on LTAs. To illustrate, in the special issue of *ELT Journal* dedicated to research on LTAs (Hall, 2016), none of the nine articles considered student members as having needs or interests different from the in-service teacher member population. Take, for example, the membership survey Motteram (2016) conducted to learn the reasons people join IATEFL and how satisfied they were with their memberships. Motteram notes that survey responses came “from all membership categories, including full fee paying along with retired and student members” (p. 153). Yet there was no separate analysis of the student membership experience.

The study outlined in this chapter is a first step towards understanding the relationship between LTAs and their student members. It aims to identify the strategies used by LTAs to recruit student members, facilitate their involvement in association activities, and meet their unique member needs.

2 Methods

To understand the engagement of LTAs with prospective and current student members, this study employed a content analysis of the material culture produced by LTAs (Rossman & Rallis, 1998), specifically the official association websites and other documents uploaded to those sites, such as newsletters and by-laws. LTAs were identified for this study from the affiliate association lists of three U.S.-based national/international LTAs: the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), the National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE), and

the TESOL International Association. These three associations were chosen as the starting point for this study since their affiliates cover the entire geographic scope of the United States and represent teachers of a wide range of second, foreign, and heritage languages. From these affiliate lists, 140 state, multistate, or national LTAs were identified as being located geographically within the United States. Of these, two of the associations were excluded from the study because they did not have websites, or their websites were inaccessible. Associations that do not offer memberships to individuals and those that do not serve teachers specifically (e.g., associations for supervisors, linguists, or translators) were additionally excluded from the data collection. Finally, there were two associations that appeared on the affiliate list of more than one organization; these were only counted once. This left 121 associations, with all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia being represented. Including ACTFL, NABE, and the TESOL International Association, brought the sample size to 124 (see the appendix for a complete list of associations included in this study). Table 1 provides an overview of the geographical scope of the associations included in this study and their language focus.

In Table 1, the second language classification refers to those associations which promote the teaching of a language that learners would use in daily communication. This includes the associations dedicated to the teaching of English as a Second Language (ESL) as well as American Sign Language (ASL). The foreign language classification includes associations which promote the teaching of languages used in countries outside the U.S. and which learners would not use for daily interactions. This includes associations dedicated to the teaching of languages like French, German, and Chinese. The multiple languages classification refers to those associations which support first and additional language development within the same learner population. This category consists primarily of the bilingual education associations.

“Student” is being defined for the purposes of this study as an undergraduate or graduate student, full- or part-time, who is pursuing a degree in a field which would lead to a career in language teaching. It should be noted that some of the associations researched had contests, awards, and scholarships for students who are learners of the language. However, the focus of this study is not on the efforts of LTA programs to promote language learning but rather on the ways the associations recruit and involve students who are future language teaching professionals in the association’s activities.

Table 1 Number of associations sampled by geographical scope and language focus

	Second language	Foreign language	Multiple languages	Total
National/international	2	17	1	20
Multistate	9	3	0	12
State	26	37	29	92
Total	37	57	30	124

2.1 Data Collection

Data was collected by reading the publicly available information on the associations' websites to identify any references to student members and the contexts in which those references occurred (e.g., as pertaining to membership categories, conference registration fees, or scholarships). Content analysis was chosen instead of surveying association leaders as an association's website is where prospective student members would most likely obtain their information about the association. This method would also avoid the issue of low survey response rates.

Once on the association website, I reviewed information that was accessible via the main navigational menu and submenus. If there were further links on the subpages that were related to student membership or participation in the association, I followed those to their end point. I also read the association's constitution or by-laws, strategic plan, the most current annual report, minutes from the most recent business meeting, the most recently published newsletter, and the program from the last conference, when these were available on the associations' websites.

If an association's website did not contain a certain piece of data (e.g., reference to a student membership category), the assumption was made that the association did not offer this type of participation since it was not publicized to prospective student members. Data for each LTA was compiled in a spreadsheet.

2.2 Data Analysis

Data in the spreadsheet was first analyzed quantitatively by calculating frequencies and percentages of the different strategies employed by the associations. Data was also analyzed qualitatively by coding the types of initiatives developed by the associations and grouping similar items into categories. For instance, the fact that some associations have student members on their Board of Directors was coded as "Participation in Governance." This was combined with activities coded as "Student Awards" and activities coded as "Student Spotlights" to generate the theme of "Acknowledging the Value of Student Members."

3 Findings

The LTAs reviewed for this study facilitate the involvement of student members in a wide range of ways. However, the level of engagement with student members varies greatly from one association to the next. 94% of the associations employ at least one strategy for engaging students, usually in the form of reduced membership or conference registration fees. The highest number of strategies utilized by one association was 8, with the average being 2.3. The strategies used by the associations to involve

student members can be grouped into four functions: to recruit student members, to acknowledge the value of student members, to allow student contributions to the association, and to meet the needs of student members.

3.1 Strategies to Recruit Student Members

The LTAs reviewed employ several strategies for recruiting student members. By far, the most common strategy, used by 95 (77%) of the associations, is to have a student membership category. In these cases, the student membership rate is discounted from the regular membership rate (more on student discounts below). However, the associations define “student” in different ways. Some associations only state that the applicant should be a “student,” “college/university student,” or “post-secondary” student, without further qualifications. Some associations restrict student memberships to undergraduate students, while others reserve this category for graduate students, and yet others allow students of both degree levels. Some associations specify that the student must be enrolled full time while others allow both part-time and full-time students. Some associations indicate that the student must be enrolled in a degree program related to languages, in language education, or leading to teacher certification. A few associations also stipulate that student members cannot be working full-time or working as teachers. There is great disparity, then, in how LTAs define “student” for membership purposes.

Of the LTAs with a student membership category, 56% do not require any proof of student status from membership applicants. Twelve percent of the associations state that “proof” or “documentation” of “enrollment” or “student status” is required; however, the type of proof that should be submitted is not specified. Of those associations that do require specific documentation of student status, the most common form of proof requested is a copy of the student’s college/university identification card (12% of the associations). Other forms of evidence of student status requested by the associations include current course schedules; transcripts; emails or letters from professors, advisors, department chairs, or the registrar’s office; tuition bills; use of a school email address; and endorsement from a current member of the association.

The majority of the LTAs with student memberships grant student members the same rights and privileges as regular members. However, eight of the associations place restrictions on student members. For example, they stipulate that student members do not have the right to vote or hold office. Or, the student memberships do not include the same level of benefits, e.g., they may not receive copies of the association’s publications.

A few associations have special initiatives meant to increase student membership. For example, New Jersey TESOL-New Jersey Bilingual Educators (NJTESOL-NJBE) gives free one-year memberships to students upon the recommendation of a faculty member (NJTESOL-NJBE, n.d.). The American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP) offers group memberships for Graduate

Departments. These group memberships include one faculty member and a particular number of graduate students (1–20, 21–40, 41+) (AATSP, 2017a).

3.2 Strategies to Acknowledge the Value of Student Members

Many times, when reviewing the websites of the LTAs, student members seemed to be invisible. It was difficult to locate any reference to them outside of the student category checkbox on the membership form. However, a few of the associations make special efforts to recognize and give voice to their student members as valued members of the association.

One way that LTAs demonstrate they value the presence and voices of student members is by allowing them to participate in association governance. As noted earlier, a few associations place restrictions on student members that they cannot vote or hold office. However, this is not the norm. In most cases, student members have rights equal to regular members. Nine of the associations reviewed in this study have taken the further step of designating positions on their board of directors or executive councils to be held by student members, either in appointed or elected positions. Allowing for this type of student participation in governance not only facilitates student involvement in the association but also develops the associations' leaders of the future.

Another way that associations show they value their student members is by rewarding their developing pedagogical skills. While the majority of the associations have "Teacher of the Year" awards for experienced teachers, only six give awards to members who are student teachers based on their teaching performance in their practicum or other field experiences. One notable example is the McAlpine Award for Outstanding World Language Student Teacher, which is presented by the Arkansas Foreign Language Teachers Association (AFLTA). To win this award, evidence must be submitted that the student candidate has met the six ACTFL/CAEP criteria listed in the Program Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers (ACTFL/CAEP, 2015; AFLTA, 2015). Other associations give visibility to their student members by including them in Member Spotlight features in their newsletters and on their websites.

3.3 Strategies to Allow Student Contributions

Most programming and activities sponsored by LTAs (e.g., the annual conference) are open to all members equally. However, some associations have developed opportunities for students to contribute to the association in unique ways, both in carrying out the work of the association as well as in expanding the knowledge base of the professional field.

As an example, six of the associations in this study specifically recruit student members to volunteer at the annual conference. In exchange for helping with registration or counting the number of participants in each session, the students are able to attend the conference at a discounted rate or even for free in some cases.

But doing grunt work is not the only role that students play within the association. They also contribute to developing the knowledge base of the field. Six of the associations offer special opportunities for student members to present their research, either during preconference sessions or during the main conference. For instance, the TESOL International Association offers separate forums for master's level and doctoral students to present their research prior to the annual convention (TESOL International Association, 2017). The American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP) has two Continuing Graduate Student Sessions during its annual conference: one dedicated to "Graduate Student Research in Literary and Cultural Studies" and the other to "Graduate Student Research in the Language Sciences" (AATSP, 2017b, para. 2). Students are selected for these sessions through a competitive process, are provided a stipend to attend the conference, and are recognized at the Awards Banquet for the quality of their research. Finally, Mid-America TESOL (MIDTESOL) gives a "Best Student Proposal Award" at the annual conference. Students self-nominate for this award when they submit their conference proposal by checking a box on the submission form indicating their eligibility. The winner receives a cash award (MIDTESOL, 2017).

Three of the associations have also created special opportunities for student members to be involved in their publications. The newsletter of the Texas Association for Bilingual Education (TABE) includes tips for the leaders of its Bilingual Education Student Organization (BESO) affiliates, reports on BESO activities, and advice for students, all written by student members (see, for example, Cavazos, 2016). The newsletter of California and Nevada TESOL (CATESOL) has featured special theme sections for graduate student perspectives (CATESOL, 2017a). In addition, its journal hosts a College/University Graduate Student Writing Contest, the winner of which has his/her article published in a future issue (Roberge & Wald, 2017). The American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP) publishes the *Spanish and Portuguese Review*, an online journal which is written and edited entirely by graduate students (AATSP, 2017c).

In these examples, we see that students are not just passive recipients of benefits offered by the LTAs. Rather, students are given opportunities to be active contributors to the association and to the larger profession.

3.4 Strategies to Meet the Needs of Student Members

The LTAs reviewed for this study make a variety of efforts to address the financial, social, and career development needs of their student members. These are described below.

3.4.1 Meeting Students' Financial Needs

Students, particularly those who are studying full-time and not working, often lack disposable income, which means that joining an LTA and participating in its events can be financially prohibitive for them. LTAs, overall, seem to be cognizant of students' financial needs. To this end, 95 (77%) of the associations reviewed offer reduced membership fees for students. Seventy-two (58%) of the associations allow students to pay a discounted rate to attend the annual conference. It should be noted that membership fees are sometimes rolled into conference registration; in addition, conferences are sometimes free for members. This makes it difficult to disentangle these two student benefits, yet it is obvious that they are the two most prominent strategies used by LTAs to support and involve student members.

To further support student member participation in annual conferences, eighteen of the associations offer scholarships and grants to students. In some cases, the scholarship/grant is only a waiver of the conference registration fee. However, in others, there is a cash award meant to defray the costs of registration, travel, and lodging. Some of the grants/scholarships are competitive, designated for outstanding students or those who will be presenting at the conference. In other instances, the grants/scholarships are distributed on a first come-first serve basis. An example of a conference attendance grant is the Graduate Student Grant offered by Northern New England TESOL (NNETESOL). This competitive grant is awarded to a full-time graduate student in Applied Linguistics or TESOL and consists of complimentary conference registration and up to fifty dollars cash reimbursement for travel expenses (NNETESOL, n.d.).

LTAs provide financial support to student members in other ways as well. Nineteen of the associations offer scholarships to support students in their educational pursuits. There are scholarships for undergraduate students, graduate students, and those taking coursework for certification as language teachers. For instance, the National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages (NCOLCTL), in conjunction with the National Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations (NFMLTA), currently offers eight dissertation completion awards in the amount of 2500 dollars each (NCOLCTL, 2015).

A final source of financial support for student members, offered by eight of the associations, takes the form of scholarships for study abroad. This form of support is unique to the foreign language teacher associations in this study since developing and maintaining proficiency in the foreign language taught is an important professional competency. One such scholarship is the Walter Jensen Scholarship for Study Abroad offered by the American Association of Teachers of French (AATF). This 2000-dollar scholarship is awarded to a student enrolled in an established teacher education program in French at either the undergraduate or graduate level. It is meant "to cover tuition, fees, travel, or housing costs for a semester-long or one-year study abroad program in a Francophone country" (AATF, 2017, para. 3).

3.4.2 Meeting Students' Social and Career Development Needs

Of the LTAs reviewed, a number of them have created subgroups designed for student members which allow them to interact with their peers. These subgroups take a variety of forms. One subgroup for students at the undergraduate level is the Bilingual Education Student Organizations (BESO). These are established on college and university campuses, are led by students, and are affiliated with their state's bilingual teachers' association. For instance, the Texas Association for Bilingual Education has 19 BESO affiliates (TABE, 2017).

While it is common for foreign language associations to have honor societies for students who are exemplary learners of the language, only one association of those reviewed has an honor society for future *teachers* of languages. The Connecticut Council of Language Teachers (CT COLT) sponsors the CT COLT Future Teachers Honor Society. To be inducted, students must have a minimum GPA of 3.0 and be nominated by one of their professors. In addition, they must

have been accepted into the language department and education program at CT colleges and universities offering a teaching degree in world language. Students must be in the process of completing the FLT Certification program - this includes DSAPs, MATs, and undergraduate & graduate students in the FLT Certification program.

(CT COLT, n.d.)

In addition to these groups, five of the associations list Special Interest Groups (SIGs) created for students, and one has a Graduate Student Committee; however, it is not clear from the associations' websites what kind of activities these groups engage in.

LTAs have also introduced initiatives to support student members in their career development. For example, the Texas Foreign Language Association (TFLA) provides a 3-hour preconference workshop for pre-service teachers. Topics of this workshop include classroom organization, lesson design, and classroom activities (TFLA, 2017).

California and Nevada TESOL (CATESOL) offers Novice Mentor Rap Sessions at the annual conference. These are 10-min meetings between mentors and students or newly graduated teachers who are seeking career and teaching advice from experienced teachers and administrators (CATESOL, 2017b).

Finally, the Modern Language Association (MLA) has a longstanding (since 1998) Committee on the Status of Graduate Students in the Profession. This committee

is charged with considering a range of curricular, intellectual, and professional issues that affect both MA- and Ph.D.-seeking graduate students.... The committee should organize convention sessions and consider association publications and other projects that will assist students while they pursue their education, gain experience as teachers, seek employment, and make a transition to the workplace. The committee is also charged with bringing issues that concern graduate students to the attention of the MLA staff, the Executive Council, and other MLA committees that deal with activities that affect graduate students.

(MLA, 2017, *Charge-Revised May 2007*)

Other activities of this committee are to provide a Graduate Student Lounge at the annual conference, compile and distribute a list of conference presentations of interest to student members and produce a booklet which orients students to the conference experience (MLA, 2017).

4 Limitations and Future Research

Data was collected for this study by reviewing information that is publicly available on LTA websites and subjecting that information to a content analysis. A limitation of this method is that all information pertaining to students may not have been published on these websites. Also, certain information on some LTA websites is restricted to members only and requires passwords to access, thereby precluding the inclusion of that information in this study. Future research could attempt to survey LTA leadership to identify ways the associations may engage student members that are not evident from publicly available information.

It is also acknowledged that some of the associations reviewed have affiliates or branches at the regional and local levels. Additional efforts to engage student members may be taking place at these sublevels, yet affiliate and branch activities were not explored as part of this study.

Furthermore, it is important to understand the student members' experiences as participants in LTAs. It would be worthwhile to develop qualitative studies which survey or interview student members directly to gain their perspectives.

5 Recommendations

As mentioned in the methods section of this chapter, documents such as annual reports, strategic plans, and minutes from business meetings were reviewed when these were available on the associations' websites. In several instances, LTAs have listed *increasing membership* as a strategic goal for the near and long term. In this case, recruiting student members and enhancing the student membership experience should be a priority. Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be made for LTAs who wish to recruit more student members, integrate them into association activities as valued contributors, and better serve their needs.

- Identify your student members. Ask about participant status on membership application forms (i.e. student, practitioner, administrator, retiree), even if there is no difference in benefits. This allows an association to keep track of the number of student members it has.
- Make sure the association's website is up to date! Create a special tab/page for students which synthesizes all the information that is relevant for them (e.g., mem-

bership discounts, scholarships, awards, presentation or publication opportunities, and special student groups).

- Match student members with professional-category members who can serve as mentors by answering questions about the association and encouraging students to get involved in the association's activities.
- Assign student members the same rights and privileges as regular members. This allows students to have more voice in the organization and could motivate them to become more involved. Consider naming a student member to the governing board, or creating a committee or taskforce (composed of both professional and student members) to develop initiatives aimed at student members.
- Create posters or booklets which describe the association and highlight benefits for student members. Send these to faculty/advisors in language teacher education programs. Offer an incentive to these faculty/advisors (e.g., a free publication) if they recruit a certain number of student members for the association.
- Solicit student member contributions to your newsletter or blog. Include them in Member Spotlight features. Take student members out of the shadows and into the limelight. You might even designate a Student Member Month!
- Integrate activities designed for student members within your larger events. Do not relegate these activities to preconference sessions where students are isolated from the professional members who might serve as their mentors.

6 Conclusion

This chapter has described how a sample of 124 LTAs in the United States recruit and support the involvement of student members. Discounts on student memberships and reduced conference registration fees are the most prominent ways that LTAs foster the participation of student members. However, as this study illustrates, some associations have expanded beyond discounts to engage their student members in other, more meaningful, ways. These innovative strategies demonstrate to students, and to the membership at large, that student members are an integral part of the association and of the language teaching profession.

Student members are the language teaching professionals, and our colleagues, of the future. By focusing greater efforts on recruiting student members, and meeting their specific needs, LTAs can not only build their own membership base but also support teacher retention in the field and help alleviate the language teacher shortage that the U.S. and many other countries face (Swanson & Mason, 2018). It is hoped that the strategies described in this chapter will inspire the leadership of LTAs to become more proactive in recruiting, recognizing, and supporting student members.

Appendix

Language Teacher Associations Sampled

Alabama World Languages Association (AWLA)
 Alabama-Mississippi TESOL (AMTESOL)
 Alaska Association for Bilingual Education (AKABE)
 Alaskans for Language Acquisition (AFLA)
 American Association of Teachers of French (AATF)
 American Association of Teachers of German (AATG)
 American Association of Teachers of Italian (AATI)
 American Association of Teachers of Japanese (AATJ)
 American Association of Teachers of Korean (AATK)
 American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages (AAT-SEEL)
 American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP)
 American Association of Teachers of Turkic Languages (AATT)
 American Classical League (ACL)
 American Council of Teachers of Russian (ACTR)
 American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)
 American Sign Language Teachers Association (ASLTA)
 Arizona Association for Bilingual Education (AABE)
 Arizona Language Association (AZLA)
 Arizona TESOL (AZTESOL)
 Arkansas Foreign Language Teachers Association (AFLTA)
 Arkansas TESOL (ARKTESOL)
 California and Nevada TESOL (CATESOL)
 California Association for Bilingual Education (CABE)
 California Language Teachers Association (CLTA)
 Carolinas TESOL
 Chinese Language Association of Secondary-Elementary Schools (CLASS)
 Chinese Language Teachers Association (CLTA)
 Classical Association of New England (CANE)
 Classical Association of the Atlantic States (CAAS)
 Colorado TESOL (CoTESOL)
 Confederation in Oregon for Language Teaching (COFLT)
 Connecticut Council of Language Teachers (CTCOLT)
 Connecticut TESOL
 Dakota TESL
 Florida Foreign Language Association (FFLA)
 Foreign Language Association of Georgia (FLAG)
 Foreign Language Association of Maine (FLAME)
 Foreign Language Association of Missouri (FLAM)
 Foreign Language Association of North Carolina (FLANC)
 Foreign Language Association of North Dakota (FLAND)

Foreign Language Association of Virginia (FLAVA)
Foreign Language Educators of New Jersey (FLENJ)
Georgia Association of Multilingual, Multicultural Education (GAOME)
Georgia TESOL (GATESOL)
Greater Washington Association of Teachers of Foreign Languages (GWATFL)
Hawaii Association of Language Teachers (HALT)
Hawaii TESOL
Idaho Association for Bilingual Education (IABE)
Idaho Association of Teachers of Language & Culture (IATLC)
Illinois Association for Multilingual Multicultural Education (IAMME)
Illinois Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language (ICTFL)
Illinois TESOL/Bilingual Education (ITBE)
Indiana Foreign Language Teachers Association (IFLTA)
Indiana TESOL (INTESOL)
Intermountain TESOL (ITESOL)
Iowa World Language Association (IWLA)
Kansas World Language Association (KSWLA)
Kentucky TESOL (KYTESOL)
Kentucky World Language Association (KWLA)
Louisiana Foreign Language Teachers Association (LFLTA)
Louisiana TESOL (LaTESOL)
Maryland Foreign Language Association (MFLA)
Maryland TESOL (MDTESOL)
Massachusetts Association for Bilingual Education (MABE)
Massachusetts Foreign Language Association (MAFLA)
Massachusetts TESOL (MATSOL)
Michigan Association for Bilingual Education (MABE)
Michigan TESOL (MITESOL)
Michigan World Language Association (MWLA)
Mid-America TESOL (MIDTESOL)
Minnesota Council on the Teaching of Languages & Cultures (MCTLC)
Minnesota TESOL (MinneTESOL)
Mississippi Foreign Language Association (MSFLA)
Modern Language Association (MLA)
Montana Association of Language Teachers (MALT)
National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE)
National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages (NCOLCTL)
National Network for Early Language Learning (NNELL)
Nebraska International Language Association (NILA)
New Hampshire Association of World Language Teachers (NHAWLT)
New Jersey TESOL/New Jersey Bilingual Educators (NYTESOL/NJBE)
New Mexico Association for Bilingual Education (NMABE)
New Mexico Organization of Language Educators (NMOLE)
New Mexico TESOL (NMTESOL)
New York State Association for Bilingual Education (NYSABE)

New York State Association of Foreign Language Teachers (NYS AFLT)
New York State TESOL (NYTESOL)
Northern New England TESOL (NNETESOL)
Ohio Foreign Language Association (OFTLA)
Ohio TESOL
Oklahoma Association for Bilingual Education (OABE)
Oklahoma Foreign Language Teachers Association (OFLTA)
Oklahoma TESOL (OKTESOL)
Oregon Association for Bilingual Education (OABE)
Oregon TESOL (ORTESOL)
Pennsylvania State Modern Language Association (PSMLA)
PennTESOL-East
Professional Language Association of Nevada (PLAN)
Rhode Island Foreign Language Association (RIFLA)
Rhode Island Teachers of English Language Learners (RITELL)
Society for Classical Studies (SCS)
South Carolina Foreign Language Teachers Association (SCFLTA)
South Dakota World Language Association (SDWLA)
Southwest Council on Language Teaching (SWCOLT)
Sunshine State TESOL (SSTESOL)
Tennessee Foreign Language Teaching Association (TFLTA)
Tennessee TESOL (TNTESOL)
TESOL International Association
Texas Association for Bilingual Association (TABE)
Texas Foreign Language Association (TFLA)
Three Rivers TESOL (3-R TESOL)
Utah Foreign Language Association (UFLA)
Vermont Foreign Language Association (VFLA)
Virginia TESOL (VATESOL)
Washington Area TESOL (WATESOL)
Washington Association for Bilingual Education (WABE)
Washington Association for Language Teaching (WAFLT)
Washington Association for the Education of Speakers of Other Languages (WAESOL)
West Virginia Foreign Language Teachers Association (WVFLTA)
West Virginia TESOL (WVTESOL)
Wisconsin Association for Bilingual Education (WIABE)
Wisconsin Association for Language Teachers (WAFLT)
Wisconsin TESOL (WITESOL)
Wyoming Foreign Language Teachers Association (WFLTA)

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Part II
LTAs Forms of Professional
Development

Teacher Development Through Language Teacher Associations: Lessons from Africa



Aymen Elsheikh and Okon Effiong

Abstract This chapter reports on a study which investigated the role of Africa TESOL and its affiliates in providing for and improving the continuous professional development of teachers in their constituencies. A survey and interviews were conducted to ascertain how beneficial attending professional development events are. Findings from the survey suggest that these events help teachers to develop professionally and improve their teaching overall. Interview data also corroborate the survey findings regarding professional development events. The interview data further indicates that, despite the challenges affiliates have, many still make it possible for teachers to avail themselves of professional development opportunities. The chapter concludes with highlighting the important role Africa TESOL and its affiliates play in their members' professional development. Although the leaders of these associations have a strong sense of community and solidarity, the host of challenges facing them should be identified and overcome through collaboration with internal and external bodies, among other means. It is also crucial to develop a research program to shed more light on different aspects and functions of language teacher associations, especially in fragile contexts.

1 Introduction

As Language Teacher Associations (LTAs) around the world celebrate their anniversaries, such as the 50th birthday by TESOL International Association (also referred to as TESOL elsewhere in the chapter) in 2016 and IATEFL in 2017, there seems to be little research on how these organizations contribute to the development of their members. Given the long history of LTAs, it is important not only to research these associations (Aubrey & Coombe, 2010; Lamb, 2012; Smith & Kuchah, 2016) but

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also investigate the fulfillment of promises of providing effective and sustainable continuous professional development (CPD) to their members.

While the established associations reflect and celebrate their accomplishments, emerging ones look up to them. They may also want to follow in their footsteps and even occasionally differentiate in order to make themselves more attractive and culturally-relevant to their potential members. There is, therefore, the need to hear from these LTAs, especially those from the underrepresented regions of the world. Using the concept of communities of practice as a lens (Wenger, 1998), the purpose of this chapter is to document the process and evolution of Africa TESOL and its affiliates and their role in providing and improving the CPD of teachers in their constituencies. It does by first reviewing the literature on professional development through LTAs. It will then discuss the theoretical framework used for the study, i.e. communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This will be followed by a description of the methodology and a presentation of the findings of the study. The chapter will end with drawing some conclusions and implications for both research and LTAs.

2 Literature Review

Although our pre-service and in-service education programs, found within government and/or private institutions, are working diligently, it is impossible to prepare teachers for all the challenges they will face throughout their careers. It is for this reason that professional associations seek to provide a wide variety of professional development activities for their teacher members. OECD (2009) conceptualizes professional development as follows:

...activities that develop an individual's skills, knowledge, expertise and other characteristics as a teacher...effective professional development is on-going, includes training, practice and feedback and provides adequate time and follow-up support. Successful programs involve teachers in learning activities that are similar to ones they will use with their students and encourage the development of teachers' learning communities (p. 49).

Edelfelt (1989) argues that professional development in teachers' associations (TAs) is different from traditional, formal graduate study because it is more egalitarian and probably more democratic as there is no social distance between the provider and the receiver. In the TA, teachers are treated more like professionals engaging in the activities voluntarily and they tend to be more participative than in other types of in-service education. This conceptualization of TAs can also be captured in Lamb's (2012) definition:

[LTAs are] networks of professionals, run by and for professionals, focused mainly on support for members, with knowledge exchange and development as well as representation of members' views as their defining functions (p. 295).

In the mainstream literature, professional associations have also been conceptualized as: "(1) providers of formal and informal learning opportunities, (2) constructors of

frames of reference in which professional and bureaucratic norms can be blended, and (3) catalysts for changing conditions and relationships in external environments” (Carol, 1995, p. 215). Despite their importance, Aubrey and Coombe (2010) and Barfield (2014) point out that, compared with other forms of professional development, English LTAs are almost invisible in the mainstream literature, perhaps—it may be suggested—because they may not impact the lives of many academics. With the emergence of a plethora of LTAs in the past few years that have positive effect on the lives of numerous teachers (Borg, 2015), it is imperative to investigate how they provide opportunities for professional development for the members.

Research on LTAs has also pointed to the advantages reaped by the members of the associations. These benefits can be personal and/or professional. They may also be defined by the specific roles members play within the LTA. Bailey (2002) categorizes the personal and professional benefits of her experience as TESOL International Association’s President into the development of skills: interpersonal skills; management and leadership skills; professional communication skills and time management which is a macro-skill that cuts across all the others.

Other examples can be found amongst the scanty literature on LTAs, particularly in MA dissertations of Hornby scholars (Abebe, 2012; Debacco, 2007; Falcao, 2004) and, in one case, a Ph.D. thesis (Gnawali, 2013). These studies show the important role of LTAs in providing teacher training and development opportunities for state school teachers in developing countries. The authors, who have themselves benefited from professional development within an LTA, argue for the need to strengthen their respective LTAs through research which sheds light on the potentials of these LTAs.

Although, to our knowledge, there is a recent publication on LTAs, which appeared in the *ELT Journal* in 2016, the eight articles in this special topic issue point to several unresolved issues, tensions and dichotomies that future research can investigate (Paran, 2016). These issues range from representation, the nature of activities (open vs. closed), relationships with external bodies, Western versus non-Western conceptualizations of LTAs (Padwad, 2016), and so on. It is, therefore, timely to conduct more research to discuss such critical issues and to examine the functions of LTAs that contribute to the members’ professional development.

It is crucial to look into and encourage various forms of PD activities because many LTAs organize annual conferences, and this serves as the main professional development activity for their members throughout the year. An example of this type of research is Borg (2015) who examined delegates’ perspectives about the benefits of attending conferences. Aubrey and Coombe (2010) and Algren et al (2008) have also noted the importance of conferences in many teachers’ professional development and have proposed practical improvements. Although the limited studies on LTAs suggest that different forms of PD offered by these associations include conferences, workshops, blogs, publications, e-mail discussions and study abroad opportunities (Abebe, 2012; Debacco, 2007; Falcao, 2004), conferences seem to have attracted (although still scarce) more research attention.

2.1 *Africa TESOL and its Affiliates*

After identifying the gaps in the literature, the authors will describe the birth of a regional LTA, Africa TESOL, comprising 22 different African countries and how they are working together as a community not only to bridge the gap in our existing knowledge about LTAs but also to enhance the CPD of their members.

The conceptualization of Africa TESOL dated back to 2010 when only four Africa-based LTAs were affiliated to TESOL International Association. This underrepresentation was the needed catalyst to form a continental body to address professional development problems experienced by language teachers in Africa. Setting the stage for its launch began in 2015, by which time the number of African LTAs affiliated to TESOL had increased considerably. The next logical step was to write to these affiliates, using the listserv of the TESOL Affiliates Council, to express the need to come together to create a continental body. Cameroon, Ethiopia, Senegal and Sudan responded positively and were the founding affiliates of Africa TESOL.

Okon approached Aymen who at the time was deeply involved in growing TESOL Sudan and both discussed how this pet project could be launched. With his experience of organizing international conferences for TESOL Sudan, TESOL Sudan (Aymen) was able to provide the platform to launch Africa TESOL. In February 2016, Africa TESOL ultimately was launched and hosted its first international conference in Khartoum, Sudan.

In attendance were more than 300 participants and presenters from ten countries including Senegal, Sudan, Cameroon, Egypt, Mozambique, UK, USA, UAE, Qatar and Oman. By this time, 11 LTAs in Africa had become affiliates of TESOL Africa. Its second international conference took place in May 2017 in Kigali, Rwanda and was attended by more than 400 delegates from 14 African countries and 6 countries outside Africa. The third conference was held in May 2018 in Dakar, Senegal. The 3rd conference attracted presenters from 15 African countries and 7 countries outside Africa. We hope to build on our past successes. Finally, at the time of going to press, 23 LTAs from 22 countries have affiliated with Africa TESOL namely: Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cote D' Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Bissau, Mali, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, and Uganda.

A noticeable difference between Africa TESOL and other international LTAs is in its leadership structure and composition. Apart from the authors who are based in Qatar and are the Vice President and President respectively, its steering committee is made up of leaders of eight LTAs in Africa—Angola, Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Nigeria, Senegal and Sudan. This model serves the organization well because the different LTA leaders can share their common concerns and seek solutions to problems encountered by language teachers in different regions of the continent. Africa TESOL is also seeking mutually beneficial collaborations with LTAs outside the continent as well as other initiatives capable of highlighting good practices in the African English Language Teaching landscape.

2.2 *Communities of Practice*

A lay understanding of the term *communities of practice* (henceforth CoP) revolves around the idea that it is a group of people with a common interest who come together to discuss and learn from each other about their interest. In academia, CoP are used as part of a larger learning system which connects the individual to the society (cf. Vygotsky, 1978). Drawing from the work of Lave and Wenger (1991), England (2018) defines communities of practice as “sets of relations among persons and activities over time in relation with other tangential and overlapping communities of practice” (p. 2). This definition shows not only the connection between people and the activities they engage in but also the symbiotic relationship between the different communities of practice that share similar interests.

Drawing on the concept of *situated learning*, Wenger (1998) expanded the scope of CoP to include three interrelated dimensions: *mutual engagement*, *joint enterprise*, and *shared repertoire*. Mutual engagement relates to how individuals interact with each other, so they arrive at a solution or a common understanding of a problem or an issue. Joint enterprise is tantamount to teamwork, which means that the members of the community are engaged in the process of working together toward the achievement of a common goal. Shared repertoire refers to the specialized knowledge and resources that members of the community have in common. These resources and knowledge are then used to negotiate meaning which will in turn facilitate the process of learning within the community. The three dimensions discussed above are typically used to understand the nature of the interaction among different groups of CoP. The interview questions in this chapter draw on these different dimensions and will be used throughout the analysis process to show how different Africa TESOL LTAs interact and engage their members in the process of professional development.

3 Methodology

A mixed-methods approach is followed in this study. The data for the study comprise a questionnaire and interviews with members and affiliate leaders. The questionnaire was developed based on the main objective of the study which revolves around the role of Africa TESOL and its affiliates in the CPD of their members. It asked their opinion on the most recent professional development (PD) event they attended that was organized by either Africa TESOL, its affiliates, or any other LTA. Items from the theoretical framework described above were also included in the survey to document the process of negotiated meaning and mutual engagement (Wenger, 1998), such as asking and answering questions during presentations. Interview questions also stem from Wenger’s (1998) notion of mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and shared repertoire in order to tap into the process of learning that forms the basis of the members’ development. Pen and paper questionnaires (see Appendix) were distributed to attendees of the 2017 CAMELTA Annual Conference and 28 responses

were received and analyzed. Similarly, the same questionnaire was shared electronically via Survey Monkey to colleagues in Africa and 30 responses were received and analyzed.

3.1 Participants

As mentioned above, the participants who took the survey were primarily teachers of English as a foreign language in Africa and/or from an African origin but based elsewhere in Africa. Those who participated in the interview, however, were, in addition to being English teachers, leaders of national associations in Africa. To get an understanding of how these associations work, their activities and the challenges they go through, we thought that leaders would be the most appropriate group of participants to discuss such issues. Leaders of five Africa TESOL affiliates from five different countries: Angola, Cameroon, Rwanda, Senegal, and Tunisia responded to our e-mail invitation and consented to be interviewed.

3.2 Data Analysis

Data analysis followed both standard quantitative and qualitative procedures. The data from the survey was analyzed using descriptive statistics, such as percentages. Our aim here was to get an understanding of the number of the participants who either agree or disagree with the survey items and these were used to ask the leaders so they can elaborate further, especially on the items that a large number of participants disagrees with. The pen and paper survey was administered during a conference in Cameroon because access to the online survey was challenging due to poor Internet connectivity and lack of appropriate IT skills. This may also explain the low response rate we received for the electronic survey which was mainly taken by association leaders.

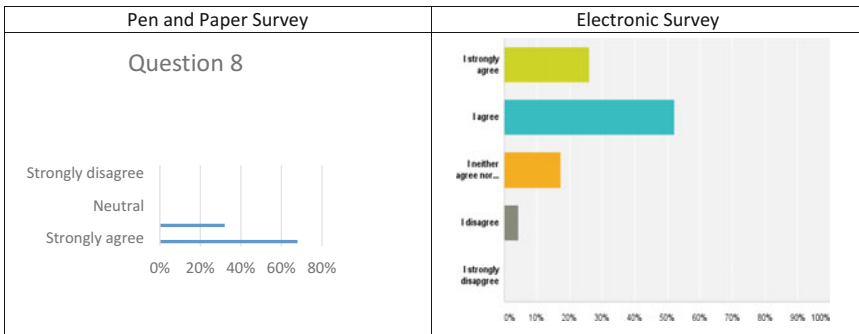
The interviews were recorded, transcribed and categorized based on the main interview questions: goals of LTAs, activities, the affiliation with Africa TESOL, and challenges. The rationale for this categorization is to highlight the affiliates and the nature of the work they engage in. The analysis, however, weaves in the elements of CoP as previously discussed.

4 Findings

4.1 Survey

Only three pertinent questions 8, 10, and 17 from the pen and paper survey will be discussed as they relate directly to improved teaching and professional development. These are listed in Figs. 1, 2 and 3 and discussed below.

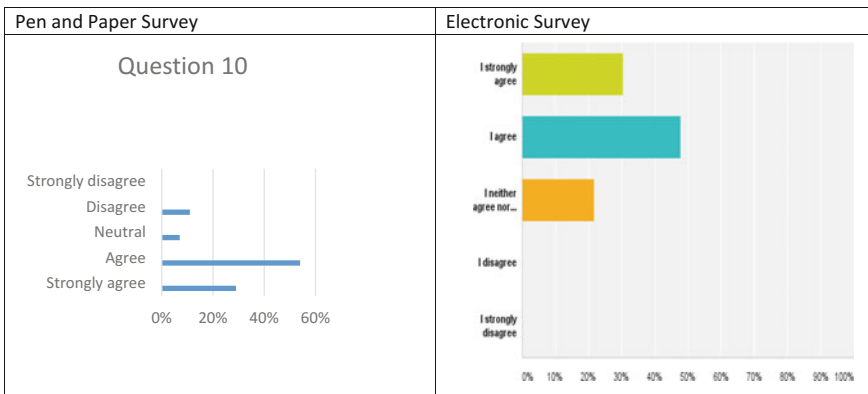
Q8: The themes and topics discussed helped to gain more practical knowledge about ELT



Pen and Paper: SA 19(68%), A 9(32%)

Fig. 1 Q8: The themes and topics discussed helped to gain more practical knowledge about ELT

Q10: I had the opportunity to obtain practical materials I could use in my teaching

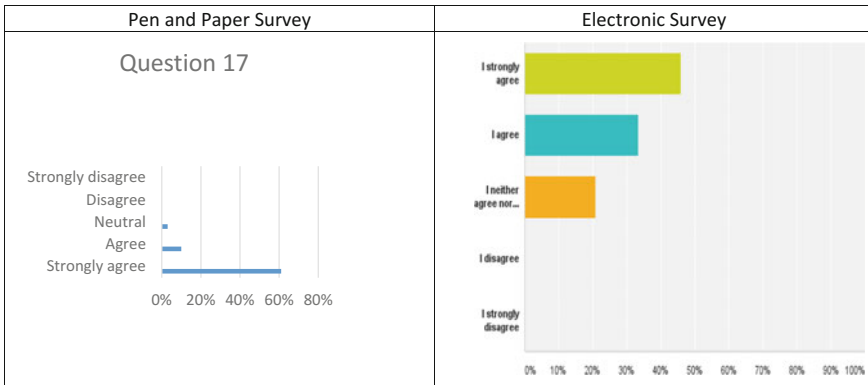


Pen and Paper: SA 8(29%), A 15(54%), N 2(7%), D 3(11%)

Electronic: SA 9(30%), A 14(48%), N 7(22%)

Fig. 2 Q10: I had the opportunity to obtain practical materials I could use in my teaching

Q17: After attending this event, I know what I need to work more on to grow professionally and as a person



Pen and Paper: SA 17(61%), A 10(36%), N 1(3%)

Electronic: SA 14(46%), A 10(33%), N 6(21%)

Fig. 3 Q17: After attending this event, I know what I need to work more on to grow professionally and as a person

There is 100% agreement that the themes and topics helped the teachers to improve their teaching. However, 78% of the respondents to the electronic survey agreed. This lends credence to Borg (2015) who showed that 82% of his respondents reported deeper theoretical knowledge of the ELT field. Similarly, the results here support Lessing and De Witt (2007) who reported that 95% of the respondents showed improved teaching competence and excellence. Stewart and Miyahara (2016) also reported that activities of LTAs serve as fora for teachers to disseminate good practice and to collaborate in professional development activities. Importantly, all the respondents were unanimous in their response to the positive effect conference themes and topics have on classroom practice.

83% of the pen and paper respondents compared to 78% of those who responded to the electronic survey agreed that the conference provided opportunities for them to obtain useful practical materials for their respective classrooms. This result is in line with Borg’s (2015) study in which 80% of the respondents reported receiving practical materials and 67% noted immediate changes in their work. It underlines the importance of conferences in offering professional development opportunities to teachers thus resulting in improved classroom practices.

97% of the pen and paper respondents and 79% of the electronic survey respondents indicated that the conference was an avenue for self-awakening because it helped them to identify areas for improvement in their professional life. Lessing and De Witt (2007) reported similar findings in which 93% agreed there was need for training in order to develop professionally.

4.2 Interviews

We conducted Skype interviews with leaders of five Africa TESOL affiliates from five different countries: Angola, Cameroon, Rwanda, Senegal, and Tunisia. An e-mail message was sent in January 2017 to affiliate leaders but only five of them consented to be interviewed. For anonymity purposes, we adopt the following acronyms for the five teacher associations: TA1, TA2, TA3, TA4, and TA5. The interviews were conducted between February and April of 2017 and each one lasted for an average of 30 min. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and categorized based on the main interview questions: goals of LTAs, activities, the affiliation with Africa TESOL, and challenges.

4.2.1 Goals of LTAs

One of the questions asked relates to the specific goals behind the establishment of the affiliates which are LTAs in and of themselves. Below are some responses from the leaders of the affiliates.

The main goal is putting together English teachers where they can discuss challenges, opportunities, and share experiences to be better teachers (TA1).

...to bring together practitioners in the field of ELT from all sectors...also enhancing research...and creating connections between different professionals locally and internationally (TA2).

...is to do in-service training for teachers...to share best practices among teachers...to network with all the ELTAs...to keep the best [form] of standard English (TA3).

...keeping the CPD of the English language teachers...to stress the relationship between the MOE [Ministry of Education] and other potential donors...to contribute to the society outside of English teachers (TA4).

As can be seen from the leaders' narratives, the elements of a CoP are present in almost all of them. Mutual engagement is evident when the leaders talk about bringing together teachers not only to discuss challenges but also to share experiences and best practices in the field of ELT. In addition, the idea of working in and creating a symbiotic relationship with other CoP is well represented when TA4 points to the relationship they aspire to create and maintain with the Ministry of Education. The common goals these associations work toward, which mirror the joint enterprise dimension of the CoP, include sharing experiences, opportunities, challenges; enhancing research; conducting in-service training for teachers; to improve the standard of English; and to reach out to communities other than the ELT ones.

4.2.2 Activities of LTAs

Central to any LTA are the activities they engage their members in. To understand these activities, we asked the leaders to tell us about the forms of professional development they offer to their members. Below are their responses.

...the national seminar is a nationwide event...delegates come from all over the country...trying to reach the remote regions... the English language day is a nationwide event as well...it gives younger [novice] teachers more opportunities to have hands on activities, workshops, and ready-made materials...for the student activities, local teachers gather students to give them extracurricular activities, such as competitions, talent shows, spelling bee... (TA5).

It is worth noting here that what is meant by the “national seminar” is the annual conference of this affiliate. It seems that it is a local or national event and it is unclear whether international participation is sought or even desired. Unlike LTAs that mainly organize conferences as their sole activity (Borg, 2015; Aubrey & Coombe, 2010; Reynolds, this volume), this affiliate has another national activity, which is the English language day. In fact, they are getting ready for this year’s day as we write this chapter. Moreover, they organize activities for the students, so their professional development opportunities are not limited to teachers only. We found this to be a unique undertaking and it contributes to an expanded definition of LTAs in addition to the one offered by Lamb (2012).

Similar to TA5, other affiliates also provide more than just a conference and activities for teachers. For example, one leader had this to say about the activities they offer: “Every year we hold three big events. Two national ones and one international event...we hold small events in between, such as fun days for kids, workshops, etc.” (TA2). We also note here the unique element of providing outreach services to the community, such as entertainment for kids. Other affiliates such as TA4 and TA2 organize and participate in campaigns to donate blood and clean the city.

In addition to providing regular professional development activities such as workshops and conferences, TA4 aspires to influence policy related to ELT. This can be gleaned from the narrative of their leader below.

We have been organizing workshops and a conference...we have been discussing with the Ministry of Education to provide us with the tools so that we can organize a large training on DELTA and CELTA...we want to influence the policy so that English can be taught from primary school.

What has not been mentioned by other leaders is the aspect that relates to policy. In his conceptualization of LTAs, Lamb (2012) points to the advocacy role of the associations. It is clear that TA4 fits under this categorization and therefore it is a typical association based on Lamb’s (2012) definition.

These activities that the LTAs engage in represent the shared repertoire of the CoP. Members of the LTAs are mutually engaged so they share knowledge and expertise that they have in common. This is done through a joint enterprise where they work together collaboratively toward the common goal of developing professionally. From our interaction with the LTAs leaders, they saw themselves as gatekeepers whereby

their role was to facilitate the process of professional development for their members. They also aspired to be part of something bigger than their LTA.

Mutual engagement relates to how individuals interact with each other so they arrive at a solution or a common understanding of a problem or an issue. Joint enterprise is tantamount to teamwork, which means that the members of the community are engaged in the process of working together toward the achievement of a common goal. Shared repertoire refers to the specialized knowledge and resources that members of the community have in common.

4.2.3 The Affiliation with Africa TESOL

Although some of the African LTAs are affiliates and associates of TESOL and IATEFL (International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language) respectively, TA2 saw membership and being part of Africa TESOL as a springboard for belonging to something not only bigger but also closer to home. He stated that “we would like to be part of a bigger association...we are Africans...with our brothers and sisters, we can build a better future”. With an eye toward the future, he believes that Africa TESOL will contribute positively to the professional development of African teachers.

This narrative above, which shows that the association’s ambition, is corroborated by what TA had also observed regarding the role of Africa TESOL in the future, “when we decided to participate as founding member of Africa TESOL, we initially thought that it would be a good tool to help the countries in Africa to improve our status in English language teaching” (TA4). As a proud founding member of Africa TESOL, TA4 believed in its vision which centers on contributing positively to the field of ELT in Africa.

The sense of membership in and belonging to a larger association is also mirrored by TA1. He had this to say about what becoming affiliated to Africa TESOL meant:

It is something to bring people together, people across Africa...let’s imagine all the teachers in Africa have a platform where they meet and discuss challenges...I see Africa TESOL as something as big as IATEFL and TESOL in the future.

Having a platform contributes positively to the construction of the community’s identity which can be defined by a shared domain of interest (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Meeting and discussing challenges relates to the practices that teachers engage in through their membership in and identification with particular LTAs, a process that contributes to the development of teacher identity (Motteram, 2016; Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, & Johnson, 2005). This extract also shows the positively imagined identity of Africa TESOL as compared to the two biggest and most prestigious LTAs, IATEFL and TESOL.

4.2.4 Challenges of LTAs

We concluded our interviews with the affiliates’ leaders by asking them about challenges their associations face. These included issues of finance, volunteerism, as

well as political struggles. For example, TA3 was in a dilemma because of their large membership. This precluded them from receiving the financial support they needed from external bodies. According to their leader, “they [the American Embassy] told us they could no longer help us financially because when they look at the number of [our] member[s], we have almost 1000. They think we can raise the money by ourselves”. However, the members do not have the means to commit to a regular fee structure and this poses another challenge relating to attracting more members to join the association.

[Members] pay a registration fee that is nothing. It is about two dollars per year. [For] the conference, they pay like ten dollars, so we wanted them to increase the conference registration fee but when we discuss (sic) [this] in an assembly, they refused, and I didn’t want to force it on them. I didn’t want to lose more members (TA3).

Although the dues from members are not very significant, other associations try to make the most out of them. They also seek other avenues for generating revenue, so they support and sustain their activities. This is true for TA2 and the extract below is a case in point.

We try to manage the little funds we get from our membership fee and also from our partners. Last time we won a grant, and then we help[ed] the (sic) teachers in five districts and we get a little extra from the US embassy who support all our conferences.

The role of the US embassy can be viewed in a positive light here, unlike elsewhere. These grants are not available to other Africa associations and they rely solely on revenue generated from membership dues and generous donations from sponsors of their events. TA2 is a prime example here as their leader explicates that “we need financial support for our events. If you want to give good quality events, we need to have the resources. We don’t have a government grant. All the money we have comes from memberships and from sponsors”.

Volunteerism also poses a great challenge to the associations. Those who volunteer would always want a reward, and, in the case of TA2, as can be seen here, this is related to financial gains.

Sometimes we need people who are really committed, and some people would say well if I do this what am I getting in terms of money, and then you realize it is always those ten people who are always doing the job because they are the ones who are really committed.

It seems that those who are committed reap the benefits of being involved. This is demonstrated in this volume through the few chapters that discuss professional and leadership skills development for those who commit to serving the professional community. Realizing that volunteering for an LTA is a full-time job, TA4 aspires to attract and recruit more volunteers (see extract here) so the work is more efficient.

We are going to include more volunteers in our work, because being in an association is actually a full-time job and you need to really delegate tasks to other people so that they can do the work. So involving more and more people more professionals in the management of the association and maybe also creating chapters throughout the country.

It is unclear, however, how this will be achieved. Delegating tasks and creating chapters in different parts of the country are great ideas for decentralizing the association's work and thus adding a layer of efficiency to it. However, a clear mechanism for recruiting volunteers to buy into the vision of the association needs to be in place.

One final type of challenge the leaders discussed can be categorized as a political one. This does not relate to entities affiliated with the national government, but it also extends to organizations representing foreign countries or governments. The following extracts capture this very lucidly.

I think the British Council wanted to (inaudible). I remember I went to the British Council and they said we can't work on something that the US embassy is working on. For us what we want is supporting teachers, whether it is the US embassy or the British embassy (TA2).

The ministry [of Education/Higher Education] offers its premises for us to hold events for example and our last national event was held in the premises of the ministry of education for free of course so that is their contribution. They contribute with the place and they contribute with coffee breaks and lunch and everything (TA4).

External stakeholders, such as the British Council, the Regional English Language Office (RELO), Ministries of Education, among others can wield influence and may impede the work of LTAs. However, this is not always the case, as these same stakeholders can be very supportive of LTAs' activities. For example, in organizing the first Africa TESOL conference, which took place in Khartoum, Sudan in 2016, both the Ministry of Higher Education and the British Council of Sudan contributed to the hosting of the event. Political tensions, as well as other struggles, can factor into the work of LTAs and it is best that they are dealt with in a diplomatic and professional fashion.

5 Conclusion

This chapter reported on a study which investigated the role of Africa TESOL and its affiliates in providing professional development opportunities for their members. The members surveyed reported that they are satisfied with how their LTAs run and provide them with different activities to engage in. These activities not only helped them increase their practical ELT knowledge through gaining valuable insights and obtaining practical materials that they can use in their classrooms but also contributed to charting out an overall plan for what they need to work on to develop and grow professionally.

The interviews with the association leaders revealed how each LTA lived up to its promise of providing quality professional development activities to its members. Through discussing the goals of LTAs, their activities, and the affiliation with Africa TESOL, it is clear that these associations exhibit the different dimensions of a CoP: mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and shared repertoire. How the leaders viewed and talked about their LTAs as part of Africa TESOL signaled the sense of solidarity and belonging which is needed for the development and promotion of a coherent

professional identity that can propel the work of the associations through cultivating this strong sense of community of practice and situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

The chapter also points to a number of challenges that LTAs face which include finance, volunteerism, and politics. These are not unique to African LTAs, as associations all over the world face them on a regular basis. For an LTA to function properly, these challenges would need to be identified and overcome. Despite these challenges, LTAs around the world can learn from the experience of their African counterparts, especially as it relates to expanding the role and the very nature of an LTA. Engaging in activities for students and kids as well as participating in blood drives and cleaning campaigns are examples of how LTAs' work can be extended.

Future research could also be conducted to examine the nature of the challenges faced by LTAs and how they can be mitigated. In addition, as this chapter, especially the interview part, is limited to ascertaining the views of LTAs leaders, future studies should seek input from members, so their experiences are better understood. There are many other areas for research, but these are the ones that came about as a result of the current study.

Appendix

Questionnaire

The questionnaire below was shared electronically among affiliate members in Africa and hard copies shared among delegates who attended the 2017 CAMELTA conference in Cameroon.

How often do you participate in professional development activities a year?

Once, twice, three times, more than three times, I don't participate at all.

If you have participated in professional development activities before, these were organized by:

Government, my school/institution, private organizations, other: _____

Please indicate which of the following events you have attended:

Africa TESOL 1st Conference/My Local Affiliate Conference/Regional Conference/International Conference

Based on the event you attended, please indicate whether you strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D), strongly disagree (SD), or not applicable (NA) to the following statements:

- (1) *The timing of the conference was convenient*
- (2) *The location of the conference was convenient*
- (3) *The venue of the conference was suitable for the event*
- (4) *The presentations given were valuable*
- (5) *The plenary sessions were valuable*
- (6) *The concurrent sessions and workshop were beneficial*

- (7) *The themes and topics discussed were suitable to my professional development needs*
- (8) *The themes and topics discussed help to gain more practical knowledge about ELT*
- (9) *The themes and topics discussed help with my research*
- (10) *I had the opportunity to obtain practical materials I could use in my teaching*
- (11) *I increased my knowledge and understanding of current best practices in ELT*
- (12) *I asked questions during the presentation that I attended*
- (13) *I answered questions based on my knowledge and teaching context*
- (14) *I networked and met professionals from my country*
- (15) *I networked and met professionals from other countries*
- (16) *I followed up with people I met at the conference for further professional development purposes*
- (17) *After attending this event, I know what I need to work more on to grow professionally and as a person*
- (18) *I would attend Africa TESOL conference if held in my country*
- (19) *I would attend Africa TESOL conference if held in another country*

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Killing Two Birds with One Stone: SPELT's Professional Development Programs



Fauzia Shamim and Zakia Sarwar

Abstract One of the major functions of language teacher associations is to provide a range of professional development opportunities for its members (Lamb, 2012; Paran, 2016). Accordingly, the Society of Pakistan English Language Teachers (SPELT) offers a variety of programs including monthly workshops, the annual conference, and short and long-term training courses. SPELT, like other language teacher associations, is also run by volunteer members. One of the problems faced by language teacher associations is the dearth of volunteers willing to spend time and effort on organizational work (Gomez, 2011). However, in SPELT, an interesting observation through the years has been that many of the participants of SPELT's long-term professional development program (the International Certificate in English Language Teaching or ICELT), offer their services as volunteers for the organization at the completion of their program. Normally, they start as members of a sub-committee and then, as they hone their leadership skills, they move up to important leadership positions in the SPELT working committee. This chapter investigates the impact of the ICELT program on participants' personal and professional skills and attitudes and their motivation and experience of their volunteer work with SPELT. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 6 ICELT participants turned teacher leaders; all of them started their professional journey as ICELT participants and are now serving the profession as leaders through the SPELT platform, and/or in the broader teaching-learning scenario in Pakistan.

1 Introduction

Recent years have witnessed the growth of teacher associations for English language teachers around the world. Both TESOL and IATEFL, two major international teacher

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associations, have a wide network of TAs from around the world. TESOL currently has more than 100 TAs as affiliate members; the IATEFL website lists 121 associate members (TAs) in different parts of the world (see www.tesol.org; and www.iatefl.org respectively) [accessed 15/10/16].

Falcao and Szesztay in their opening article in the book ‘Developing a teacher association: An introduction’ (2006, p. 13) highlight two reasons for teachers to join teacher associations. These are: practical benefits, and a sense of belonging to a professional community. One of the major functions of language teacher associations is to provide a range of professional development opportunities for its members (Lamb, 2012; Paran, 2016). Normally, the TAs offer their members both products and services for continuing professional development such as a resource center or library, and workshops and short and long-term courses. Additionally, there is an annual conference that aims to bring together teachers and leaders in the field for mutual sharing of ideas and networking. The TA newsletter or journal keeps the members abreast of latest developments in the field as well as other opportunities for professional and personal growth both inside and outside the TA (see Falcao & Szesztay, 2006). For specific case studies about TAs work in South Asia and the MENA region/Arab Peninsula, please see (Aubrey & Coombe, 2010; Gnawali, 2016; Khan, 2010; Khanna, 2010).

One of the problems faced by language teacher associations is the dearth of volunteers willing to spend time and effort on organizational work (Gomez, 2011). However, a consultancy report on SPELT identified the spirit of volunteerism among SPELT members as one of the key reasons for its success (Ali, 2012).

This chapter is divided into two parts. Part I provides a brief introduction to SPELT and its professional development programs in Pakistan. In part II, the impact of ICELT on participants’ personal and professional development and their motivation and experience of their voluntary work with SPELT, as revealed through the semi-structured interviews of 6 ICELTers—5 current and 1 past SPELT leaders—is presented; all of them started their professional journey as ICELT participants and are now serving the ELT profession as leaders through the SPELT platform, and/or in the broader teaching-learning scenario in Pakistan. This indicates that TAs can help improve the quality of teaching-learning in the classroom through needs-based professional development programs. Additionally, these participants can become an important resource for the TAs as future leaders.

2 SPELT: A Brief Description

In Pakistan, the need for a professional association of English language teachers was realized in the early 80s in the wake of the growing demand for improving the quality of English language teaching-learning in the country. At that time, English language teaching was not accorded the status of a profession in Pakistan (Haque, 1983). In fact, the English departments in universities offered only literature-based courses and looked down upon language teaching as an ‘inferior’ activity. The majority of

teachers entered the profession with no specialized training in teaching English as a second or foreign language. Additionally, the curriculum at government run teacher training colleges was outdated and their tutors considered Audio-Lingual Method as the most modern way of teaching English in 1984 (British Council, 1986; Husain & Sarwar, 1989). Unsurprisingly, concern was being voiced in all circles about the falling standards of English in Pakistan. To address this situation, SPELT was born in 1984 as a non-political and non-profit organization with two major aims: (1) to help improve the standard of teaching-learning of English at all levels in Pakistan; and (2) to provide a platform for English teachers in Pakistan for their professional development through the sharing of ideas and learning with and from each other. The mission and goals of SPELT, as recorded in the SPELT charter (1987, p. 1), are as follows:

SPELT's goals are to provide a professional forum for its members and practitioners teaching English as a Foreign/Second language, to facilitate effective communication, and to improve the teaching/learning standards of English in Pakistan.

The charter elaborates that in order to meet these goals, amongst other things, SPELT will “organize academic sessions, professional development programs, and teacher-research facilities” (SPELT Charter, 1987, p. 1). (Further details about SPELT can be found at www.spelt.ork.pk; and Baber, Sarwar, & Safdar, 2005).

SPELT's executive body, known as the Working Committee, comprises 7 coordinators, each with their own sub-committee of 3–5 members. Three coordinators are elected one year and four coordinators the next year. A coordinator is elected for a two-year term but can be re-elected for the same position for another term of two years. After completing their term of office (2–4 years), a coordinator needs to rotate off the working committee for at least two years; however, during this time they are encouraged to serve as a sub-committee member to guide the new coordinator. This allows for continuity in leadership while providing opportunities for new members to join the SPELT working committee on a regular basis.

An interesting observation in SPELT through the years has been that many of the participants of SPELT's long-term professional development programs (International Certificate in English Language Teaching, and the earlier Certificate for Overseas Teachers of English), offer their services as volunteers for the organization during or at the completion of their program. Normally, they start as members of a sub-committee and then, as they hone their leadership skills, they move up to important leadership positions in the SPELT working committee and other organizations in Pakistan.

2.1 Activities for Teacher Development in Pakistan

As mentioned earlier, SPELT was born in 1984 as a result of a felt need for professional development for English language teachers, particularly to support teachers who wanted to take more informed decisions in their classrooms. This section begins

with a brief overview of SPELT activities for professional development of teachers in Pakistan. Next, details of one of SPELT's long-term programs, the International Certificate in English Language Teaching (ICELT), being run successfully since 2004, are shared to provide the context for the data and findings presented in the second part of this chapter.

2.2 Monthly Academic Sessions: Developing a Culture of Teachers Learning with and from Each Other

Teachers are invited to share their classroom practices with each other in a monthly two-hour workshop, termed as "Academic Session". Normally, one practicing teacher presents one or more teaching strategies used in their classrooms successfully. This is followed by a collaborative exploration of what was done and why. This allows the participants to examine their teaching practices with peers in a supportive learning environment, which in turn, helps them develop new understanding of issues affecting classroom language teaching and learning.

Thirty-three years after SPELT was established, the monthly Academic Sessions still runs regularly. This session is open to both members and non-members. As such, it continues to provide English language teachers in Pakistan a shared platform for professional development. Additionally, the academic sessions serve as a training ground for new presenters to polish their presentation skills before they present to a wider audience in teacher education workshops or at conferences.

2.3 Annual Conference

In September 1985, a seminar was organized to celebrate SPELT's first anniversary; the theme was to evaluate compulsory English courses from Grades 1 to Bachelor's degree level (SPELT, 1985). The evaluation report was subsequently published and made available to teachers and policy makers. Since then 33 international conferences have been held reaching out to more than 2000 teachers each year through the SPELT annual chain conference organized by its four chapters across Pakistan (see also Aronson, 2014; Blok, 2015; Sarwar, 2011, 2016).

2.4 Newsletter/Journal

A two-page cyclostyled newsletter was started soon after the inception of SPELT; this has evolved over the years into an ISSN registered refereed journal titled 'SPELT

Quarterly'. The aim is to provide the practitioners a mutual space to share context-appropriate methodology and low-cost materials and activities for classroom use.

2.5 Workshops and Courses for Teacher Development

As mentioned earlier, when SPELT was formed there was hardly an avenue open for professional development of English language teachers in Pakistan. More importantly, most of the one-shot in-service training workshops and teacher training courses organized by the government did not offer specialized ELT training. As part of its mission and to fill this gap, SPELT started offering ELT workshops and short and long-term courses for teacher development. A key function noted by Falcao and Szesztay (2006, p. 17) for TAs is "to take a lead in providing in-service training opportunities". Soon after its inception, SPELT started offering a one-year training course, Practical Teacher Training Course (PTTC), which instantly became popular. However, trainee feedback suggested the need for government recognition of the course, to add to their qualifications portfolio and possible salary enhancement. After exploring different avenues for affiliation in Pakistan and abroad, SPELT got affiliation from the Cambridge University for their Royal Society of Arts Certificate for Overseas Teachers of English (COTE) in 1989; this was replaced by the International Certificate for English Language Teachers (ICELT) in 2004.

2.6 Features of the ICELT Program

The ICELT course has two components: 50-h face to face teaching (Phase 1), and follow-up support for the participants throughout the academic year to translate their learning into classroom practice along with classroom-based assignments (Phase 2). The course also focuses on participants' language enrichment through language awareness tasks and assignments.

During Phase 2, the course participants get an opportunity to observe their tutors teaching in their respective classrooms. This, along with classroom observation by peers and tutors, allows them to observe exemplary teaching, and obtain feedback on how to adapt techniques and strategies, and learning resources to their classrooms. The classroom-based assignments also encourage reflection on their teaching and assessment practices in light of their new learning.

Part I of this paper has provided the background information about SPELT's mission and its major activities such as SPELT's one-year long professional development programs—ICELT and COTE in the context of English language teaching in Pakistan. Part II of the paper presents the findings of a small-scale research study based on semi-structured interviews of 5 ICELT and 1 COTE graduate; all of them have been involved variously with the organization's major activities and

management since completing the SPELT programs, and currently hold or have held key leadership positions in SPELT.

3 The Study

The aims of the study were to find out, first, the impact of the ICELT program on participants' personal and professional development and career enhancement, and second, their motivation and experience of active and long-term volunteer work with SPELT in different leadership positions.

3.1 Methodology

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 6 graduates of the ICELT (or earlier COTE) program using purposive sampling. All of them are either serving or have served SPELT in different capacities; 4 are current SPELT coordinators (out of a total of 7), one is a sub-committee member, and 1 is past coordinator. The interviewer knew all the participants very well, having taught some of them in the COTE and ICELT program and/or worked with them in the SPELT Working Committee. Interestingly, it seemed that our earlier relationship of mutual trust and respect helped the participants to open up to me as a researcher, even though they were warned that despite anonymity and confidentiality of data, it may be possible for their close associates to recognize them, an issue highlighted earlier in small-scale case study research (Shamim & Qureshi, 2010).

Details about the study participants are given in Table 1.

3.2 Findings and Discussion

According to the participants, their primary motivation for joining the ICELT program was their need for continuous professional development. Some were persuaded to join the program by their colleagues—ICELT graduates—and some senior SPELTers visiting their schools. Roheena and Ayesha, both content teachers at the time of joining ICELT, are working as skilled English teachers and teacher educators, but also helping their colleagues and students by integrating the teaching of English with content subjects.

Table 1 Study participants' roles before and after completing the ICELT program

Participant	Current role(s)	Pre-ICELT role	Post-ICELT role(s)	Future development plans
Roheena	Teacher of senior classes at a prestigious private school; teaches preparation classes for IELTS and TOEFL; Teacher trainer	School teacher (Math and Social Studies)	'extraordinary' teacher, teacher educator, textbook writer, curriculum reviewer, presenter at conferences and contributed articles to the SPELT journal	Continue to improve her professional skills as English teacher and teacher trainer
Meher	Principal of a prestigious private school; ICELT Course Director	School teacher (English)	Skilled teacher and teacher trainer; presenter at conferences	To complete her Ph.D.
Ayesha	ELT Consultant; coordinator, principal, workshop leader and ELT	School teacher (Teaching History, Geography, Pakistan Studies and Social Studies at the secondary level)	Skilled teacher, teacher educator, textbook writer, curriculum reviewer, presenter at conferences	To improve her skills as teacher and teacher trainer, particularly for Content Integrated Language Learning
Zainab	Teaching adults at a prestigious language school; Visiting faculty at a University ^a	House wife	Skilled teacher, teacher educator	To continue to learn through attending PD programs
Zakir	ELT Consultant (trainer)-has his own consultancy firm	Classroom teacher, teaching senior level classes in a private school	Skilled teacher and trainer	To improve his skills as teacher and teacher trainer
Samina	Teacher Associate (EAP) at an international university in Karachi, Pakistan	Part-time teaching (intermittently) in schools; busy 'raising 5 kids'	Skilled teacher and teacher trainer; presenter at conferences	Pursuing online DELTA course and M.Phil.

^aZainab has recently taken retirement due to ill health. She now devotes her time to her voluntary work in SPELT only

3.2.1 ICELT: A Life-Changing Experience

Roheena described her experience of ICELT as a ‘life changing experience’. According to her it brought about a “190° turn” in her career and transformed her from an “ordinary to an extraordinary teacher”. For Zakir, completing the ICELT “was a sort of ‘U-turn—rewarding professionally, [but] not in terms of monetary gains”. He describes himself as “still a classroom teacher” [after completing ICELT] but with confidence to teach well, “I had my beliefs about teaching-learning earlier also but there was much to learn-lots of learning and making sense of them through ICELT”.

Meher shared that, “ICELT opened up my mind—I became a ‘specialist’ teacher; the course equipped me with skills to diagnose learners’ problems in learning English and select and devise appropriate needs-based strategies to help them”. Similarly, Samina describes her experience of the ICELT program as a “big leap” in her personal and professional life, “a real eye-opener”: “This was the first time I realized that it’s not enough to have good language skills to teach English; in fact, you need training to become an ELT professional, knowing not only a variety of activities to use in your classroom, [which she had learned from attending workshops] but actually learning the background theory why [to use them] and where they are coming from”. For Ayesha, the ICELT program provided “space for fresh breathing” and subsequently, opened for her “new horizons—a world to explore”, as will be discussed in the next section.

Zainab shared that the COTE experience impacted her a lot. This was because, “In COTE I got an understanding of what I was doing and why”. Zainab shared that she had never imagined herself as a teacher, “But when I got into it I enjoyed so much—if it wouldn’t have been for SPELT training I would not have enjoyed it so much”. Remembering her first class, Zainab said it was a sea of faces, but her training helped her to do some classroom activities which the students enjoyed. Also, in every class the students were very receptive when she tried to do something she had learned in the course, “I changed tasks—didn’t go by the book—the students enjoyed—I enjoyed.... In the faculty meeting when a teacher complained that students copy the exercises from previous students, I said ‘Why don’t you change the tasks?’ I demonstrated how this could be done—everyone was amazed—this was a morale booster—gave me more confidence”.

The career trajectory of all the ICELT graduates shows both lateral expansion of knowledge, skills and experiences, and an upward movement on their career ladder. For example, after completing their ICELT program, they started conducting SPELT-organized workshops and short courses; also they have presented regularly at the SPELT annual conference and contributed articles to the ‘SPELT Quarterly’ based on their classroom experience. The inner confidence gained from SPELT training and peers provided them with greater confidence to continue to implement innovative methodology in their classrooms even after the course, despite occasional setbacks. More importantly, these experiences helped them develop life skills that have assisted them subsequently both in their personal and professional lives. For example, Meher claimed that the ICELT was like a roller-coaster ride, “exhilarating but very challenging at the same time. [But] It developed in me the grit to face

challenges, to deal with the problems by facing them rather than evading or running away from them". For Ayesha, the experience of working on the assignments was also very challenging but enriching at the same time, particularly the opportunity to tutor and learn collaboratively with her peers, "Whatever I got to learn [I thought] I must teach to others; that's my learning approach".

The participants' displayed some personal traits as well as general trends in their career development. First, they were all motivated to join the course as they were not satisfied with their current teaching practices or needed a new direction in their careers. Second, they are all life-long learners who see ICELT as a major breakthrough in their professional development journey. Hence, after completing the course, all the participants have continued to enhance their knowledge and skills through using further opportunities for professional development, both formal and informal. Some have undertaken higher education or aspire to do so to improve their qualifications but more importantly, to continue to improve themselves as ELT professionals. Third, they've all experienced role expansion and career enhancement post ICELT, moving from being teachers to teacher leaders. As such, they have engaged in curriculum review, textbook development and training of English teachers through the SPELT platform and elsewhere. This indicates that all of them are life-long learners constantly looking for and using opportunities to implement and improve their current knowledge in diverse settings. Meher's¹ motto in life sums up the dominant belief among the study participants: "Success is not that you are number 1, number 2, or number 3. Success is that you continue to grow".

Findings of this small-scale study indicate that SPELT's long-term teacher training programs—COTE and ICELT—have had a high impact on study participants' personal and professional development as well as their careers. In fact, it brought about a seismic shift in their beliefs and attitude in their own role as ELT professionals in particular and towards teaching-learning in general. What explains their transformation from an 'ordinary' to an 'extraordinary' teacher? One of the main features of the ICELT Program is the active support provided to the participants by their peers and course tutors during their school-based implementation of their new learning. This seems to have given them the confidence to experiment with innovative methodology and learn both from their successes and failures during post-lesson reflection. Farrell's study (2008) with 60 Singaporean teachers about their school placement experience during their initial teacher education program indicates that teachers value greatly the support they get from the school personnel during their practicum. Follow-up support in the implementation phase has also been identified as a major indicator of professional development programs' impact on teachers' self-efficacy and student learning outcomes (Ingvarson, Meiers, & Beavis, 2003; Waters, 2006).

A limitation of the present study is that it did not include student learning outcomes. However, the evidence quoted above from teacher interviews indicates participants' improved levels of confidence and feelings of self-efficacy. This helped them to share their learning with their peers and others as teacher educators as well

¹Pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of the study participants.

as engage in curriculum review and textbook development. This expansion of roles from teachers to teacher leaders opened new avenues for the participants both for sharing their learning as well as their own continuous professional development (see also Shamim & Anderson, 2010).

Thus, the ICELT model in Phase 1, followed by peer and tutor support for the implementation of their new learning in the classroom in Phase 2 seems to be a key impact on participants' changed beliefs and improved classroom practices.

3.2.2 Motivation and Experience of Working with SPELT

SPELT, like other language teacher associations, is run by volunteer members. This section describes ICELT graduates' motivation and experience of their volunteer work with SPELT.

As mentioned earlier, a clear majority of ICELT participants volunteer their services for SPELT during and/or after completion of their course. Their motivation is often rooted in their experience of working closely with SPELT tutors during their one-year course of study. They normally join the SPELT working committee (the executive body), as a sub-committee member to understand the workings of the organization and to be mentored to work as coordinators subsequently. Their commitment to SPELT as volunteers is evident in their willingness to continue serving the organization for a second term and/or as a sub-committee member (or in some other capacity) in the SPELT Working Committee (see Table 2).

The majority of the study participants were already members of SPELT when they enrolled for SPELT teacher training programs. However, they became more actively involved in its activities either during or after completing the program. A question at this stage is: What explains the participants' sustained volunteer work with SPELT? The participants' motivation and experience of working with SPELT is presented in the next section.

3.2.3 SPELT Is a Place to Learn and Relax

There was general agreement that everyone felt respected and cared for in SPELT. For example, the participants appreciated the fact that in SPELT even new and junior members are treated as equals. This helps to make SPELT a "safe haven, a place that allows you space to become aware of and develop your personal and professional strengths... I'm at ease here, at home" (Samina). According to Roheena, "SPELT is a place to relax, my 'maika' [parents' home]". Additionally, as Zainab shared, working with SPELT has given them confidence to deal with different kinds of people and situations: "[It] taught me how to juggle people, things, and situations".

Table 2 Study participants' leadership roles in SPELT

Participant	Year of completing ICELT	Current role in SPELT	Past role(s) in SPELT	Future plans
Roheena	2011	Academic Coordinator (2014–2017)	Sub-committee member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To improve SPELT marketing and communication strategies – To serve as Academic sub-committee member
Meher	2005	Journal Coordinator (2016–2017); member conference sub-committee (2017)	Conference Coordinator	Wants to continue as Journal Coordinator for 2nd term (2018–19)
Ayesha	2013	Finance sub-committee member (2014–17)	Volunteer	Wants to continue as sub-committee member only due to other engagements
Zainab	1990	Finance Coordinator (2016–2017)	Program Coordinator; sub-committee member	Wants to continue for 2nd term (2018–19) to institutionalize procedures
Zakir	2008	Member Program sub-committee (2015–17); member conference sub-committee (2017)	Academic Coordinator; Conference Coordinator	Wants to continue his association with SPELT in other ways (even if not actively involved for personal reasons)
Samina	2013	Working Committee Coordinator (2014–2017)	Sub-committee member	Continue as Academic sub-committee member

3.2.4 Caring and Sharing in SPELT

Zainab was appreciative of the support she received from SPELT leaders and fellow SPELTers: “Throughout my struggles [both personal and professional] I was treated very well. They make you feel at home”. Similarly, Ayesha explains that her continued motivation for being an active SPELTER comes from the opportunity it provides to work with experienced members of the team, their welcoming attitude and their willingness to mentor novice teachers/younger colleagues.

Moreover, serving SPELT gave Zainab a chance to get away from problems at home: “I felt this was important—maybe I neglected my children a little but the excitement, the sense of belonging, being part of a group gave me energy”. In the same vein Meher shared that she almost dropped the ICELT course due to personal problems, but the tutors and the Course Director encouraged and supported her, and as a result, she was able to get back on track. Recalling this experience, she shares, “this has taught me a lesson for life—never give into pressure, face the challenges and find ways to deal with them”. To this day, she practices this when faced with any management or other challenges in her job and/or life in general.

3.2.5 SPELT Provides a Platform to Spread Your Wings Endlessly

The participants were unanimous in their view that SPELT provides a platform for continuous ongoing professional development through attending workshops and courses and participating in teacher training projects for a variety of teachers from the very disadvantaged to the elite private schools. Also, there are opportunities for textbook writing, curriculum review etc. For example, Ayesha shared that recently she was invited to be part of the textbook writing team for classes VI–VIII for the Sindh Textbook Board, the body responsible for producing textbooks for government schools in the province of Sindh. As such, she got the opportunity to attend a training program for content writers conducted by the British Council. This gave her the confidence to write a story and 3 poems for these textbooks. Also, she did language enhancement projects for teachers of different school systems.

Samina shared that she has learned a lot of management skills through her work with SPELT. For example, “I wasn’t aware of what minutes [of a meeting] are. I learned all these basics: how to acknowledge and respond to emails, go through files”. She has gained confidence through her work with SPELT: “I can contribute, I can participate, be quick on my feet, [I’m now] not afraid of making mistakes... I’m not afraid at all of taking decisions—I do not panic... I can now spread out my wings”. However, she acknowledges that none of this would have been possible without support from her mentors in SPELT. She feels she can never stay away from SPELT now despite her many engagements. “I give full credit for where I am right now to SPELT”. She shared that after she rotates off the Working Committee in a few months’ time—“I won’t be so active maybe, but this is a part of me—I don’t think that ever at all [sic] I am not associated with SPELT”. Similarly, Meher’s role as conference coordinator, in particular, has given her an inner confidence in her

own skills and abilities: “I know what I am and what other people say doesn't bother me”. This self-awareness along with honing of her leadership skills as a member of the SPELT working committee has helped her both in her personal life and career enhancement.

SPELT also provides opportunities for networking. For example, Zainab shared that “During my volunteer work with SPELT I got a lot of recognition and opportunity to meet with, for example, the GM of OUP”.

3.2.6 Identifying and Nurturing Potential Leaders

It seems that SPELT leaders, particularly those who are also ICELT tutors, identify potential leaders from ICELT participants and then nurture them as prospective leaders. For example, Zakir shared that he was identified as a “good resource for SPELT” during the ICELT program. According to him, the tutors saw his commitment –“I had lots of questions during sessions”. Hence, he was invited to join the SPELT Working Committee, “[and then] “I made my way towards success”. He feels that he already had the skills for being a leader, but they were nurtured and polished during his work with SPELT. Also, affiliation with SPELT provided him with opportunities to apply all his learning and continue to improve himself professionally as a trainer through attending workshops. Zakir acknowledges the role of SPELT in his personal and professional development, “I owe a lot to SPELT”.

According to Nobre (2011), recruiting and retention of volunteers for an organization needs to be systematized with special attention being paid to some ‘extrinsic’ factors such as a sense of achievement, acknowledgment, recognition, rewards, belonging to a good team, and personal/professional development (Szesztay, 2006 as cited in Nobre, 2011, p. 32). These, in addition to intrinsic reasons for serving the organization, provide the benefit of ‘having your cake and eating it too’ (Underhill, 2006 as cited in Nobre, 2011, p. 32). Nobre suggests that the extrinsic rewards might include systematic and planned opportunities for the volunteers to develop a range of skills through engaging with the TAs work such as financing and marketing. The TAs may also consider issuing certificates for volunteers’ work in different areas for their career enhancement. Additionally, the TA might provide scholarships and funds for them to undertake courses in areas of identified needs. TAs can also provide networking opportunities to its volunteers that may not be possible in more traditional contexts. Finally, “an efficient volunteer will have excellent professional exposure (national and international exposure) which might work as a springboard for several other challenges and new professional perspectives” (Nobre, 2011, p. 33). It seems that SPELT provides its volunteers with opportunities for personal/professional growth and networking. At present funds are not provided for the volunteers to attend workshops and courses to develop other required skills such as financial management. However, the ‘reciprocal relationship’ identified by Gnawali (2016, p. 177) is evident in ICELT graduates long-term association with SPELT as current or past leaders. On one hand, they serve the organization in various capacities including organizing events and activities such as teacher development workshops

and the annual conference; on the other, they develop the required teacher educator, management and other skills ‘on-the-job’. In this regard, the mentoring role played by senior members of SPELT, and their constant encouragement and confidence in the participants’ capacity to undertake SPELT-related projects have played a key role in participants’ long-term affiliation and active volunteering for SPELT.

It is noteworthy that the majority of SPELT members are women. It has been observed that, in Pakistan, women are expected to fulfill their household responsibilities as mother and wife first. Also, volunteer work by women is frowned upon by family and friends, as this is a non-income generating activity. In this scenario, SPELT is perceived as providing a support network to its female volunteer members and leaders (6 out of 7 current SPELT coordinators are women). The space for ‘caring and sharing’ provided by SPELT seems to give the members a sense of belonging and identity leading to their personal and professional well-being (Mendes et al., 2016).

All the study participants have had an active involvement as volunteers with SPELT since completing their ICELT program.² The ICELT graduates’ initial involvement with SPELT can be explained by their respect and admiration for their course tutors who, according to one participant, provided them the support that they had never received from their teachers before. Samina’s comment sums up the participants’ views well: “Their passion for teaching and professionalism left a deep mark on me—they reminded me of my mother who is also an educationist”. Additionally, the open and welcoming attitude of the SPELT leaders and particularly, their mentoring role, seems to have played a key role in the participants’ motivation to offer their services for the organization. However, their long-term association as volunteers can be explained by their reciprocal relationship (Gnawali, 2016) with the organization: it provides them a ‘safe haven’—a professional and social network for discussing personal and professional matters. Thus, while on the one hand they serve the organization, on the other, it serves them by providing them with rich opportunities for networking, and continuous professional and personal development facilitated by peers and mentors in a conducive environment. This in turn, gives them recognition as ELT professionals both at home and abroad.

4 Conclusion

Several opportunities for teachers’ professional development were initiated by SPELT as a result of the felt need of its members. The focused goals were capacity building and the improvement of standards of English in Pakistan. Some positive outcomes of these initiatives, particularly the one-year long training programs, include the participants’ professional and personal growth, career enhancement, and volunteer work in various leadership roles in SPELT. The chapter presents the trajectory

²Some of them have been dormant for a while due to personal reasons. However, they have kept themselves associated with SPELT through their network of SPELT friends and associates.

of 6 participants—all of them are serving either in the current working committee or being groomed to take up key leadership positions in the organization through their work in various sub-committees. An examination of the motivation and experience of the participants reveals that COTE/ICELT was a life changing experience for them. The participants' career trajectories and particularly the expansion of their roles from a teacher to teacher educator, curriculum reviewer, and textbook writer are testimonies of the impact of SPELT's long-term teacher training programs on their personal and professional lives. All of them were encouraged by the SPELT leaders and provided with opportunities to engage with the organization in different capacities, during or on completion of their course. As a result, they felt both motivated and confident to participate more actively in managing the TA as leaders. This helped them to continue their personal and professional development on the SPELT platform. All this while, they mutually sustain and support each other as SPELTers, which may be the secret of SPELT's survival despite all odds.

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Developing Communities of Practice Through Language Teacher Associations in Oman



Junifer Abatayo

Abstract One of the most important concerns of teachers' professional development is their involvement in language teacher associations and specialized academic groups. Language teacher associations (LTA) are expected to provide sustainable collaborative learning activities that are beneficial to the teachers. This chapter, therefore, explores how language teachers in Oman develop communities of practice through their involvement in language associations. In addition, this chapter draws from my own managerial experience in education as an organizer of language associations and delves into the strengths and limitations of teachers' involvement in language associations through analyzing their own reflective practices and the use of the Community of Practice (CoP) model to illustrate how their transformative learning activities contributed to their professional growth. Finally, recommendations on how LTAs could provide effective and beneficial professional development to the teachers and how to intrinsically motivate teachers are included in this chapter hoping that these would eventually have a valuable impact on teachers' transformation.

1 Introduction: Why Create Language Associations?

I know that I am not alone in asking and inquiring why there is a need for teachers to get involved in academic organizations. Considering that the work is voluntary and involves a number of responsibilities, why should one join and share the burden of the tasks and responsibilities from its creation, performance of roles, and extending responsibilities to other parts of the community. In fact, it is very difficult to find active members who are willing to do the job. In addition, it is also time consuming to conduct meetings, organize and attend conferences and other professional development activities. Teachers also find it difficult to take on roles in managing the association considering their teaching hours, committee work and other institutional involvements.

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In this context, I would like to highlight the very important role of teachers' involvement in language teacher associations and how their participation helps develop their own context of communities of practice. Their reflections are also vital in facilitating an ideal understanding of the language association's role in teachers' professional development.

Why should teachers form an association? Falcao and Szesztay (2006) indicate that forming an association can help improve the practice of language teaching and learning. In addition, getting involved in language teacher associations can also foster high academic and professional standards. If teachers are motivated to collaborate and extend mutual support among teachers in the academic circle, then they are capitalizing on the communities of practice where ideal practices dwell. According to Knowles (1980 as cited in Clair & Adger, 1999), teachers need to be self-directed and must show readiness to learn something new. He further adds that in order for teachers' development to succeed, the desire for immediate application of new skills, knowledge and meaning collaboration must take place.

1.1 Why Get Involved in Language Associations?

Teachers need to get involved in academic groups or associations for this can make them active collaborators in the academic community and might encourage them to become leaders leading and educating colleagues and other professionals on the significance of teacher involvement in the field. Szesztay (2005) shares two distinct reasons on why teachers join associations and she categorizes the benefits into two different categories. These include practical benefits and a sense of belonging. Practical benefits include attending the conference itself as a member or participant; enjoying a discounted registration fee; learning about new events and courses offered; listening to interesting lectures and talks thereby gaining fresh information from teachers and experts and most importantly, finding opportunities for professional development. When teachers were asked about their beliefs regarding what benefits they can get in joining language teacher associations, they highlighted the following:

1. Belonging to a family of language teachers.
2. Keeping themselves abreast of new perspectives in teaching and learning.
3. Getting in touch with other teachers and peers.
4. Enjoying team spirit or team feeling.
5. Being in a community of colleagues.
6. Meeting teachers and language practitioners from around the globe.
7. Networking opportunities.
8. Professional development and self-fulfillment.

There are undeniable benefits in joining professional associations and one of the most highly valued effects is a 'sense of belonging'. This is a chance where one can meet and interact with many people who have different experiences and good

practices worth sharing in the community. Belonging to a group or organization increases the odds that you will learn something you may need to know someday or meet a person you can help or someone who will help you. Interacting with people can also offer a number of opportunities such as networking, career development and getting published. Woody (2012) states that publications that a group puts out can help professionals in advancing their career. Being a member allows you to publish your own work as well, which can have a valuable impact on your professional career. To be a part of a community gives you a source of inspiration and eventually allows members to take further decisions in helping the organization grow.

Dortch (2012) also lists some reasons why joining a professional association is beneficial and well worth the time and effort:

1. Access to education and training. This allows all members of the association to know and learn about opportunities in terms of educational activities and training that are useful in advancing themselves in the fields of teaching and learning. Communities of practice always provide a shared vision towards achieving effective education.
2. Access to membership directories. Most of the associations maintain directories of names and professional groups and this can help the community stay well informed about impending activities and offers interesting opportunities through linkage and international connections.
3. Access to certification and licensing programs. Many associations support member certification and licensing programs. In fact, this is one reason why some institutions are encouraging their teachers to get involved in teacher associations, for it offers valuable information on certification and accreditation. There are licensing offices or commissions that are offering free workshops to help academic institutions maintain teaching standards and elevate teaching and learning practices.
4. Privileged access to industry events and conferences. This may qualify active members of the association for discounts or special access to upcoming conferences, workshops, and other related events in the community. Not only discounted conferences, sometimes members can also avail themselves of free and/or discounted books and other teaching materials that are useful in the classroom.
5. Access to innovations and new developments. Associations let you stay on top of new products, services and innovations especially in education, teaching and learning. In this digital age, as our students are keeping themselves connected to the internet-knowledge-community, it is also a good practice for teachers to be on top of the information age. This can make teachers not only effective users, but also educated providers of knowledge and information.
6. Opportunities to give back to the community. You can use your membership to share your knowledge with other members in the community. This also helps promote and develop communities of practice where teachers can achieve connectivity and establish social connectedness. The community where we belong is the community that reflects our practices and shared goals. In order for a community to develop, we must share and give back the knowledge we have learned and

therefore create a community of practice that values educational development of its members and stakeholders.

7. Networking opportunities. Undoubtedly, the most important benefit of these associations is that they provide their members and the community with an excellent opportunity to network with other professionals. Networking is essential in a community where people share practices, create and foster knowledge to understand the social learning environment. Supporting a community of practice or network of professionals is linking people to others who have shared practices. Sharing a practice is not enough to form a community; people must have connectivity (Andriessen, 2005).

2 The Context of the Community of Practice (CoP)

The idea of communities of practice is popularly attributed to Lave and Wenger's book on situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Hoadley (2012) states that communities of practice are a model of learning where people take memberships in and participate in developmental activities in a community that serves as home of the shared practices. He adds that a community of practice is a community that shares practices. In addition, Lave and Wenger (1991) share that individuals who join a community normally take up its practices and participate in its activities, therefore taking up also the identity of the group. This also allows them to get involved in learning and cooperating activities with their peers or colleagues and allows them to be in charge of their own development and learning.

The community of practice model is defined as a group or teams of professionals who share good teaching and learning practices that promote the solutions to problems (Wenger, 1998; Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). Wang, Gitsaki and Moni (2011) also add that a community of practice is a venue where individuals share their best practices and passion on improving their teaching and where they learn new skills and implement new plans and initiatives. Wenger (1998) lists the three main characteristics of the community of practice that include mutual engagement, a joint enterprise, and a shared repertoire. An example of this community of practice is when teachers meet and discuss new teaching and learning strategies (mutual engagement) and share their knowledge and expertise through their own reflective practices in the classroom (a shared repertoire) in order to improve and achieve optimum learning (a joint enterprise). This allows teachers to have an open and informal setting that leads to having a certain degree of informality, but high in connectivity. Community of Practice as social learning system also reflects three components: domain, community, and practice. A domain in a Community of Practice (CoP) is not just a group that shares a common or shared interest but one that is committed to the interest or shared vision. Simply put, you must be willing to work towards that interest of the community. Further, community suggests that you engage with the group in common activities and other related events, work together, cooperate and collaborate, and share information to help and support each other to achieve

a common interest or goal. Practice means that all the members are practitioners. In this context, these refer to teachers, language educators, and other professionals in the field. Communities of practice are grounded in situated theories of knowledge where knowledge itself belongs to people and individuals and enacted through common shared practice (Hoadley, 2012). With teachers' perceptions, experiences and reflections, this chapter hopes to add valuable information towards developing communities of practice through creating language associations in Oman.

3 Methodology

3.1 Research Design

A semi-structured interview was conducted in three different professional development contexts- in a conference, coffee meet ups, and professional development workshops organized by some institutions. The interview was informal so that teachers could freely share their thoughts about the benefits of joining language associations.

3.2 Setting

The chapter shares some contexts and situations of some teachers who have shared experiences and expressed concerns and issues regarding joining language teacher associations and other professional development activities as part of their community of practice. Teachers involved in this chapter come from different parts of the world, in most cases having a good number of teaching experiences both at the preparatory level and in the tertiary education sector. In fact, some of the teachers have been involved in organizing conferences and symposia in their previous working environments. They were actively involved in helping teachers and other professionals in continuing the development of their skills, and benefit from the experience from their colleagues thus contributing to the communities of practice.

Teachers in Oman truly have the opportunities to continue their professional growth, learning, and teaching. However, the opportunity of involving themselves in these organizations is limited. My direct contact and experiences with language teachers not only in Oman but also with others who are teaching in the Gulf has been very useful in promoting the creation of language associations for teachers. Their reflections and involvement have also helped in advocating communities of practice being associated with knowledge management and learning as social practice.

Table 1 Interviewees' background

Interviewee	Qualifications	Gender	Years of teaching experience	Specialization	Institution location
Jaycer	Ph.D.	Male	21	Linguistics	Sohar
Jason	Ph.D.	Male	12	ELT	Sohar
Melanie	Ph.D.	Female	11	TESOL	Saham
Kristine	MA	Female	17	ELT	Muscat
Mark	MA	Male	6	ELT	Muscat
Virgo	MA	Female	22	ELT	Musana
Karen	MA	Female	8	Linguistics	Al Suwaiq
Jeremy	Ph.D.	Male	16	English Education	Liwa
Alma	Ph.D.	Female	16	Linguistics	Shinas
Ker	Ph.D.	Male	16	English	Buraimi
JJ	MA	Female	14	English	Shinas

Names used here are pseudonyms

3.3 Participants

Eleven teachers from different colleges and universities in Oman participated in the interviews. During the interview, I asked questions relating to their reasons for joining language associations, their involvement in the professional development activities, and the challenges and limitations they experienced as members or participants. Their reflections on their involvement were also included in the discussions for these are vital in understanding their peripheral participation in the construct of communities of practice.

Table 1 shows the profile of the teachers who agreed to share their perceptions and experiences regarding their involvement in forming and joining language associations. Six of the teachers are PhD holders and five have MA qualifications. Interestingly, they all have a good number of years of teaching experience in the Gulf. Data and other relevant information in this paper were collected through individual interviews and meeting transcripts.

4 Results and Discussion

4.1 Teachers' Perceptions of Teacher Associations

The following section highlights some of the actual responses of the participants. Perceptions on joining language associations and their own reflective practices are also included in the transcript.

I taught in Saudi Arabia for 6 years and in my teaching experience, I could still remember that there was no language association in my area. There was one, but it was very far. I cannot even attend meetings and conferences. The registration fee is sometimes expensive. I really wanted to join and participate in language associations or groups, but my teaching load is heavy and I don't have time even for my own professional development. Now that I am in Oman, I really tried my best to attend workshops and conferences. Yes, I am not a member of any organization, but I do attend seminars organized in my college. I still believe that my attendance to workshops and trainings are beneficial to my own professional development. It would be a great idea if you are a part of a community, if I may call it association of teachers, because it is a venue where I can learn many things and I can also share at the same time (Jaycer).

Oh yes, I am a member of a language association but I find it not really useful for some reasons. Some of the presentations were not properly selected according to what I need as a teacher; not meeting my professional needs. I learned so many new things through attending conferences. Reflections are very important and I think academic institutions should design workshops that cater to the needs of the teachers. I hope to join language associations in Oman, if there is any, so I can also share my teaching beliefs and experiences. It feels good to be in the community where teachers share practices and different experiences (Jayson).

I don't think joining language associations is practical. The fact that most of the associations are very far from my region, I opted to attend meetings and workshops in my college. Anyway, it is the same fruit we eat every day. Don't get me wrong, I still believe that joining associations, in this case language groups, can still be very important. I'd like to share that in my college, we need to go through a strict procedure if you want to attend a conference. My impression in fact is that, the management is not really supportive of the teachers' development. Professional development in house, yes we do have such activities, but attending conferences and workshops outside of the college is such a headache. One very important lesson I want to speak on is the amount of knowledge you will get if you are in a community of professionals. I can be a real teacher where my voice is heard and respected (Melanie).

I am very much interested, but _____ ! Do you think we have the time to do all these? In our own setting, I mean in the college, it is a challenge even if you will attend a conference. My line manager sometimes doesn't allow us to attend the conference. I am glad that there are workshops organized by some professionals in our area and that is the only chance I can improve and keep myself abreast in the world of teaching. If I learn something new such as teaching tips and techniques, I am sure it will also benefit my colleagues and others who are in teaching profession. By doing this, I must say that I am contributing to the development of the community, or community of practice (Kristine).

There is no language association here in Oman. What I know is that there are institutions holding conferences with registration fee. The event is helpful, in fact, I attended four international conferences here in Oman and I find it useful. Sometimes I feel that we need to go out and talk to other professionals, we need updates, new things, and even new technology to use in the classrooms. I want to learn more effective teaching and learning. Do we have an organization in Oman? I haven't heard of any. Are you interested in creating a language association? If so, please count me in (Mark).

I think it is high time for Oman to create and establish its own association for language teachers. There are academic institutions in the country who act as hosts of conferences and workshops, but there was no claim of it as a 'language association' as creator or organizer. The purpose of holding a conference in Oman is no different from other academic institutions because it is just the same with the normal hosting of academic symposium. The structure is the same such as plenary talk, parallel sessions and some professional paid sessions. I

wish I can see in the future an association created by groups of language teachers across the country. Teachers from different universities and colleges should collaborate and lead in assisting teachers in their professional development (Virgo).

I remember back in 2004, there was a group of teachers who started a focus group. Their objective is to keep the group up and running to prepare the members in creating a language association. I attended meetings and workshops, unfortunately the focus group died a natural death. Probably because of lack of support from the institution? Or it could be that some members have no time considering the heavy teaching loads and other tasks assigned to them. I strongly believe that getting involved in language associations can contribute also to the development of communities of practice. Teachers must learn how to take part in the creation of this academic group, for this will benefit us, the students and the academic community (Karen).

I can lead a role in forming a language association in Oman for I believe it can help us all teachers in enhancing and developing ourselves as facilitators of thought. Getting involved also means professional development where we can share good experiences and practices, therefore contributing to communities of practice. I would like to see a language association exist in Oman (Alma).

My understanding of communities of practice is when we involve ourselves in sharing lessons and good teaching principles and practice. My self-assessment as a teacher tells me that if you belong to a shared community, it really encourages me to improve myself in the practice of teaching. Moreover, community of practices is like my home where I can freely share my practices and teaches, most especially my reflections that are vital to the development of teaching profession. We are both in EFL context, sharing the same reflections can definitely help add to the growing bodies of knowledge relating to understanding our students, improving and maintaining teaching standards, and uplifting the spirits of our colleagues (JJ).

4.2 Teachers' Feedback and Reflections on Their Professional Development and Community of Practice

The interview shares valuable information regarding teachers' personal reflections on their teaching, involvement in professional development, and to the development of a community of practice. In their professional practice, teachers consider themselves as social beings. This means that they need to interact with their students and other people. This context goes beyond understanding their responsibilities in the classroom. They believe that learning as a social context is not confined only to the four corners of the classroom. People around them such as peers, colleagues, the local community and other professionals are important for they are involved in the educational process. This also proves that teachers have their own set of beliefs, values and assumptions. According to Tann (1993), personal theories are different ways of thinking about the teaching profession. Personal theory exists, and can change as teachers expose themselves to new experiences such as involvement in the academic community, training, and other professional development activities. This is also important because teachers need to understand their past and present professional experience as teachers in academia, and as learners in the community. When teachers share their

perceptions of their teaching and professional development, one can say that their own personal theories are tacit, and in some cases implicit. Scribner (1999) explains that professional development can have a variety of shapes. It differs from one place to the other and it can have a different scope and dimensions. Some are small and can have peripheral participants and members. The use of mix modalities can also be a reflection of professional development where teachers and other members meet face to face, sometimes through online and other media. Other structures of professional development have been created formally with regular meetings, set of officers, budgets and some developed with charters. In the case of some teachers in Oman, their professional development lies solely in the different committees organized by their respective departments. A teacher appointed head of the committee, organizes workshops and invites teachers to attend and participate. After each workshop or seminar, feedback sessions are organized and more often than not, no reflective feedback is conducted. This shows that the professional development activities where teachers are involved proved to be not functional probably because these are developed in order to achieve the requirement of the academic institution. Research and other sources within the professional literature clearly explain that quality in language education and effective reshaping of the teaching-learning practice is realized if issues of reflections are given importance. This can help teachers reflect on their practices and can definitely help them develop themselves professionally (Farrell, 2007). Some teachers shared their frustrations on the conduct of the professional development activities. They attend activities with no specific goals in mind relating to their roles and involvement. Al-Busaidi and Tuzlukova (2014) have shared the policy document of their professional development in which the following valuable information are outlined: The head and members of the team are responsible for faculty professional development, research, and induction and mentoring programs for demonstrators and new teachers. Responsibilities also include the identification of aims and goals, supervision and facilitation of professional development and research programs, identification and evaluation of professional development needs of the faculty and staff, investigation of professional development opportunities that take place in public and private colleges, universities and institutions inside and outside Oman and offering suggestions related to the acquisition of needed resources. Representing the Language Centre on forums related to professional development and research is also highlighted with the purpose of maintaining a database of relevant conferences, symposia and training workshops that are available in the region and in the world. Another value added to the committee is the supervision and maintenance of a webpage on professional development and training, creating short-term and long-term plans for professional development events throughout the academic year, providing various professional development strategies and effective options for individuals and groups of teachers. Further, the document mentions the preparation of certificates for teachers who actively participate in professional development sessions, engaging teachers in various types of reflective activities, including professional development programs such as on-line professional development groups and action research projects and initiating and conducting projects aimed at enhancing professional development at the Language Centre.

It is evident that the professional development plan and structure relate to the needs of the teachers. In fact, the structure is designed through the collected feedback and other information such as requests from teachers and results of analysis surveys. It was also very clear that continuous monitoring of teachers' needs in the teaching profession is vital to the development of their skills and abilities. When teachers are monitored in terms of their teaching practice, this becomes a vital part of their learning as they need to reflect on and articulate their own professional practice and priorities. This is important because it raises their consciousness of existing knowledge, helps them to evaluate and question their assumptions about education, teaching and learning and their own professional development, and allows them to gain access to understand and investigate the process of their careers (James, 2001).

One way for teachers to develop new meanings in their involvement is when they agree and share their own development and good practice in the community they belong to. Teachers take pleasure in learning about new teaching ideas especially if they will take part actively as learners and as members of the knowledge community. This results in teachers learning experientially therefore providing them with opportunities to think of others such as their peers and colleagues and other professionals in their field. This helps them understand that in a community where knowledge and practices are shared, they are constructing a community of practice through their professional development.

However, the need for the opportunity to get involved in the knowledge community is what teachers are claiming in order to advance their knowledge, skills and abilities. Teachers must interact and collaborate with others to receive great support and have determination in developing themselves in academia and in the community. Indeed, if teachers are to help bring out the best out of themselves, for teaching and learning, they need to work together effectively. Involving themselves in language associations can offer a splendid opportunity where they can improve themselves as teachers, promote and foster academic and professional standards, encourage support and cooperation among peers, provide mutual support to others, and encourage the development of a community- involve, learn and share.

5 Conclusion

Developing communities of practice through teachers' involvement in language associations can help strengthen their sense of identity and sense of achievement. This is central in sustaining motivation to help teachers and other professionals understand that, we learn through sharing. Learning because we allow ourselves to be part of a community, and sharing because we promote the value of good practice in the community. Teachers' involvement both in professional development and language associations can offer superb opportunities in advancing teachers' knowledge and skills.

Being involved in organizing teachers' groups and communities, I would like to recommend the following:

1. Professional development units in academia should design workshops and training for teachers' that suit their needs. Curriculum, teaching and learning can serve as the basis for its design and development. Based on experience, not all workshops and training provided for teachers reflect their needs. Most workshops in academia and other learning institutions are conducted just to fulfill the demands of work requirements. One size as they say, doesn't fit all.
2. Teachers' participation at conferences, workshops and seminars should be considered an important component in their appraisal. By doing this, teachers will be motivated to participate in joining academic groups or associations. We must provide teachers the opportunity to be active members of the community, so they can help build knowledge communities and communities of interest.
3. In most cases, teachers especially those who are teaching in foundation programs are not motivated to get involved in joining and participating in language associations because it does not help in their ranking or teaching status. By the time they join the university or college, the teaching rank awarded to them stays the same despite the number of conferences attended, workshops conducted, and papers published. The Ministry of Higher Education should at least consider this as vital in encouraging and supporting teachers in their professional development especially engaging themselves in participating as leaders or members of language associations. This is such a great opportunity for them to increase their level of awareness and understanding of their role in developing communities of practice.
4. A group of teachers in Oman should start forming a language association to help teachers develop knowledge-building-communities and communities of practice highlighting the core values of teaching and learning, professional development, and leadership skills.

Acknowledgements This report is based on teachers' beliefs and perceptions on the importance of professional development activities and engagement in academic groups and associations in promoting communities of practice in the local context. They expressed interest and eagerness in forming a language association in Oman. Their main goal is to support language teachers' professional development through their involvement in the association. They dreamt of teachers who can effect teaching and learning transformation, thus developing communities of practice.

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The Alignment of English Language Teacher Association Conference Themes to Research Agendas: An Investigation of TESOL International Association and IATEFL



Kashif Raza

Abstract This chapter presents an analysis of the themes English Language Teacher Associations (ELTAs) have used for their annual conferences in the past 5 years (2013–2017) and their alignment with research findings and recommendations in the areas where these themes are focused. For this analysis, two big ELTAs were chosen: TESOL International Association and IATEFL. The chapter is divided into three parts. The first part discusses these themes and the research areas they covered. The second part looks at the research basis for these themes and their relevance to both TAs' research agendas. It also explores the progress and the development in the selections of themes over the last five years. The last part presents a comparative analysis of the two ELTAs' conference themes.

1 Introduction

English Language Teacher Associations (ELTAs) play a significant role in the professional development of teachers. However, the researchers that are interested in the administration and delivery of English Language Teacher Associations (ELTAs) perceive their roles differently. Gephart and Oprandy (1999) argue that language teachers should not only participate in conferences but also engage themselves in different forms in the administration of conferences to enhance their competence level. Coombe and Aubrey (2010) believe that ELTAs bridge the gap between a fresh university graduate's knowledge of the subject matter and the challenges in a real classroom. In addition, certain ELTAs also argue for the importance of their annual conferences. For example, TESOL International Association states that its annual conventions aim to provide a platform for educators and scholars to learn from each other by sharing ideas and discussing developments in education. Additional aims of

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TESOL International Association include helping teachers get involved in research projects and exploring available resources and familiarizing themselves about the community development efforts that are currently taking place around the world (TESOL, 2017a, b). Similarly, The International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL) claims that its annual conference is a chance for the international community to gather for knowledge sharing, community buildings, and institutional representation (IATEFL, 2017).

Since the role of ELTAs in teacher development is widely acknowledged, it increases researchers' interests in exploring how certain language teacher associations are playing this role. ELTAs serve as a platform for researchers and presenters to share their findings and experiences from their areas of interest, but this platform rarely receives researchers' attention. There has been some research on the significance of participating in conferences in different forms and the functioning of ELTAs (Coombe & Aubrey, 2010; Borg, 2014; Kuchah & Smith, 2016; Rixon & Smith, 2017). However, little research exists on the selection and implication of conference themes on the language teachers that attend these conferences to share knowledge and improve their understanding of recent trends in language teaching. This chapter aims to discuss the selection of conference themes that certain ELTAs use to attract educators from different parts of the world. It also intends to explore if these conference themes have any relevance to the research agendas of these conferences.

For this purpose, two prominent ELTAs were chosen for this chapter: TESOL International and IATEFL. The chapter discusses their conference themes and the research basis of these themes in the light of their research agenda, if any.

2 English Language Teacher Association Conference Themes and Their Selection

Trent University's (2005) comprehensive guide for planning a conference lists establishing a conference theme as the first step to get started. They suggest that a conference theme, along with other necessary steps, should be selected six to eight months prior to the occurrence of a conference. This can help in deciding who to invite as the plenary and the featured speakers for an upcoming convention.

Almost all the ELTAs in the world have a theme (Heard, 2016) for their annual conferences and this theme is in some way related to a particular field. Conference themes not only allow connecting with members and their academic needs but also help in narrowing down the focus of professional development sessions that take place at the event.

Heard (2016) argues that there are two types of conference themes. The first type is very 'broad' and aims to include almost everybody in the field. This type of theme is very general in terms of its focus and does not limit to a specific area. For example, an ELT conference with the theme "TESOL Conference" applies to all the language

educators in the field. The other one, called a ‘narrow’ theme, does not serve everyone in the field and interests a limited population. Such themes are mostly research driven and focus on a specific area. For instance, TESOL International Association’s 2013 Convention theme, *Harmonizing Language, Heritage, and Cultures* (TESOL, 2013), called for efforts to improve mutual understanding through increased communication across different cultures, religions, languages, ethnicities, and teaching and learning practices. With a clear and precise focus, this conference theme invites participants with interests in these specified areas.

For the most part, conference themes are suggested either by the organizers and position holders or by the members. In either case, the themes often contain some *buzzwords* to attract language teachers from around the world and are also recycled by some ELTAs.

Since the mechanism, if any, which ELTAs follow to select a conference theme is not always defined, its relevance to recent research findings in the area(s) where a selected theme falls is not guaranteed.

3 Brief Overview of TESOL International Association and IATEFL

Since this chapter intends to discuss annual conference themes from the last 5 years (2013–2017) of TESOL International Association and IATEFL and explores to see if these themes aligned with their research agendas, it will be helpful to provide a brief discussion on these ELTAs and their mission statements.

TESOL International Association, previously known as Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), was established to provide a unique platform that is available to English educators and administrators from different educational levels and geographic locations. The idea of forming this association was conceived at the National Association for Foreign Student Affairs’ (NAFSA) annual conference in April 1963. The first conference on language teaching, with a participation of over 700 language teachers, was held in May 1964. After holding three conferences on ESOL and establishing a governing constitution, the TESOL International Association was founded in 1966.

As an International Association, TESOL International Association regularly organizes annual conferences with a mission to advance “the quality of English language teaching through professional development, research, standards and advocacy” (TESOL, 2017a, b, p. 2). It believes that the annual convention provide its international participants unique opportunities for sharing knowledge, discussing recent developments in language learning and teaching, engaging in research projects, exploring available resources, and learning about literacy efforts. The association also caters for language teachers who are unable to attend the convention. Recorded sessions, PDF copies of the program book, and comprehensive information about pre and post-convention sessions are provided on the association’s webpage for mem-

bers and non-members to catch up with any information that they had missed at the convention.

The International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL), initially known as ATEFL, was founded in early 1967 to provide a medium “in the UK for English language teachers and other professionals to make contacts with one another and share ideas” (Rixon & Smith, 2017, p. 13). The association was initially formed to serve the language educators in Britain, and that is why the first eight conferences were organized in London, UK. However, towards the end of 1970, its doors were opened to the international community to increase the diversity in membership, welcome faculty from different origins and backgrounds, and collaborate with other ELTAs internationally to organize joint conferences. As a result, the first IATEFL conference, organized outside the UK, was in Budapest.

IATEFL’s annual conferences aim to provide a platform for participants “to gain access to the latest teaching methods, to establish and maintain contacts in the field and to proudly represent their own teaching institutions by sharing their ideas and research with delegates from other establishments” (IATEFL, 2017, p. 1). Furthermore, there are pre-conference sessions by IATEFL’s Special Interest Groups (SIGs), plenary speakers from around the world, professional development sessions, and an exhibition with publishers, organizations and Tech businesses. Participants can utilize all these resources to increase their understanding of language literacy, learn about recent research in the field of language teaching, and share the recently learned knowledge with their colleagues at work.

4 ELTA Research Agendas and Their Conference Themes

This section discusses TESOL International Association conference themes and explores the research areas they focused on the last 5 years. It also compares the research areas focused on the annual conference themes and their relevance to the research areas identified by the 2004 (Borg, Curtis, Davison, Han, Reynolds, & Scovel, 2004) and the 2014 Research Agenda (RA) of TESOL International (Coombe et al., 2014). This is followed by a similar discussion on IATEFL’s conference themes of the past 5 years.

4.1 TESOL International Association’s 5 Year Conference Themes and Research Areas

Table 1 provides a brief overview of the 5 TESOL International Association conference themes and their research focus. It also lists the sub-areas that were covered by these themes.

Table 1 2013 to 2017 TESOL International Association Conference Themes, Research Areas and Focal Points

Theme year	Theme statement	Research area	Focal points
2013	Harmonizing Language, Heritage and Cultures	Intercultural Communication	(1) Build congruence in language acquisition and learning, heritage and cultures (2) Support students (3) Improve intercultural communication and understanding (4) Strengthen our determination and comprehension (5) Advance TESOL as a field
2014	Explore, sustain, renew ELT for the next Generation	None	(1) Explore (2) Sustain (3) Renew
2015	Crossing Borders, Building Bridges	Intercultural Communication	(1) Observe variances and challenges through discussions and dialogues (2) Consider fresh chances for change
2016	Beyond Borders	Intercultural Communication	(1) Reinterpret TESOL as an international association, not as a local community (2) Inspect steadiness and progression beyond differences and limitations (borders & boundaries)
2017	TESOL 2.0: Engage, Enrich, Empower	a. Advocacy b. Professional development c. Research Standards	(1) Engage: language education and policy (2) Enrich: knowledge, networks, professional experience (3) Empower: learn and lead in a 2.0 world

TESOL International Association's 2013 convention theme focused on "Harmonizing Language, Heritage, and Cultures" (TESOL, 2013). With a research focus on 'Intercultural Communication', it called for efforts to create congruity among these three elements through increased communication across different cultures, increased understanding of other cultures, religions, ethnicities, and languages, strengthened resilience, and developed fields of English language teaching (ELT) and English language learning (ELL).

With a representation of different cultures and cultural ways of thinking, this theme invited insights on how ELT and ELL are perceived by different societies and groups, and the ways student needs in a context are accommodated. In addition, the theme acknowledged a need for sharing teaching and learning experiences,

research findings, and language teacher cognizance to cope with the speedy changes continuously happening in the world.

The conference theme for the 2014 convention highlighted the development TESOL International Association had made during 2013 and 2014 by exploring, sustaining and renewing the field of English language teaching (TESOL, 2014). It explored the academic activities going on in different programs around the world, learned about diverse initiatives in these programs, and gathered information about the financial resources available to researchers, educators and students. In addition, it sustained the in-progress plans to develop TESOL as a field by giving TESOL awards in recognition of the initiatives, continuing publications, providing professional education opportunities, cooperating with stakeholders in the field of ELT and ensuring constant support from dedicated sponsors. Finally, renewal of TESOL memberships, the services available to active members, and the efforts to improve TESOL International Association's governing body were also emphasized. Since the focus of the 2014 annual convention was to display the efforts TESOL International Association had made in the past to advance the field of ELT, it did not relate to any research area.

The 2015 Convention Theme, 'Crossing Borders, Building Bridges', also centered around 'intercultural communication' as a research focus. Since TESOL International Association hosts participants from all over the world with interests and backgrounds in different areas of TESOL, an effort to involve these differing perspectives in ELT and ELL for their representation in professional development activities was considered necessary.

To achieve this claim, the theme placed an emphasis on engaging in conversations on challenges and differences across cultures and borders to consider the possibilities of bringing changes in the way language teachers and learners think and believe. In addition, the theme also suggested that the gaps created by time, experience and insights can be filled through bridges that are built by decreasing differences and redefining boundaries. The 2015 TESOL International Association Convention claimed to provide participants with opportunities for developing understandings and communities that are fresh and built through cross-cultural dialogues.

"Beyond Borders" was the theme of the 2016 Convention that took place in Baltimore, Maryland, USA. As a sequel to the 2015 convention theme, it proposed reinterpreting "the worlds of TESOL International Association beyond borders" (TESOL, 2016, p. 2) to reform the world around us. With the research focus on "Intercultural Communication", it claimed that the existing traditional borders divide people based upon their geography, education system, linguistic abilities, approaches, type of English, societal practices, and English as L1 and L2. This separation limits the collective efforts for the advancement of ELT and, thus, negatively affects the development of TESOL as a profession.

To solve this issue, the 2016 theme stressed on the need to ignore the boundaries that separate TESOL professionals and limit their work and experience to a faction or a community. Instead, it asks for thinking beyond the usual borders and developing our skills as teachers and researchers to serve other communities and grow the field of TESOL.

The 2017 Convention that took place in Seattle, Washington, USA considered “Engage, Enrich, Empower” as its conference theme. With a focus on “advocacy, professional development, research, and standards” (TESOL, 2017a, b, p. 3) as research areas, it emphasized using TESOL International Association as a platform for continuously examining teaching, learning and research, reflecting on practices, preparations, and management, and achieving goals through interaction and teamwork, organized discussions, and reformed efforts.

TESOL International Association has claimed that through dialogues with people who play different roles in language teaching and policy development, one could learn about practices in language teaching, administration of a language program, conducting research in different areas and becoming an advocate for language policy. In addition, these practices can enhance educators’ expertise in different fields, develop links with other professionals, and increase knowledge about a particular area of interest. As a result, teachers and learners can play leadership roles in the future.

4.2 TESOL International Association’s Conference Themes and Alignment with the Research Agendas

Before moving onto a discussion on the alignment of conference themes with the Research Agendas (RAs), let us have a look at the history of TESOL International Association’s research agendas and their features.

The first RA was adopted in 2000 to report on the dynamic nature of the field and delineate research priorities “by setting forth a list of topics and contexts in which research in TESOL is productive and beneficial” (Brindley et al., 2000, p. 2). The agenda also included sample research questions within the listed research areas (i.e., Language Learners, Educational Settings, and Language in Society) along with a rationale for each list of questions to suggest possible lines of inquiry. Finally, this agenda also called for reviewing TESOL RAs every 3 years for potential changes and modifications.

In accordance with the recommendation of periodic assessment, the 2004 RA was an upgraded version of the previous document. With a similar purpose, this new agenda aimed at exhibiting the significance of research for the advancement of TESOL profession. It also puts an emphasis on systematic, principled and ethical research that not only informs policy makers and other stakeholders in the field but also directs future research in ELT and ELL (Borg et al., 2004).

With a focus on research in suggested areas, assistance for novice researchers, identification of potential areas of research, communication between the researchers (doers of research) and the teachers (users of research), available funding opportunities, and inquiry into common beliefs and theories, the TESOL International Association’s 2014 RA aims to provide guidance for teachers and researchers (Coombe et al.,

2014). It seeks to promote dialogue between teachers and researchers to understand their stances on ELT and ELL, and on the factors that trigger changes in them.

Since research is considered essential for the advancement of the field of TESOL, the 2014 RA outlines three significant areas for future research: (1) the language development process of students and teachers as individuals; (2) how language is taught and learned by different communities; and (3) the impact of social changes on teaching and learning of languages. The agenda also includes two different tables (see Coombe et al., 2014 for more details) that include sample questions to direct future research and to show how research findings from such studies can inform professional development.

In this section, I compare the research areas identified by the TESOL International Association's 2004 and 2014 RAs against the conference themes (2013–2017) used by TESOL International Association for its annual conventions to see if these themes centered on any of the suggested research areas. The 2013 and 2014 conference themes are compared against the 2004 RA and the 2015, 2016 and 2017 conference themes fall under the 2014 RA.

According to Table 2, the 2013 and 2014 conference themes did not align with the 2004 RA. The main purpose of the 2004 RA was to inform researchers, policy-makers, governmental agencies and other stakeholders of the potential areas of investigation that could benefit the TESOL profession and its international community. This was not the focus of the 2013 and 2014 conference themes. The earlier aimed at enhancing intercultural communication and mutual understanding among different cultures to understand students' multiple needs for simplifying the process of language teaching and learning. The latter, the 2014 conference theme, without any research focus, advertised TESOL International Association's plans and achievements in the development of the ELT profession.

On the other hand, Table 2 shows that the 2015 and 2016 conference themes indirectly aligned with the 2014 RA by focusing on networking, teambuilding, collaboration, cooperation, and interaction to promote intercultural communication. Since the 2015 conference theme had probably already been set before the publication of the 2014 RA in November 2014, it might not have allowed the conference planning committee to consider aligning the two.

The 2015 conference theme emphasized providing equal opportunities of representation to the international membership, so that their views on language learning and teaching can be considered for further development of the field of TESOL. It

Table 2 TESOL International Conference Themes Compared Against Its Research Agendas

Conference theme	Research agenda	Alignment status
2013	2004	Did not align
2014	2004	Did not align
2015	2014	Indirectly aligned
2016	2014	Indirectly aligned
2017	2014	Directly aligned

claimed that cross-cultural dialogues could increase mutual understanding, which can result in a collective effort to bring a positive change in language teaching practices. This slogan was further developed by the 2016 conference theme that challenged the traditional perceptions of borders and boundaries. It also highlighted the importance of reconsidering factors that separate people into different communities and groups, so that teaching practices and research projects can expand to other communities and their implications can be broadened.

However, a clear reference to the research agenda was present in the 2017 conference theme; this was missing in the previous themes. With a different approach, this theme aimed to achieve the 2014 RA's goals "to envision research as a fundamental activity for all TESOLers, not only one that generates knowledge but also one that we all engage in and use results from to evolve our practices" (TESOL, 2017a, b, p. 2). This shows a clear shift from mere engagement, networking and interaction to conducting research, sharing practices and enhancing teaching and learning skills. Furthermore, it also directed research focus on issues concerning practices in the field of TESOL to increase the application of findings in everyday teaching.

Though the TESOL International Association had adopted a research agenda in 2000 (see Brindley et al., 2000 for more details) to prioritize its research, review changes in the field, and offer something for everyone (Coombe et al., 2014), it did not play any role, until the 2017 convention, in developing conference themes. Although TESOL International Association does not consider itself a research conference, it acknowledges the importance of quality research in the improvement of the English Language Teaching (ELT) profession. In accordance with the TESOL International Association's Mission and Values (TESOL, 2017a, b), this chapter proposes considering the research agendas, as done for the 2017 conference theme (see Table 1), as a source for driving themes for its annual conferences. This will not only allow the TESOL International Association to accomplish its mission of promoting research as a trend but also use its annual conferences as a platform to promote dialogue between researchers and educators-the doers and users of research (Coombe et al., 2014).

Although the 2013–2016 themes followed a chain of ideas and focused on building TESOL as a unified community, little variety existed in their focus. With a limited scope, they have been overlooking the interests of 20 Interest Section members and were not considering other content areas stated in the calls for participations. What I propose, then, is diversity in the focus of annual conference themes. Since TESOL International Association aims to show "respect for diversity, multilingualism, multiculturalism, and individuals' language rights" (TESOL, 2017a, b, p. 2), efforts should be made to reflect this value in the selection of annual conference themes.

4.3 *IATEFL Conference Themes and Research Areas*

Since IATEFL does not have any published research agenda and conference themes for annual conventions, this section discusses IATEFL's mission, values and annual conferences. It also provides a detailed analysis of IATEFL's Calls for Proposals.

IATEFL's annual conferences invite language teachers, researchers and administrators from different contexts and geographical locations to exhibit the diverse and varied nature of the field of language teaching (IATEFL, 2017). From the first conference in 1967 to its 18th convention in 1984, IATEFL consistently had themes for its annual conferences (Rixon & Smith, 2017) to direct proposals towards focused areas. According to Rixon and Smith, this practice was later discontinued to bring variety to IATEFL conferences by allowing contributions that were not controlled by a central theme.

A shift in the format of IATEFL's annual conferences took place in 1985. In addition to fundamental changes to the provision of facilities and session types, conference themes were permanently excluded from its yearly programs. Rixon and Smith (2017) argue that the idea behind this move was to: (a) give a different form to future conferences; (b) invite varied contributions from members; and (c) involve the silent membership in planning presentations, giving workshops and developing groups with special interests. They add that the gap created by the adoption of non-thematic conferences was quickly filled by the growth of Special Interest Groups (SIGs) that introduced fresh areas of interest and widened the range of content areas at IATEFL's annual conferences.

Since IATEFL does not have central themes for its annual conferences, the focus of proposals for presentations can vary. The criteria followed to select proposals is the same every year. IATEFL receives two types of proposals for its annual conferences (IATEFL, 2017). The first type is content specific and focuses on one of the SIGs's areas. The other one is general in nature and does not relate to any of the 14 SIGs. In the absence of a clear conference theme, IATEFL allows presenters to either relate their proposals to a SIG or keep them general in focus. Based on the category chosen by the presenter, his/her session is scheduled under either SIG presentations or General.

The information provided to the prospective presenters in the Speaker Proposal Guidelines has not seen any significant changes since 2013. The document consists of three parts: information about the program; what to include in your proposal; and how to develop a proposal. The first part provides basic information about the program and the type of proposals expected by IATEFL's proposal review committee. It further explains the policy of categorizing proposals and the main factors for the acceptance or rejection of a proposal. The second part outlines the items that must be included in a proposal, the word count for different parts, and types and duration of intended sessions. The last part explains the necessary information that should come with a proposal and provides detailed discussion on different types of presentations and available resources for the presenters.

Table 3 IATEFL SIG DAYS: Variety of Sessions Within a Special Interest Group

IATEFL 2013 SIG Day: English for Specific Purposes	IATEFL 2017 SIG Day: English for Specific Purposes
1. Might an ELF destroy our standards? 2. Using social media to enhance learning outside the classroom 3. Genres of university student writing: insights from the BAWE corpus 4. Two approaches to ESP course design	1. Teaching the language of negotiations 2. Wake up! Get ready for life! Present and negotiate 3. Building bridges: the disciplines, the normative and the transformative 4. Two's a crowd? Making co-teaching work across faculties

Although IATEFL's SIGs and General category allow presenters to direct the focus of their presentation to one of the SIG areas or otherwise, they do not identify a specific theme for a conference. This results in contributions from multiple areas at a single conference. For instance, SIG Day sessions at the 2013 and 2017 conferences were never focused on a particular research area under a particular interest group. Table 3 provides an example of the sessions organized by the English for Specific Purposes SIG and the variety of areas they covered. A comparison of 2013 and 2017 SIG Days is also provided to show how this practice has continued over the years. To develop consistency and a general focus of an annual IATEFL convention, this chapter proposes having central themes for each of the SIGs so that contributions relevant to these interest groups can center on a single theme.

4.4 Comparative Analysis of TESOL International Association and IATEFL Conference Themes

This section discusses the similarities and differences in the conferences themes of TESOL International Association and IATEFL from the 2013 to 2017 annual conventions. Though TESOL International Association and IATEFL were initially established a few months of each other, they were not perceived as competitors in the field of language teaching. With some differences in their format and structure, both ELTAs aim to provide professional development to English language teachers.

Both associations organize annual conferences that offer multiple opportunities of professional development in the form of sessions, workshops, teaching tips, dialogues, poster presentations and discussions. Similarly, their primary focus is language teaching and learning, and all the session types at their annual conferences are tailored towards ELT and ELL. Furthermore, both associations provide author guidelines for proposals to be considered as a part of the conference program.

On the other hand, there are some important differences too that distinguish TESOL International Association and IATEFL from each other. The first difference that was observed in the past years' conferences was the presence or absence of themes that gear up the focus of proposals towards a specific area of language

teaching. TESOL International Association has a conference theme for each of its conferences and the theme was published in the annual Call for Proposals. In addition, a development is seen between the 2013 and 2016 themes that follow a chain of ideas linked to a central theme. However, a direct relevance to the research agenda was absent in these themes. Then there was a shift of focus in 2017 and an area of the research agenda was targeted in its theme. This was not the case in IATEFL's past 5 years conferences as they were general in focus and invited presenters from different areas of interests. SIGs were given more importance and presenters could either link their proposals to any of these SIGs or keep them general in nature. However, in spite of this role, SIGs do not have any explicit research agenda or pre-announced themes that could give some indication to potential contributors and delegates of what they might be getting at a conference.

5 Conclusion

Although ELTAs play a significant role in teacher development by providing a platform for learning about the practices in ELT-an element missed by graduate schools, they have not yet achieved the needed attention of the researchers. In this chapter, I have discussed conference themes of TESOL International Association and IATEFL from 2013 to 2017 and explored if they centered on a specific research area. Furthermore, whether the research focus of these conference themes was aligned with the research agenda of their associations was also studied.

It was observed that TESOL International Association had conference themes for each of its conventions from 2013 to 2017. Although the 2013 and 2014 conference themes did not align with the areas suggested by the 2004 Research Agenda, 2015–2017 conference themes focused on a research area that was identified by the TESOL International Association 2014 Research Agenda. However, only the 2017 conference theme aimed to achieve an area of the research agenda that put an emphasis on promoting research activities.

On the contrary, IATEFL did not have any themes for its conferences from 2013 to 2017 and has no published research agenda. For participation as presenters and attendees, Special Interest Groups (SIGs) were used as areas of focus of IATEFL's conventions where presenters could relate their proposal to any of the SIG areas.

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Part III
Collaboration Between
and Within LTAs

The Impact of a SIG on Assessment Literacy



Peter Davidson and Christine Coombe

Abstract A major aim of professional associations is to provide opportunities for professionals to interact with others, share ideas and develop in their chosen profession. Professional associations exist to provide specialized networking and development opportunities to a specific profession, group of individuals or field of study. To promote and support specialized research and communication, smaller subgroups within an association are often chartered or developed. These subgroups are typically known as Special Interest Groups. According to Jacob et al. (2013), association members join SIGs because they want to go deeper into a specialized content area and they enjoy networking with others who ‘speak the same language.’ The TESOL Arabia Testing, Assessment and Evaluation SIG (TAE SIG) has focused their professional development activities on an important trend in the field, that of language assessment literacy (LAL). Language assessment literacy has been a critical topic in English language teaching since the late 1990s. Unfortunately, this is mainly due to the fact that so many English language teachers are not assessment literate. In other words, many English language teachers lack the knowledge and skills to write effective language tests, evaluate the effectiveness of their tests, and use their test results in meaningful ways. The purpose of this chapter is to critically examine the status of LAL in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and report on activities that the TAE SIG has implemented to increase LAL.

1 Introduction

The TAE SIG has as its mission to help language teachers in the region become more assessment literate. As such, this section will define what is meant by LAL and discuss why it is important. Some barriers to teachers becoming assessment literate

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will also be described. We will then share a course of action that we have employed to improve English language teachers' LAL.

2 Review of the Literature

2.1 *What Is LAL?*

Tsagari and Vogt (2017), note that the concept of 'literacy' has expanded considerably in recent years to include domains such as computer literacy and science literacy. Other forms of literacy could also be added to this list, including digital literacy, technology literacy, media literacy, information literacy, cultural literacy, and multi-cultural literacy, amongst others. In 1991, Richard Stiggins coined the term 'assessment literacy'. More recently, the term language assessment literacy (LAL) is used to differentiate it from other forms of assessment literacy.

Early definitions of LAL focused on the knowledge and skills associated with assessment. Stiggins (1995) notes that teachers with a high level of assessment literacy know what they assess, why they assess, how to assess, what the possible problems with assessment are, how to prevent these problems from occurring, and they are familiar with the possible negative consequences of poor, inaccurate assessment. Paterno (2001, p. 2), further elaborates when he maintains that LAL is "The possession of knowledge about the basic principles of sound assessment practice, including terminology, the development and use of assessment methodologies and techniques, familiarity with standards of quality in assessment".

Later definitions of LAL move beyond LAL as just knowledge and skills of testing to include awareness of the impact that assessment can have on individuals and society at large. Inbar-Lourie (2008, p. 389), for example, defines LAL as "the capacity to ask and answer critical questions about the purpose for assessment, about the fitness of the tool being used, about testing conditions, and what is going to happen on the basis of the test results". This criticality of the impact of assessment is also highlighted in O'Loughlin's (2013, p. 363) definition of LAL as "a range of skills related to test production, test score interpretation and use, and test evaluation in conjunction with the development of a critical understanding about the roles and functions of assessment within society".

Fulcher's (2012) oft-cited definition of LAL is perhaps the most broad and comprehensive to date: LAL is:

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

2.2 *Is LAL Necessary?*

According to Cheng, (2001), research shows that a typical teacher can spend as much as a third of their professional time involved in assessment. Coombe, Troudi and Al-Hamly (2012) suggest that this figure could be even higher, arguing that teachers potentially spend as much as half of their time on assessment and/or assessment-related activities. Given these statistics, it is therefore essential that English teachers have a solid grounding in language testing theory coupled with practical test-writing skills so that they can write tests that assess their students accurately and fairly. Teachers also need to be able to evaluate and critique tests to ensure that they are valid and reliable. As noted by Gronlund and Linn (1990), teachers who assess their instruction can better understand their students' needs, monitor learning and instructional processes, diagnose student learning difficulty, and confirm their learning achievement.

There is also the growing acknowledgement that good assessment can facilitate student learning (Coombe, Davidson, O'Sullivan, & Stoyhoff, 2012; Coombe, Folse, & Hubley, 2007; Davidson & Mandalios, 2009; Green, 2017; Hamp-Lyons, 2017). When teachers know how to interpret test data, they can use this data to inform their teaching and to personalize their students' learning, and they may also use test results to make adjustments to their teaching syllabus, and to make improvements to the way that they teach (Xu & Brown, 2017). As noted by Harding and Kremmel (2016), LAL should be an integral part of a teacher's ongoing professional development.

2.3 *Barriers to LAL*

It has been pointed out numerous times that many language teachers lack even the basic assessment literacy skills needed to develop, interpret and use effective classroom assessments (Boraie, 2015; Mertler & Campbell, 2005; Tsagari & Vogt, 2017; Xu & Brown, 2017). So, we need to ask the question: Why do so many language teachers lack the knowledge and competencies to write, evaluate and use tests effectively? There are a number of potential barriers or obstacles to teachers becoming assessment literate.

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

the rating of subjective questions, not knowing what is going to be done with the test results, and not being given any warning that a test was going to be given at a particular time. Teachers may also have had bad experiences with computerized testing, such as the technology not working or breaches in test security. These negative experiences with tests may contribute to making some teachers distrustful and skeptical of tests and they may put teachers off learning more about assessment.

Another potential obstacle to teachers becoming assessment literate could be that some teachers may feel that they do not know enough about assessment to write tests and use the results in meaningful ways. Unfortunately, it has been well documented that many first degrees, teacher-training courses and Master's programs do not offer an assessment component, and if assessment courses are offered, they are mainly theoretical and not sufficient in scope to fully develop assessment literate teachers, so teachers often lack the theoretical knowledge and practical experience to write tests, and use test results in meaningful ways to improve teaching and learning (Tsgari & Vogt, 2017; Xu & Brown, 2017).

For many teachers, language assessment appears complex with its own concepts and language. Take, for example, the concept of validity. Teachers trying to understand this concept are soon overwhelmed with the many different types of validity such as: construct, content, curricular, criterion-related, concurrent, predicative, convergent, divergent, discriminant, face, consequential, systemic, scoring, ethical, internal, external, to name just but a few. Furthermore, some of the important concepts related to assessment such as reliability involve mathematics and statistics, which can be off-putting to language teachers with limited numeracy skills. It should also be noted that the average English classroom teacher might not easily understand journal articles, reinforcing their belief that assessment is difficult and complex and is probably best left in the hands of the testing experts.

Related to this last point is the fact that many teachers do not actually need to write tests as part of their job description. Rather, the tests for their students are written by specialist test writers in a testing unit, or they could come directly from the ministry of education. If teachers are given responsibility for writing tests, it may only be for small-scale, low stakes classroom tests. Increasing workplace demands on teachers may also mean that they do not have any time to spend writing tests. Another reason why teachers do not write tests is that insufficient resources such as release time or extra payment are not allocated for writing tests. At the end of the day, for many teachers it is just easier and more practical to leave test writing in the hands of the so-called testing experts.

2.4 SIGs as Communities of Practice

SIGs are smaller groups within the overall organization or association that focus on specialized topics. SIGs function as 'communities of practice' within an association. England (2018) defines a community of practice as "sets of relations among persons and activities over time in relation with other tangential and overlapping communities

of practice” (p. 2). Her definition is based largely on work done previously by Lave and Wenger (1991) who define communities of practice as 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.

The key elements of a CoP include: the domain, the community and the practice. The *domain* refers to the members who are brought together by a learning need that is shared. In the case of the TAE SIG, the shared learning need was that of assessment literacy. The community relates to members’ collective learning bond over time. The interactions that occur as a result of the CoP that affect their practice is referred to as the *practice*.

3 An Assessment Competency Framework

In order to improve the assessment literacy skills of English language teachers, it was decided by the TAE SIG officers to follow an appropriate course of action. Firstly, we needed to specify a set of assessment competencies that all English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom teachers must have. We then needed to advise teachers on how to reach these assessment competencies, and most importantly we must provide learning opportunities for teachers to reach these assessment competencies.

Stiggins (1995) notes that a combined attempt was made by the National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME), the American Federation of Teachers, and the National Education Association to identify and endorse a complete set of classroom assessment competencies for teachers.

More recently, the National Institute of Education (2010, p. 10) in Singapore developed the following Assessment Competency Framework, specifying what the assessment literate teacher should be able to do:

- Design appropriate assessment tasks.
- Plan assessments as part of effective teaching and learning.
- Understand and communicate the goals and criteria of assessments.
- Develop capacity for self-assessment through reflective and self-directed learning.
- Provide feedback to help learners improve.
- Administer, score and interpret the results effectively.
- Recognize unethical and inappropriate assessment practice.

4 Developing LAL Amongst English Language Teachers

A review of the literature in LAL found that a number of professional development activities were useful in helping English language teachers become more assessment literate. Short descriptions of each of these activities are included in this section.

4.1 Graduate and Post-graduate Language Teaching Courses

Once a framework of assessment competencies had been established, we then need to advise teachers on how to reach these assessment competencies and provide them with learning opportunities so they can reach these assessment competencies (Magno, 2013). Obviously one of the best ways for teachers to learn about assessment is when they are studying for their first degree, and/or on subsequent post-graduate teacher-training courses or Master's degree programs.

4.2 Training Within the Workplace

One of the best places to learn more about assessment is the workplace. Teachers can work with other teachers to learn more about assessment, and to write and evaluate tests. A better suggestion is to have teachers experienced in assessment mentor teachers who are less experienced. Perhaps the most effective way a teacher can develop their assessment literacy skills is by joining the testing unit of their workplace, if there is one, to develop their theoretical knowledge and practical skills in testing.

4.3 Online Courses

A study by Fan, Wang, and Wang (2011) found that a web-based model helped in-service secondary teachers improve their assessment knowledge and enhanced their perspectives on testing. Teachers can also access online resources such as the British Council's Language Assessment Literacy Project which provide animated introductions and worksheets on a range of assessment topics and a comprehensive teacher-produced glossary on assessment terms. These resources are available at: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/exam/aptis/research/assessment-literacy>.

4.4 Testing Books

There are many books that teachers will likely find useful in developing their assessment literacy skills. A look in all the current book catalogs from the major publishing houses in English language teaching (ELT) will turn up a wide variety of both practical and research-oriented volumes on the topic of language assessment. Perhaps the most noted series of volumes on research in the field of foreign/second language (F/SL) assessment is the one published by Cambridge University Press entitled *Studies in Language Testing (SiLT)*. SiLT is a series of academic volumes

edited by Michael Milanovic and Cyril Weir. This 34-volume series is published jointly by University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations and Cambridge University Press (CUP). The series addresses a wide range of important issues and new developments in language testing and assessment and is an indispensable resource for test users, developers and researchers. There are currently 34 titles available; a full list of these, plus content summaries, is provided at: <http://research.cambridgeesol.org/research-collaboration/silt> (Coombe & Davidson, 2013).

Another good source of language assessment research can be found in the proceedings of conferences, especially the Language Testing Research Colloquium (LTRC), the International Language Testing Association's (ILTA) annual conference and more locally in the Current Trends in English Language Testing (CTELT) Conference proceedings published by the TESOL Arabia Testing, Assessment and Evaluation SIG (Coombe & Davidson, 2013).

4.5 Testing Journals

It should be noted that the average classroom teacher would likely find it difficult to comprehend articles in these types of journals, and the content may be too specialized for the needs of most classroom teachers. However, as a teacher's assessment literacy skills develop, they may find the two major journals of our profession, *Language Assessment Quarterly* and *Language Testing*, increasingly accessible and informative.

Language Testing is a peer-reviewed, international, quarterly journal that publishes original research and review articles on language testing and assessment. In existence since 1984, it provides a forum for the exchange of ideas and information between people working in the fields of first and second language testing and assessment. This includes researchers and practitioners in EF/SL testing. In addition, special attention is focused on issues of testing theory, experimental investigations, and the following up of practical implications.

According to their website <http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/hlaq20/>, *Language Assessment Quarterly: An International Journal* (LAQ) is dedicated to the advancement of theory, research, and practice in first, second, and foreign language assessment for school, college, and university students; language assessment for employment; and language assessment for immigration and citizenship. This journal was first published in 2004 and was originally intended as a vehicle for more practically-based papers in language testing. At present, LAQ publishes original articles addressing theoretical issues, empirical research, and professional standards and ethics related to language assessment, as well as interdisciplinary articles on related topics, and reports of language test development and testing practice. All articles are peer-reviewed and are intended to appeal to an international audience.

In addition to these journals specifically devoted to disseminating empirical research on language testing and assessment, articles can also be found in other major journals of the field including but not limited to, *TESOL Quarterly*, *Modern*

Language Journal, Studies in Second Language Acquisition, Assessing Writing, Melbourne Papers in Language Testing, Applied Linguistics, and Papers in Language Testing and Assessment.

4.6 Attending Workshops and Talks on Testing at Conferences

Teachers can also study independently to help develop their assessment literacy. For example, they can do a face-to-face testing course. The Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) run an introductory course in language testing every summer. One of the most common professional development activities for teachers is attending pre- or in-service training workshops and academic conferences. Assessment is often a timely topic or theme at these events so attending workshops and talks are often a beneficial activity and one that can help teachers become more assessment literate.

4.7 Attending Specialized Language Testing Conferences

There are a number of specialized language testing conferences worldwide that English language teachers can attend. Most of these associations host annual conferences and have a variety of publications related to language testing. Some of the most important ones are:

- Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) Conference.
- Language Testing Research Colloquium (LTRC), the annual conference of the International Language Testing Association (ILTA).
- The Association of Language Testing and Assessment of Australia and New Zealand (ALTAANZ) Conference.
- The International Conference on Language Testing and Assessment (ICLTA), the academic conference organized by the National Education Examinations Authority (NEEA) in China.
- New Directions in English Language Assessment, an annual event in East Asia, hosted by the British Council.
- Asian Association for Language Assessment (AALA) Conference.

4.8 Joining Language Testing Organizations

Most language teaching organizations such as IATEFL and TESOL are likely to have Interest Sections or Special Interest Groups (SIGs) devoted to developing the

language testing knowledge and skills of language teachers. These SIGs organize events and often have online forums that can be excellent sources of assessment professional development for teachers. Teachers can also develop their Assessment Literacy skills by joining these language testing organizations which include but are not limited to:

- International Language Testers Association (ILTA).
- The Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE).
- European Association for Language Testing and Assessment (EALTA).
- Association of Language Testing and Assessment of Australia and New Zealand (ALTAANZ).
- Asian Association for Language Assessment (AALA).

5 LAL in the MENA Region

Special Interest Groups (SIGs) are chartered by the Board of Directors of an association to give members with similar professional specialties the opportunity to exchange ideas and keep themselves informed about current developments in their fields. The activities of the SIGs, planned by their members and elected officers, provide clear indication of the diverse interests and needs of association members. Through participation in SIGs, you can help design what are small professional organizations within the broader professional association.

The TESOL Arabia Testing, Assessment and Evaluation Special Interest Group (TAE SIG) was formed in 1996 and has been responsible for much of the scholarly work and professional development activities on language testing and assessment in the Gulf.

In addition to its flagship conference, CTELT, the TAE SIG organized events focusing on many different levels of testing and assessment expertise. At the last annual Current Trends in English Language Testing or CTELT Conference in 2012, a session was held on the formation of a strategic plan and research agenda for the group. Interested educators were invited to attend a focus group to help TAE SIG Co-chairs, Christine Coombe and Peter Davidson, plan activities and identify research priorities for the coming academic years. The result of this meeting generated the following educational and research priorities for the TAE SIG in its final years.

5.1 Educational Priorities for TAE SIG

Focus group attendees were very much in favor of continuing the dual approach of the TAE SIG whereby two distinct populations of teachers were found to exist in the region; the first group were those with a fairly sophisticated level of language testing and assessment knowledge and expertise and the second group who are those iden-

tified with having a basic grounding in the field but want to develop more (Coombe & Davidson, 2013).

5.2 Research Priorities for TAE SIG

Much of the past research on language testing and assessment in the Gulf region has been disseminated through TAE SIG events and/or TAE SIG/TESOL Arabia publications. Those attending the focus group prioritized a number of research priorities for the TAE SIG including identifying teachers' levels of assessment literacy with a view to using this knowledge to better plan professional development activities and training for the TAE SIG. Two major projects were identified under 'research priorities'. The first was to collect data on the assessment literacy levels of TAE SIG members and teachers in the MENA. To this end, Hidri and Coombe (forthcoming) developed and administered a questionnaire on aspects of assessment literacy which was administered in 2015. Some 400+ responses to the questionnaire entitled 'A Survey of Teachers' Conceptions and Practices of Assessment' were received. This questionnaire consisted of 60+ items on conceptions regarding assessment and practices associated with assessment and assessment-related activities. Preliminary data indicate that LAL levels vary from context to context and from teacher to teacher.

Another recommendation that came out of the focus group was to publish a 2nd edition of the very popular *Assessment in the Arab World* volume which was originally published in 2005 by Davidson, Coombe and Jones. This first volume featured 18 research-based articles from testers and teacher educators from around the Middle East. This recommendation resulted in the publication of *Language Assessment in the Middle East and North Africa: Theory, Practice & Future Trends* (Coombe, Davidson, Gebril, Boraie, & Hidri, 2017).

6 Major TESOL Arabia Testing, Assessment and Evaluation SIG Initiatives

6.1 Fundamentals of Language Assessment (FLA) Certificate Course and Training Courses

One of the first major initiatives of the TAE SIG was the development and administration of the 'Fundamentals of Language Assessment' course. This course was originally conceptualized as a 1–2-day course for practicing teachers and later evolved into a series of workshops that could be delivered face-to-face in flexible one day, two-day, one week or two week formats. Through a mix of both theoretical and practical content and activities, the focus of the course is on the essential elements of assessment literacy and the topics included:

- cornerstones of testing;
- testing the four skills;
- testing language;
- writing test items e.g. multiple-choice questions (MCQs), essay questions;
- alternative assessment.

FLA courses have been conducted in all the Emirates and 34 countries worldwide. Among them include:

- Gulf: UAE, Oman, Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia.
- Middle East: Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Iran.
- Africa: Ethiopia, Sudan.
- Asia/Sub Continent: Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Thailand.
- Europe: Armenia, Georgia, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Russia.
- Central/South America: Peru, Chile, Costa Rica, Brazil.

6.2 Assessment Publications

The TESOL Arabia TAE SIG has been committed to publishing several volumes focused on both research and practice as well as a series of CTELT Conference Proceedings. Language testing books published by TESOL Arabia include: Lloyd, Davidson, and Coombe (2005), Davidson, Coombe, and Jones (2005), Coombe, Davidson, and Lloyd (2009), Coombe and Khan (2015), and Coombe, Davidson, Gebril, Boraie, and Hidri (2017).

6.3 Online Courses

The TESOL Arabia TAE SIG offer several online initiatives to help members become more assessment literate. Since its development in 2012, the online ‘Fundamentals of Language Assessment’ course has been run five times to over 700 teachers. Two three-month self-access courses on ‘Alternatives in Language Assessment’ and ‘Testing the Skill Areas’ have also been developed and delivered to groups of teachers in the Gulf and in several MENA countries.

7 Conclusion

The lack of LAL amongst English language teachers is a major concern that English language testing specialists need to help address. However, it should also be noted that it is not just the assessment literacy of English language teachers in the MENA region that need to be addressed, but rather the level of assessment literacy of teachers

all around the world. The ongoing quest to help teachers improve their knowledge about and experience with different types of language assessment is a crucial one and one that can be enhanced with some of the professional development activities that we have discussed in this chapter. Organizing and facilitating these and other projects has been the mission of the TESOL Arabia Testing, Assessment and Evaluation SIG since its inception in 1996. Unfortunately, due to non-profit administrative issues TESOL Arabia and all its entities including SIGs have ceased to function as of September 2017. It is hoped that in the future we can continue our professional development activities to help English teachers develop assessment literacy skills in other capacities.

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Professional Development in Low Resource Environments: The Role of Africa TESOL, TESOL France, and IATEFL GISIG



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Abstract This chapter presents the development of a recent collaborative project between TESOL France and affiliates of Africa TESOL, with the later addition of IATEFL GISIG as collaborating IATEFL Special Interest Group. The principal aim of the collaboration is to generate good practices which will enable the development of English language teaching in sub-Saharan countries, whose teachers often experience difficult circumstances and lack effective teaching resources. The community of practice as defined by Lave and Wenger (1991) will be used as a model to analyze the different phases of the collaboration between the language teacher associations. We review recent literature on teacher associations and provide a broad definition of communities of practice and how this applies to the collaboration between the language teacher associations under review. We then discuss the different phases of collaboration from mid-2015 to end-2017, focusing on the first three stages of a community of practice: potential, coalescing, and maturing. The chapter concludes with a short review of what has been achieved and provides general recommendations for continuation of the collaboration.

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1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the current collaboration between Africa TESOL and TESOL France, which started in 2015–2016.¹ The collaboration aims to support the professional development of teachers in Africa, and the initial focus is on language teacher associations (LTAs) in the sub-Saharan countries in Africa. These are generally perceived to be working in a low resource environment: they lack the resources or materials which would enable teachers in their continuing professional development (CPD).

Africa TESOL and TESOL France are LTA networks² at different stages of development: the latter is a long-established national LTA with regional chapters whereas the former is a young international network of national LTAs which held its 3rd annual conference in 2018. This raises the question whether different roles should be assigned to these LTA networks. For example, should TESOL France be given a senior role? In this respect, it is worth noting what Andy Barfield writes about collaboration: ‘whatever its particular form, collaboration involves deciding goals together with others, sharing responsibilities, and working together to achieve more than could be achieved by an individual on their own’ (Barfield, 2016, p. 222). Accordingly, it could be said that collaboration between Africa TESOL and TESOL France is one which involves all stakeholders in management and decision-making roles, however their roles are initially distributed. This is one key consideration when reviewing the different stages in development of the collaborative project.

Another key consideration is whether the two LTA networks under review show common ground or the shared interests that would be needed to establish a fruitful collaboration. The mission statements on the websites of both LTA networks would indicate that this is the case. However differently these are worded, both Africa TESOL and TESOL France advocate supporting and nurturing the CPD of its members as an integral aspect of membership. In that respect, their identity is like that of other LTA communities where CPD remains the key focus, and which is to be distinguished from other professional associations who highlight external advocacy as an integral feature of their community (Paran, 2016).

¹This chapter discusses the collaboration between Africa TESOL and TESOL France, but the initial collaboration on the project in the years 2015–2016 was between individual national LTAs in sub-Saharan Africa and TESOL France. From 2017, Africa TESOL would be acknowledged as the key stakeholder in the collaboration with TESOL France. The participating individual African LTAs may therefore be seen as ambassadors of their continental network, Africa TESOL. Accordingly, reference in the present chapter to Africa TESOL is also understood to include the participating national LTAs in sub-Saharan Africa.

²We refer in the present chapter to these key stakeholders, TESOL France and Africa TESOL as LTA networks or communities as they differ in their organization as LTAs. For example, TESOL France is a national LTA with a large network of regional chapters whereas Africa TESOL is a continental network with national LTAs as affiliates. Also, Africa TESOL is a young network but some of its members such as CAMELTA (Cameroon) are long-established national LTAs.

2 Communities of Practice

Given the above considerations, it seems relevant to view the current and future collaboration of Africa TESOL and TESOL France through the lens of the communities of practice (CoP). This social learning model was first defined by Lave and Wenger (1991); and has evolved through professional debate and key publications by Wenger and others. A recent overview of the CoP model indicates how Wenger's conceptualisation has moved away from traditional ideas of a master-apprentice relationship in a learning community. Wenger sees the CoP as the 'living curriculum for the apprentice', one in which 'the practice of the community is dynamic and involves learning on the part of everyone' (Wenger & Trayner, 2015a, p. 4). His concept of apprenticeship is dynamic and involves participation at all levels.

Wenger and Trayner (2015a) indicate how the concept could be applied in an analysis of the collaboration between the two LTA networks under review here. They identify three crucial areas for the community of practice: identity, community and practice. The CoP bases its identity on a shared domain of interest; as a community '[its] members engage in joint activities and discussions ... [and] build relationships that enable them to learn from each other' (p. 2); its members are also practitioners in that 'they develop a shared repertoire of resources: experiences, stories, tools, [and] ways of addressing recurring problems—in short a shared practice' (ibid.). We would suggest that the areas of community and practice outlined by Wenger and Trayner are present in the current collaboration between Africa TESOL and TESOL France, and that these two areas should be the focus of our analysis.

Before we discuss the development of their collaboration, it may be useful to reflect on how LTAs collaboration can be viewed, using the CoP model. Herrero (2016) analyzes how a new language teacher association, FILTA, developed into a community of practice. Herrero adopts the five development stages of the CoP, as defined by Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002). Her analysis of FILTA's development as a CoP focuses on the first three stages: potential, coalescing, and maturing. These stages can be generally understood as follows: the embryonal or potential stage which has the basic elements of a community, as the sense of a shared domain of interest develops and potential members start focusing on common goals or objectives; the transitional or coalescing stage in which members launch the new community and seek to engage in learning activities to develop and shape the community practice; and the maturing stage which marks a deeper commitment from its members as they seek to form a communal identity and further develop the communal practice.

Herrero's interpretation of the second stage is significant. The author identifies the basic characteristics of the coalescing stage as follows: 'it has a domain of knowledge; it is a community that interacts; and practice—the sharing of experiences, tools, and resources in order to maintain the core of knowledge—is central' (Herrero, 2016, p. 193). Her description of the coalescing stage not only reformulates the three areas demarcated by Wenger and Trayner as being essential to collaboration in a community of practice; in doing so, Herrero implicitly marks this second stage as the key stage in collaborative development.

The first two years of the collaboration between Africa TESOL and TESOL France show similar developments which would indicate that these LTA communities are moving through the first stages of a developing CoP. To achieve a better understanding of these developments, we will be using Wenger's five-stage model as a framework. In doing this, we will be focusing on the potential and coalescing stages. Our understanding is that collaboration on this scale would require time and sustained investment to be able to evolve to the maturing stage. Given the relatively short initial period under review here, the latter stage is not the primary focus for this study.

The trajectory of longer-term collaborations generally shows the adjustment of general goals as the first stage unfolds and becomes more concrete. The collaboration between the two LTA communities under review is not different in its initial development. Also, the trajectory is not straightforward: there are intermittencies and gaps in the interaction and accordingly in the knowledge being shared between the participating networks. This zigzag trajectory is also reflected in the different sources which document the first two or three years.

In discussing the collaboration between Africa TESOL and TESOL France, we adopt the document analysis approach. Bowen (2009) and O'Leary (2014) outline in this respect concerns which may affect the quality of research. For example, there may be inconsistencies in the available data, especially regarding reports or available data which can only be indirectly confirmed or is incomplete. There is also an element of subjectivity in that the authors of the present chapter were participants in the collaborative project. A further consideration is that the available sources are heterogeneous: they include audio or video sources, informal or unpublished documents, email correspondence, and minutes of face-to-face or online meetings. We keep the above factors in mind when considering information from data sources on the initial stages of the collaboration. Our view is that the advantages gained by using document analysis to contextualise and trace the development of this collaboration outweighs any limitations that may arise through adopting this approach.

2.1 April 2015–November 2016: The Preliminary

The documentation from the April 2015–November 2016 period indicates developments which characterise the potential stage of building a CoP, such as the pooling of shared interests and seeking of common objectives. A first collaboration between Africa TESOL and TESOL France is proposed and crowdfunding was set up by TESOL France to enable Africa TESOL delegates to attend the 2016 annual symposium of TESOL France in Paris. There was informal (email) correspondence around crowdfunding and travel arrangements, but the first 'document' that is easily available for analysis is the podcast interview with Harry Kuchah, recorded just before his plenary talk at the November 2016 TESOL France symposium in Paris.

The podcast interview is a key document. It bridges the information gap as Kuchah looks back on how the collaboration started, while also providing relevant context on

current needs of LTAs in Africa, as well as insights into what the African delegates expected to achieve at the November 2016 symposium. The first part of the interview focused on how the collaboration started, at the annual IATEFL conference in Manchester, in April 2015. Kuchah's plenary talk in Manchester on 'ELT in difficult circumstances' and discussion with African LTA delegates at the IATEFL Associates Day sowed the seeds of the future collaboration between Africa TESOL and TESOL France.

One concrete outcome from the IATEFL conference in Manchester was an informal call to support the African LTAs. Initial conversations with TESOL France representatives eventually led to the attendance of Kuchah and delegates from three African LTAs³ at the TESOL France annual symposium in Paris in November 2016. This demonstrates how annual conferences can act as a catalyst for potential collaboration; physical events would seem to remain relevant for engaging in new forms of professional engagement between LTAs. Interesting in this respect is an independent evaluation conducted by Simon Borg on the impact of attending international ELT conferences. The evaluation comprised a survey and follow-up interviews with respondents from seven Gulf countries. Key findings were that the delegates benefited from: (1) an enhanced knowledge and use of ELT techniques; (2) networking with other ELT professionals; and (3) an enhanced professional confidence and motivation. The survey was limited in scope; however, based on the findings as reported 'ELT professionals attending international conferences do benefit in many ways' (Borg, 2015).

TESOL France had been supporting educational projects in Africa, and a tangible result had already been achieved in getting African LTA delegates to Paris. Expectations were raised further during the Paris 2016 plenary, at which Kuchah proposed a bottom-up approach to teacher development. The plenary, held at the TESOL France annual symposium in Paris in 2016, acted as a springboard for engaged discussion among delegates. This was consolidated in the panel discussion on 'Teaching in Africa', held during the same symposium in Paris. These provided appropriate conditions for active engagement between the delegates from both LTA communities.

The panel discussion had an informal two-part structure. The principal aim of the first part, in which the African LTA delegates presented their current teaching environment, was to raise awareness. The diversity of practices across the different LTA regions was immediately clear. The delegate from the Cameroonian LTA (CAMELTA), Catherine Moto talked about the heterogeneous practices across Cameroon, while the delegate from the Angolan LTA (ANELTA), Caetano Capitão discussed a different set of challenges in that ANELTA is a young LTA and Angola is a predominantly Portuguese-speaking country with a limited availability of qualified teachers of English.

³The three national LTAs in sub-Saharan Africa are: CAMELTA (Cameroon), ANELTA (Angola), and ATER (Rwanda); the respective LTA delegates are: Catherine Moto, Caetano Capitão, and Rukundo Kayankole. Moto and Capitão would be active collaborators in the first months of the collaborative project.

The second part involved a small-group brainstorming session. This would constitute a first springboard for initiatives, through which the TESOL France community could contribute and support teacher development for the attending African LTAs. In the follow-up feedback session, key areas for collaboration were identified and TESOL France President, Jane Ryder announced her participation at the next Africa TESOL conference following conversations with the representative from the Rwandan LTA (ATER). Yet, the immediate concern after the Paris 2016 symposium was how this initial momentum would be maintained and sustained in the year ahead.

2.2 December 2016–April 2017: Exploration

The above outcomes are a first indication that both LTA communities were about to move beyond the potential stage in the formation of a new CoP. Goals and actions were being set and the collaboration seemed about to enter the coalescing stage. There was a grouping of interested delegates around two development strands that had generated the most interest regarding teacher development in low-resource environments. These were: (1) developing mobile teacher training, and (2), developing a low resource toolkit. The initial groups working on these strands would later merge and form the Africa Team.⁴

The transition from the short, intense exploration of key issues in Paris to a less immediate mode of discourse is a fragile moment in the development of any collaborative project. The email correspondence immediately after Paris 2016 reflects awareness of the need to ensure continuity. Jane Ryder assumed a steward role during this transition phase, with two groups provisionally forming around the future informal leads, Roy Bicknell and Julietta Schoenmann. Ryder would remain officially outside the emerging Africa Team, but what we see in this brief transitional phase is a pattern that would be repeated in all the initial stages of the project. The email exchanges during this phase show that different collaborators took initiative or assumed an informal stewardship, depending on their current availability. It may be inferred that the changing constellation and role of participants is an unavoidable aspect of collaboration in its early stages, especially when there are few physical events for the participants.

Two key documents in early 2017 centered around the group working on the mobile teacher training strand. The minutes from two Skype meetings in January and February 2017 provide some insight into collaborator priorities and the decision-making process. The first Skype meeting (8 January 2017) was the more comprehensive of these two. This was reflected in the relatively large number of attendees

⁴The initial months show different constellations of participants before a clear group emerges in early summer 2017. This would be named the Africa Team at the 11 June 2017 meeting and presented as such to African LTAs in the July 2017 communication. Current members are: Roy Bicknell (IATEFL), Harry Kuchah (CAMELTA), Csilla Jaray-Benn (TESOL France), Linda Ruas (IATEFL GISIG), Julietta Schoenmann (IATEFL GISIG), Jo Smith (TESOL France), and Jennifer Taylor (TESOL France).

and interventions as well as in its extensive minutes. Collaborative projects are often expected to have an initial high participation, and we see this too here with Skype representation from key stakeholders: Africa TESOL affiliates (CAMELTA, ANELTA), TESOL France and IATEFL GISIG.

So, what do the January 2017 minutes indicate regarding the discussion and decision-making? As one might expect, there was a renewed exploration of goals, and an ensuing action plan. The discussion centered on: (1) an exploration of appropriate training models; and (2), a review of African LTAs needs regarding low resource materials. The emphasis was on the former topic and specifically addressed mobile teacher training, which seemed to be the main attention area for the participants at the January meeting. It is a good example of the knowledge sharing one might expect at this stage. Africa Team member, Schoenmann explained how a current mobile project in Nigeria she was co-responsible for was being run. The discussion of scale, duration and resources eventually raised the question of future funding and how this might be sustained, once the new project reached a further stage of development. Concerns were expressed regarding how this could be done, whether through an international LTA (IATEFL or TESOL International) or through state funding.

The early emergence of financial feasibility as a potential issue may have been influenced by the participation in the current group of experienced practitioners in low resource development schemes; and the considerable budget and scale of the nationwide project in Nigeria may have also prompted discussion around this point. The implicit question was: would there be sufficient funding for large-scale implementation in the new project's later phases?

Schoenmann's clear explanation of how knowledge was shared on the Nigeria project (cascading with master teachers) exemplifies how social learning and knowledge sharing often work at the initial phase of building a CoP. The information on the challenges facing the Nigeria project provided new insights for the Africa LTAs representatives and the Africa Team. This would in principle enable them to better assess what is required in the way forward. Paran (2016) proposes three knowledge conceptualisations of an LTA: transmission; creation; and collaborative creation/sharing. It would seem from the January 2017 discussion that the third conceptualisation is dominant in the new project.

Another key issue raised during the January 2017 meeting was the timescale. During the meeting a three-phase timeline was proposed for 2017, of which only the first phase came to fruition. The first phase (January–May 2017) would focus on prioritising, getting people involved and planning activities. They are examples of what we might expect to see during the coalescing stage of a CoP, and the actual developments during the collaboration, from January up to July 2017, would also suggest this. The proposed second phase (September–November 2017) didn't come to fruition. This is yet another example of the zigzag trajectory which is often seen in the early stages of a CoP's development.

An additional key topic was the discussion around the current availability of low resource materials in the respective African LTA countries. Here was an opportunity to assess whether the needs of the Angolan and Cameroonian LTA communities matched the proposed initiatives. Adjusting perception and managing stakeholder

expectations would be required to stake out the next development in this building stage. The January 2017 minutes indicate in this respect that the collaborators were aware of possible pitfalls ahead, such as timescale as well as operational and financial feasibility during future implementation.

The interventions during the January 2017 meeting could be seen as examples of the ‘feedback loop’ that are discussed by Wenger and Trayner (2015b). The feedback loop is said to be integral to each development stage of the CoP and involves reassessment of actions and implementation, with a view to further development. This first Skype meeting was a productive one, with 11 action points. Its relatively large output also seems in part due to the reassessment of goals and perceptions. Failure to deliver on any of these actions would immediately affect the continuity and further collaboration, but this is a concern which was only explicitly expressed in later months.

The February 2017 Skype meeting already reflects a potential change in momentum. The number of participants is smaller, with only one African LTA delegate in attendance (Capitão, from ANELTA). It has already been suggested that the ‘non-delivery’ of action points from the January 2017 meeting might have an immediate impact, and the minutes would indicate that this was the case. We can infer from the February 2017 minutes that the Skype attendees were uncertain whether the actions agreed earlier would be implemented. The minutes also show that the interaction was productive in that new ideas on development were presented and discussed. Yet, already these seem to have been shaped by an unforeseen need for readjustment.

It is the first clear sign of uncertainty as to the further building of the collaboration. Accordingly, a document was put together, whose general purpose was to realign ideas underpinning the low resource toolkit development strand with the ideas explored in the January and February Skype meetings. The relatively new aspect in this document was the foregrounding of hubs for knowledge dissemination among the African national LTAs. The document might be seen as an example of how different views of collaboration are bridged. In that respect, it prefigures the readjustment of priorities at the next Africa Team meeting, which was held at the annual IATEFL conference in Glasgow in April 2017.

2.3 April–July 2017: Regrouping

The meeting at IATEFL Glasgow presented an opportunity to take stock after these first months. The minutes were concise (200 words), and only outlined outcomes and agreed actions. Two aspects of this meeting are relevant regarding the current developments. The meeting group was small, with no African LTAs delegates in attendance, which may have affected the quality of the knowledge being shared. Also, the active contribution of IATEFL GISIG to the project was becoming clearer. One tangible outcome was the adoption of the collaboration with Africa TESOL as an official IATEFL project and the acknowledgment of IATEFL GISIG as a third key stakeholder. An important development: the addition of a new stakeholder and

the ensuing sponsorship, though not resolving the issue of financial support, could help sustain project momentum.

The Glasgow 2017 meeting was meaningful in more respects. It was a first concrete opportunity to review progress: it was generally agreed that the face-to-face discussion enabled the attendees to bring the current project status into sharper focus. One general finding was that much had been explored and proposed in the first Skype meetings in January and February 2017, yet there was a sense of disappointment at what had been concretely achieved. For example, at the time it was not clear if African LTA delegates had been able to follow up on the initiatives agreed in previous months.

As previously suggested, large-scale collaborations may often show a zigzag trajectory in their development over time. The initial momentum with its quick ‘stacking’ of initiatives and the subsequent fall-back, and disappointment at the seeming lack of progress, seem to correspond to the potential and realised values of social learning highlighted by Wenger and Trayner (2015b). They define potential value as being what may or may not work, and realised value as what eventually proves to work or not work. Any collaborative project has its successes and failures. The different initiatives in the exploration phase and their critical reassessment at the Glasgow 2017 meeting seem to correspond to the respective values, as defined by Wenger and Trayner. With hindsight, the Glasgow 2017 meeting could, therefore, be seen as a resetting of the agenda for further collaboration.

An indication of this resetting was the downscaling of project ambitions. The Africa Team representatives decided in Glasgow to re-prioritise the two development strands that had been first agreed after the Paris 2016 symposium: informal lead roles were assigned, with a narrower focus on implementing mobile teacher training and developing low resource materials.⁵ Two short videos on the respective ideas would then be set up for presentation to delegates at the 2nd Africa TESOL annual conference in Kigali, Rwanda in May 2017.

A main concern was whether the project initiatives would find support among the Kigali delegates. This was especially important as there had been no opportunity in Glasgow to consult Africa LTAs representatives. It had also been decided to focus on the Angolan LTA (ANELTA) for a pilot implementation of the two initiative strands. If successful, these would be rolled out to include the other participating African national LTAs. Subsequent email correspondence with TESOL France centered on information sharing around video content and presentation at the Africa TESOL conference in Kigali. The current project status would be summarised for the Kigali delegates, while teacher training videos from the Nigeria project would be selected for possible use in Ryder’s workshop in Kigali.

As it turned out, no projection facilities were available at the Kigali event. Unforeseen incidents of this kind cannot be ‘factored in’ during the early development of an inter-continental project, especially one where technology is being used in countries with a low resource environment. As with any social learning project, incorporating lessons learned is an integral part of further development. One lesson learned is that

⁵ Africa Team members, Bicknell and Schoenmann were assigned the role of informal lead for the respective low resource material and mobile teacher training development strands.

when information from the field is lacking, provisional assumptions will still need to be made but also checked before testing on location.

Later correspondence with Ryder as well as the summary of her Kigali workshop on sharing resources indicate that the areas prioritised by the Africa Team in previous months ‘tracked’ reasonably well with the perceived needs of the Kigali delegates. These include: the need to share physical resources; the use of mobile technology; and the need to share lesson plans which would be seen as relevant on a low resource development project. The data provided from Kigali indicate the merging of the different stakeholder interests, which would enable and help sustain further development. In that respect, they constitute a bridge to the subsequent Africa Team meeting in June 2017.

The 11 June Skype meeting can be seen as a further readjustment of scope and actions for the collaborative project. The attendance of Kuchah and Ryder at the meeting provided an important opportunity for reconnecting and reassessing progress: their feedback as Kigali delegates provided vital information for the other participants at the June 2017 meeting. Their feedback indicates that the 2nd Africa TESOL annual conference had its own dynamic, with new ‘development shoots’. Ryder, for example, mentions the enthusiasm of delegates from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). This motivated the decision to include the DRC as one of the four LTAs countries for further collaboration.

The further decision at the June 2017 meeting to involve four African national LTAs was not a re-treading of old ground: delegate feedback and new ideas from Kigali 2017 enabled the Africa Team to rethink initiatives that had been proposed during the early months. This resulted in a dual initiative: the decision to use WhatsApp as a medium which was readily available for most African teachers; and the African national LTAs would be asked to organize teams of five to ten members each. The latter action is an example of lessons learned, as this would remedy the previous over-dependence on single representatives from a national LTA for providing project continuity. The decision to adopt an easy-to-use social media platform also showed an increased awareness within the Africa Team of what is operationally feasible in the field; and the setting up of regional hubs would see a gradual merging of the mobile teacher training and low resource materials strands in further development of the Africa project.

With this regained momentum, action was taken and in July 2017 an email communication was sent to the African LTAs. Late July already saw the first positive response, with details of provisional teams from at least two African national LTAs. This was an early indication that the project was on track for further implementation. Another important outcome from the June 2017 meeting was the decision to investigate the setting up of a collective web resource platform for all collaborating LTAs. Both actions are the first signs that the Africa project was about to engage in transitioning to the third, maturing stage of a new community of practice.

2.4 Paris, November 2017

The collaboration between TESOL France and Africa TESOL to constitute a community of practice with the goal of assisting its members with CPD further evolved into its coalescing phase during the 2017 Paris symposium. This opportunity for the adherents of the two LTAs and affiliates to physically meet and explore common goals speaks to the ‘centrality of conferences’ in the life of LTAs as argued by Paran (2016). In effect, the Paris symposium allowed members of TESOL France and Africa TESOL, who might not otherwise have had an opportunity, to gather and reflect on areas of professional development aiming at advancing their community of practice toward the maturing phase.

The preliminary meeting between members of the two LTA networks and affiliates resulted in the creation of five topics to be examined in a panel discussion divided into five focus groups. Each group was to be facilitated by a volunteer member from both LTA networks and had the responsibility to report their group’s final recommendations to the general assembly. Following are the five discussion areas:

- Creating a mentorship program between TESOL France and Africa TESOL.
- Collaboration on writing the present chapter.
- Creating technical and materials support for teachers in Africa.
- Supporting primary teachers in Africa with books and games.
- Putting in place training workshops in Africa.

The subject of a mentorship program between TESOL France and Africa TESOL generated a lot of interest. The discussion focused on ways of organizing a mentor/mentee program between more experienced teachers from France and teachers in low resource regions of sub-Saharan Africa for mutual support and professional development. The program would aim at connecting ELT practitioners from various educational and cultural backgrounds to share experiences, lesson plan strategies, and teaching techniques.

Participants expressed genuine interest in helping at their different expertise or skills level. A few of them raised concerns about their lack of knowledge regarding educational systems and teaching contexts in Africa. For instance, a few specific questions were: as experienced educators in the west, how would they determine the needs of their African counterparts? Considering low resource teaching contexts often lack technological tools, how would communication be established and maintained between mentors and mentees? Who would initiate communication? How would a follow-up be ensured?

The questions above relate to the notion that in a community of practice ‘a person’s intentions to learn are engaged...’ (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 29) and that the beauty of the program is in the learning opportunities it presents for both mentors and mentees. Teachers from different educational systems and contexts can learn directly from one another and determine areas of needs as a team. Thus many fruitful ideas emanated from this group’s efforts such as: creating an online platform where volunteer mentors and mentees would write and post their profiles highlighting their skills

and/or expertise; designating the Africa TESOL steering committee to be in charge of matching mentors to the right mentees; ensuring follow-up and commitment once matching is realized; recruiting volunteer mentors and mentees in Senegal (during the 3rd Africa TESOL conference in May 2018) and from TESOL France as well as at the TESOL Convention in Chicago in March 2018; conducting a needs analysis to determine issues necessitating immediate attention in the program; considering the possibility of audio conferences between mentors and mentees; and building a bank of interests accessible to everyone.

The focus group on chapter collaboration resulted in this very chapter you are reading now. Aymen Elsheikh who led the group suggested that a chapter about the collaboration between TESOL France and Africa TESOL be written for this volume.

The next focus group explored avenues of technology and material support for teachers in Africa. They suggested creating a page on the IATEFL GISIG website to store materials; a WhatsApp group for online discussions and setting up a pilot group in Senegal to start the tech support. For the webinars, Fatou Kine N'diaye who led the discussion group suggested using the WhatsApp video feature to share teaching tips on technology integration and its importance in ELT classes.

The fourth focus group in the panel led by Ryder discussed supporting teachers in Africa with books and games. Their recommendations were to first create a leaflet outlining the project and the reasons Africa TESOL would be a good recipient for these books and games. Secondly, members who have contacts with some airlines would be encouraged to find out if these companies could help with shipping. Additionally, the rationale behind using the resources being collected and sent to teachers should be clarified and Kuchah could write a short description of the challenges primary teachers in Africa face. The final point proposed by this group was a joint effort between TESOL France and TESOL Spain during the next TESOL Spain conference to get their members to participate.

The fifth and final focus group explored was putting in place training workshops in Africa. Mamadou Diouf, the facilitator of the group reported that there was some crossover here with the technology and materials support group, but the focus was more on how to deliver on the ground workshops and where that should be. It was decided to try and focus on schools in Senegal to start with and Fatou's school was suggested as one example. Chris Sowton would be visiting Fatou's school in the following few days and he would be looking specifically for possible topics for teacher training based on teachers' needs, possible lesson plan topics for classroom materials, and the situation regarding internet access. The commonality in the proposals from the five focus groups seems to be grounded in what Smith (2003, p. 2) believes a community of practice is about, 'its joint enterprise as understood and continually negotiated by its members.' The key word here being 'negotiated'.

The collaboration between TESOL France and Africa TESOL being at its infancy warrants for its members to negotiate their evolving identity and their trajectory toward the realization of their shared objectives. Neither the identity nor the trajectory of this intended CoP is a one-size-fits-all deal because of the transnational nature of the participating networks. Consequently, the success of such an enterprise will require continuous effort, commitment, and perseverance from all parties. The

initiatives from Manchester, Kigali, to Paris are evidence of a sustained effort and commitment from members of both LTA networks who already have their eyes fixed on the 3rd Africa TESOL annual conference in Dakar, which is projected to be taking this collaboration into the maturing phase.

3 Recommendations

The document analysis already provides various outcomes which suggest possible recommendations or ways forward; and especially regarding the current phase of the project. This corresponds in our view to what we might expect to see during the coalescing stage of a CoP's formation. The zigzag trajectory and changing constellations of collaborators would seem to be a natural development, but one which also reflects the fragility of any large-scale project. This fragility could be counterbalanced or supported by having a formal stewardship of the project. Several project members had already assumed an informal steward role but having an acknowledged and assigned steward role might enable easier management of the next development phase of the Africa project.

The documents can also be seen as anchors in this embryonic phase. Our view is that the appointment of a project archivist or documentalist should be considered. This would provide more structure to the reporting and thereby help bolster tracking and reviewing of developments on the project. A final consideration is the appointment of a project lead, a role which has been adopted throughout by different members of the Africa team. This would not need to be an executive committee, but we would recommend a certain degree of formalisation of these roles. This may help strengthen collaboration between the African LTAs and the Africa Team, and improve steering of the current project. The key aim is to enable the transition into a new phase of professional development, with the first shoots of an inter-continental collaborative project which eventually takes root and matures.

The outcome of Paris 2017 has decidedly steered the collaboration in the direction of the maturing phase. More specific goals have been set with follow-up plans to be concretized during the TESOL Spain and Africa TESOL conferences. In Spain, more members will be recruited to participate in the project and in Senegal the first volunteers for the mentorship program will be recruited. In addition, Fatou N'diaye and Mamadou Diouf who respectively led the focus group on technology support and teacher training are from Senegal and will be able to hold a more significant discussion between Senegalese participants and their European counterparts.

4 Conclusion

We have analyzed the various 'documents' that track development of this collaborative project. As stated earlier, the overview we have of the embryonic stages of

the collaboration are necessarily incomplete. General reporting on the Africa project shows inconsistencies, due to the intermittent collaboration and information gaps; yet various key documents and other data sources provide an appropriate framework through which outcomes could be established and some provisional conclusions made.

With this in mind, we can see certain patterns emerging. One is that the CoP model has proven to be a relevant framework for a first analysis of the collaboration between the participating LTA networks. The document analysis suggests that developments during collaboration match the initial stages of a CoP. A case in point is the initial enthusiasm of potential collaborators during the project launch at the Paris 2016 annual symposium. This is a first indication of the potential stage of forming a CoP, when prospective collaborators seek to determine the scope of future collaboration. Then we see an exploration phase in the first months of 2017, whose developments would indicate that collaboration is moving through the coalescing stage, in which stakeholders (re)set goals and actively seek to act and make goals more concrete. We would suggest that there are also the first signs that the collaboration may be about to move into the third, maturing stage, in which the actions and interventions of the collaborating LTAs gain a sharper focus. Some examples of these are the actions involving the creation of African LTA teams, the proposed investigation to set up a web hub for teaching resources, and the potential funding through recent adoption of the Africa collaboration as an IATEFL project.

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Bringing Language Teacher Associations Together



Laxman Gnawali

Abstract LTAs in their initial years of their establishment gathered momentum and got bigger in membership size as time passed by. They were viewed as a platform for professional development for teachers, and their conferences were attended by increasing numbers of participants. However, they received little visible attention in the ELT discourse until 2010. Research reports and journal articles including special journal issues brought the existence of LTAs into the mainstream ELT discourse. Although publications highlighted the collaborative activities among LTAs, the collaborative initiatives between the LTAs did not seem to receive much attention. This chapter is an attempt to bring to light the fact that LTAs are increasingly coming together and creating synergy to undertake actions that benefit them. Based on the minutes of a regional LTA meeting held in Karachi, Pakistan, this chapter mainly discusses how LTAs can learn from successes as well as the challenges of one another. It also presents how planning collaborative activities can help the LTAs realise what they can achieve together and at the same time increase awareness of the unattainable ambitions they may have.

1 Introduction

Language teacher associations (LTAs) started coming into existence in the 1960s and the pioneers include TESOL International Association and IATEFL in this regard. Although subsequent number of new associations increased, and members in the associations and attendees at the conferences also grew, their existence did not get much attention in the ELT discourse in the early years. LTA leaders and members took them as a platform for professional development and the conferences took the center stage as well as their publications. The justification of LTAs and their role in teacher professional development appeared in some sporadic papers in the nineties and onward, however, an explicit discourse in LTAs came into view only in 2010. In

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the special issue, probably the first of its kind, of *English Language Teaching Journal* on teacher associations published in 2016, and as Paran (2016) in the introductory section indicates, the articles mainly covered “membership, participation, conferences, social issues, publications, and conceptions of LTAs” (p. 135) and established that the LTAs are significant communities of practice. In the same issue, Smith and Kuchah (2016) reported that the LTAs had not historically engaged in research and went on to establish that the situation was changing and LTA members and leaders, at least in some cases, had now started undertaking collaborative initiatives including research. Their report brought to the fore the collaborative perspective within the LTAs, and similarly, another report by Lamb (2012) highlighted a collaborative research between LTAs in Europe that brought in an inter-LTA collaborative dimension. Lately, joint conferences, the exchange of delegates going to conferences and collaborative research between and among the LTAs are increasing. However, the LTA discourse does not include much on these collaborative efforts. It may be worth examining the collaboration between LTAs as a crucial phenomenon to understand more closely the dynamics and intricacies that lie within. How the LTAs build and strengthen working relationships between them and collaborate with one another, how such collaborations function, and what immediate and far-reaching outcomes are realised are the key issues that need to be addressed. This chapter is an attempt to fill the gap by reporting on a regional LTA meeting which tried to envision a short-term and long-term collaboration between the Asian and African LTAs. I begin by setting the context of how an LTA thrives by collaborating between its members and then linking it to the inter-LTA collaboration such as sharing successes, challenges and envisioned future initiatives.

2 The Context

The fact that collaborative initiatives within an LTA facilitate the professional development of its members and advance the growth of the LTA itself has been now established. The more members collaborate, the stronger they and their LTA are. On the flip side, the more an LTA grows and expands, the more diverse the opportunities it can create for its members. Thus, the members and the LTAs grow and develop in a reciprocal relationship (Gnawali, 2016). Similarly, collaboration and exchanges between the LTAs in a region may result in increased visibility and capacity building for individual LTAs and the creation of synergy for joint undertakings. The recent proliferation of LTAs globally may be as a result of the successes recorded by older LTAs thus motivating individuals to set up new ones. These days the LTAs are not only organizing their own activities, they are also increasingly coming together to organize joint events, exchanging information and knowledge and thus building relationships between the partners.

I will first draw on my own context to discuss the LTAs with regard to their collaborations and outcomes. Members of Nepal English Language Teachers' Association (NELTA) attend the annual conferences of Japan Association for Language

Teaching (JALT), Bangladesh English Language Teachers' Association (BELTA), All India Network of English Teachers, Thai TESOL and two of the attendees get free accommodation and meals whereas others can register for the conference at the local rate. NELTA provides the same facilities for the members of those associations based on the general Memorandum of Understanding NELTA has signed with them. Lately, NELTA has just won the bid to organize the 2019 Regional TESOL conference in Nepal in collaboration with the TESOL International Association.

The NELTA case is just an example of the recent phenomenon in the LTA community in Asia. LTAs have started knocking on the doors of their counterparts as well as opening their doors for them so they can exchange resources and services. This collaboration has a win-win potential for all parties. I have seen the justification while serving NELTA in the capacity of Senior Vice President and other positions in the Central Executive Committee.

There already exists knowledge in the non-voluntary sector on the benefits of collaboration between organizations. For instance, Boyer (2018) claims that organizations can exchange and retain knowledge, and Kotowski (2018) highlights the possibility of significant research initiatives where active organizations come together and act together.

Within the LTA community, there is a growing realization that the sum is more than its parts. Lamb's (2012) study on Language Associations and Collaborative Support (LACS) undertaken by the European Center for Modern Languages (ECML) indicates that collaboration helps the member LTAs to gain greater visibility. He claims that LTAs with their collaborative undertakings are, "responding to this challenge by minimising their identity as a professional institution, whilst enhancing their identity as a professional network" (ibid, p. 304). In the same report, Xerri (2012) concludes that LTAs can benefit if they collaborate with organizations that do not necessarily belong to the English teaching profession. In other words, LTAs can collaborate with and benefit from both ELT or non-ELT associations alike.

This discussion shows that the collaborations and benefits derived from them are real. Models of collaborations and the conditions set are also now publicly discussed at the LTA events. However, an elaborate discussion on the potential collaborations and the perceived challenges has not been formally documented. In the subsequent sections, I report on a regional LTA meeting that not only worked as a forum for sharing successes and challenges of individual LTAs but also brainstormed possible collaborative initiatives between them and likely obstacles they may face.

3 The Regional Meeting

At the 33rd SPELT International Conference of Society of Pakistan English Language Teachers (SPELT) in 2017, the organizers decided to explore the possibilities of inter-regional collaborations and called for a meeting of the LTAs from the regions. It was attended by representatives from SPELT, Nepal English Language Teachers' Association (NELTA), Bangladesh English Language Teachers' Association (BELTA),

TESOL Arabia (United Arab Emirates), TESOL Sudan and TESOL Greece. The objectives of the meeting were: (a) sharing LTAs' successes and challenges, (b) sharing participating LTAs' initiatives for networking at the national level, (c) moving towards regional networking and cooperation and (d) setting achievement targets.

The delegates were expected to share one success and one challenge they were facing, national level networking in terms of models, and membership benefits etc. and then present their partnerships and networking at regional level if they existed. The meeting was also expected to plan a regional conference or a symposium, and possible modalities of the regional MOOCs (an acronym for massive open online courses). The meeting discussed some concrete future targets such as a joint research study on the impact of LTAs on teachers' continuous professional development, advocacy and an ELT anthology and its logistics.

The meeting was attended by 12 delegates and two major modalities for collaboration were suggested (a) sharing experiences, successes and challenges, and (b) planning collaborative actions and activities. Sharing the activities that were successfully undertaken by an LTA would inspire other LTAs to replicate them in their own contexts, whereas familiarity with the challenges experienced by other LTAs would forewarn and caution them. The second modality would synergise the LTAs to actually work together thereby building a closer relationship. Here I highlight both the sharing and the planning and discuss theoretical links and practical implications.

3.1 *Sharing Successes*

The success story started with BELTA's delegate. She stressed that BELTA partners with several other associations around the world and it networks with other like-minded organizations such as *Teachers Helping Teachers*. She stated that the partnership has helped BELTA to expand its membership drive. The delegate from Nepal highlighted the achievements of NELTA, the only teacher association in Nepal. The successes of NELTA included large membership—4000 life members (biggest success) from public and private sectors, ranging from primary to secondary schools as well as university level. He attributed this success to social media outreach. The way the publishing houses have now started financially supporting its activities, mainly conference related, shows that partnership with NELTA means greater visibility for their products. He stated that NELTA has its own building acquired with funds from membership fees, donations from its members and its branches.

SPELT's delegates reported a different success story: the "traveling conference". They shared that SPELT organizes its annual conference as a traveling conference. In this case, the conference is organized using the same conference theme in four cities Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad and Abbottabad on consecutive dates, and presenters travel from one city to another giving the same presentations, instead of participants gathering for the conference in one venue. This year's traveling conference program was shared as an example. The main advantages of the traveling conference were reported as follows: more female teachers can participate as they do not need to

travel long distance to conferences held in major cities in different regions, and foreign delegates experience traditional hospitality and culture of different places. Later I tried to explore the justification for traveling conferences and saw that at the Affiliate Leadership Break-Out Session at the TESOL Convention in 2016, its Founding President Zakia Sarwar had given a presentation on “SPELT’s traveling conferences.” Elsewhere, she justified why traveling conferences are essential to benefit those who can’t make it to the conference.

If teachers can’t come to the conference, the conference goes to the teachers! Plenary and featured speakers travel to give the same presentations to at least three different venues. Dates and presentations are juggled so as to maximize the inputs of experts from other countries. At the same time each venue has its fair share of local presenters (Sarwar, 2011, p. 69).

TESOL Arabia had a list of success stories. It has replicated ideas from both TESOL International and IATEFL in its SIG activities. The Testing and Evaluation SIG delivers professional development sessions on testing/assessment. It works with other affiliates around the world and is in a position to support other LTAs. It also organizes a SIG for mentoring the elders. It provides scholarships to selected members to attend other conferences as well as travel grants to present at TESOL Arabia conference. It was also reported to have had a healthy bank balance.

The TESOL Sudan representative explained that the board members live and work outside the country and they help the association from there. They mainly network with colleagues where they live and explore speakers and resources for the conferences. This was a model other LTAs do not probably have. The TESOL Greece representative reported successful partnership with non-ELT organizations. In addition, it has cut down costs by introducing electronic newsletters to replace the printed version.

Each of the successes could be a lesson for other LTAs. The BELTA perspective implicitly hinted at the fact that the more an LTA visibly partners with others the more potential members see value to join it. From NELTA, members showed voluntarism and commitment to the association. SPELT’s traveling conference could be a lesson for large countries where teachers with low resources could benefit when conferences come to their cities. TESOL Arabia’s model of setting up local SIGs, TESOL Sudan’s networking outside the country and TESOL Greece’s cost cutting modality through electronic publication are some of the ideas other LTAs can replicate to strengthen their positions.

3.2 Sharing Challenges

The delegates shared challenges which were also diverse. While the challenges experienced by BELTA were increasing membership and involving them at the regional level, NELTA’s challenge was that there were too many members, hence, meeting their expectations was a huge task for the leaders. The bigger challenge was that teachers from the public schools, unlike private school teachers, expect allowances

for attending training sessions. For SPELT, the traveling conference which they claimed as a success was a challenge as well. Providing hospitality can sometimes be difficult for members. It was also not easy to find a suitable venue in every city.

TESOL Arabia's challenges were legal and personal. The registration of TESOL Arabia under new regulations from the government has caused the delay of hosting the next conference.

TESOL Sudan's challenges were different from others. For example, they do not have many members who would be happy to volunteer time and effort. The teachers are not well motivated to take advantage of the professional development opportunities the association brings, let alone initiate their own. They also face funding problems as not many organizations are willing to support this LTA financially. The sad situation reported by TESOL Greece was that their membership is dwindling, and has come down to 500 from 2000 recorded at its inception.

The familiarity with challenges like these can be a good lesson for any LTA leaders. They can think and plan how to increase membership while expanding the services so membership is retained, how to attract teachers to offer training for free etc.

4 Conceptualizing Regional Collaboration

In the midst of the successes and challenges as shared by the delegates, they also discussed the benefits if the LTAs came together, such as sharing ideas and practices in the region. The delegates felt that a network of LTAs could be established, even an informal one, in the belief that if such a network can be established, it would provide a common platform for sharing ideas. In conceptualizing this, they cited the example of a more formalized network like Asia TEFL, as well as SEETA that comprises 15 teacher associations across Europe. Individual LTA members also need to be a member of SEETA. The network has low resource turnover as it mainly works online. The delegates proposed that such a network should be called 'Language Teacher Associations Network'. In setting up such a network, they listed a few benefits such as publications exchange, member exchanges, joint classroom based projects/publications/research, online sharing/virtual exchange and collaborative conference.

As they discussed these possibilities, questions arose on the operational modalities. Questions such as which affiliate will take on leadership, will there be an event chair or co-chairs, who will decide/agree on venue, date (suitable for region) and theme were discussed. It was agreed that all LTAs need to identify and agree on themes and dates for regional events.

The meeting did not provide a clear picture on what was achievable and what to look into. So, they proposed that the network needs a formal set up for holding joint events in order to facilitate sharing ideas with representatives, sharing leadership structure, hosting online or regional events (identify and distribute roles), establishing

a structure (conferences/events/chair), setting up small committees for exploring resources.

As the discussion went on, the participants were divided into groups to work out a plan for the LTA network. The outcomes of individual group discussions showed interesting proposals.

Group 1 proposed joint research and publications. The outcomes would be a chapter for the LTA book the proposed network would publish in the near future. The network members would identify common issues and design the study. The study would be a comparative study or a study replicated in different countries. As the group presented their suggestions, they made a list of the challenges such as who develops the statement of purpose, who initiates what, who works on the funding proposal, how to ensure accountability, shared communication and exchanges of ideas, and setting up an online library/archives to be shared by LTAs.

Group 2 proposed a slightly different modality, that is, to create a forum for sharing problems and experiences. However, this would entail a system and the questions they raised were who should undertake the setting up of the forum, how often and who should manage etc. They proposed to initiate a qualitative research done by an LTA and an action research done by the LTA that takes the first initiative. A number of themes for the research were proposed such as language teacher associations, ELT methodology, teacher development, and English language and ELT materials.

Group 3 proposed collaborative publications by the LTA network members. They discussed some basic questions such as who oversees the publication process, how to divide responsibilities etc. It was proposed that papers are solicited within a year, edited accepted and published. The network would publish a newsletter with updates. For both undertakings, an editorial team would be formed. Two delegates also stressed that all regional representatives should contribute to their LTA book chapter with a focus on the meeting and its outcomes.

Group 4 worked on advocacy. The team proposed to identify common regional advocacy issues and list out operational hazards for different shareholders. Together, they also listed the potential challenges that may surface such as having a common theme/goal, and incentives for the members.

As the meeting was ending, another discussion was initiated on best practices but with the specific focus of networking on the national level. Each TA was asked to share key initiatives required for networking. As a response, the BELTA delegate suggested a session for teacher development in a city/region and invite interested participants to form a chapter. If 50 members sign up to form a chapter during the session, a new chapter would be formed. The new members' fee is taken by BELTA but when the chapter holds an event, the center funds it. Chapter representatives are funded to attend the annual conference like 178 members who attended the last conference from the regions. For this, a grant was received from US State Department. When BELTA central office holds a planning retreat, chapter representatives are also invited.

NELTA's national networks had some unique practices. Out of the Rs. 2500 conference fees, 50% is for expenses and the other 50% is saved. 10% of the income of the conference goes to the Head Office for funding travel grants and scholarships for

members. The main conference expenses are supported by publishing houses and other organizations, and the venue for the conference is free as it is held at a school or college that has conference facilities. Regarding membership, most members come to NELTA through branches which are 51 in total. The branches are independent in organizing local events; the center helps by funding trainers to these events. Another area of strength is the scholarship awarded by AS Hornby Trust UK and others and are routed through NELTA.

SPELT chapters are independent in planning and conducting local events such as academic sessions and short courses. There is no central membership list. Members belong to and pay dues to their respective chapters and the chapters remit 10% of this amount to the head office. Annual traveling to conferences is arranged by chapters with active support from the head office in terms of providing speakers, bags, files etc. as well as program planning. Chapters need to buy the SPELT journal for their members and thereafter provide free of charge to their members. Each chapter has a working committee comprised of at least three members, i.e. program coordinator, conference coordinator and finance coordinator. Elections for these posts are held as per the SPELT charter. Each chapter needs to submit their annual report and audited accounts for the AGM normally held in December each year.

At the end, one delegate highlighted the main points discussed in the meeting including the need for a regional TESOL conference to be held in Asia. She saw the power of the LTAs coming together. As with the successes and challenges, the raised awareness of one LTA and its national networking is definitely a model to consider. Moreover, planning activities collaboratively would bring the LTAs together. In the course of the discussion, the delegates would sometimes think of some doable action such as small scale research and book chapter writing and sometimes they would think of a more ambitious task such as a formal network. Certainly, several questions were raised on each activity proposed and there was likelihood for these LTAs to stay in touch through collaborative activities while exploring new avenues in the future.

5 Conclusion

Based upon the discussions in the meeting, we can conclude that the LTAs have several successes to report to their members. For example, some have larger memberships while others have greater financial strength. All seem to have several challenges such as satisfying the large membership or dwindling number of members, apathy of members towards the professional development activities or unmet expectations of members. These challenges vary from LTA to LTA, so, bringing the LTAs together is a win-win situation for all.

Coming together and planning for collaborative activities seems to bring synergy. The activities which were not thought of before the meeting seemed possible as a group. The LTAs saw the possibility of joint action and the resulting benefits of embarking on joint projects. The questions raised in the meeting seemed to be the

reality check needed as some ideas seemed too ambitious. Even then, there seemed to be an undercurrent of togetherness in all these deliberations.

Despite the obstacles, setting up a regional network would be a step towards bringing these LTAs together. LTAs are aware of the challenges but remain enthusiastic, LTA leaders always look ahead to come together again and again. The meeting also epitomized this spirit.

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Strengthening South Asian LTAs: Networking and Challenges



Arifa Rahman and Fatima Shahabuddin

Abstract This chapter examines the issue of networking amongst Language Teacher Associations (LTAs) in the South Asian region with an aim to promote professionalism and to share best practices and thus strengthen the associations in the process. It includes a discussion of recent initiatives undertaken to promote regional networking by some South Asian English Language associations, including BELTA (Bangladesh English Language Teachers Association) and SPELT (Society of Pakistan English Language Teachers). The lessons learned from these initiatives form the basis for a framework to guide future directions for regional networking. The two LTAs share some of their regional networking activities but there are also several other initiatives that each are involved in that serve different contextual needs and are often dependent on opportunities and resources that become available at certain times. However, regional networking has always been high on the agenda for both. The LTAs discuss the benefits and the challenges of undertaking their respective networking exercises. In light of lessons learned, steps are proposed for sustainability from a practical point of view.

1 Introduction

Language Teacher Associations (LTAs) have become an integral part of the professional development network across the world. The term LTA applies to organizations related to the teaching of any language; however, associations related to *English* language teaching appear to dominate the scene. The reason for this is probably the general perspective that English is currently the global lingua franca in major areas of education, trade, communication, information technology and entertainment. Although this chapter revolves around English Language Teacher Associations

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(ELTAs) in the South Asian region and the networking initiatives taken to formulate strategies to strengthen them, the expression LTA has been used assuming that the key underlying factors across all language associations are similar.

This chapter presents a case study of two South Asian LTAs, BELTA (Bangladesh) and SPELT (Pakistan) and their interrelated initiatives at developing and strengthening themselves. The first section explores the background and rationale of LTAs and sets the framework for recognising the centrality of networking as an essential feature for growth and strengthening of the associations. It then reports on the networking initiatives and their outcomes as the above LTAs have intermittently participated in joint activities since 2004. Getting the genie of networking into the bottle and making it serve the purpose of the LTAs in a sustainable manner appear to be rather elusive. In the final section, the effectiveness as well as the challenges of the networking exercise are analyzed bearing in mind future directions in regional interactions and networking.

2 Background and Purpose of LTAs

Lamb (2012, as cited in Paran, 2016, p. 128), defines LTAs as “networks of professionals, run by and for professionals, focused mainly on support for members, with knowledge exchange and development as well as representation of members’ views as their defining functions.” Khanna (2011, as cited in Gnawali, 2013, p. 36) states that the primary aim of associations is “to empower the teachers by constantly building their proficiency skills”. The main focus of LTAs, thus, is providing platforms and opportunities to language teachers for their continuing professional development (CPD).

The scope and variety of teacher development activities of LTAs varies across different contexts. Some activities carried out by the LTAs include workshops, short-term training programs, publications, and conferences. Other activities, undertaken by only a few LTAs like SPELT, include tailor-made programs and materials development for various institutions, textbook writing, and long-term accredited teacher training courses. However, conferences seem to occupy center stage in the initiatives undertaken by most LTAs. Paran (2016, p. 129) points out that “conferences are an important member benefit ... and an important CPD opportunity; many LTA members attend conferences specifically to refresh their enthusiasm, find out about new trends and resources in the field and to engage in professional debate.” Sarwar (2011, p. 69) adds, “A conference... reflects the strengths of a teachers’ association ..., and at the same time, a successfully managed conference strengthens the image of an organization”. Teachers and institutions mark conferences on their calendars and wait the year-round for the conference to occur. The gathering gives them an opportunity to meet old colleagues and network to form bonds with new ones”. This could be the reason why conferences are so high on the agenda of most LTAs; in fact, they also take priority when networking amongst LTAs is discussed.

And yet what seems to be missing in all the activities is *advocacy* and initiatives related to *involvement in policy making*, although a desire for this is often expressed by the LTAs while discussing areas for networking. This is underscored by Paran (2016, p. 128): “It is interesting to note that ... the external advocacy element, which is so important for subject associations as well as professional associations, is positioned as the last element for LTAs, as an addition to their core activities”. The reason for this could be, as is the case in Pakistan, that the government policies are often guided by political targets rather than by educational aims. In the case of Bangladesh, Rahman (2014) points to myopic state policies regarding education, teacher development and professionalism.

It is evident that most LTAs work under immense resource constraints, both human and financial, and with their main aim being the professional development of teachers, they are often unable to devote the time and resources needed for establishing their position as a key stakeholder in the area of policy making. And thus they find it advantageous in exploring support from other regional LTAs. Not only is there an opportunity to learn how other LTAs pursue this aim but there is also the likelihood of regional LTAs forming a collaborative synergetic force to take up the cudgels for advocacy.

3 Why Strengthen LTAs

The aim of the United Nations’ 4th Sustainable Development Goal (among its 17 SDGs for 2030) is to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” (UNDP, n.d.). Although Pakistan has committed to work towards the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals, there is no visible evidence that any sustainable, long term measures have been undertaken to provide lifelong learning opportunities to language teachers. The language teachers’ need for continuing professional development like those of other teachers in Pakistan, are mostly being met by the private sector, the non-government organizations (NGOs), or the LTAs and other professional associations.

Similarly, in Bangladesh, Rahman (2014) reports on the state providing periodic professional development of language teachers within a *narrow* perspective. The *narrow view* imparts some specific skills and knowledge to language teachers in order to deal with specific new requirements, e.g. training teachers to handle a new textbook or using a new teaching aid or introducing a new test format. Such an approach hinders and discourages the *broad* view of professional development within a CPD perspective, the aim of which is to take root as a deeper process in which teachers continuously enhance their knowledge and skills, their understanding and maturity and grow both as professionals and as people. This is quite unfortunate as most educators today view CPD in its *broad* sense. Indeed, the situation in Bangladesh actually reflects reality in many other contexts as pointed out by Hargreaves (2000) who sees the current status of teacher professionalism as being marked by a struggle between *de-professionalizing* (negative) and *re-professionalizing* (positive) forces.

There are several reasons why language teachers look to LTAs for their professional development. With teaching being low-paid and often a female-dominated profession, it is very difficult for teachers to access professional development programs offered by the private sector as these are expensive and may require time and travel. As far as the NGOs are concerned, their programs and activities are often guided by the target aims of the respective NGOs and the agendas of the agencies funding them. Hence, the training that they offer often does not meet the needs as specifically desired by language teachers. This is where LTAs step in—they offer free or low-cost relevant teaching development, meeting the specific needs of language teachers. This is a major reason why LTAs need to be strengthened.

Another reason for strengthening LTAs is that they provide a platform for both learning and sharing of ideas. This is important, because teachers are not only recipients of knowledge and skills, they are also the contributors. Research findings by Gnawali (2013) showed that teachers learn and grow with the LTA by means of a reciprocal learning approach—as teachers enjoy available resources, they develop into resources themselves. “The association and its members build social capital with the resources they have and they bring and create conditions for their own learning. The learning is reciprocal, collaborative and shared” (Gnawali 2013, p. 248).

Furthermore, the strengthening of LTAs is important for their sustainability. Most LTAs in the South Asian region owe their founding and continuity, despite all odds, to the commitment of a group of volunteer teachers and other educationists. By having very limited resources and mostly dependent on volunteerism and scant resources that they can mobilise, the LTAs, especially young associations are in a vulnerable position. And yet the role they play in providing cost effective and contextually relevant professional development opportunities cannot be undermined. Gnawali (2013) emphasizes that to enable LTAs to carry out their role more effectively, strengthening them and the association’s structure is crucial, both for their own vitality and survival and for the benefit of their members.

3.1 Initiatives for Strengthening LTAs Through Regional Networking

With an awareness of the role and contextual relevance of LTAs in enhancing the level of teaching and learning of English in their respective countries, and in providing support to each other, the British Council initiated the first Regional Teachers Association (RTA) Conference in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in February 2004. The objective was to encourage LTAs to work proactively towards the development of ELT in their respective regions by providing a forum for the development of the ELT fraternity in the region by engaging in activities which would contribute to both the development of teachers and ELT in general. Twenty-six participants from India, Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Indonesia and Nigeria representing ELTAs and the British Council offices came together in this four-day conference to discuss the

various issues related to the effective functioning of LTAs. The four-fold action plan was to:

- promote sharing of ideas and best practice through a network of teacher associations;
- maximize the impact of Teacher Association work through a sharing of resources;
- empower individual Teacher Associations to be more effective in their national activity;
- to support the setting up of Teacher Associations in countries where they do not yet exist.

A follow-up RTA meeting was organized again by the British Council attended by the same TA participants at Karachi, Pakistan on 4–6 October 2004 to carry further the work done by the LTAs after its first meeting at Colombo. A year later, in 2005, the Regional English Language Office of the US State Department arranged a 2-day regional LTA meeting at Karachi, Pakistan with similar objectives. So it appears during 2004–2006, there was a flurry of initiatives linked to the LTA networking and strengthening issue.

Networking can serve a dual purpose: help acquire new ideas and share what works in various countries with similar issues. More than that, networking can save LTAs from self-defeating and debilitating thoughts. Learning that they are not the only ones facing seemingly insurmountable problems, that others have been there and have overcome them or are still there and are trying to overcome similar issues and problems, can be a huge source of strength. Networking is of great value particularly for South Asia, with its densely populated regions and diversity of languages, cultures, ethnicities, and socio-religious groups and yet with a great deal of similarity in the kinds of issues that this region faces, particularly in the education sector.

Pickering (2008) advocated that LTAs would be more effective in improving the teaching and learning of English in their countries if their memberships and activities are broader and more sustainable. He also argued that a strong regional network of LTAs would help further and sustain the continued growth of the younger organizations. The British Council 2007–08 project launched another initiative to bring the South Asian regional LTAs together to strengthen their capacities through regional networking. It brought together a number of ELTAs from the Central and South Asia region. Although regional networking was one of the aims of this project, the focus was more on strengthening the capacity of the LTAs. This was done by delivering training in leadership and management, strategic planning, marketing and communications, project and events management and strengthening and expanding TA products and services for teacher members. However, the networking element was not much developed with more emphasis on developing the capacity building of the LTAs as individual associations.

Nearly four years later, the *networking* element received fresh impetus in a Regional Hornby School project floated by the British Council Dhaka, aptly named ‘Sharing Best Practice: Strengthening and Extending Teachers’ Associations in South Asia’ in December 2011. Thirty participants from seven ELTAs from the South Asia and Middle East region, including SPELT and BELTA, participated in this 5-day

workshop. There was still a strong emphasis on skills development of LTA volunteer leaders in areas of leadership and management through strategic planning, financial management skills and skills related to marketing, fund-raising & sponsorship, the maintenance of membership databases, enrolment, raising awareness and greater acceptance of ways of promoting more transparent succession within the LTA. However, networking and TAs helping each other also occupied a visible space in the workshop proceedings as it offered participants a platform for sharing success stories and best practice in key areas. To create stronger links in the region, specific ideas such as the Moodle platform—a Virtual Learning Environment designed to facilitate networking between TA leaders in different countries and the Peer Support Review (PSR) process—a consultative procedure intended to help LTAs learn from each other, were introduced. In the longer term, ideas were floated to organize a regional conference and carry out joint research (see Pickering, 2012). Further impetus to regional collaboration, was provided through a follow up workshop of the participating ELTAs and a collaborative review of the SLELTA Conference, in Colombo, in September 2012. Subsequently, a joint presentation was made by LTAs at the IATEFL Conference in Liverpool, in April 2013, reiterating the steps that the regional ELTAs planned to undertake with respect to their own associations and for networking purposes.

In addition to these British Council initiatives, at least two other ELTAs, BELTA and SPELT have also attempted regional networking. Some initiatives that these two regional ELTAs have undertaken are discussed below.

3.2 *Bangladesh English Language Teachers Association (BELTA)*

BELTA values networking at all levels be it local, national or international. In-country networking starts with connecting schools and with local teachers not only in the urban areas but also in rural and marginalised communities. At the intra-regional level, BELTA's network extends to fourteen regions spread over the country where each BELTA chapter is involved in outreach teacher development programs. In addition, institutional networks spawn BELTA's credibility as a language professional initiator and teacher development provider to educational institutions and universities that offer a range of CPD programs for teacher development and empowerment.

A significant networking enterprise that BELTA has been actively involved in over the last 13 years is its collaboration with *Teachers-Helping-Teachers* (THT), currently a JALT SIG (<http://tht-japan.org/>). To date, a group of volunteer teacher educators based in Japan but with nationalities from around the world have come to Bangladesh nearly every year to offer 2–4 days of ELT training to local English teachers through culturally appropriate workshops and interactive presentations. To date, this networking endeavor has reached nearly 3000 teachers. Khan (2011, p. 180) evaluates this program thus: “In involving international experts in teacher training,

BELTA has had the foresight to combine outsider expertise with insider perspectives in order to make the methodologies suitable for the Bangladeshi educational and social context.”

Besides, BELTA is linked to international English language organizations. It is an Affiliate of TESOL, an Associate of IATEFL, and a regional member of AsiaTEFL. It also has formal memoranda of understanding (MOU) with JALT (Japan), MELTA (Malaysia), NELTA (Nepal) and AINET (India). This enables each LTA to enjoy benefits from the partnering LTAs, especially during conferences. Although there is no formal signed agreement with SPELT or SLELTA, there is an informal agreement regarding the benefits and facilities for one another.

The final networking activity is the Peer Support Review (PSR) that was floated during the South Asia Strengthening Teachers Associations project in 2011. The entire mechanism involved an LTA initially carrying out a self-assessment of its own operations on issues of leadership, management, membership, newsletter, marketing, communication, training, website, etc. Later the same LTA was peer reviewed by at least two other regional LTAs during its annual conference along the same criteria. The first PSR was carried out at Colombo, Sri Lanka during the 7th SLELTA Conference, Sept 5–10, 2012 in which five LTAs took part.

An important element was that the visiting LTAs underwent a training session first on how to carry out the PSR and what the assessment parameters would be and how to give constructive feedback before doing the actual review of the host LTA during the conference. The underlying ethos of this entire exercise was the “don’t worry, we are in the same boat” approach. The reviewers participated in the conference like other delegates and discreetly gathered information while engaged in friendly exchanges with local members and delegates over lunch or tea. During the post-conference feedback session, the reviewers give their comments by deliberately avoiding criticism, emphasizing strong points and finally raising options for moving ahead. The main objective was to encourage enhanced management and develop a positive sense of identity as members of a shared profession.

The second PSR took place at the BELTA International Conference held in January 2013 in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Here LTAs from Nepal and Sri Lanka engaged in the same mechanism to review BELTA’s performance as a LTA and as a conference organizer. The third PSR was planned for the NELTA conference later that year but as there were not enough visiting LTAs from the region, the exercise had to be aborted. Although the PSR proved to be an effective review mechanism, it turned out to be an expensive enterprise and needed financial support and sponsorship.

3.3 Society of Pakistan English Language Teachers (SPELT)

SPELT has been attempting regional networking, in a very broad sense, almost since its inception in 1984. In 1987, two of the founder members traveled to attend a conference at the Central Institute of Modern/Foreign Languages, Hyderabad, India, using their personal resources. Their vision was to have regional coordination, as India and

Pakistan both face similar language teaching issues. Because of their networking, by the late 80s, SPELT was inviting and hosting presenters from countries in the region to present at the annual SPELT International conferences. In fact, ELTAA in Afghanistan was born at a SPELT conference in Karachi, Pakistan, and NELTA was mentored by SPELT during its early years. Over the last 33 years, presenters from ELTAs in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Saudi Arabia, and UAE have presented at the SPELT Annual International conferences at different venues in Pakistan. Almost invariably, SPELT has taken advantage of the presence of these regional ELTA representatives to hold informal and, at least on two occasions, formal meetings. On all these occasions, there has been sharing of issues and ideas and how the regional ELTAs could share resources and remain in regular contact to benefit from each other.

In most cases, though not all, these representatives from the ELTAs have been sponsored participants. And, these meetings have been dovetailed with the annual SPELT conference, to enable participants to present at an international conference and network with regional associations, thereby achieving two targets for the price of one. However, high though the desire and the realization that networking and collaboration can benefit all, these meetings have not yet resulted in long lasting, concrete measures for networking, due to a variety of reasons.

One major constraint that has been voiced consistently is getting sponsorships for attending regional LTA meetings in different countries, on an ongoing basis. In order to address this issue, one recent initiative that SPELT once again undertook was that it offered to host a meeting of regional ELTAs, by dovetailing it with its annual international conference in Karachi (see Gnawali's chapter in this volume). One major attraction of the SPELT conference is that it offers the opportunity of presenting in three different cities of Pakistan and attending the TA meeting, all in one go. Additionally, SPELT offered to provide local accommodation and in-city transport, while the participants bore the cost of airfare, visas, and inter-city travel, if desirous of presenting at conferences in other cities. This, probably, was the first ever meeting initiated by an ELTA in the region, in which members from four other regional associations participated, and no funding was obtained from any source. However, just how far this can be sustained without the help of 'funding agencies' remains to be seen.

4 Networking Challenges: Some Points to Consider

Ideal though networking sounds, numerous factors hinder its implementation. Probably one reason why networking, though considered by all as an ideal route to take, does not get off the ground is that the term is not properly unpacked to understand the 'why' and 'what' of networking. It is discussed in terms of 'areas' for networking, i.e. having regional conferences, publications, and research; exchanging journals/newsletters; signing formal agreements. It is not that these areas are not important; but what is more important is to first explore how networking will benefit

the LTAs and their members; what are the capacities that LTAs have or what they can offer for continued networking; what are the issues that impact sustainability; and what innovative steps can be taken to overcome the financial challenges facing networking.

Working out how exactly networking will add value to the working of LTAs and how the benefits will trickle down to the members is crucial. It will then help in placing networking amongst the core tasks of an LTA and not as something to be sporadically discussed or attempted. Moreover, it will help LTAs in clearly targeting areas where best practices can be identified and will lead to seeking collaboration in areas that will be beneficial to their organization and its members. This, in turn, will raise their profile and attract more membership as opportunities for professional growth will become evident.

LTAs, as the name signifies, are associations. And, just as other professionals cannot be expected to have language teaching skills, teachers cannot be expected to have extensive command over areas like financial management, computer and internet technology, marketing skills, etc. Hence, while exploring networking options, assessing the capacity of LTAs in all concerned areas is important for continuity.

Another aspect that needs deep consideration is *sustainability*. Enacting and sustaining networks across countries is not easy. "One of the greatest problems for successful collaboration is for them to maintain their momentum. Ongoing, thorough planning and management are essential, and this allows for the continued redefinition of roles, responsibilities, goals and timelines... This type of progressive planning ensures that the network remains successful and productive." (McDermott 1999, as cited in Baber, Sarwar, & Safdar, 2005, p. 220). The key words for maintaining the momentum are 'thorough planning' and 'management'.

Planning to the last possible detail and clearly defining the roles and responsibilities is essential for any organization, but more so for networking among LTAs operating in different countries. Most LTAs depend on professionals' voluntary contribution of time and hard work; these volunteers already have multiple professional and personal demands on their life. Moreover, barring a few diehards, there is often a huge turnover, with experienced people leaving and new ones joining. Added to that are the varying contexts in which the different LTAs operate and the constraints under which they work. This clearly demands detailed planning and a clear definition of roles and responsibilities, within and across LTAs, for networking to be a sustainable endeavour.

Financial sustainability is yet another major concern. In the context of networking, attending conferences and TA meetings emerge as major resource intensive areas. Is there a solution? Taking advantage of technological advances can be strongly considered as one possible solution. Secondly, more structured dovetailing of networking with conferences can be another viable option, both for the host and participating LTAs, as meagre resources can then serve a dual purpose. Both these options have their share of constraints but some extra effort and out of the box thinking may provide a more sustainable financial strategy for networking.

5 Lessons Learned and the Way Forward

Sustaining any networking initiative involving multiple partners requires ongoing communication within and between partner LTAs, to ensure continuing dialogue. One way of ensuring ongoing dialogue within the LTA is “to keep a running assessment of how well a partnership is working from the point of view of all participants” (Ramsley, 2002, as cited in Baber et al., 2005, p. 220). This highlights the need for regular assessment of how networking is contributing to the growth and development of an LTA and its membership, and how it is promoting membership interest and enthusiasm. This will serve a dual purpose; it will help in keeping the networking agenda center stage and will prevent stagnation of the networking process. Moreover, constant evaluation and review of networking relationships and initiatives at the LTA level can lead to the development of newer and more relevant ideas, which can provide the impetus needed for vibrant collaboration.

Ongoing dialogue between partner LTAs is required about how networking is proving beneficial. It is equally important to monitor the progress of agreed steps and/or activities that each LTA had agreed to carry out and communicating regularly with each other regarding updates. This will ensure that time and effort invested in conceptualising and concretising various initiatives yield the desired results.

E-technology can also be effectively utilised for communication. However, two things particularly need attention: the extent and the purpose for which it is to be used. All South Asian LTAs may not have the human or technological capacity to meet the sophisticated demands of modern technology; hence, it is important that this be kept as simple as possible. Secondly, due to information overload, the volume of communication often becomes unwieldy to handle; this requires that the areas of communication be clearly defined and kept to a minimum. This can stop important communication from falling between the cracks.

Face-to-face interactions are considered essential for networking by most LTAs, but human and financial resource constraints are often hindering factors in sustaining such interactions. Past attempts and experiences show that conferences have played an important role in bringing regional LTAs closer. Since conferences seem to be the most popular occasions for holding meetings, maybe, now is the time to capitalise on them for networking in a more structured manner. If conferences occupy a central position in LTAs, and they are an important CPD opportunity, the question that begs attention is: why not explore the possibility of positioning networking within conferences in a manner that they become an integral part of the LTA conference planned activities?

Most LTAs hold conferences; they mobilise resources, both human and financial, to hold them; hence, merging a regional LTA meeting with their conference may be manageable for them. However, this would require readiness on the part of the LTAs desirous of holding the meeting and, of course, detailed planning. The next area is participation of representatives from regional LTAs. Here, one size may not fit all; hence, a variety of options can be explored, prime amongst them being: selling this to members as an ideal CPD opportunity, in addition to having the chance of

presenting in a different country and attending an LTA meeting. This can help address both human and financial constraints. Moreover, if properly structured, this can help sustain networking, develop future leadership in LTAs, and help attract and sustain members.

Another area for LTA collaboration can be *collaborative research*, which is fortunately not resource intensive. With scant published research available regarding this South Asian area, it is a significant CPD opportunity, as challenges and variables are quite similar across the region. Collaborative research is increasingly becoming an essential field, as the world is becoming a global society, with students and teachers traveling to different parts of the world to acquire/impart education, more research and a deeper understanding of factors and issues are required.

Some other areas for regional networking could be: (a) offering membership to members of network organizations at subsidized rates, (b) collaborative writing of materials/books/book chapters, (c) working towards developing a curriculum framework with the regional needs in mind, and (d) considering the contextual limitations, determining advocacy paths.

6 Conclusion

Regional networking can go a long way in strengthening LTAs and in improving and enhancing the quality of activities and initiatives that they offer to their members. Targeted properly, it can help LTAs in attracting and retaining members. Structured initiatives can lead to effectiveness and sustainability. And placing networking center stage in all LTA programs and initiatives can contribute to continuity and productivity. However, genuine collaboration requires that it should move from just being a desire to becoming a commitment, and a cause worth pursuing.

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Part IV
Personal, Professional and Leadership
Development

Developing Leadership Capacity Through Leadership Learning Opportunities



Lauren Stephenson

Abstract The chapter examines how five LTA leaders developed their leadership skills through engaging in leadership learning opportunities. It draws on some of the findings of a research project that explored how five internationally renowned leaders in English language teaching (ELT) developed their leadership capacities. Through the methodology of narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelley, 2000; Trahar, 2013) the study sought to explore how these leaders make sense of their own development as leaders in the world of ELT with rapidly changing characteristics by focusing on their leadership learning at the level of lived experiences situated in the complex, globalized ELT context. Data were drawn from written interviews and were analyzed using an inductive process of identifying themes. The findings reported in this chapter include the critical roles of leadership learning, informal leadership development opportunities; and leadership learning through mentoring/coaching and relational leadership. The chapter concludes with practical insights and recommendations for those who aspire to lead in Language Teacher Associations (LTAs).

1 Introduction

The educational literature is replete with theories of leaders and leadership but until relatively recently the focus has tended to be on the positional leadership of the educational leaders with a view to understanding what skills and traits are required to lead change in educational institutions. The emphasis has been on the characteristics and behaviors of the single ‘heroic’ leader. However, over the last three decades there has been an increasing awareness that educational organizations are much too complex for leadership by a single leader resulting in participatory and distributed models of leadership (see Harris, 2004; Spillane, 2006).

Distributed approaches to educational leadership allow for new opportunities for teachers to take on leadership roles and typically these have been in three con-

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texts—the classroom, the profession and the organization. Theoretical perspectives on teacher leadership are not new. What is significant in their re-emergence is the realization that leadership is the work of everyone (Berry, Daughtrey & Wieder, 2010).

At the same time as new perspectives about educational leadership have emerged, there has been a corresponding growth in understanding the most effective approaches to professional learning and development of pedagogical and leadership skills (Lloyd & Mayer, 2010). This has included the role of LTAs for networking and the development of ‘communities of practice’ (Wenger, 1998). Both concepts of networking and communities of practice assume that learning is fundamentally a social phenomenon; knowledge is inseparable from practice and is integrated in the life of communities that share values, beliefs, languages, and ways of doing things. According to Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (2002) circumstances in which individuals engage in real action that has consequences for themselves and their communities of practice create powerful learning environments.

Taken together, the three elements of LTA leadership, teacher leadership and communities of practice underscored the study’s objectives to gain a better understanding of how leadership capacity can be developed, specifically through LTAs. The international literature highlights some important elements of successful leadership learning and these are elaborated here.

2 Literature Review

As the limitations of individual leadership have become increasingly evident through recent research, collective or teacher leadership has become increasingly well established and consists of “teachers who lead within and beyond the classroom, contribute to a community of teacher learners and leaders, and influence others towards improved educational practice” (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, p. 17). Teacher leadership is emerging throughout LTAs across the globe where leadership is shared with a continued focus on expertise in teaching. The focus is on leadership practice rather than leaders, leadership roles, or leadership functions and takes form in the interactions between leaders, followers, and their situation (Berry, Daughtrey & Wieder, 2010). Teacher leaders generate instructionally specific conversations, develop trusting relationships and advocate shared leadership development resulting in team-oriented cultures (Lloyd & Mayer, 2010).

Emerging research suggests that the effectiveness of teacher leadership roles is dependent, in part, on support received from other leaders (Barth, 2013). Where teacher leaders have direct and regular contact with the organizational leaders, they are better able to communicate learning improvement messages to others in organizations such as LTAs.

Leadership in ELT and LTAs, therefore, is a complex, multi-dimensional and social process of self-discovery (Cunliffe, 2004). ELT leaders are those that other teachers and educational leaders value for their collaboration, coaching, modeling,

mentoring, guidance and professional support. In the current ELT context, given the turbulence, uncertainty and contradictory tensions leaders face on a daily basis, new and different leadership approaches are necessary, and it is essential that leaders are well prepared for leadership and leadership learning through formal and informal means (Berry, Daughtrey & Wieder, 2010; Robertson, 2005). Drawing on the vast leadership literature, the following section takes a multidimensional leadership development perspective.

2.1 Leadership Learning

Leadership learning is concerned with the interrelated formal processes, contexts and mechanisms within courses or programs and the informal processes in and through which professionals interact with the social experience they encounter in their workplaces (Billett, 2008). As such, similarly to Gunter and Ribbins (2002), I propose that leadership and leadership development can only be “understood through the gathering of professional experiences from within contextualized settings” (p. 388).

Leadership learning typically occurs through stages of awareness, interaction and mastery. Awareness is primarily about recognizing one’s leadership potential. As leadership is a social process, the second stage involves preparing for interaction, that is, engaging in leadership practices, testing possibilities, reaching limits, reflecting and taking further action. The mastery stage is about using leadership skills and abilities to generate new interest and energy for self and others. In this stage leaders know themselves, their beliefs, their values and what motivates them. This stage is also about being seen and recognized by self and others as exemplary, ethical and authentic leaders.

The dimensions of leadership development include:

1. Leadership information (learned knowledge about leaders and leadership).
2. Leadership attitude (learned values or dispositions).
3. Communication (learned influence).
4. Decision making (influence in ethical and socially responsible ways).
5. Stress management (learned self-regulation) (van Linden & Fertman, 1998).

Leadership skills, like most other skills, require practice in context (Billett, 2008) and leadership development needs to be connected to the goals, structures and processes of the organization (Zenger, Ulrich, & Smallwood, 2000). Therefore, part of the challenge in leadership development activities/programs is to create such experiential opportunities.

2.2 *Informal Leadership Development Opportunities*

Research indicates that educational leaders have a preference for forms of informal professional learning, mentoring and experiential leadership development rather than formal courses (Zhang & Brundrett, 2010). There are a broad range of informal leadership development opportunities to support leadership learning. Some of these include critical self-reflection through journaling, sharing opinions about current ELT issues; engaging in debate, discussion and critique of those issues, conversations and decisions about learning norms and expectations, and behavioural boundaries and expectations; and conversations and decisions about teaching, learning and assessment. The social aspects of networking and communities of practice enable individual and collective leadership learning. Learning from this point of view requires developing the dispositions, demeanour and outlook of the practitioners involved, rather than merely acquiring information (Brown & Duguid, 1991). As such, peer support, buddying, critical friends, mentors and coaches play a critical role in supporting the development of leadership capacity.

3 Leadership Learning Through Mentoring/Coaching

There is also a large and growing literature on developing leadership capacity through quality mentoring and coaching. Bush and Glover (2005) suggest mentoring and coaching as highly successful in promoting the development of practising and aspirant leaders. Coaching differs from mentoring in that it is generally for a short period of time and focuses on helping an individual with specific current leadership performance challenges or issues in the present, whereas mentoring is for a longer period and focuses on developing the individual holistically for the future—professionally, personally, and often, spiritually.

Recent research offers a range of skills and qualities of mentoring that effective coaches and mentors demonstrate that include:

1. Being accessible to a mentee, being willing to listen; being reflective and sharing ideas; providing honest and constructive feedback to the mentee; being understanding and supportive; being patient with questions and uncertainty; having strategies for and knowledge of effective leadership and being a role model for aspiring leaders (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Victoria, 2010, p. 3).

Coaching leadership is defined as leadership that is learned, modeled and reflected upon through the lived experience of leadership in action (Robertson, 2005). Such authentic leadership learning opportunities occur reciprocally as individuals learn new skills and practices leading to further dialogue and critical reflection. Holmes (2003) suggests that effective coaching depends on four variables: the task focus of the coaching; the personal mastery and competences of the coach; the skills,

attitudes and knowledge of the person being coached; and the context or ecology of the organization. Robertson (2005) found that those leaders who had themselves been coached were more willing to coach others and sought opportunities in their daily interactions to do so.

3.1 Relational Leadership

Relational leadership is a process of social influence, construction and distribution (Uhl Bien & Ospina, 2012) and as such, knowing and learning are ongoing processes of relating and meaning making determined by socio-cultural contexts (Bandura, 1977). A relational leadership perspective suggests leadership effectiveness is determined by the ability of the leader to create positive relationships “differently constructed in different relational and historical/cultural settings” (Dachler & Hosking, 1995, p. 4). A relational approach to leadership, therefore, means understanding that interdependent relationships and intersubjective meanings continuously emerge as organizational phenomena (Uhl Bien & Ospina, 2012). Attributes of individuals involved in leadership behaviors or exchanges are no longer as important as social construction processes by which certain understandings of leadership come about and are privileged.

According to Komives, Lucas, and McMahon (1998), the primary components of relational leadership are that it is inclusive of people and diverse viewpoints, empowers others involved, is purposeful, ethical and process-oriented. Relational leaders inspire, motivate and empower others to be their best authentic selves. Similarly to relational leadership’s focus on social relations, Spillane’s (2006) view of distributed leadership focuses on interactions rather than actions.

4 Methodology

The aim of this research project was to begin to understand some aspects of leadership in ELT from the perspective of five leaders in the field. Specifically the project sought to identify the leadership approaches, critical significant events, successes, challenges and relationships that impacted the leadership practices of these leaders.

This study draws on the discrete story narrative tradition where discrete stories are told in response to single questions and are typically brief and topically specific (Labov, 1997). Because people live out their lives in a storied way, this study privileges positionality and subjectivity. Relativism rather than absolute truths is at the core of this qualitative approach. A social constructionist perspective is also taken where the changing meaning of events for these ELT leaders is in history and culture. The methodology used acknowledges that all personal stories are selective and open to editing and change. Therefore, the findings should be regarded as representations open to other interpretations and contested meanings.

Over 30 male and female leaders, acknowledged for their highly visible international profiles and their broad and rich experiences of leadership in ELT, were invited to participate in the study. Their selection did not assume that leadership is a senior position or that holding a senior position reflects the achievement of leadership.

Neil J Anderson, Anne Burns, Susan Barduhn, Christine Coombe and Peter Grundy graciously accepted the invitation and responded to the leadership interview questions emailed to them. These ELT leaders have worked across the globe from the USA through to the UK, Europe, Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Australia. In the context of their lives, they were invited to share their opinions, perspectives and memories of their own lived leadership experience in ELT and specifically LTAs. They each gave permission to use their real names.

4.1 Participants

Neil J Anderson, a Professor and Chair of the Department of English Language Teaching and Learning at Brigham Young University–Hawaii, USA, served as President of TESOL International from 2001 to 2002. He currently teaches courses in the TESOL undergraduate program as well as language classes to second language learners. He also served on the Board of Trustees for the International Research Foundation for English Language Education from 2004 to 2008.

Susan Barduhn, Past President of International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL), is Professor Emerita at SIT Graduate Institute in the US, where she was Professor, Chair of the Summer MA TESOL program, and Director of the Teacher Training and Professional Development Institute. She has been involved in English language teaching for more than 40 years as teacher, trainer, supervisor, manager, assessor and consultant; and she has worked for extended periods in Kenya, the UK, the US, Switzerland, Colombia, Spain, and Portugal.

Anne Burns is a Professor in TESOL in the School of Education at University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia. She has worked as an English teacher, teacher educator and researcher in France, Kenya and Mauritius; and in higher education in the UK and Australia. She has held leadership roles in several LTAs.

Christine Coombe, President of TESOL from 2011 to 2012, currently works as an Associate Professor at Dubai Men's College. Dr Coombe has served on the IATEFL Conference Committee and she previously served on the TESOL Board of Directors as Convention Chair for Tampa 2006. During her tenure in the Gulf, she has served in various leadership positions on the TESOL Arabia Executive Council including President and Conference Chair.

Peter Grundy, past President of IATEFL, began his teaching career in the 1960s and has taught in schools in the UK and Germany in initial teacher training and in higher education in the UK and Hong Kong. He retired from full-time employment at the University of Durham in 2002, where he had taught Linguistics and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) since 1979.

4.2 Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected in the form of electronic interview, participant reflection, storytelling and email. This form of data collection acknowledges that memory is selective and shaped, and retold in the continuum of one's experience. The responses were often told as stories dependent on the individual's past and present experiences, values and beliefs. Each narrative was initially treated as an individual 'case' and these individual cases were then compared, and inter-case themes identified in order to showcase some leadership perspectives in ELT and specifically LTAs.

The quality and trustworthiness of the study was ensured through the data generation procedures and an adaption of the narrative research process as outlined by Moen (2006). I aimed to capture the participants' voices over a six-month period of time. I also began writing early, reported fully, and kept accurate records. I was a reflexive researcher and aimed to be candid and at all times aware of my own subjectivity and biases. As such I sought verification of participants' views of the accuracy and credibility of the findings, interpretations and conclusions (Miles & Huberman, 1994), a technique that is considered critical for establishing credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

5 Findings

5.1 Leadership Learning Opportunities

Each participant acknowledged that Language Teacher Associations such as IATEFL and TESOL International are key ways for educators to network, develop and sustain communities of practice and learn from each other (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002), particularly in special interest groups that are focused on leadership and management. It continues to be the case that opportunities for leadership in ELT are too often a consequence of someone who is good at teaching being promoted within an organization, but who is not given formal or informal support in the new skills to be an educational administrator and leader. Rather, leadership support has often come from LTAs and colleagues (Killon, 2013).

Each participant identified the importance of knowing and understanding the self, their beliefs and values as these determine leadership behaviours (Avolio & Walumbwa, 2014; Branson & Gross, 2014). For example, Neil Anderson believes keeping a leadership journal is an extremely effective tool in helping people develop as leaders. It ensures that leaders engage in critical self-reflection (Cunliffe, 2004) through regular journaling: "Journaling is one way that we can each gain insights into our own experiences as leaders and to record our own development."

Susan Barduhn is an advocate for formal training in administrative operations, procedures and people skills where its impact can be measured (Killon, 2013). "A responsible administration will identify those whose experience lends them insight to

the real needs of students and teachers, and then follow up with appropriate training and mentoring.”

However, similarly to the other participants, she also believes that the majority of leadership capacity development occurs in the actual doing of the leadership and through informal professional learning opportunities (Uhl Bien & Ospina, 2012; Zhang & Brundrett, 2010). “I have learned a great deal about leadership through experience that I think cannot be covered or acquired through formal training. When a similar situation occurs, the learning that took place through previous experiences is the teacher.”

Likewise, Peter Grundy believes that there is much to be learned that cannot be covered by formal training and he is not in favor of formal leadership training programs (Gunter & Ribbins, 2002; Zhang & Brundrett, 2010). He is not supportive of policies in advance of encountering a situation. “I think leadership skills are developed on the job and come about by thinking hard about people and the situation and remembering that in a sense the leader is only there, and certainly only leading effectively, because others agree to it. The few things I know are all particularized to contexts and people and so are unlikely to result from formal training.”

Each participant commented that their practice of leadership and learning about leadership in action and through action provided significant leadership capacity development (Billett, 2008; Gunter & Ribbins, 2002; Zenger et al., 2000) and leadership development is grounded in knowing the self and needs to be connected to the goals and strategies of the organization. When Neil Anderson took a seminar class during his graduate studies in the master’s program in teaching English as a second or foreign language at Brigham Young University, he was asked to become familiar with the names and areas of expertise of the presidents of the professional association, Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). “That is when I first became familiar with such names as H. Douglas Brown, TESOL president from 1979 to 1981, and Ruth Crymes, TESOL president in 1979. I learned that Professor Crymes had died in a plane crash on her way to the 1979 Mexico TESOL conference. Other names included Harold B. Allen (1966–1967), TESOL’s first president; Mary Finocchiaro (1970–1971), a nonnative speaker of English from Italy; Russell N. Campbell (1971–1972); Betty Wallace Robinett (1973–1974); Christina Bratt Paulston (1976–1977); and Bernard Spolsky (1978–1979). Many of these TESOL presidents wrote the textbooks that we were using in our master’s program. As I have been actively engaged in the profession and the professional association, these people became now more than just names; they were role models of strong leadership. I have benefited from these role models. I have been influenced by learning about TESOL’s leaders.”

Anne Burns had not meant to set out to be a “leader” or have advanced plans about where her career should go (Zhang & Brundrett, 2010). “Basically, I was just very interested in and fascinated by the field I found myself teaching in, realized that I didn’t know enough about it and wanted to learn more through further studies and teaching experiences. As I worked in various places, I feel I’ve been very fortunate indeed to have opportunities put in my way by great mentors who sort of “tapped

me on the shoulder” and gave me opportunities to participate or pushed me to go beyond what I was currently doing.”

This was similar for Peter Grundy in that he never asked for a leadership post but had always been asked to take on specific leadership roles or responsibilities (Zhang & Brundrett, 2010). “Usually, you’re asked to take something on because they can’t find anyone else—this is to some extent a compliment but mostly reflects the fact that most people are too nice to want to be leaders or too honest to be likely to do the job well. I don’t think this is the way it works in politics. By nature, I side with the underdog and have very little time for leaders. Inevitably one finds oneself in a leadership role from time to time in life, both at work and in one’s family relationships.”

Susan Barduhn too is someone who is asked to take on extra responsibilities and positions of leadership. “I started teaching English in Colombia when only 18. I was identified early for administrative and teacher development roles. At the age of 29 I was given the tremendous opportunity to go to Kenya and create a language school. It was an immediate success and I remained the director for eight years. It is still going strong! After that I moved to London to International House [IH] and was soon promoted to Deputy Director. I remained with IH for ten years before going freelance—trainer, trainer of trainers, consultant, assessor, school inspector, supervisor, conference organizer, President of IATEFL.”

5.2 Leadership Learning Through Mentoring/Coaching

Mentors, mentoring and coaching approaches influence the majority of the LTA leaders in this study because each leader believes in maximizing their own potential as well as that of others and of situations (Bush & Glover, 2005; Robertson, 2005) albeit in slightly different ways.

Susan Barduhn commented specifically on the support and leadership mentoring of Adrian Underhill at various stages in her career. Anne has also been most influenced by leaders who adopted a coaching approach (Robertson, 2005): “In my experience, they open up opportunities for you that take you beyond your current comfort zone (for me, e.g. being asked to edit a journal when I was a very early career researcher). Then, they give you support to do the job at just the right time but make themselves available as soon as they can for input and advice when you need it. The rest of the time they get out of your way and show you they have confidence in you to do a good job. These kinds of leaders are also generous in not taking credit for work that others have done or being threatened by talented people they have around them.”

Similarly, Neil Anderson has been greatly influenced by five TESOL presidents: Donald Freeman, Denise Murray, MaryAnn Christison, Kathleen Bailey, and David Nunan (Bush & Glover, 2005; Robertson, 2005). “For me these five individuals have served as mentors of leadership. As I have watched their exemplary leadership, I have learned to develop my own leadership skills. Each of these leaders has extended personal invitations to me to enhance my skills and take on new leadership roles.”

Neil also reminds educational leaders of the importance of giving back through mentoring and coaching activities (Zhang & Brundrett, 2010): “As I have benefitted from mentors, I recognize that I must serve as a mentor for others. Therefore as I have been actively involved in TESOL leadership roles, I have tried to identify, encourage and support others who can serve as leaders. My point is that we can each benefit from mentors and from being a mentor.”

Christine Coombe has also been influenced by a number of individuals in her quest for professional success. “There were all the influences at university—so many...Fast forward a bit to my time in the Gulf, perhaps the most significant event for me in my development as a leader was my involvement with TESOL Arabia because it was with TESOL Arabia that I acquired and honed most of the skills in my leadership arsenal. The most significant has been my involvement with organizing events. My experience in this arena was largely responsible for my being elected Convention Chair for Tampa. My role models for this were the past convention chairs who were always ready to provide advice and support when things got difficult. In my quest to be TESOL President, several Past Presidents were very supportive of my nomination. Suchada Niammit, Lisa Barlow and Gabriel Maggioli also were very supportive, especially of my second run for President.”

Peter Grundy also favored a coaching leadership model (Roberston, 2005) where leadership is learned in action through modeling and action in context (Holmes, 2003). “To be honest, I try to use mentors as last resort. I kind of skim read the files handed to me when I became IATEFL president and tried not to be too influenced by them. But then I wouldn’t have wanted to become president (or director of a summer school) if I hadn’t had lots of ordinary experience of the set-up already. Mentoring, by definition, is for people who don’t know enough to do a job. I prefer the system in which you get asked questions on a need to know basis if you’re a person who might mentor.”

5.3 Relational Leadership

Each of the five leaders recognize that leadership is a social influence process (Uhl Bien & Ospina, 2012) and as such, an ongoing process of relating and meaning making determined by socio-cultural contexts (Dachler & Hosking, 1995). Anne Burns’ quote here captures this very effectively: “Well, for me leadership is not a question of being out there in front and assuming people will come along with you, or that decisions from the top will automatically be accepted. It’s more a philosophy of how leaders work with others and how their actions influence others. Leaders need to roll up their sleeves and be prepared to do the things they recommend that others do. I’ve always thought too that good leaders trust their colleagues to do a good job and don’t micro-manage how they do it—they get out of their way! I feel very strongly that if you can’t relate well to people and have them work with you, it’s impossible to be a good leader.”

Peter Grundy's next quote also reinforces the importance of working together for a common purpose (Lloyd & Mayer, 2010). "To get everyone to do great work, they have to be in an environment where they set their own targets and are trusted to get on with it. Some people will fail, but most will achieve far more than in the 'this-is-your-job' culture. I also think that leadership is institutionalized to some degree so that almost everyone will succeed as a leader in the right institution and almost everyone will fail in the wrong institution."

The participants indicated that their leadership learning largely arose out of a variety of informal routes, such as self-reflection, journaling, group work, learning communities and collaborative work within and across LTAs and other ELT organizations. The implications and recommendations for those who aspire to lead in Language Teacher Associations (LTAs) are now discussed.

6 Conclusion

Firsthand experience had far greater impact than professional development programs and that formal programs or readings could not sufficiently prepare for the rigors of professional activity. The five ELT leaders' preference is for longitudinal experiential practice. In all cases the majority of their learning in the workplace is informal and involves a combination of learning from colleagues and learning from personal experience, often both together. This is reinforced in the educational leadership learning literature (Zhang & Brundrett, 2010).

This study suggests that teacher leadership development is best learned from others' leadership experiences, their successes and challenges, which are clearly facilitated by involvement in LTAs. Though very positive about informal learning, the participants also acknowledged the important role of formal programs. The participants' perceptions reveal that other leadership development providers and the contribution they make to ELT leaders' professional learning should not be ignored.

The study's findings emphasize that future ELT leadership development needs to be linked more fully and coherently with ELT leadership practice in context. It was clear that each participant has been significantly influenced by previous LTA leaders. They clearly felt that such role models were essential, and they had a high regard for their leadership, their attitudes and experience. Such evidence makes it clear that ELT leaders help to fulfil the learning needs of many leading practitioners by offering practical advice and real-world examples of experiential learning. The participants also stated that they highly valued support from their own learning community in terms of their personal development mostly through apprenticeship models and shadowing experienced leaders.

The study is significant in that it sheds light on the debates about how best to understand the location of the continuing professional learning of teacher leaders and who is best placed to grow future leaders. The main conclusion reached is that we need greater recognition that professional learning and leadership socialization are important sources of contextually grounded knowledge and understanding and, if

anything, the increased complexity of leadership will continue to require greater individualized and contextualized support. The findings indicate that formal leadership programs, on their own, did not sufficiently prepare and develop these leaders but rather they learned leadership through internal and contextual support from within LTAs and their organizations. The results of the study also indicate the need for more diversified and differentiated program frameworks that cater for the individual and collective needs and interests of those practicing and aspiring to leadership in ELT. LTAs have provided significant opportunities for both formal and informal leadership learning through mentoring, coaching, networking and the development of communities of interest and practice. Changing the perception of leadership opportunities as no longer 'supplementary' to ELT but integral to professional growth is therefore essential. As reported by the five participants in this study, LTAs clearly have processes, policies and frameworks that enable and promote leadership learning and have enabled the enacting of democratic and relational models of leadership practice. LTAs foster inclusivity and recognise the need for new and developmental leadership learning models such as collective teacher leadership, mentoring, coaching, relational leadership and communities of practice. LTA leadership opportunities invite participants to develop integrative and adaptive habits of mind.

This chapter reports on an investigation of the leadership learning journeys of five internationally renowned ELT leaders' leadership learning experiences as perceived within varied contexts, and specifically LTAs. Leadership development is best learned from leadership experience, successes and challenges, and is clearly facilitated by involvement in LTAs. Three main recommendations can be derived from the study. Firstly, LTAs are a key means of ensuring that leadership professional learning is emphasized and aligned with local and global contexts. Clearly there are many passionate advocates already providing strong leadership capacity development who have dedicated their work to support leadership learning. Secondly, teacher leaders must be encouraged to analyze comprehensively and respond knowledgeably to the local context and work closely with and through their colleagues to establish effective relational leadership practices. Thirdly, if ELT leaders are to become professionally competent, they need to be able to take control of their own professional learning and be actively engaged in research into professional practice. In support of new research and emerging knowledge in leadership learning, I recommend that future empirical investigation focuses on capturing the possibilities for developing new and future ELT leaders through more informal and experiential learning within LTAs and other organizations, and by identifying teacher leaders' contributions to the enhancement of ELT leaders' professional learning.

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Leadership Emergence Within MEXTESOL



Leticia Araceli Salas Serrano and Ulrich Schrader

Abstract Language Teacher Associations (LTAs) can be the professional place where teachers learn, grow and develop personally and professionally. However, for the effective functioning of these associations, some members must take leadership roles. This chapter follows the leadership development of six MEXTESOL members who have emerged as leaders within the association at the local chapter level and at the national level. From the data obtained in this empirical study, four stages were identified on the path of emergence and development of these leaders. The experiences of the participants as leaders were explored in order to identify the motivations, challenges and rewards they have encountered in their development as teachers and leaders and how MEXTESOL became the common niche where they found their space to develop as leaders and to empower others.

1 Introduction

The development of LTAs around the world demands that language teachers take on new roles; one of these roles is as leaders of their associations. The present chapter portrays how leaders of a Language Teacher Association (LTA) in Latin America emerge, perceive and enact leadership and how they develop the leadership skills that help them perform their roles and functions within the organization.

Language Teacher Associations (LTAs) have been defined by Lamb (2012, p. 295) as: "...networks of professionals, run by and for professionals, focused mainly on support for members, with knowledge exchange and development as well as representation of members' views as their defining functions".

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From Lamb's definition, it can be assumed that LTAs are entrusted with offering language teachers a space where these professionals can grow and exchange views and knowledge in their particular contexts. TESOL International Association was created in 1966 "out of a concern for the lack of a single inclusive association with the mission to advance the quality of English language teaching through professional development, research, standards, and advocacy" (The History of TESOL, paragraph1). Among the association's values that members are encouraged to follow are:

- Professionalism demonstrated by excellence in standards, research, and practice that improve learning outcomes.
- Respect for diversity, multilingualism, multiculturalism, and individuals' language rights.
- Integrity guided by ethical and transparent action.
- Commitment to life-long learning.

These values are taken as guidelines for the functioning of the association and for organizing events that bring members together, both person-to-person and through electronic media. Lamb (2012) mentions that one of the central events that LTAs promote is an annual conference, where members interact and learn from each other. The conference is expected to be the space where experts and members establish a common ground for the advancement of the profession and a reaffirmation of language teacher knowledge and collaboration.

1.1 MEXTESOL

The Mexican Association of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, MEXTESOL, founded in 1973 as a Civil Association, is the largest and most inclusive English language teachers' association in Mexico. MEXTESOL's mission (MEXTESOL, n.d.) is to develop in its members, as well as in nonmembers, the highest standards for teaching English to speakers of other languages, and among its objectives are to:

- Promote the professional development of English teachers.
- Assist teachers in updating their teaching methodology and in expanding their repertoire of teaching techniques in all areas of ELT.
- Promote research in the field of Applied Linguistics in the area of English Language Teaching.
- Disseminate through its professional publications and electronic media, the results of research and a discussion of classroom practices.
- Create, through Academic Saturdays and Regional and National Conventions, an ongoing forum for training and professional development in the area of ELT.

In pursuit of the latter objective, MEXTESOL organizes an annual international convention, which attracts more than 2000 attendees. The selected proposals to be

included in the conference program promote innovation, new trends in teaching, professional knowledge and professional development paths and opportunities. Each year, the theme of the conference attempts to reflect a current situation or challenge of the LTA's local or international context. In that way, the conference can contribute to meet the values of MEXTESOL. Altogether, there is a database of more than 7000 members and nonmembers. As with other LTAs, MEXTESOL has a network of local chapters located throughout the country. These local chapters organize their own grassroots academic events throughout the year and come together with member and independent nonmember ELT professionals at the annual fall conference.

MEXTESOL is governed by the *Consejo Directivo Nacional*, (National Governing Board, CDN for its initials in Spanish) of seven voting members: a President, a Vice-president, a Parliamentarian, a Secretary, a Treasurer, the President of the Ethics Committee and the Past President. The different activities and responsibilities that the association requires are incorporated into the Association's Bylaws (*Reglamento Interno*) and divided among the members of the CDN.

With so many people involved throughout the 45 years of its existence, it is insightful to consider how MEXTESOL leaders have emerged and assumed their roles as leaders. New teachers are continually taking on leadership roles in order to keep MEXTESOL functioning and thriving. However, this process has not been explored in detail. We believe that, by identifying the ways in which leaders emerge and develop within an LTA, this will add some knowledge to empower teachers who can and are willing to take the lead in other LTAs. In addition, this knowledge can give members and language teachers in Mexico and in other contexts a deeper understanding of how the leaders of the association develop leadership skills and which characteristics of leaders are valued in an LTA. Therefore, this chapter will explore some basic concepts on leadership and how the leadership process takes place in MEXTESOL, an LTA in Latin America.

2 Leadership

Teachers have been regarded as natural leaders because of the nature of their work. Being in front of a group of students requires certain leadership qualities and skills. However, being a leader of their own peers is something that not all teachers view as part of their teaching duties. Leadership has an important place among the myriad characteristics of teachers in the 21st century. Thus, it is pertinent for teachers to become active and assume leadership roles in their respective communities and associations.

Leadership, according to Kouzes and Posner (2012) is an observable set of skills and abilities. The same authors (2003, p. 1) say "Leadership is not about position or title. Leadership is about caring about relationships, and about what you do". However, leadership also involves *privilege and power* (our own emphasis), and LTAs are not free of these aspects in spite of the altruistic spirit behind their creation. A leader is defined by Northouse (2004, p. 3) as "an individual (who) influences a

group of individuals to achieve a common goal”. In relation to teacher leadership, Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) have defined leaders as those teachers who lead within and beyond the classroom. These teacher-leaders contribute to a community of teachers and have the skills to influence others towards improved educational practice. In the words of Kearns (2005), leaders systematically foster a purposeful relationship among participants who use their individual skills to advocate change. Leading involves exercising control over the behavior of a group of people. Therefore, leadership may turn into issues of power and privilege, which require special skills that need to be developed in current and emergent leaders.

According to Sun (2016), leadership skills can be learned and cultivated through leadership development opportunities, dedication, and the willingness to learn, and most importantly, through constant practice. Language teachers are in a process of professionalization (Burns & Richards, 2009) that demands their active participation in the field. A leader has the capacity to influence others and look for a common goal and mission. That is why this empirical study takes the transformational leadership theory as its foundation. Burns (1978, p. 4) describes a transformational leader as a person who “looks for potential motives in followers, then, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower”. The creation of LTAs requires language teachers who can become leaders and represent their peers in academic and political endeavors. In order to empower potential leaders, leadership can be tracked from the characteristics of incipient leaders to those leaders who have influenced the other members of the LTA. Then, it is important to explore this process of leadership emergence in an LTA. The present study aims at exploring the ways leaders in MEXTESOL emerge, develop and enact leadership in a Latin American context.

3 Research Questions

Based on an internal perspective and in an attempt to explore the views that probable emerging leaders in an LTA have on leadership from within MEXTESOL, the following questions were created in order to conduct the study for the present chapter:

1. How can members take on leadership roles in MEXTESOL?
2. How do leaders in the association develop their leadership skills?
3. What are the most valued leadership skills among the emerging leaders of MEXTESOL?
4. What are the key areas for enhanced leadership performance?

4 Methodology

This empirical study falls into the tradition of the qualitative paradigm as the answers given by several emerging leaders of the association were explored and analyzed.

Table 1 The participants and their role in the association

Participant	Role in the Association
Luis	Local Chapter President
Carlos	Local Chapter President
Hugo	Local Chapter President
Laura	Local Chapter President
Pedro	Member of the CDN
Ana	Member of the MJ

According to Creswell (2012), a qualitative study consists of: (a) stating the purpose and research questions in a general and broad way so as to elicit the participants’ experiences, (b) collecting data based on the testimony of a small number of individuals so that the participants’ views are obtained and (c) analyzing the data for a description and themes using text analysis and interpreting the larger meaning of the findings, among other characteristics. In order to answer the previous research questions, a structured questionnaire was created as the instrument to collect the data for the study. The participants were informed of the nature of the study in the questionnaire itself and consented by submitting their completed questionnaire.

4.1 Participants

Twelve MEXTESOL members in the association were identified as strong present or emerging leaders. All of these leaders were Mexicans with at least two years of active membership within the association. All participants are currently holding a relevant position in the association, either by presiding over one of the local chapters in the country or by holding a leadership position in the CDN or the MEXTESOL Journal (MJ) which is published by the association.

From the twelve written invitations sent out, six MEXTESOL members agreed to participate. The group of participants, two male and four female, was conformed as illustrated in Table 1.

4.2 Data Collection

In order to collect the data for the study, a questionnaire was designed. The questionnaire included some open-ended questions with the purpose of having a broader perspective on how the participants view leadership in general and how they see their own leadership role in the association. One of the questions, for example, was related to the characteristics that the participants regarded as necessary in a leader

while another question was related to the participants' plans within the association (see Appendix).

The instrument, once validated and peer reviewed, was sent by email to the twelve MEXTESOL members identified as leaders, but only six of them, as mentioned above, completed the questionnaire. The participants were informed of the nature of the study and were asked to answer the instrument and return it by email as well. On average, the completed questionnaire answers were sent back within a month. The responses were then collected and organized for analysis and interpretation.

5 Findings

Once the data from the interviews was obtained, the information was organized in relation to each question so that similarities and differences among the participants' answers would be evident. Similarities were preferred in order to find patterns in what the participants said. These patterns were then used as the guiding structure of the results and the conclusions of the study. By analyzing the data obtained through the instrument of the study, we were able to answer the research questions. This section will present the information the participants shared in relation to their experiences as leaders in the association and the authors' reflections on the participants' answers.

In a blog by the Business School of the University of Sydney, Morton (2016) affirms that:

“The traits of an emerging leader are individual, centered on personal growth. An emerging leader has the capacity to develop the qualities of a leader because they have the capacity to learn. They are not afraid of difficult lessons because they expose themselves to risk” (paragraph 9).

The primary way emerging leaders in MEXTESOL take on a leadership role is of their own choosing: they volunteer. Four out of the six participants said they volunteered to serve in the association. The remaining two mentioned they were elected by the other members in their own Chapters and only one of them said he was appointed by another member first and then subsequently elected. Among the reasons for volunteering to be a leader, the participants mentioned the following:

- (a) The need to do something for other teachers.
- (b) The need to give back more to the profession.
- (c) As a way of paying back all they had received when starting out as teachers.
- (d) To take a bit of MEXTESOL to their city.
- (e) To share the latest knowledge in ELT with their students.
- (f) To become involved in teamwork with other local English teachers.
- (g) To provide a space for all teachers to share their experiences and improve their practice.
- (h) To increase the quality of academic sessions, the level of participation of local and regional institutions involved in the ELT field, and to bring more active members into the association.

- (i) To promote training for English teachers.
- (j) To strengthen the ELT community.

These leaders felt that they had achieved most of the objectives they had established for themselves when they decided to take on their roles as leaders in the organization. Carlos, for example, said that he felt he “had given back something and that he had achieved his objectives. However, you can never do enough as there is always more that you can give”. Hugo, on the other hand, said that although he was happy to say that he had achieved most of his objectives, he felt dissatisfied with his colleagues’ participation as they had not helped him much and he had to do most of the work by himself. Hugo also complained about the participation of his partners in his local chapter when he said: “I (sorry, but I can’t say we) organize only one event per semester” because of the absence of his fellow committee members in doing the chapter’s tasks. Pedro and Ana said that their local chapters have continually grown, and the perspectives of what English teaching should be have broadened as their events include local, national and international experts. The increase in the number of members was also mentioned by Carlos as one of the outcomes of his leadership.

In relation to the characteristics that leaders in MEXTESOL consider essential for leaders, their answers varied, but these 10 characteristics were among the most frequently cited by the participants:

1. Communication.
2. Responsibility.
3. Commitment.
4. Collaboration.
5. Team building.
6. Goal setting.
7. Motivation.
8. Respect.
9. Trustworthiness.
10. Integrity.

The next question was related to their own skills as leaders within the association. For the question: “To what extent have you achieved your objectives?” the participants’ general perception was that they were doing very well; therefore, the average rating of achievement was very high: 9.16 (on a scale of 1–10, with 10 being the highest score). Expanding on his response, Carlos, for example, seemed to be very satisfied with his role as a leader as they (his local chapter) had accomplished more than the goals they had set for themselves and that feedback from sponsors, members, nonmembers and the ELT community had always been positive. Ana, on the other hand, mentioned that she was getting to a point in her life where she felt she needed to step back due to health problems related to her age.

When asked about how they rated themselves as leaders, even though the average rating was lower than that for achievement, it was still high: 7.83. Interestingly, Ana said that she had never set out to be a leader, so she had not prepared for leadership.

What she did as an emerging leader was to emulate people whose work she admired and found valuable.

When asked about areas for improvement, these leaders mentioned: time constraints and time management between their jobs as teachers and their responsibilities as leaders in the association. Luis said he would like to enroll in special courses to strengthen MEXTESOL. Another area for improvement mentioned was delegating, and the need to start developing the younger generation of teachers within the association. As weaknesses within their chapters, these leaders mentioned communication; the need to work on their interpersonal skills in order to deal with the people who attend the annual convention or the people who attend their local events. Pedro also mentioned that his image as a leader was something he needed to improve on. He commented that a leader's image was important in Mexican culture.

The answers to the question on leadership learning and development showed that about half of the participants have multiple pathways to develop as leaders; the other half seems to primarily utilize only one or two ways of development. Among the ways to learn and develop their leadership skills, four mentioned taking courses; two said they read books on leadership, of which one mentioned "digital" books specifically. Giving and attending workshops was also mentioned as a pathway for leadership growth, as well as listening to peers. Altogether four of these leaders said they had emulated leaders in the association or sought advice from past or current leaders to help them in managing their own local Chapters and in polishing their own leadership skills. Covey (2004) focuses on the role that each of us can play in helping others find their leadership voice; therefore, MEXTESOL's current leaders can help to develop leadership in members who can become future leaders.

These MEXTESOL leaders admire past presidents of the organization who have been wise, reliable, knowledgeable and humble enough to listen to all stakeholders. Carlos mentioned that he especially admired leaders who make decisions based on facts and not on personal judgments or emotions. Luis, for example, said; "an ideal MEXTESOL leader is self-less and an example of integrity and commitment". The leaders of this association seem to set their standards in relation to past presidents and try to emulate their actions and behaviors in order to obtain the best results during their leadership terms.

Regarding their plans within the organization, four of these leaders admitted that they wanted to continue collaborating and being leaders in the association. The reasons they gave for their decision were in their own words:

- (a) "It takes me to a new educational world, different from my school activities" (Hugo).
- (b) "I believe in MEXTESOL's mission" (Pedro).
- (c) "I want to set really want to set [*sic*] the foundations for my chapter to keep going after my period" (Luis).
- (d) "It has been rewarding" (Carlos).

However, two of the participants said they did not want to continue with their leadership positions. One found that the situation was too political and the other

mentioned that she found she was now unmotivated because of the age and health issues she was having.

Although it was not a specific question, the participants referred to something they did not like about their activities as leaders in MEXTESOL. They claimed that they had not considered the political dimension of the association or that some members seem to look only for their personal gain. Luis said that, at first, he was disappointed when he saw how political the meetings were, but he ended up understanding that politics is part of what happens in most organizations.

The findings presented in this section were based on the respondents' answers. However, the fact that the participants knew the authors of the questionnaire as leaders of the association could have influenced their answers in order to please or to impress them. On the other hand, the respondents are all professionals and should know the relevance of giving accurate, impartial answers to a study. We prefer to consider the second perspective as true.

6 Leaders' Emergence and Development Path

From the participants' responses, several points should be considered regarding the emergence of leaders within MEXTESOL. First, the leaders in the association volunteer to become active leaders. Then, they are elected by their peers; but the first step taken is volunteering as the participants themselves explained in their answers. Second, the leaders in MEXTESOL assume leadership responsibilities with the intention of improving their peers' teaching practice and the profession in general. Finally, these leaders are aware of the impact of their leadership, and they look for ways to learn how to exercise more effective leadership by reading books or taking courses. Leaders in MEXTESOL look for continuous learning opportunities and try to emulate past and current successful leaders in order to make their leadership more effective.

Effective collaborative work and communication seem to be two of the main concerns of these leaders in MEXTESOL. The leaders of this LTA value communication, responsibility, commitment, collaboration, team building, goal setting, motivation, respect, trustworthiness and integrity as individual and common characteristics for the effective functioning of the association and the development of leaders in MEXTESOL. This information must be considered for possible future training opportunities and courses the association provides as well as for the selection and development of future MEXTESOL leaders.

Going over the literature on the topic, we realized that although leadership emergence has been acknowledged as an important theme in leadership. However, there are still gaps in how transformational leadership is achieved. In 2014, Singer identified four stages in the development of a leader: (a) the individual contributor who builds credibility and develops a network, (b) the novice manager/leader who develops skills and gets involved in the culture of the organization, (c) the experienced manager/leader who in spite of exercising a holistic leadership still needs a mentor and (d) the transformational leader who has the skills to recognize and develop other

leaders in the organization but at the same time considers a holistic view of the context. From our perspective and through analysis of the data collected, it was evident that MEXTESOL has no formal plan for “emerging or current leaders”; however, four stages were also identified in the leadership cycle in the association:

- (a) **Recruitment or pre-leadership in MEXTESOL (pre-service).** As the participants’ answers showed, members usually volunteer to act as leaders. Considering that they come from diverse backgrounds, it is probable that they act as leaders in other scenarios in their lives; however, leadership skills are not a formal requirement to be a candidate for any position in MEXTESOL. Motivation is the key for members volunteering and becoming part of the association’s governance structure. Their performance makes them potential leaders and they gradually take on more responsibilities and importance within the association.
- (b) **Supervision and Training (in-service).** The second stage begins when the emerging leader starts his/her functions in a leadership position. There is no formal training; instead, they principally learn from past or current members. MEXTESOL does not have a formal plan of supervision or evaluation of leaders; however, re-election or performance results can show how effective their leadership has been. Occasionally, MEXTESOL organizes outsourced leadership workshops.
- (c) **Recognition of leaders (ongoing and usually at the end of service).** While in-service, leaders are recognized through their appearance in the convention program book and by including their roles within MEXTESOL on the association’s webpage. They are also publicly recognized during the annual international convention. Leaders may also receive some benefits, such as membership and convention fee waivers during service and for one year immediately thereafter.
- (d) **Post-service.** After their leadership terms end, some of the leaders choose to continue serving the association in other capacities: as a speaker, in a chapter committee, in the MEXTESOL Journal as a reader or Editor, or as a reader for the Academic Committee. In exceptional cases, they might be asked to serve as mentors of the new leaders.

After analyzing the data collected and reflecting on MEXTESOL leadership practices, it becomes evident that leaders in the association need more than motivation to perform their roles well. In the TESOL Presidential blog, Sun (2015) states that to help teachers become leaders, associations can provide teachers with administrative support if they:

- Create “hybrid” roles for teachers (teaching plus instructional coaches, mentors).
- Promote shared leadership structures (teachers’ input into school policies, curriculum, and professional development).
- Provide teachers with release time for professional development and planning.
- Recognize/reward/value teacher leadership.

Following what Sun (2015) states, LTAs can become a safe and encouraging space for emerging leaders to develop their skills and thus, make their associations stronger

and more credible. By encouraging teachers to take different roles in the association, promoting a leadership structure that allows new leaders to gain knowledge, developing their skills, and recognizing the members who have taken the risk of becoming leaders within the association they can become transformational leaders (Burns, 1978; Singer, 2014; Sun 2016) in the association. Leaders in MEXTESOL, both in regional and national leadership roles, can be encouraged from the moment of their election to exercise motivation and transform their local contexts into spaces of growth by providing guidance and inspiration in order to earn the respect and commitment of the members of their local Chapters. Therefore, a transformational leader plays an important key role in an LTA.

7 Conclusion

LTAs are an effective way to put together the efforts of people who share a common goal and provide the space for language teachers to learn and develop personally and professionally. MEXTESOL has provided language teachers in Mexico with a niche for learning, interacting and development. Throughout its 45-year history, leaders have emerged and excelled. In this chapter, the experiences of six of its leaders have been explored and some conclusions have been drawn.

LTAs can benefit from listening to their leaders' voices and providing them with opportunities for growth and sustained development. Knowing the characteristics that MEXTESOL's emerging leaders value can offer a cultural perspective on which path to follow in the pursuit of common goals. Exploring perceived areas of improvement can direct the efforts of leaders and members in making their LTA stronger. That way, when crises or problems arise, leaders can establish a clear vision through their leadership skills and personal characteristics by conciliating the different interests and benefits of all members and focusing on achieving the association's success in its particular context.

The classification of the stages identified in the path of leadership in MEXTESOL has allowed the authors to realize the need to establish a more formal system at each stage to facilitate effective recruitment and development of leaders in LTAs. Reflecting on what Reynolds (2017, paragraph 7) says, "we can offer to mentor new members to the field or even set up a more formal mentoring program", MEXTESOL should develop a formal system of internal leadership support. This system may allow the association to take advantage of current and past leaders as a source of inspiration and training while developing leadership in members who have the potential to become emerging and future leaders. When pursuing common goals, leadership development becomes an important issue as long as the members and the LTAs governing structures support it.

Appendix: The Instrument

On Leadership in MEXTESOL—Questionnaire

We are conducting a limited, mostly qualitative analysis of leadership formation in MEXTESOL and we would appreciate it if you could answer the following questions regarding your leadership development and role in MEXTESOL. Your responses will be kept in the strictest confidentiality and any references to your responses in our report will be appropriately masked to protect your identity. Before you begin answering the questions, we suggest you look over all of the questions to obtain a global view of the scope of this study. For open-ended questions/responses, use as much space as necessary.

1. How did you become a leader in MEXTESOL? (more than one answer is possible)
 - _____ You were designated by superiors or colleagues.
 - _____ You volunteered.
 - _____ You were elected by the members.

2. What were your initial objectives when you became a MEXTESOL leader?

3. From the following list, choose ten leadership skills you believe are necessary to be an effective leader in MEXTESOL. Then rank them in order of most important (1) to least important (10)

Communication	Flexibility	Empowerment
Motivation	Innovation	Respect
Trustworthiness	Collaboration	Self-Confidence
Creativity	Empathy	Team Building
Responsibility	Honesty	Goal Setting
Commitment	Delegation	Integrity

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ |

Would you like to add any other leadership skills that are not included above? In what approximate rank? (Use additional space as necessary.)

1. _____
2. _____

4. How would you rate yourself as a leader in MEXTESOL? 1 (not-so-effective) to 10 (very effective):

Why? _____

5. To what extent have you achieved the objectives described in question #2 to date?

1 (achieved very few) - 10 (achieved most of them): _____

6. How did or do you prepare yourself to be a leader? Which of the following strategies have you utilized to develop or improve yourself as a leader since you have assumed a leadership role in MEXTESOL

_____ Read books about leadership?
(Specify) _____

_____ Read articles? (Specify) _____

_____ Searched for information on the Internet?
(Specify) _____

_____ Taken courses or workshops?
(Specify) _____

_____ Emulated or sought advice from a past or current leader?

7. Which specific resources from those you considered above would you recommend to other aspiring leaders in MEXTESOL?

8. What leadership skills do you feel you still need to develop or improve on?

Why?

_____ How can you go about acquiring these skills? Within MEXTESOL? Outside MEXTESOL?

9. Do you currently have a leadership role in any other capacity outside of MEXTESOL? Which situation(s) and role(s)?

10. Is there anyone in MEXTESOL that you currently admire as a leader?

Name:

_____ What specific qualities do you admire in this person?

11. Would you like to continue to be a leader in MEXTESOL?

Why or why not?

Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions.

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Leadership, Mentoring and Transformation in Language Teacher Associations: A Tripartite Dialogue



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Abstract Language teacher associations (LTAs) offer structures, spaces, tools and opportunities at the nexus of educational research, practice and advocacy. These bodies have the unique potential to advance individuals' professional lives as well as to spearhead systemic transformative changes in the spaces where these individuals work. The current chapter is a tripartite dialogue piece among three different generations of TESOL professionals (or "TESOLers") from diverse ethnolinguistic and professional backgrounds whose career trajectories intersected thanks to the *Leadership Mentoring Program* (LMP) offered by the TESOL International Association, the largest international LTA focused on promoting excellence in ELT. The contributors, originally from Argentina, Brazil, and Turkey, draw on their professional experiences and interactions within and beyond the TESOL International Association's LMP to illuminate the dynamic shift in their roles as a result of their participation, to discuss the notion that the two-way mentoring process played in their growth as TESOL professionals, and to reflect on the role that LTAs can play in promoting the professional growth and leadership development of their members. Ultimately, this chapter aims to provide directions both at the *micro* level, focusing on individuals who are or aspire to be a part of programs like the LMP, and the *macro* level, focusing specifically on LTAs (and more generally on professional associations) that currently have or envision to create programs similar to the LMP.

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1 Introduction

A professional association is commonly defined as an organization founded to “advance the standing of the members of the occupation or profession by setting educational and other standards governing the profession, advocating for favorable public and private policies, aiding members in their professional development, and advancing professional practice through research and information dissemination” (Kloss, 1999, p. 71). Regardless of the domain, teacher associations offer a platform—structures, spaces, tools and opportunities for development—at the nexus of educational research, practice and advocacy. Participation in these associations at various levels (e.g., local/state-level, national or international) offers a unique potential to advance individuals’ personal and professional lives (i.e. development) as well as to spearhead systemic transformative changes in the spaces where these individuals work.

Spearheaded by associations on both sides of the Atlantic, namely TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) International Association in the United States and IATEFL (International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language) in the United Kingdom, *language teacher associations* (henceforth, LTAs) are now an indispensable component of the English Language Teaching (ELT) enterprise. Despite the fact that LTAs have been around for more than half a century, the field of ELT is nevertheless characterized by an “alarming paucity of research related to ELT associations and conferences’ compared with other forms of professional development” (Aubrey & Coombe, 2010, para. 10). More recently, scholarship has come to acknowledge the vitality of these underresearched and undertheorized platforms (e.g., see Aubrey & Coombe, 2010; Lamb, 2012; Paran, 2016; Elsheikh, Coombe & Effiong, this volume). This growing interest in LTAs brings about an array of issues, questions, directions, and contributes to the emergence of an agenda for future research and various methodologies and apparatuses for researching them (Paran, 2016).

In conceptualizing LTAs, there are two prominent observations related to the scope of these entities—First, ELT professionals benefit extensively from the professional development practices offered by the associations in related fields, such as applied linguistics (e.g., *Association Internationale de Linguistique Appliquée–AILA*, *British Association for Applied Linguistics–BAAL*, *American Association for Applied Linguistics–AAAL*) and foreign language education (e.g., *American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages–ACTFL*). The knowledge, experience and professional development opportunities generated within these associations are essential to the conceptualization of the ELT profession and professionals. Second, and more importantly, although LTAs are established principally around *teachers* (i.e. “T” in LTA), their sphere of influence actually transcends beyond teachers, and encompasses other professionals involved in ELT, such as pre-service teachers (undergraduate/graduate students), teacher educators, materials writers/publishers, curriculum developers, administrators, and policy-makers, among others. In other words, defined as “groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area

by interacting on an ongoing basis” (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder 2002, p. 4), LTAs as “communities of practice” (CoP) (Herrero, 2016; Wenger, 1998) include but are not limited to teachers. This understanding translates into diversification of professional development activities in terms of kind, scope, and purposes.

Grounded in methodological lenses of self-reflexivity and collaborative autoethnography, the current chapter is a tripartite dialogue piece among three different generations of TESOL professionals (or “TESOLers”) from diverse ethnolinguistic and professional backgrounds whose career trajectories intersected through *The Leadership Mentoring Program* (LMP) offered by the TESOL International Association, the largest international LTA focused on promoting excellence in ELT. The contributors engaged in a tripartite collaborative autoethnography (Chang, Ngunjiri, & Hernandez, 2013) to reflect upon and analyze our experiences and values brought and taken away from the mentoring relationship. In light of the nature and purposes of the mentoring experience, collaborative autoethnography is believed to promote dialogic self-reflexivity and meaning-making processes both as researchers and mentors/mentees across time and space. In this study, the contributors, originally from Argentina, Brazil, and Turkey, draw on their professional experiences and interactions within and beyond the TESOL International Association’s LMP to illuminate the dynamic shift in their roles as a result of their participation, to discuss the role of the two-way mentoring process played in their growth as TESOL professionals, and to reflect on the role that LTAs can play in promoting the professional growth and leadership development of their members. Ultimately, this chapter aims to provide directions both at the *micro* level, focusing on individuals who are or aspire to be a part of programs like the LMP, and the *macro* level, focusing specifically on language teacher associations and more generally on professional associations that currently have or envision to create programs similar to the LMP.

2 The Leadership Mentoring Program by TESOL International Association

Established in 1965 and based in the United States, TESOL International Association is the world’s largest international organization dedicated to excellence in ELT for speakers of other languages. For more than five decades, the Association has been serving as a premier professional platform bringing together various stakeholders comprising the ELT profession (e.g., teachers, teacher educators, researchers, administrators and policy makers). Today, with more than 12,000 members representing more than 150 countries and more than 100 worldwide affiliates (TESOL, n.d.), TESOL International Association is a dynamic CoP for ELT professionals from various professional backgrounds and future trajectories. As summarized in Table 1, the Association offers a wide range of opportunities to its membership in the realms of research, standards, policy/advocacy, leadership and continuing professional development.

Table 1 Events, activities, efforts, professional development opportunities offered by TESOL International Association

Type of activity/effort	Description
Annual convention and language expo	An international meeting hosting an average of more than 6500 professionals each year
Interest sections and forums	21 interest sections and several forums offering online networking and digital professional development
Books	Offering more than 100 books for ELT professionals through TESOL Press
Digital resources	Latest news and updates about the association through the TESOL Resource Center, TESOL Connections, English Language Bulletin, and The TESOL Blog
Serial publications	Publications dedicated to dissemination of scholarly inquiry such as TESOL Quarterly and TESOL Journal
Awards and grants	More than 80 awards to support ELT professionals and ELT research and practice
Resources for advocacy	Events and artifacts dedicated to elevating the stature of the ELT profession such as position papers, white papers, policy briefs, TESOL U.S. Advocacy Action Center, and Advocacy Day
Standards and best practices	Contributing to the standard-based instruction in ELT through the development of Pre-K–12 English Language Proficiency Standards, Technology Standards, TESOL/CAEP Professional Standards for P–12 Teacher Education Programs, Standards for Adult Education ESOL Programs, Standards for ESL/EFL teachers of adults, and effective practices in workplace language training
Career services for professionals	A range of platforms that bring job seekers and recruiters together through The TESOL Career Center and The Job MarketPlace
Professional development opportunities	Enhancing the professional knowledge base of ELT professionals through regional conferences and symposia, certificate programs, online courses and virtual seminars
Leadership development	Online and in-person events and networking opportunities contributing to the overall quality of current or future leaders within the association

The LMP is one of the numerous leadership development opportunities offered by the TESOL International Association. It encourages TESOL members to be more engaged with the Association in a scaffolded manner. To be more specific, during the annual convention, this program pairs selected recipients with TESOL leaders who serve as a mentor throughout the year. Although applications for the LMP are open to all members, preference is given to TESOLers from underrepresented groups, and to those who demonstrate some evidence of organizational experience, service and potential for involvement and leadership for the Association. Individuals who are accepted into the LMP receive (1) basic registration to the annual convention, (2) US\$1000 for accommodation expenses during the convention, (3) a structured mentoring relationship with a TESOL leader, and (4) waived registration fee for participation in TESOL's Leadership Development Certificate Program (LDCP). This 40-h self-paced online program is a unique professional development and leadership training for current and future leaders within TESOL International Association. Individuals who go through the LDCP stay up-to-date about TESOL (both as a profession and association), learn the fundamentals of leadership within the context of an LTA, engage in meaningful discussion and interaction with like-minded professionals from various backgrounds and contexts and critically reflect upon their knowledge, skills and dispositions concerning leadership skills, style and perceptions. In the remainder of this chapter, we will briefly reflect upon our individual experiences within the LMP.

3 A Tripartite Dialogue on Leadership, Mentoring and Transformation

3.1 Lia's Reflections

In a chapter titled "Mentoring as a Pathway to Leadership: A Focus on Nonnative English-Speaking Professionals," by two of us (Kamhi-Stein & de Oliveira, 2008), we described two approaches to mentoring. The first approach is what we called "Mentoring as a One-Way Directional Approach" (p. 40). This approach is reflective of a banking model of education, which assumes that the more experienced professional "fills" the less experienced one with knowledge. The second approach to mentoring, which is the one we still advocate for, is what we called "mentoring as transformational leadership" (p. 40). This approach to mentoring has three characteristics. First, it is dyadic in that both mentor and mentee gain from the mentoring experience. Second, the mentoring relationship is meant to provide both professional and personal learning opportunities to the mentee and mentor. Third, mentoring as transformational leadership involves a spiral process since both participants set goals, meet such goals, and set new and higher goals aimed at leadership development.

Luciana and I have been in a constantly-evolving transformational mentoring relationship since we met in 1998, when Luciana, who was completing her MA

program and I, who was a relatively new Assistant Professor, met when I organized a colloquium focusing on nonnative English-speaking professionals at an annual California TESOL conference. Luciana was in the audience and raised her hand to ask a question. We immediately formed a spontaneous bond that can be attributed to the fact that we were both South American women navigating US academia.

Eventually, our mentoring relationship became formalized through the TESOL association's Leadership Mentoring Program (LMP) in which Luciana participated in 2005–2006. After the conclusion of the LMP, Luciana and I collaborated on several publications and presentations. This collaboration culminated with the publication of a co-edited volume titled "English Language Teaching in South America: Policy, Preparation and Practice" (Kamhi-Stein, Díaz-Maggioli, & de Oliveira, 2017).

The mentoring relationship that Luciana and I have had over the years mainly occurred within our two professional associations, California TESOL (CATESOL) and TESOL International Association. Upon reflection on our mentoring experience, four points are in order. First, good mentoring relationships go through four phases: initiation, cultivation, separation, and redefinition (Mullen & Schunk, 2012). Our mentoring relationship reflected the four stages. The first phase, initiation, started in a spontaneous manner when we met at the above mentioned CATESOL annual conference. The second phase, known as the cultivation phase, coincided, at least in part, with Luciana's leadership development in CATESOL and my service in the association (Secretary first, and President later), as well as my service on TESOL's Board of Directors, and Luciana's participation in the LMP. This stage, which lasted several years, allowed Luciana and I to collaborate in leadership activities in both associations. Because our professional interests were focused on the same topics of interest (nonnative English-speaking professionals), we supported each other as we took action on issues that were of concern to both of us. The third stage, separation, started as Luciana began her service on TESOL's Board of Directors. At that point, it was clear that Luciana had established her independence and, though we continued to collaborate, our relationship was spontaneously redefined in that, due to Luciana's newly developed insider's perspective to the TESOL International Association and her amazing academic career, she began to take on the roles of informant and expert and I took on the role of a holistic advisor. More importantly, our personal friendship remains as strong as we navigate through different periods of our personal and professional lives.

The second point that can be made from the mentoring relationship that Luciana and I have been in is that professional associations that value members the way TESOL International Association and CATESOL do provide important formal and informal spaces in which mentees and mentors can grow. Formal spaces are in the form of TESOL's LMP, which is designed to prepare future TESOL leaders, particularly those who come from underrepresented groups or geographical areas. Informal spaces are those provided by conferences, listservs, etc. that allow members to establish initial contact, similar to what Lu and I did through the CATESOL conference.

Another reflection from my mentoring relationship with Luciana is that while programs like the LMP provide valuable opportunities to mentees and mentors, good mentor-mentee partnerships cannot be mandated by such programs. Specifically, I

would argue that the success of our combined—that of Luciana’s, Ali Fuad’s and mine—experience in the LMP is due to the fact that we chose each other as mentors and mentees prior to our participation in the program.

Finally, as I wrote this personal reflection, I became aware that programs like the LMP provide room for a model of transformational leadership that has a multiplying effect. Specifically, as the mentoring process evolves, the mentee becomes the mentor of a new professional and the new mentor becomes the liaison between the original mentor and the new mentee. This is our case. Initially, I was Lu’s mentor, who in turn became Ali Fuad’s mentor. While Ali Fuad and I have been collaborating on several activities, the writing of this chapter has led us to establish a stronger bond since it has allowed us to reflect on our interconnected experiences in the LMP. I can confidently add that given Ali Fuad’s already successful leadership experience in the TESOL International Association, I expect him to become the mentor to a future TESOL leader.

To conclude, an effective mentoring relationship like the one Luciana and I have is one that is life-long. Our professional relationship has evolved as much as our personal relationship. As a mentor, I always remind myself that mentors can open doors, but they can only succeed if their mentees are ‘invested’ (Norton Peirce, 1995) in the mentoring process. It is clear that this was Luciana’s case. In fact, I am proud to say that the student rose well above the teacher.

3.2 *Luciana’s Reflections*

Having been both a mentee and a mentor through the LMP, my perspectives are similar to Lia’s in many ways. First, as we wrote above, mentoring as transformational leadership includes personal and professional growth opportunities for both the mentor and mentee in a spiral process of setting new and higher goals for leadership development. When Lia and I started our informal mentoring relationship at CATESOL, one of the main aspects related to *encouragement* and *support*. She encouraged me to run for leadership positions within CATESOL and supported me through the process, not only describing expectations but also discussing what issues needed attention. When we participated in TESOL’s LMP, I wanted to enhance my leadership skills in TESOL International Association as I was just moving out of California to Indiana (IN) and Lia encouraged me to run for President of Indiana TESOL (INTESOL) before taking on something “bigger” with TESOL, which was exactly what I did. My transition from CA to IN happened the year that I participated in the LMP with Lia as my mentor and our mentoring relationship continued to grow. As I finished my term in the INTESOL Presidential line, Lia encouraged me to run for the Board of Directors of TESOL International but she was very clear about when I should do that—waiting for a new Executive Director to be in place and after tenure. These encouragements were extremely important to me as then a new Assistant Professor starting my academic career. Her knowledge of TESOL International,

after being on the Board for three years, helped me make wise decisions about my own involvement and success.

Lia's mentoring went beyond CATESOL and the LMP and I still rely on her knowledge and expertise in many aspects. For instance, a simple text message "You're doing too much! Focus!" has helped me to consider and re-consider what I was doing in academia. Our relationship has evolved so much over time that text messages like this, which may seem abrupt to some, actually shows care and honesty that I do not get from anyone else.

My professional relationship with Ali Fuad started when we met at an NNEST-IS meeting at a TESOL conference in 2011. In 2013, I approached Ali Fuad and asked him if he would like to be nominated for TESOL's LMP. Having known him for a few years, I knew he would be the perfect nominee for the LMP. I also volunteered to be his mentor. That was the beginning of a new mentoring relationship for me now in the role of mentor for a novice TESOL professional with so much potential. It was easy to be his mentor because he was so open to every word and piece of advice that I was able to provide. As Lia has mentioned about mentoring me as an "easy" process due to my openness and potential, I saw the same in Ali Fuad—easy because the openness and potential were already there. I believe that, while what brought Lia and I together as South American women navigating academia was different about Ali Fuad, our combined mentoring relationships are connected to us all being multilingual professionals in TESOL.

These mentoring relationships were brought together most recently when I was considering running for TESOL President. I asked Lia what she thought and relied on her advice and mentoring through the application process. Both Lia and Ali Fuad were my recommenders for my candidacy for TESOL President and their strong letters of recommendation helped me get selected to be on the ballot in 2016 for the 2017–18 election for President-Elect. And I am happy to say that I was selected the first time I put in an "Expression of Interest" for President and also elected the first time I was on the ballot. In addition, I became the first Latina and Latin-American to be elected President in TESOL's 52-year history. The mentoring relationships afforded by TESOL's LMP helped pave the way to current leaders of the association and contribute to the future of leadership. The writing of this chapter is an example of how programs like TESOL's LMP can bring together professionals for mentoring opportunities that go beyond the original purposes of the program.

3.3 Ali Fuad's Reflections

If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of Giants.

Isaac Newton (1675)

My first encounter with Luciana, my 'Giant' in Newtonian terms or 'Lu' in her own words, was through her words. It dates back to my graduate school days when we were assigned to read her collaborative scholarship (Athanases & de Oliveira,

2008, 2011) in a doctoral course focusing on current and future research directions in teaching English Language Learners (ELLs). Later on, her (as well as her LMP mentor, Lía Kamhi-Stein's) wise words appeared again and again (de Oliveira & Richardson, 2001, 2004; Kamhi-Stein & de Oliveira, 2008) as I was planting the seeds of my current research agenda focusing on issues of (in)equity, discrimination, privilege and marginalization in TESOL. My first personal encounter with Luciana (quite interestingly with Lía, as well) was afforded by my transition from my then-local TESOL affiliate (WATESOL—Washington D.C. Area TESOL) to 'big' TESOL through Non-native English Speakers in TESOL Interest Section (NNEST IS). As I argued elsewhere, "serving as the institutionalized home base and the intellectual space of the NNEST movement" (Selvi, 2014, p. 581), the NNEST IS brings together TESOLers from diverse personal and professional backgrounds around the idea(l)s of a more participatory, democratic, collaborative, and inclusive professional future. Being a part of a common structure, sharing a similar professional vision, and interacting in person (e.g., NNEST IS business meeting, social dinners) and online (e.g., NNEST IS listserv, social media) helped establish the strong foundation of our long-lasting relationship.

Having gone through the LMP as a mentee (mentored by Lía), Luciana approached and encouraged me to submit my application for this program, and graciously agreed to serve as my mentor, if my application was accepted. Although the acceptance of my application may seem the formal 'starting line' of our mentoring experience, it is fair to assume that it had begun long before and grew organically as a result of our professional relationship within TESOL, both as an association and a field of scholarly inquiry. The LMP has afforded us institutionalized support, structure and space, and brought a formal recognition and label to our relationship. Our mentoring experience within the LMP is a unique testament to the 'constellation of identities' each of us brings to the mentoring context and process—a mentoring program with a transformative leadership focus (i.e. LMP), organized and supported by a professional association for English language teachers (i.e. TESOL), bringing together two individuals from various professional trajectories (i.e. a mid-career, tenured, college professor and established scholar as a mentor and an early-career, tenure-track, college professor and emergent scholar as a mentee) with diverse individual characteristics (i.e. a US-based, immigrant, Brazilian/Latina, female as a mentor, and a Turkish, male working in North Cyprus as a mentee). In the same vein, our relationship, due to the mentoring experience within the LMP, is a unique testament to the constellation of relationships that each of us takes away from the mentoring context and process. Although the completion of the LMP may seem the formal 'finish line' of our mentoring experience, it just marks a point of transition and transformation in our relationship. The LMP has afforded us an opportunity for the co-construction of our professional identities and roles in a dynamic and fluid way and maintained our relationships beyond the program. This view is in line with the morphological orientation to the notion of "mentoring," which refers to an act of guidance in progress and underscores its continuity across time and space.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize three major points gleaned from my ongoing mentoring experience with Luciana. First, this relationship provided a first-hand

mentoring experience as a mentee and afforded prominent insights contributing to my current conceptions of what mentoring is, should be and could be. This is aligned with mentoring as a transformational learning process which spearheads a “fundamental change in the way we see ourselves and the world in which we live” (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007, p. 13) and even the Associations we serve. Rather than treating mentoring as a linear transmission of a set of static ideas, generic skills and decontextualized practices, we conceptualize it as a creative, co-constructed, multifaceted and life-long process in which both the mentor and the mentee engage in bi-directional and transformational growth. Second, going through a formal mentoring experience with a specific leadership focus strengthened our involvement and engagement with the Association. To exemplify, Luciana first joined the Board of Directors and was later elected as the President of the TESOL International Association. Thanks to our ongoing dialogue, I made a transition to Conferences Professional Council, a newly established body responsible for collaborating with the TESOL’s Central Office in shaping the academic program of the Annual Convention and Expo—the culminating event of the Association. Quite interestingly, I will be serving as the Chair of the Conferences Professional Council (formerly ‘Program Chair’) in the Annual Convention in 2019, in Atlanta, during which Luciana will be delivering the Presidential Keynote, following my introduction. Finally, perhaps the biggest benefit of going through a formal mentoring experience is gaining a mentor for life—someone I can trust, collaborate with, support and enjoy working with. Beginning with a leadership for transformation focus, our relationship has evolved tremendously and transcended into other realms such as collaborative partnership, professional guidance, and most importantly, collegial friendship.

4 Implications for English Language Teacher Associations

For many people, LTAs are conceptualized as a CoP platform (Herrero, 2016), a major thrust of knowledge production and dissemination (Stewart & Miyahara, 2016) through bi-directional dialogues (Smith & Kuchah, 2016) and advocacy (Kamhi-Stein, 2016), a prime source of continuing professional development (Paran, 2016) and a professional body affording a sense of professional identity and belonging (Motteram, 2016). While these are valid observations about LTAs, our specific focus distilled through our lived experiences showcased in this chapter is on another level—mentoring for leadership within (and beyond) an LTA.

Considering the wide variety of benefits associated with mentoring, it has been adopted as a powerful strategy enhancing and promoting leadership in various organizations (ranging from novice principals in schools to future leaders in language teacher associations) and even serving as a catalyst for organizational transformation (Crow & Grogan, 2017). Departing from this realization, mentoring for leadership and organizational transformation lies strategically at the crux of the LMP offered by the TESOL International Association. Table 2 summarizes our experiences in

Table 2 A summary of our experiences in the LMP

Characteristics	Comments and remarks
Building relationships	The LMP fosters long-lasting personal/professional relationships across multiple borders and boundaries (e.g., linguistic, cultural, ethnic, gender, etc.)
Mentoring as continuing professional learning	The LMP is a facilitated mentoring program supported and conducted within an LTA and bears the unique advantage of responding to individuals' specific needs while being sensitive to the overarching visions of the professional association (Ritchie & Genoni, 1999)
Ecological view of mentoring	The LMP adopts an ecological view of mentoring, embedded in the social environment and network of TESOL International Association
A win-win-win situation	Establishes a symbiotic learning experience for everyone involved, namely <i>mentors</i> (sharpening mentoring skills, contributing to the Association), <i>mentees</i> (receiving professional support, guidance and directions) and <i>the Association</i> (developing a cadre of future leaders)
Diversity of professionals	The LMP acknowledges the diversity of professionals within a 'teacher' association and creates spaces for professionals other than classroom teachers (e.g., teacher aides, teacher educators, researchers, professors, material writers, publishers, and administrators)
Identity building	The LMP capitalizes upon our identities as teachers, teacher educators and (emergent/established) scholars, administrators and leaders
Future-orientedness	Mentoring experience gained from the LMP will have prominent future-oriented impact on mentees' approaches to future mentoring experiences
Beyond leadership	Although the LMP has a specific 'leadership' focus, the interaction and synergy it generates actually transcends to other realms of scholarly activities (e.g., research collaboration, writing for publication, supporting each other in job searches, etc.)
Engagement with the association	As a leadership induction experience, the LMP deepens our engagement with and socialization into the Association
Mentoring for the association	The LMP underscores the importance of mentoring for leadership and brings it to the attention of the Association
A model for everyone	The LMP provides a model and structure for other local, regional, national or international LTAs that have or envision to create programs with similar goals

the LMP, and showcases how our roles, identities, interactions and experiences are dynamically co-constructed within and beyond this program.

We believe this program offers an intellectually-stimulating experience for everyone involved (mentors, mentees and LTAs), and stands out as a viable, sustainable and transformative structure for LTAs envisioning to create mentoring for leadership programs with similar goals and directions. Moreover, it afforded us to experience various roles in the mentoring experience (mentor and mentee), create an intellectual space for reflective dialogue on roles, values, meaning embedded in this process, and finally provide opportunities to increase our involvement and engagement with the LTA.

5 Conclusion

Whether you are embarking upon your professional career as a student teacher in your field placement or getting prepared for your tenure as a president of a language teacher association, chances are you will need “a brain to pick, an ear to listen, and a push in the right direction,” as John C. Crosby, an American politician (1859–1943), reminds us. This is perhaps even more important and recognized in the field of education in which collaborative dialogue and support (also known as mentoring) is regarded a *sine qua non* in the lifelong journey of being, becoming and preparing teachers for diverse teaching settings. As part of their notion of accountability to their members, professional associations are charged with the task of providing a range of professional development opportunities, and LTAs are no exceptions. The growing body of research on LTAs, evolving definitions of continuing professional development and our dynamic experiences as mentors and mentees collectively suggest that mentoring for leadership should be a prominent aspect of the activities provided by LTAs.

Mentoring programs housed within and supported by LTAs, such as the LMP, bring a series of benefits for individuals (mentors and mentees) and organizations (the Association and the institutions where mentors and mentees work) from various career trajectories (novice professionals and mid-career professionals), operationalized at various levels (departing from leadership but transcending other realms), across time and space (shaping current understanding and informing future experiences). Whilst there is a plethora of literature concerning the vitality of mentoring for teachers and leaders within school systems (e.g., see Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Lambert, 2003), LTAs remain a largely uncharted territory for the researchers interested in mentoring for organizational transformation. Ultimately, it is our hope that our experiences in this chapter provide directions both at the *micro* level, focusing on individuals who are or aspire to be a part of programs like the LMP, and the *macro* level, focusing specifically on LTAs that currently have or envision to create programs similar to the LMP.

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Emotional Intelligence Growth Through Volunteering with Language Teaching Associations



Patricia Szasz and Kathleen M. Bailey

Abstract As language teaching professionals, we often have opportunities to volunteer with professional associations in our field. This chapter explores the idea that in addition to giving to their organizations, volunteers also gain through such service—by serving on committees, task forces, and association boards. Such benefits include the development of leadership skills that people may not have the opportunity to hone at their own institutions, and the excitement of working with like-minded individuals from around the nation or world. Using Goleman’s (1998) model of emotional intelligence, some research literature, and examples from our own experience, we discuss the development of emotional intelligence through volunteer service in language teacher associations. This model includes three intrapersonal components (self-awareness, self-regulation, and motivation) and two interpersonal components (empathy and social skills). Through both research and personal experience, we posit that volunteer service in language teacher associations (LTAs) fosters the development of emotional intelligence, which in turn, creates more efficient and more effective leaders.

1 Introduction

As language teaching professionals, we often have opportunities to volunteer with LTAs in our field. Numerous service opportunities are described via social media and association publications. Clearly LTAs such as TESOL International Association (TESOL), the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL), EnglishUSA: The American Association of Intensive English Programs, and the American Association of Applied Linguistics (AAAL) as well as TESOL affiliate organizations around the world accomplish many of their goals through the

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service of volunteer members who donate their time and expertise to move initiatives forward.

But what do volunteers gain by serving on committees, task forces, and association boards? In this chapter we share how we and others have benefited by serving as volunteers in our own professional organizations. These benefits include the development of leadership skills and the excitement of working with like-minded individuals from around the nation or even from around the world. There is often a symbiotic relationship where volunteers bring skills from their home setting to their volunteer work, but they also learn from their work with LTAs and bring that learning back to their home organizations. Indeed, we believe that volunteering provides new perspectives and can help hard-working professionals develop new skills and avoid burnout. In fact, a survey of professional people in the US found that “volunteering has many rewards. Respondents indicated it helped improve their sense of well-being and effectiveness at the office, expand their network, develop new skills and enhance their company’s visibility” (Kotsonas, 2017, p. 1). In this chapter, we first provide an overview of Goleman’s (1998) model of emotional intelligence, and then we discuss how those who have served in volunteer leadership positions with LTAs have developed these emotional intelligence skills through their service to these organizations.

2 Goleman’s Emotional Intelligence Framework

A useful framework for thinking about the benefits of volunteering is Goleman’s (1998) emotional intelligence model. The model has five components: three intrapersonal (within the self) and two interpersonal (between the self and others). We find that much of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes developed during our time as leaders in LTAs can be described using competencies that Goleman has outlined. He hypothesized that these competencies are what set apart the average leader from the star performer.

Turning first to the intrapersonal aspects of emotional intelligence, the three components are self-awareness, self-regulation, and (self-) motivation. *Self-awareness* is a person’s ability to understand his/her strengths and weaknesses, the ability to recognize the impact of his/her emotions and having a strong sense of self-worth. *Self-regulation* deals with controlling one’s impulses, maintaining integrity, adapting to change, and being comfortable with new ideas. *Motivation* refers to having a drive to achieve excellence, aligning personal goals to those of the organization, a willingness to act as opportunities present themselves, and an ability to overcome obstacles.

As for the interpersonal competencies of emotional intelligence, Goleman (1998) identifies empathy and social skills as setting apart great leaders from mediocre ones. For Goleman, *empathy* means the ability to develop and support others, a service orientation to customers (or in our case, association members), the ability to leverage diversity, political savvy, and most importantly, a sense of how others feel and how they see the world. By *social skills*, Goleman means being an influencer, a strong

listener and communicator, a peacemaker, an inspirational leader, a change agent, a relationship builder, a strong collaborator, and an effective team builder. Perhaps this list seems daunting, but Goleman convincingly argues that all these skills and attitudes can be developed within those seeking to become better leaders. Examples from the literature and our own experiences support this view.

2.1 Intrapersonal Aspects of Emotional Intelligence

Using Goleman's framework, we will first discuss how volunteering in professional associations can lead to development in the intrapersonal domain. Here we address the three intrapersonal aspects of Goleman's (1998) model and share relevant data about how serving as volunteers can promote individuals' professional development.

2.1.1 Self-awareness

As noted above, the first intrapersonal sub-category—self-awareness—includes three components: (1) recognizing one's emotions and their effects, (2) knowing one's strengths and limits, and (3) having a strong sense of one's self-worth and capabilities. In questionnaire research on how the experience of leadership changes leaders, Bailey, Thibault, and Nunan (2009) surveyed the Past Presidents of the TESOL International Association. The survey asked the respondents "about their strengths and weaknesses when they began their term of service; about the significant challenges TESOL was facing at the time; about the knowledge and/or skills they had gained by serving as President; and about any changes they had experienced in their attitudes and/or awareness" (Bailey et al., 2009, pp. 239–240).

In terms of the categories of Goleman's (1998) emotional intelligence framework, the least frequently reported initial gap or deficiency that respondents reported in the Bailey et al. (2009) study was self-awareness. Only two of the 21 respondents reported that they felt a deficiency in that area.

However, 95% of the respondents noted the experience of being President was positive and had changed them for the better. They said that having this leadership role "led to increased confidence and enhanced self-awareness" (Bailey et al., 2009, pp. 247, 248). Three respondents said they were shy and that being President "had helped them to be more assertive, outgoing and confident. (The word *confidence* appears more frequently than any other term in the data.)" (Bailey et al., 2009, pp. 247, 248).

Self-awareness is crucial because one's effectiveness as a leader hinges on one's ability to understand one's own biases and blind spots. Once these gaps are identified, it is then critical to build a coalition of association leaders that can fill in missing knowledge. For instance, in EnglishUSA, the presidential stream typically alternates annually from members who represent university-based or college-based programs with those from proprietary schools. In this way, the association takes into account a

myriad of perspectives, avoids an echo chamber mentality that reinforces previously-held beliefs and assumptions, and better meets the diverse needs of its constituents.

Another element of self-awareness involves having a strong sense of one's self-worth and capabilities. This topic did not emerge in the literature we reviewed and was not initially evident in our retrospections about our volunteer leadership experiences. In fact, we sometimes lacked an understanding of our capabilities. For example, when Bailey was chairing her first meeting as TESOL President, she checked the time against the agenda and found that the discussion was way ahead of schedule. She asked the Past President, "What am I doing wrong? Did I skip something?" The Past President reassured her that there was no problem—that she was managing the discussion efficiently.

2.1.2 Self-regulation

The second subcategory of the intrapersonal factor, that of self-regulation, triggered several responses in the Bailey et al. (2009) study of former TESOL Presidents. This multifaceted category includes (1) self-control (keeping disruptive emotions and impulses in check); (2) trustworthiness (maintaining standards of honesty and integrity); (3) adaptability (flexibility in handling change); and (4) innovation (being comfortable with novel ideals, approaches and new information). Of these four subcategories, the topic of self-control has been noted in the available literature on volunteering in professional LTAs.

For example, in a report about what she herself learned by being TESOL President, Bailey (2002) made the following comment about the development of her interpersonal skills:

I learned to be something bigger than myself—someone better and calmer and gentler than I usually am. There were many times when members were so obnoxious and so unreasonable in their demands that I wanted to strangle them, scream, curse, and stomp out of the room. Fortunately, the person who preceded me as a TESOL President, MaryAnn Christison, is very calm and sweet. I am not. (Or at least not always.) And yet, I found myself adopting the strategies I had seen her use again and again during the year that she was President. For example, she would smile and thank a person who had voiced a negative comment. In the midst of what seemed like an endless debate, she would pleasantly tell the Board members that in three minutes she was going to move on to the next agenda item, so we needed to wind up the discussion if we could. Nine times out of ten, her smile, her calm voice, and her eye contact with individuals had the effect of making us behave more sensibly as a group and reach a compromise that we could all happily live with. She exuded a certain managerial gentleness that was very successful in getting things done (Bailey, 2002, p. 33).

Indeed, self-regulation may very well be the most challenging of all emotional intelligence skills to develop, but perhaps it is also the most important. As an association leader, the ability to think on one's feet becomes critical, particularly when dealing with dissatisfied members or the press. As an example, when posed with a thorny question, Szasz found that she could take a page from a mindfulness-based stress reduction class she had taken. In that course, she was introduced to the S.T.O.P technique (Goldstein, 2012). S.T.O.P stands for Stop, Take a breath, Observe, and

then Proceed. Adopting this strategy in her role as Treasurer of EnglishUSA gave Szasz just the right amount of time to formulate a diplomatic response when faced with a challenging questioner.

As another example, while Szasz was conducting the annual business meeting, an outspoken member asked a probing question about the use of membership dues. The natural inclination might be to jump into defend the association's financial decisions. As association leaders we invest so much of our own time and energy in the organization that it can feel like a personal attack when our actions are questioned. However, taking just a few seconds to stop, breathe, observe and then answer gave Szasz enough time to formulate a calm and reasonable response, which was more likely to satisfy the questioner. She followed up the public response with a private conversation with the member, who also happened to be a former board member himself. In that way, she was able to further explore the motivation behind the question and ensure that she had answered it to his satisfaction.

Other elements of self-regulation are adaptability (flexibility in handling change) and innovation (being comfortable with novel ideas, approaches, and new information). Again, these issues did not explicitly emerge from the literature we reviewed, perhaps because it is the very nature of association leadership to be adaptable and innovative. Board meeting discussions typically deal with new ideas about how to improve the association. Volunteers who choose to commit time and energy as association leaders may be naturally adaptable and open to innovation as a function of their roles.

2.1.3 Motivation

The third intrapersonal component is the ability to motivate oneself, especially in the face of obstacles or setbacks. As Murray and Christison (2009) explain, a leader with motivation acts "from a sense that 'this is achievable,' rather than 'this won't work'" (p. 89). The (self-) motivation factor consists of four subcategories: (1) achievement drive: striving to improve or meet a standard of excellence; (2) commitment: aligning with the goals of the group or organization; (3) initiative: readiness to act on opportunities; and (4) optimism: persistence in pursuing goals despite obstacles and setbacks. Opportunities to develop in these four areas are exemplified in a series of experiences Szasz had as a result of a political change in the U.S.

During Szasz's tenure as President of EnglishUSA, the election of a new US President posed a significant setback to the Intensive English Program (IEP) community. The new President's inflammatory anti-immigrant rhetoric had a sharp and immediate impact on program enrollments, which were already heading on a downward trend. According to the Institute of International Education's Open Doors Report (2017), IEP enrollments across the United States fell by 25.9% between the academic years 2015–16 and 2016–17.

While many within the IEP field felt downtrodden by the election results and the impact they had on international students' desire to study in the United States, Szasz was mobilized in a way she had not been before. She decided to participate in the

NAFSA: Association of International Educators' Advocacy Day event in Washington, DC, in March 2017, with EnglishUSA's Executive Director. It was the biggest turnout NAFSA had ever had for their advocacy event. While there was no particular piece of legislation for which to lobby specifically related to Intensive English Programs, Szasz felt that it was imperative to visit her Members of Congress to ensure they understood the positive impact international students have on the United States, both from a diplomatic and an economic perspective. It was her hope that these visits would help to garner congressional support for international students when it was inevitably needed.

Szasz and a colleague then took what they learned from NAFSA and delivered a webinar for EnglishUSA members to talk about grassroots advocacy and how members could make their voices heard. This session was followed by a panel discussion at the EnglishUSA Stakeholders Conference in Washington, DC, and a subsequent presentation at the association's Professional Development Conference. These sustained efforts to educate and support the EnglishUSA membership to advocate on behalf of their students and programs were intended to create a ripple effect so that members throughout the US would feel empowered to visit their own Members of Congress. Rather than sit back and let things happen, it was time to act. The experience was extremely inspiring and energizing for Szasz, because it gave her a way to work through a negative time for the association, and she hoped to share that enthusiasm with the rest of her community.

2.2 Interpersonal Aspects of Emotional Intelligence

We turn now to the second major component of Goleman's (1998) model of emotional intelligence—the interpersonal competencies. Serving as leaders in language teacher associations gives volunteers many opportunities to interact with others and develop their interpersonal skills.

In the Goleman (1998) model, empathy has five subcategories: (1) developing others: sensing other people's development needs and bolstering their abilities; (2) service orientation: anticipating, recognizing, and meeting customer needs; (3) leveraging diversity: cultivating opportunities through different kinds of people; (4) political awareness: reading a group's emotional currents and power relationships; and (5) understanding others: sensing other people's feelings and perspectives, and actively being interested in their concerns.

2.2.1 Empathy

In the questionnaire research by Bailey et al. (2009, p. 244), "the topic of relationships was the theme that probably preoccupied the most Past Presidents." These authors note that "the theme is multilayered, ranging from relationships with the Executive Director and staff members to relationships with the membership and entities within

the organization” (Bailey et al., 2009, p. 244). In terms of diversity, some of the TESOL Past Presidents said they had learned “to be less critical of those whose opinions diverged from theirs, to be more indirect, to see that... leadership necessarily involved teamwork” (Bailey et al., 2009, p. 248).

Active listening is frequently cited as an important skill among managers and leaders (see Greenleaf, 2015), and this point is never more true than in the role of an association president. In fact, in the survey of Past TESOL Presidents, “two respondents reported developing better listening skills and having more patience as a result of their tenure” (Bailey et al., 2009, p. 247). By definition, an association president’s role is to preside over board discussions and decisions, rather than to inject his/her own agenda or opinions. A strong president focuses on giving everyone on the team a chance to contribute their insights and ideas so that the best decision can be reached for the organization. Pushing personal agendas simply leads to breakdowns in trust and the stifling of open communication.

A feature of empathy in Goleman’s (1998) model is a service orientation (anticipating, recognizing, and meeting the needs of others). TESOL Past President Neil Anderson refers to this service orientation as “leading from behind” (2009, p. 111):

The idea that many people have about leadership is that when one gets elected or appointed to a position, then one becomes a leader. However, if leadership is defined by behaviors of leaders, then there could be some people with title and position who are not leaders because their behaviors are inconsistent with the characteristics of effective leaders. In addition, it is quite possible that it is the leaders in the ‘background,’ the ones without title or position, the ones who are leading from behind, who can be the most influential in moving others towards accomplishing their goals (2009, p. 111).

Well-honed empathy enables leaders to facilitate effective meetings that make the best use of time and leverage the diversity of board member voices. The ability to read the room also becomes invaluable when disagreements and tensions arise. As mentioned above, the membership of EnglishUSA includes both university-governed and proprietary programs. As program enrollments declined, it became increasingly difficult for corporate employees to justify board service to their management. This challenge caused a shift in board representation that did not accurately reflect the makeup of the membership, which tends to be about 50% university-governed programs and 50% proprietary programs. As proprietary program voices became fewer on the board, it became increasingly important for the association president, who came from a university program, to amplify those voices to ensure that the organization was considering their unique concerns and viewpoints. It was equally important for the president to represent those voices in his/her own stances and remarks. It is critical to remember that as association leaders, we represent the entirety of the membership, rather than our personal interests, and empathy plays a role in ensuring all viewpoints are considered.

2.2.2 Social Skills

The subcategory of social skills in Goleman's (1998) model includes eight elements: (1) influence: wielding effective tactics of persuasion; (2) communication: listening openly and sending convincing messages; (3) conflict management: negotiating and resolving disagreements; (4) leadership: inspiring and guiding individuals and groups; (5) change analyst: initiating and managing change; (6) building bonds: nurturing instrumental relationships; (7) collaboration and cooperation: working with others toward shared goals; and (8) team capabilities: creating group synergy in pursuing collective goals.

In terms of social skills, Bailey et al. (2009) reported that the TESOL Past Presidents they surveyed said that "dealing with interpersonal relationships among and between board members and affiliates was the most frequently reported gap or deficiency. Nearly half (48%) of the respondents mentioned that they felt underprepared to deal with difficult people" (p. 241).

As another example of interpersonal skills development, Bailey (2002) writes that her management and leadership skills were also challenged, which promoted development. For example, working with her support staff provided opportunities for growth:

During the four years I served in the [TESOL] presidential line, I worked with several teams of part-time student helpers, funded by my school. ... Depending on the time of year, from one to five graduate students were working for me, which meant I had to coordinate schedules, learn about each person's strengths and weaknesses, draw on the strengths and work on the weaknesses (p. 34).

Here is an example of how volunteering in her language teacher association helped Bailey grow as a manager in her home institution:

I also had to learn to delegate responsibility [to the student assistants]. This experience involved learning to give clear instructions and set reasonable tasks—including those which had to be done in my absence. In the cases of working with two or more helpers, it also meant coordinating the work of a diverse team of people, making sure that jobs didn't fall through the cracks, and that we had a system in place for communicating with one another. Since students graduated each term, new replacements had to be trained. This fact dictated that I had to systematize my office routines and make them transparent to others (p. 34).

Likewise, elements of Goleman's (1998) social skills subcategory emerged in the survey by Bailey et al. (2009). Not surprisingly, several former TESOL Presidents reported that being TESOL President had helped them develop their organizational skills:

These included how to run meetings tightly and effectively, how to manage complexity, and how to deal with conflicting issues. Many respondents mentioned that, while they brought organizational and managerial skills to the position, the presidency enabled them to hone and refine those skills (Bailey et al., 2009, p. 248).

Participating in meetings can either be an invigorating experience or a colossal waste of time. Running effective meetings was a part of the learning opportunity Bailey (2002) gained by being TESOL President:

I got interested in running meetings as a skill and began to watch carefully to see who was effective (and who was not) at conducting meetings. I studied the discourse moves that people made as they interacted in formal meeting contexts. (Have you ever noticed the expression, ‘With all due respect...’ is always followed by the most profound disagreement with what a previous speaker has said? Or that certain closing remarks prior to a break not only bring closure to the current session but also set the tone for when and how work will resume in the next session?) (p. 34).

The most fundamental issue in meeting management is whether a meeting is held for the purposes of decision making (as are Board of Directors meetings) or for the dissemination of information (such as the open business meeting at the end of the annual TESOL convention). Unless you are working with a very small group in which unstructured interaction is a good way to get decisions made, a pre-set but flexible agenda is vital. However, an agenda which is completely determined by the meeting manager, without the opportunity for participants to nominate topics, is not likely to generate the sorts of full and frank discussions that are needed to achieve consensus in making decisions for a professional association. Engaging volunteers in agenda setting and carrying out important meetings can build two of the elements of social skills: collaboration and cooperation (working with others toward shared goals), and team capabilities (creating group synergy in pursuing collective goals).

In addition, documenting procedures and having clearly articulated public policies were important lessons for Bailey to learn as an association volunteer. She also found that “working with organizational finances provided many learning opportunities” (2002, p. 34):

In working with TESOL’s finances, I learned about budgeting, accounting, and investments. All Board members are responsible for reviewing and approving TESOL’s budget, but as a member of the Finance Committee, I was also involved in preliminary conference calls with staff members to help prepare the budget. In order to prepare for this role, I read several helpful publications produced by the National Center for Nonprofit Boards (NCNB). The frequent interaction with people so much more knowledgeable than I (TESOL’s Executive Director, the Treasurer, and the Director of Finance, in particular) was a great source of information. I was even intrigued enough to audit a course in accounting (Bailey, 2002, p. 34).

Professional-level communications—both written and oral—are key skills for volunteer leaders. The report about how leadership changes leaders notes that “communication skills that were enhanced by the presidential experience included presentation skills, the ability to listen, and problem-solving skills. Exposure to diverse audiences, particularly international audiences, enhanced communication” (Bailey et al., 2009, p. 248).

Bailey (2002) found that both her written and oral skills developed through her roles with TESOL and later with TIRF (The International Research Foundation for English Language Education):

I have been a comfortable academic writer and editor for years, but I have never experienced so many demanding writing challenges as those I faced the year I was TESOL President. The toughest for me were six ‘President’s Message’ columns that appeared in *TESOL Matters*, the association’s newsletter. These are short pieces (half a newsprint page—about 1500 words) which must appeal to a wide audience (the entire membership of the organization), deal with

a timely topic, entertain and inform the membership, and be submitted on a strict deadline. I have written books. I have written academic articles. I have written grant proposals. But writing short and snappy pieces is really difficult. I think my struggles with those six brief articles helped me learn to focus my writing faster, to trust my drafts, and to quit agonizing over how to say something and just say it (p. 35).

Fortunately, the development of this skill had a lasting positive effect. In her current role as President of TIRF, Bailey has to write a “Chair’s Report” for the Foundation’s monthly e-newsletter. Again, this non-academic genre requires writing short, engaging prose that appeals to a wide reading audience. Bailey finds that this job is not as demanding as it used to be.

As a volunteer leader, Bailey also experienced development in her spoken communication skills. She wrote,

I have been a relatively comfortable public speaker for many years. But the number of audiences I have had to face as TESOL President, the size of some of those audiences, and the conditions under which I spoke have all provided new challenges which led to new growth for me.... In addition to giving prepared formal speeches, extemporaneous talks, and workshops, I was often called upon to make brief but coherent and catchy impromptu speeches—at luncheons, at the opening ceremonies of affiliate conferences, at receptions, and at dinner parties. Usually when I visited a school or college on my travels, I was asked to make a brief speech to the students and faculty—often without warning or preparation. Eventually, I learned that I could do this and sound reasonably intelligent, without getting too rattled in the process (Bailey, 2002, p. 36).

As outlined above, Goleman’s (1998) model of emotional intelligence provides a comprehensive framework for exploring how language teacher association volunteers develop leadership skills. That is not to say that his framework is a *complete* one. A leader who is able to build strong relationships with colleagues but who lacks strong organizational skills, such as meeting deadlines, setting appropriate timelines, providing timely feedback, or demonstrating strong time management practices, will probably not be seen as effective. However, Goleman’s hypothesis is that those promoted into leadership positions typically excel at these “hard” skills, and it is the “soft” skills of emotional intelligence that will ultimately determine their success as leaders.

3 Conclusion

The TESOL survey of Past Presidents conducted in 2009 is a good first step in learning how leadership in LTAs impacts those who volunteer. It would be valuable to conduct similar studies with leaders from other organizations, such as EnglishUSA. The data from these types of surveys can then be used by associations as they recruit new board and committee members, because they will have solid evidence of the benefits of volunteer experiences. Likewise, LTAs would benefit from these data as a means of reexamining their on-boarding practices. Are they doing enough to prepare leaders at the beginning of their terms of service? How might they support the

development of board members' emotional intelligence to ensure effective leadership of the organization? These are just a couple of questions that might be addressed.

For those who take the chance and the opportunity to become volunteer leaders within these professional organizations, a beneficial first step could be to start their term by taking a skills assessment as a means of benchmarking their strengths and areas for improvement. Such an assessment also serves as a way of building self-awareness, the first element of Goleman's (1998) model. Many institutions and companies use the StrengthsFinder 2.0 (Rath, 2007) or the DiSC Assessment (Personality Profile Solutions, 2018) to give employees a clearer understanding of the skill set they bring to their organization. Perhaps LTAs would benefit from similar practices.

Based on our own experiences of professional development gains through volunteering, and on our reading of some of the available research literature, we feel confident in saying that volunteering in LTAs can provide very positive opportunities for growth. Of course, there are also frustrations and sometimes even serious conflicts. In addition, we freely admit that volunteering takes time. Nevertheless, we both know that we would volunteer again if given the chance.

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Formalizing Language Teacher Association Leadership Development



Andy Curtis and Ester de Jong

Abstract Like many boards of directors, TESOL International Association has a system in place to support new board members, and to help them take on and carry out their roles and responsibilities efficiently and effectively. The informal and voluntary coaching-mentoring arrangement is known as a ‘buddy system’; an idea which goes back at least 50 years (Freyberg, 1967). In this Association, the arrangement is open-ended and flexible, based on a second-year Board member accompanying a new Board member, during the first Board meeting attended by the first-year member. In recent years, these pairings have been more carefully matched, but the problem has been that both parties are often already extremely busy professionals, even before joining the Board, and more so afterwards. Therefore, after that initial Board meeting, in spite of the best intentions of both parties, little or no follow-up usually takes place. In light of the limitations of such a ‘buddy system’, this chapter will present a case study on the success of a more systematic and structured—but still open-ended and flexible—approach to leadership coaching-mentoring, involving a recent Past-President and a recent President-Elect of the Association, in a mutually beneficial and enlightening, professional teaching-learning relationship over a year.

1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the experiences of two leaders in TESOL International Association who decided to move beyond an informal buddy system to a more structured yet flexible way of engaging in meaningful leadership development. The chapter begins with a brief and select review of different ways new members are apprenticed into a profession, i.e., through a ‘buddy system’, ‘coaching’ and/or ‘mentoring.’ These terms are frequently used as though they are interchangeable, with the same

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(or very similar) meaning; however, there are some important differences between them. The next section describes the leadership and leadership development opportunities within TESOL International Association as the context wherein this leadership development took place. This is followed by an experiential section, describing what we did, and explaining why we decided to do it that way. We conclude by bringing together the literature and our experience in the form of a summary of what we found worked well for us, and how what we did could be improved upon.

2 Our LTA Context: TESOL International Association

TESOL International Association is an international professional organization for English language teachers. According to the website of the Association (www.tesol.org), it was established in 1966 because of “professional concern over the lack of a single, all-inclusive professional organization that might bring together teachers and administrators at all educational levels with an interest in teaching English to speakers of other languages”. According to the August 2018 membership statistics (which are the most recent publicly available at the time of writing) the Association has 10,113 members in 170 countries. In addition to those 10,000-plus core members, there are tens of thousands of affiliate members in more than 100 independent associations, making TESOL International Association the largest and longest-established association of its kind in the world.

The Vision Statement of the Association is stated on its website as: “To become the trusted global authority for knowledge and expertise in English language teaching”, and the mission of the Association is: “advancing the quality of English language teaching through professional development, research, standards, and advocacy”. The website also lists the four Core Values of the Association, which are:

- “Professionalism demonstrated by excellence in standards, research, and practice that improve learning outcomes;
- respect for diversity, multilingualism, multiculturalism, and individuals’ language rights;
- integrity guided by ethical and transparent action;
- commitment to life-long learning”.

The Association is governed by a Board of Directors, made up of an elected President, President-Elect and Past President, and eight additional elected Directors. An appointed Executive Director oversees the operations of the organization in the TESOL office in Alexandria, VA, USA.

The current Executive Committee and Board of Directors (2017–2018) is an example of the linguistic and cultural, geographic and experiential diversity of leadership in the Association. For example, the current team of nine women and three men include TESOL professionals born in and/or based in Brazil, Canada, China, Germany, the Netherlands, Thailand, Uruguay and the USA. Partly because of leadership encouragement initiatives, the TESOL Presidency has become increasingly diverse

since 2005, when the first TESOL President born in China was elected. Since then, the Association has seen its first President born in Egypt, the first of Indian origin, the first born in Europe (the Netherlands), and the first born in South America (Brazil). This represents more linguistic, cultural, geographic, and racial diversity in the last 15 years of the TESOL Presidency than in the previous 40 years, during which time most of the presidents of the Association were White, American, native-speakers of English, born in and based in the USA.

TESOL International Association has created a number of opportunities to help language teaching professionals, including current and future leaders within and outside the Association, develop their leadership knowledge, skills and abilities (<http://www.tesol.org/support-tesol/volunteer/leadership-opportunities>). For example, the ELT Leadership Management Certificate Program “provides leadership training for ELT professionals in various kinds of ELT organizations and institutions”. There is also the more targeted and more specific Leadership Development Certificate Program, which provides “professional development and leadership training for current or future leaders within TESOL International Association”. Whereas the Management Certificate Program is open to everyone, regardless of whether they are a member of the Association, the 40-hour, self-paced Development Certificate Program is only open to members of the Association. In addition, there is a Leadership Mentoring Program, which “helps TESOL members become more involved in the work of the association”, and as part of the Association’s commitment to a diverse leadership, “preference is given to individuals from underrepresented groups within TESOL”. It is also worth mentioning that the Association has, after much discussion, moved away from the business-speak, energy sector jargon of ‘leadership pipelines’ (see, for example, Conger & Fulmer, 2003), and towards more humanistic metaphors, such as ‘leadership pathways’ (Curtis, 2017).

The American comedic actress Lucille Ball (1911–1989) is one of the people most commonly credited with the saying: “If you want something done, ask a busy person to do it”. As with many such apparently contradictory sayings, there may be more truth to them than meets the eye initially. In this case, Vanderkam (2015) stated, in an article titled ‘Why already busy people are more likely to get more things done’: “It is true that those with a lot on their plates are often willing to take on more. *Just look at volunteering statistics*” (p. 1, emphasis added). Vanderkam goes on to state that: “You might think that people with jobs, and people with kids, would be less likely to volunteer than those without such claims on their time. But in reality, volunteering rates are higher for the employed than those not in the workforce”. Whatever the reasons for whatever truth there is in Ball’s oft-quoted dictum, which may be especially applicable to those who volunteer, her comment does apply to the Board of Directors of TESOL International Association, and perhaps to other LTA boards as well.

2.1 “Buddy”, “Mentor”, or “Coach”?

Embracing a new leadership role often involves the enculturation into new practices and skills. Over time, different systems have been developed to support leaders in their efforts to be able to perform their role well. In this section we provide a brief, selective review of three models for supporting leaders: the buddy system, the mentor model, and the coaching model.

2.1.1 The Buddy System

The ‘buddy’ system is one well-known example of a peer support system, which has been researched and reported on for more than fifty years. For example, using data from an elementary school in Harlem, New York, Freyberg (1967) published a paper titled *‘The effect of participation in an elementary school buddy system on the self concept, school attitudes and behaviors, and achievement of fifth grade Negro children’* (pp. 3–29). Freyberg found that, although “there was no significant difference in self-concept or school attitudes and behaviors ... the language and arithmetic achievement did show a significant gain” (p. 3). Much has changed over the last five decades, most immediately noticeable in this case being changes to the language we now use (or avoid) to refer to phenotypic features such as skin color. What has not changed during that time is the on-going interest in buddy systems.

According to the online *Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, one of the most commonly used meanings of ‘buddy’ is: “someone who does an activity with you so that you can support and encourage each other”. The online *Merriam-Webster* dictionary dates the first known use of ‘buddy system’ to 1920 and defines such a system as: “an arrangement in which two individuals are paired (as for mutual safety in a hazardous situation)”. Buddy systems have been used in a variety of contexts, and over the last 20 years, it has been popularized in, for example, medicine. Patients helping other patients has been one of the most prominent themes in the medical literature on buddy systems over the years (see, for example, West, Edwards & Hajek, 1998; Rotheram-Borus et al., 2012). In more recent years, the focus within the medical field has expanded to include buddy systems being employed for leadership development (Jones-Berry, 2016).

In the context of education, buddy systems are reflected in peer tutoring, cross-age tutoring and other forms of peer assisted learning (Bowman-Perrott, deMarín, Mahadevan & Etchells, 2016; Pyle, Pyle, Lignugaris/Kraft, Duran & Akers, 2017; Silverman et al., 2017). A reflection of the growing interest in such systems was Bush’s (2003), *The School Buddy System: The Practice of Collaboration*. More recently, buddy systems have been to help language teachers help each other (Mukundan, Hajimohammadi & Nimehchisalem, 2011), and for peer support with language-learning students (Cruz & Kwinta, 2013; Hinds, 2016). One of the more recent, and more striking, examples of a buddy system, in this case designed to help novice university researchers, is an article titled ‘A Love Story: For ‘Buddy System’ Research

in the Academy’, by Patricia Lopez and Kathryn Gillespie, in the journal *Gender, Place & Culture* (2016, pp. 1689–1700). In their article, Lopez and Gillespie explain that they “advocate the buddy system as an extension of feminist care ethics” and as “a more caring way of inhabiting the academy” (p. 1689).

In recent years, TESOL International Association Board of Directors has used a ‘board buddy’ system to support new Board members, including the incoming President-Elect. In this system, during the Board of Directors meeting, at the annual convention, a soon-to-be second year Board member (all elected members serve for three years) is paired with a soon-to-be first year Board member. In spite of the widespread use and success of buddy systems, for the Association, the buddy system that was in place, is often found to be of limited effectiveness. The main reasons are the lack of structure, together with the ever-present problem of a lack of time, especially for boards made up of members who have full-time (paid) positions, and whose (unpaid) volunteer board service is on top of already extremely busy schedules (Vanderkam, 2015). As a result, in those kinds of situations, when the ‘senior buddy’ says to the ‘junior buddy’, “Let me know if you need any help”, to which the ‘junior buddy’ replies, “OK, will do”, that can be the end of the interaction, as both parties are pressed for time, and do not want to add to each other’s workloads.

2.1.2 Mentoring and Coaching

In 2003, a new academic journal was launched, the *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*. According to the editors of the inaugural issue of the *Journal*, Elaine Cox and Grant Ledgerwood, the launch of their *Journal* “mark[ed] a defining moment in the history of coaching and mentoring” (2003, p. 1). That may have been something of an overstatement, but it is true that, in the early 2000s, evidence-based discussions of mentoring and coaching were, “as yet poorly developed in the academic and professional research literature” (2003, p. 1). Nearly a decade later, the inaugural issue of a second journal was published, the *International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education*. The launch of another journal in this field reflected not only the on-going growth in the interest in coaching and mentoring, but also a natural maturing of a field of study or disciplinary domain. Another indication of continued growth in the interest in coaching and mentoring was the more recent publication of the 500-plus-page *SAGE Handbook of Mentoring and Coaching in Education* (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012) (see also Gardiner, 2012). In relation to language education, Delaney (2012) reported on mentoring language teachers, and concluded by describing the “role of mentoring in strengthening FL [Foreign Language] education in the United States” as ‘pivotal’ (p. 200).

Fletcher (2000) offers the following definition of mentoring: “Mentoring means guiding and supporting trainees to ease them through difficult transitions; it is about smoothing the way, enabling, reassuring” (pp. 1–2). With a focus on language educators, Bailey, Curtis, and Nunan (1998) similarly suggest that mentoring involves “an interpersonal, ongoing, situated, supportive, and informative professional relationship between two (or more) individuals, one of whom (the mentor) has more

experience in the profession, craft, or skill in question” (p. 207). Mentoring, then, is more focused on the mentee and their needs but continues to recognize the advanced expertise of the mentor.

According to Fletcher, over the past decade, attention has “dramatically shifted towards coaching” (Fletcher, 2000, p. 74). Bailey et al. (1998) propose that coaching moves away from the hierarchical relationship to involve an equal-experience focus, in which the two (or more) parties may have approximately equivalent amounts of language teaching and learning experience. An important distinction between mentoring and coaching is therefore that, in the latter, one participant is not considered to be more senior than the other, making coaching more of a partnership than an apprenticeship.

The relationships between individuals in a mentoring/coaching setting are dynamic, and cannot always be clearly delineated. As Fletcher and Mullen (2012) put it: “We recognise that mentoring and coaching theory are not simple or uniform concepts but complex educational ideas that inevitably change because of their contextual dependency, philosophical rootedness and political idiosyncrasies” (p. 195). Whereas apprenticeship presumes a hierarchy and an assumed unilateral transfer of expertise and skills from master to apprentice, mentoring and coaching suggest the importance of input or agency from the mentee or the one being coached. Moreover, as Ferrar (2004) notes, “any relationship between coach/mentor and learner is shaped by the characteristics and personalities of those involved” (Ferrar, 2004, p. 54). In addition, the nature of all relationships, personal and professional, changes over time. For example, a pairing or a dyad that might start with one party being the more experienced mentor, may, over time, shift to more of a coaching relationship, as the mentee gains more experience in, for example, recent developments in the field, that the mentor may not be as aware of or as familiar with. Finally, another reason that these terms defy a clear delineation is the importance of context (see Curtis, 2017, for a discussion of the centrality of context in language education). Recognizing the importance of prior knowledge, skills and understandings will shape successful professional coaching and mentoring relationships.

As we can see, much has been written about buddy systems, coaching, and mentoring over the last 50 years. However, except for a few books, such as *Leadership in English Language Teaching and Learning* (Coombe, McCloskey, Stephenson & Anderson, 2008) and *Leadership in English Language Education* (Christison & Murray, 2009), much less has been written about the role of buddy systems, coaching, and mentoring in leadership development specifically in language education, especially within the field of TESOL.

One of the rare examples of a publication focused on leadership mentoring in LTAs is a chapter by Kamhi-Stein and de Oliveira (2008), titled ‘Mentoring as a Pathway to Leadership: A focus on non-native English-speaking professionals’ (pp. 38–49). As Kamhi-Stein and de Oliveira explain at the beginning of their chapter, their professional relationship began in 1998, when de Oliveira attended a colloquium (at the annual California TESOL conference) organized by Kamhi-Stein. The relationship developed, and after a couple of years, de Oliveira described it as: “What had started out as an author-editor relationship had slowly turned into a relationship of

mentor and mentee, or ‘more experienced’ and ‘less experienced’ friend in a highly competitive field” (Kamhi-Stein & de Oliveira, 2008, p. 39). Such a description of mentoring concurs with that given by Bailey et al. (1998), in terms of a more experienced professional working with one less experienced. However, Kamhi-Stein and de Oliveira reject the idea that the goal of such mentoring is “having the less experienced person grow and develop specific competencies” (Murray, 1991, p. xiv), as the mentor should also develop through the process.

For the purposes of documenting our experiences, we therefore approached the mentor/coach distinction from a non-dichotomous perspective, in which we see mentoring and coaching as being on a continuum, rather than a dichotomy. We recognize that the roles of the mentor/mentee or coach/coached are necessarily dynamic, co-constructed by participants themselves, will change over time, and are shaped by their leadership context (See also Lopez & Gillespie, 2016, and the *ELT In Context* series, from the TESOL Press, 2015–2017). Modern-day, professional mentoring, although experientially hierarchical, is different from its origins, as both the mentor and the mentee are expected to grow and learn through the relationship, in a more mutually developmental way.

2.2 What We Did and Why We Did It That Way

Within TESOL International Association, a mentoring relationship is also encouraged between the President-Elect (PE) and the Past-President (PP). From January 2016 through to March 2017, we found ourselves in these two roles—Ester as PE, and Andy as PP—and we decided to move beyond an incidental ‘help’ or buddy system towards a more systematic way to engage in LTA leadership development. This section focuses on our approach to mentoring as onboarding into a new role and our experiences throughout the year.

2.2.1 Setting Parameters: Structured Mentoring Sessions

It is not uncommon, and completely understandable, for teachers and other educators to tense-up whenever they hear the term ‘professional development’, as this may imply yet more things that they must do, piled on top of an already overwhelming workload (Bailey et al., 1998). Therefore, the two us—as a President-Elect (PE) and as a Past President (PP)—looked for a leadership development arrangement that would add no more than approximately, on-average, one hour per week to our burgeoning schedules. Another challenge we set ourselves was to make the arrangements as open and flexible as the buddy system that was in place for Board members, but also as systematic and structured as a coaching-mentoring relationship. Based on those criteria—a relatively small commitment of time, open and flexible, systematic and structured—we developed, gradually and organically, a simple system that

enabled us to meet those criteria, which emerged as the process unfolded, rather than being defined from the beginning.

We made a conscious commitment to engage, once-a-month, in a live Skype session, with our webcams activated, so we could see and hear each other, giving an immediacy and a connectedness despite sometimes being far removed from each other in time and space. That included the PP being, for two months, on a small, remote island in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, with limited Internet connectivity, while the PE was in her office in her university in the USA.

In addition to that monthly hour of real-time, face-to-face Skype interaction, which sometimes took several emails back and forth to arrange, the PP would send an email to the PE, a day or two before our Skype session. The message first confirmed the day, date and time of the Skype call, and then asked if there were any particular topics or areas of discussion, or any specific questions that the PE wanted us to focus on in our precious monthly hour together. If the PE did not have any particular topics or specific questions, then the PP would suggest some topics and/or ask some questions. Particular topics and/or specific questions were important in providing a professional development focus and a framework for the hour.

2.2.2 Framing Development: From Reflection to ‘Duologue’

Without having planned it in advance, we decided to create some sort of written record. The way we resolved the conundrum of engaging in deeper and more meaningful leadership development without adding undue time demands was to limit what we wrote. We did this by taking notes (sometimes copious) during our hour together but agreeing to wait for a few days before sending each other, via email, the main points that we could remember from our Skype session. What we found was that this simple, recall-based process enabled us to extract, from our often thorough and detailed notes (which would have taken far more time than we had to write up nicely and neatly) those main points that had most meaning and most relevance for each of us, and for both of us.

Initially those notes were in the form of bullet-points in an email, but over time, as the learning and understanding deepened, we would exchange a Word document, usually no more than a single page of notes, based on our recollections. Doing that allowed us to articulate our own recollections in writing, before seeing the other person’s, as we agreed that we would not open the other’s one-page attachment until we had written our own. Again, over time, we started responding to each other’s notes with our own in-text responses, creating what was, in effect, a written dialog (or duolog), that was clear, concise, and not overly labor-intensive or time-consuming, either to write or to read.

3 Our Experience

Both of us went back through our emails and notes and came to the following personal observations. Table 1 summarizes our individual perspectives on our experiences with this process.

Our experience confirms the importance of dialogue, explicit expectations, and mentoring as a dynamic relationship. Within the course of less than one year, our mentoring sessions shifted from mentee-initiated topics about roles and expectations and mentor-directed responses to broader topics about leadership that were mutually generated and discussed during the sessions. We agree that it was a positive, professional relationship, from which we both learned a great deal, and which was well-worth the time, energy and effort we put into making it a successful LTA leadership development experience.

Mentoring, coaching, and the buddy system are all based on the assumption of participants' willingness to work together. Their effectiveness is grounded in the active and constant negotiation of roles, expectations, and the nature of support (scaffolds) that may be needed at any given time. These processes are significantly enhanced when there is trust and respect (Besner, 2015). Our experience certainly

Table 1 Individual voices

Ester's voice	Andy's voice
<p>In looking over the notes and reflections during my PE year, I realize how our questions shifted over time. Our sessions started in Spring 2016, prior to my officially taking on the role of PE. The notes show I was pre-occupied with the logistics and expectations: what am I supposed to do and how will I manage my time. This subsequently shifted to a focus on the kind of tasks I thought I would engage in and seeking advice and resources, e.g., running board meetings, being public spokesperson for the organization. I would describe these sessions still as traditional mentor/mentee—Andy clearly had more experience in these areas</p>	<p>Re-reading the many emails and short summaries we wrote and exchanged between the Spring of 2016 and the Summer of 2017, I was struck by how much mentoring and coaching we were able to squeeze into each of our precious one-hour Skype calls. Email is good, especially when the communicating parties are separated by swathes of time and space. But, at the risk of using a Luddite-sounding cliché, there really is no substitute for face-to-face, real-time, speaking and listening! If that can take place in the same room, that may be better, but not necessarily</p>
<p>It was not till later, that our discussions balanced out and equalized as the nature of our session changed to talk about professional organizations and their roles, the role of strategic planning, and leadership in general. After the Board meeting in October, for instance, Andy prompted me to consider what I had learned about leadership. Similarly, in January, we reflected collectively on our experiences with leadership transitions and the implications for the new board orientation</p>	<p>Through my re-reading I also noticed the subtle shifts in our Coaching-Mentoring Continuum, so that there were times when Ester was in more of a mentoring role, when I was the mentee. Although Ester and I come from very different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, our 'common ground' is our commitment to TESOL, both the Association and the Field. Having a similarly quirky sense of humor also helped, as did the fact that we know each other well, like each other, and trust each other</p>

corroborates these insights: our mutual commitment to the structured component of mentoring, our shared willingness to allow the process to be flexible and relevant to emerging issues and allowing the relationship and roles to shift as needed.

4 Lessons Learned

Below are some lessons learned and considerations for the future.

- i. Avoid falling into the ‘terminological trap’ that is an occupational hazard for many of us who do language for a living (Curtis & Sussex, 2018), i.e., don’t worry about whether to call it ‘coaching’ or ‘mentoring’ (Ferrari, 2004). Focus on doing it well, then think about how to label it later.
- ii. Accept that, at times, one of you will be the mentor, but at other times that same person will be the mentee, depending on who has more experience of what, as and when different situations and challenges arise—many (or even most) of which cannot be anticipated.
- iii. Be as flexible as you can be with each other (Lopez & Gillespie, 2016)—but also be committed to the relationship. If, for example, one of you cannot attend the hour as scheduled, the other person should be understanding, but also gently insistent about re-scheduling as soon as possible.
- iv. Think of coaching and mentoring as a continuum along which you are moving constantly (together), and which may involve shifting roles back and forth (Bachkirova, Jackson & Clutterbuck, 2011).
- v. Keep a written record of what each of you and what both you are learning, but keep it simple, clear and concise. If possible, use those notes to create an on-going dialog, which will help you identify emerging and recurring themes, concerns and issues.
- vi. Enable and allow the mentoring process, as much as possible, to develop organically, so that it can be both open and flexible and be responsive to immediate and longer-term needs or issues.
- vii. Give structure and consistency to the mentoring sessions as you allow the process to be open and flexible. Finding that balance will take time, be patient, and listen carefully, actively, and empathetically.
- viii. Allow for frequent, regular conversations. Thinking about how the experience could have been improved, it might have been helpful to have had more time than one-hour per month of real-time, live, face-to-face interaction, and more than one hour per week on average. However, given the schedules of many LTA leaders more time would have been hard to find, if not impossible.
- ix. If time, space and distance were less of a constraint, it might have helped to have been able to meet in-person, rather than via Skype, which might have created a different (though not necessarily ‘better’) interactional dynamic.
- x. Trust and respect are key—and as in all meaningful relationships, it takes time to build up these key features.

5 Conclusion

At the end of the Kamhi-Stein and de Oliveira (2008) chapter referred to in this chapter, they wrote: “A good example of the openness and mutual respect was the writing of this chapter, which allowed us to reflect and learn from our past experiences as a way to build towards the future” (p. 48). We, the authors of this chapter, have found that to apply to us as well—the combination of structure and flexibility allowed the mentorship to be relevant and meaningful for both of us. In an email to Ester, as they were sending this chapter to the editors of this book, Andy wrote: “Working with you on this chapter has shown me that we have markedly different writing styles, and come from significantly different linguistic, cultural and academic backgrounds. But all of that has made all of this much more of an enriching experience for me—and, I hope, for you too.” In terms of the future, 10 years after the Kamhi-Stein and de Oliveira (2008) chapter was published, in 2018, Oliveira became the first Latina TESOL President in the 52-year history of TESOL International Association.

From that fact, we can draw a number of conclusions. First, the Kamhi-Stein–de Oliveira relationship can be seen as a pathway resulting in de Oliveira being the 2018–2019 President of the Association. Second, considering the history of leadership with the Association, as shown in this chapter, the greater emphasis within the Association on inclusiveness may well have contributed to de Oliveira being able to actualize her professional developmental goals. Therefore, while the Kamhi-Stein/de Oliveira partnership helped both of them grow professionally and develop their leadership skills, the Association was also evolving during that time, thereby facilitating and setting the stage for the first Latina President of the Association. Lastly, we would note that our relationship, between Andy and Ester, has also been of great mutual benefit. As such, we would encourage future PP-PE arrangements of this kind, which may be an effective model for other LTAs in other countries and contexts.

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Opportunities for Leadership Development in the Service of Language Teacher Associations



Tanya Tercero

Abstract This chapter examines the author's reflections of her participation in and service to Language Teacher Associations (LTAs), primarily TESOL International Association, one of its large, regional affiliates, and a smaller state affiliate. Employing a method of autoethnography, the author narrates her professional development pursuits in English Language Teaching (ELT) in several different contexts within the field, including her experiences in the communities of practice and social learning systems (Wenger, 2000) that have ultimately led to active leadership roles within them. Newcomers to the ELT field, program administrators, professors of TESL education programs, and leaders within LTAs themselves may find the reflected experiences presented here useful in developing and encouraging professional development and leadership opportunities for ELT practitioners at various levels and stages in their careers in order to support on-going training and research in pedagogy, mentoring, community networking, and meeting program evaluation criteria for accreditation.

For the most part, extraordinary people, teams, and associations are simply ordinary people doing extraordinary things that matter to them (Liu, 2008).

1 Introduction

In her recent keynote address at the 16th Annual Second Language Acquisition and Teaching Interdisciplinary Roundtable at the University of Arizona (February 25, 2017), Dr. Heidi Byrnes, Emeritus Professor of Georgetown University, argued for the crucial role of service in the profession of language teaching. Having devoted much of her career as a leader in service, including serving as editor of the *Modern Language Journal* (2012–2017) and as President of the American Association of Applied Linguistics (AAAL) (2010–2011), Dr. Byrnes rejects the typical academic

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hierarchy of teaching and research followed by service as a distant third; instead, she insists that “service promotes teaching and research” and views these three elements of the language teaching profession as integral. She claims that participation in service to language teaching helps the sustainability of the field itself with the “continued need to ‘justify’ the existence of programs” given the “precarious status of languages in the US education system” and where learners of English as a Second Language (ESL) are frequently politicized and marginalized. She notes that service can position language teachers to contribute an essential voice in language planning and policy decisions at the level of the classroom, the institution or organization, and the community. Furthermore, Byrnes specifically promotes service in language teacher associations (LTAs) in preparing the next generation of leaders who will be an integrated part of their professional community.

Dr. Byrnes’ (2017) keynote address about the importance of service resonated with me. As a Ph.D. student, I had spent two years in service leadership positions. I was concurrently the Vice President of my Ph.D. program’s student association and the local state affiliate of TESOL International Association (TESOL). I then served as President of both associations. In these roles, I co-chaired the annual conferences, which were just four months apart. I led monthly meetings with the student association. For the TESOL state affiliate, I led business and quarterly meetings, both face-to-face and virtual, with the board of directors. As one might imagine, these were time-consuming leadership positions, and as I juggled the priorities of my graduate program and my service commitments, I started to question the value of those activities and began to reflect on the positive and more challenging aspects of them. Dr. Byrnes’ argument re-ignited my original enthusiasm about service, though, and, as a result, the positive implications of serving in leadership positions.

2 LTAs as Communities of Practice

LTAs at the institutional, local, regional, national and international levels comprise the professional community, in this case the ELT community, which may be referred to as an ELT “community of practice” as described by Wenger (2000):

Communities of practice grow out of a convergent interplay of competence and experience that involves mutual engagement. They offer an opportunity to negotiate competence through an experience of direct participation. As a consequence, they remain important social units of learning even in the context of much larger systems. These larger systems are constellations of interrelated communities of practice (p. 229).

Effective, engaged LTAs present ample opportunities for service in the profession in addition to the development of leadership skills throughout these interrelated communities of practice, including schools or centers of ELT, the local and regional affiliates and their board of directors, Special Interest Groups (SIGs), and TESOL among others. Competence is demonstrated and experience is gained through attending local and national conferences, participating in conversations about teaching and

research through presentations and workshops, volunteering valuable time to help organize conferences, writing articles for newsletters, creating and updating social media and websites, advocating for students and the profession, or serving on a board of directors.

In order to be productive entities of social learning systems, communities of practice depend on three elements, including “learning energy” or learning initiative, requiring strong internal leadership; social capital, requiring mutual engagement within the community; and self-awareness in order to assess the community from multiple perspectives and make changes as necessary (Wenger, 2000, p. 230). Wenger highlights the various roles of internal leadership essential to a community of practice, and within LTAs, these roles are typically filled by the board of directors which may include the President, Past-President, First and Second Vice Presidents, the Secretary, the Treasurer, the Business Manager, regional representatives, and various Chair positions, such as the Rules and Regulations Chair and the Social Media Chair. These leadership roles are often responsible for organizing and carrying out some of the crucial activities of LTAs, such as holding annual conferences, recruiting and managing membership, updating artifacts (the LTA’s constitution and mission statement, for example), and building and maintaining the LTA’s website.

3 Autoethnography as Method for Self-narrative

Reflecting on my own fifteen years of ESL teaching, research, and service, I narrate my personal experience on the continuum of developing my own leadership skills through participation in LTAs as a member, presenter, and in official leadership roles. In doing so, I employ autoethnography as Choi and Ebooks Corporation (2016) describe it: “an autoethnography is generally focused on the lived experiences that relate to the specific issue under investigation” (p. 57). As did Young (2014) in his autoethnography about his presidency with the Indiana State Teachers Association, I examine my own leadership journey within LTAs and reflect on whom and what influenced it along the way. Although I have been an active member of several LTAs, for example, AAAL and CALICO (Computer-Assisted Language Instruction Consortium), I will navigate through my experiences with TESOL and its regional and local affiliates which are “independent, autonomous associations affiliated with TESOL and each other as members of the TESOL community” (TESOL International Association, 2017). Throughout the years, I have been actively involved in TESOL as a presenter and representative of my state affiliate, TESOL Arabia (defunct as of November 2017) as a presenter and proposal reviewer, and my local (state) TESOL affiliate. As an ESL instructor in adult education, higher education, refugee education, and an ESL and Spanish teacher in workforce and business development, my goal is to illustrate the connections among teaching, research, and language teacher associations in the context of leadership development . In addition, I hope to provide

some (indirect) practical advice for novice teachers in the field on how to become involved in service and leadership as I recall my own participation in the context of constructing my TESOL career, a combination of teaching, research, and service.

4 Making TESOL Connections

I first became involved with my state TESOL affiliate when I began working full-time as an English as a Second Language (ESL) instructor and program coordinator for a community-based adult education program in my state. I moved to a different city in order to take that full-time job, a rarity in many adult-education ESL programs in the US. As I was a novice to the profession, the job presented the opportunity for me to observe and be mentored by an innovative program director. Besides being a mentor, which Byrnes (2017) considers service to the future of the profession, the program director believed in providing ESL teachers with paid professional development opportunities, which Curtis (2008) deems one of the seven principles of professional development in his book chapter of the same name. Taking full advantage of these opportunities, such as attending and presenting at my first state TESOL conference, I earned education credits toward teaching-certification renewal and in the process learned more about ESL pedagogy and the field. Faez and Valeo (2012) highlight the potential leadership role of professional associations in increasing the self-efficacy of novice ESL teachers of adults by contextualizing the reality of their new TESOL classrooms which may help decrease teacher attrition that is highest in the first five years in the profession. I soon realized that participation in the local LTA was an excellent way to participate in the communities of practice of ESL teachers in my state and the profession as a whole.

Returning to my hometown after an unstable library take-over of the adult education program I had been working for, I started teaching for a large community-based adult education ESL program run by the local community college as a part-time teacher with an unpredictable teaching schedule from session to session and no benefits or job security, which is, unfortunately, somewhat typical of the ESL job market in the US. However, I did not let this situation dissuade me from making TESOL a career choice. I experienced an immense amount of job and personal satisfaction working with adult immigrants and refugees from all over the world, and I was confident that I was good at teaching ESL even though I just had a BA degree in both Spanish and Russian at the time supplemented with the on-the-job training and PD acquired in my previous teaching position. Of course, I had more to learn than I could imagine. When Liu and Berger (2015) asked TESOL Past Presidents what they believed were the important issues of TESOL, second language teacher education and development were identified; they were aware of the global, growing demand for ESL and EFL which was outpacing TESOL teacher education. Likewise, the professionalization of ESL and ELT also has been outpaced by the demand, and it still is and will continue to be, especially with part-time, low-paying job markets as the norm in many places.

The community-college-based adult education program was comprised of many education centers around town, each led by its own managers, assistant managers, and supervisors; the potential to teach one or two classes at one center and another one or two classes during the term at another center existed. It was not easy, but I pieced enough work together to survive financially by networking within the communities of practice available to me. I volunteered to sit on committees in the adult education program, and I asked to attend a board meeting of the local state TESOL affiliate because one of the center managers was the President of the state affiliate at the time, and the annual state conference planning meeting was taking place in my city. Attending the board meeting gave me another way to access the community of practice. I was fortunate enough to be referred to the college's workforce and business development office to teach both ESL and Spanish as a well-paid contractor at local businesses, such as hospitals, casinos, factories, and engineering firms.

At the board meeting, it was disclosed that the business manager was gravely ill and would not be able to coordinate the publishers, vendors, and community fundraising for the conference. Seizing the opportunity, I volunteered to act as the business manager for the conference, and under the circumstances, the board agreed. I considered myself as having good organizational skills; the conference was in my hometown, and I had some ideas as where to go for fundraising. The business manager emailed me the contact information for the publishers and vendors, and I got to work contacting them and soliciting local businesses for monetary and material contributions for the annual state TESOL conference.

Acting on behalf of the business manager, I developed skills in fundraising, community outreach, and conference planning in general. In his chapter "Development, a.k.a. Fundraising: A Neglected Element of Professional Development," Brady (2008) regards fundraising as "creating a relationship between the donor and the recipient" that "may bring new partners into the community" (p. 157). I raised enough money to underwrite the conference, securing, in part, a large cash donation from Walmart, a huge corporate retailer that had a community fund whose director had learned English as a second language, and she was willing, and able, to support the LTA. In addition, I established relationships with dozens of TESOL publishers in coordinating their participation at the state conference. Everything went well with the planning. It was when I was asked to address the members during the conference lunch, though, that I met my first difficult challenge, and I confirmed my debilitating fear of public speaking. Public speaking is deemed a vital ELT leadership skill, and it is one that does not come as easily as one might expect of a classroom teacher, requiring, instead, honed practice (Coombe, England, & Schmidt, 2008). Nonetheless, I enjoyed the conference-planning experience and becoming more familiar with the language teaching association and what it had to offer in terms of professional development.

After that state conference, I was voted onto the board of directors as the LTA's state representative for my region. In this position, it was my responsibility to chair a regional mini-conference the following spring. At that point, I had begun a graduate program for a Master's degree in ESL, so I used my networking resources at the university to secure a venue and a keynote speaker for the conference on campus at

the intensive English program (IEP) center. I recruited student volunteers from the graduate program to help me plan and organize it, and even though it was only a mini-conference, a few of the publishers I had met in organizing the state conference arranged to come. Several board members attended as well, and they helped me with the conference registration. It was a good team effort with the student volunteers, the board, and me as the chair, and it was a well-attended mini-conference. Hosting the conference on the university campus allowed teachers of the Intensive English Program (IEP) convenient access to professional development as both members and presenters; it also served as an introduction to the local language teaching association for many of the graduate students in the Master's program who were newcomers to the field.

I attended my first "Big TESOL" conference in Boston that same spring. In addition to being a full-time graduate student, I had kept teaching ESL as part of the Refugee Education Project on the weekends, so as an active teaching professional who had never been to "Big TESOL", I applied for and won one of The Betty Azar Travel Grants for Practicing ESL/EFL Teachers. Since I was graduating that spring, my primary goal was to interview for jobs at the conference's Job Marketplace in order to get a full-time position abroad for the fall. I had several interviews at the conference, and within a week, I had two job offers in hand.

A few months later, I graduated with my Master's degree in ESL, and in late summer, I moved to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to teach in an English foundations program at a women's college on a three-year contract. It was in the Middle East that I became a member of TESOL Arabia. I attended the annual conferences in Dubai, as well as the local chapter and regional SIG events, including an event presented by the Leadership and Management SIG. Working abroad in a very different culture and country from my own, I found the regional LTA's events as something familiar in which to participate, as well as a way to gain insights into my new teaching context.

In my third year at TESOL Arabia, I presented on "How to get an ESL teaching job" because people I knew, including co-workers who did not have their teaching contracts renewed, were frequently having concerned discussions about the job market during a time when the English foundations programs and ELT opportunities were in a state of change in the UAE. In the presentation, I discussed being involved in one's local LTA for networking, and as part of the session, I even built in actual networking time for participants which I advertised in the summary for the conference program. To my great surprise, the session was overflowing with both job seekers and recruiters from the TESOL Arabia Job Marketplace who engaged in a productive discussion, and it was an effective illustration of the role LTAs play in providing networking opportunities, which should *always* be a primary consideration when attending conference presentations, plenaries, workshops, receptions (Liu & Berger, 2015).

After completing my contract in the UAE, I returned to the US to continue my graduate studies in applied linguistics. For my Ph.D. coursework, I enrolled in courses that interested me and which were highly influenced by my recent teaching experience in UAE. For example, I took classes in discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, and language and identity and found myself making connections with the cultural and

linguistic contexts of the UAE. As a result, I returned to Dubai two years later to present a paper on English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in the UAE at TESOL Arabia, and I made connections with several other presenters who were researching various aspects of EMI in the Gulf. I continued to be a member of TESOL Arabia and served as a proposals reviewer which I recommend as another way to be involved with the association and learn about the topics TESOL teachers and researchers are currently working on as they may be an important consideration when planning a conference, updating a mission statement, and creating a strategic plan for the LTA.

5 Leadership Is Not for the Faint of Heart

Returning to my home state in the USA for my Ph.D. program, I re-joined the board of directors of my state TESOL affiliate as the Second Vice President. I became the First Vice President the following year and co-chaired planning for the annual state conference during which I would take over as President of the association. Settling in as the 2nd VP, I started to observe the board of directors and take inventory of the association. First of all, I genuinely liked and admired many of the board members whom I knew already, but the fact that I did know so many of them meant that the majority of the board was made up of the exact same people who had been on it for six to ten years. I identified this situation with several of the issues facing the state affiliate at the time, including having a stagnant board with two of the Past Presidents taking turns recycling their roles as President; never auditing the accounting books of the long-term Treasurer for ten years in an association that never had an annual budget and reportedly tens of thousands of dollars in the bank; lagging membership numbers and conference attendance; a ten-year-old constitution that no one could easily find a copy of, digital or otherwise; a public relations Chair in charge of social media outreach who acknowledged not cultivating that technology skill to enable her to do much outreach; and a team of newsletter editors who admitted to being too busy with other obligations to regularly write and send out an affiliate newsletter or even a short email announcement notifying the members of important policy updates, opportunities to apply for small grants, or vacant positions on the board.

At the time, it was in the Past President's job description for that board to fill those vacancies. As this TESOL affiliate serves the ELT membership in a state with a capital of five million people, a state with three large, well-known universities with graduate degree programs in TESOL and applied linguistics, a state with enormous community colleges supporting an array of ESL adult education programs; and a state that resettles thousands of refugees requiring ESL courses annually, it was not easy to understand how the LTA could not find new members interested in taking leadership roles with a plethora of ELT professionals at various stages in their careers across the state. As Wenger (2000) states, "without the learning energy of those who take initiative, the community becomes stagnant" (p. 230). After many years with the same core board members, it seemed reasonable to assume that the learning energy needed to be re-energized. Wenger also points out that when experience and competence are

too close together, such as it would be with the same board of directors after so long a period, that the community “is in danger of becoming stale” (p. 233). This was how I assessed the LTA’s landscape.

Christison and Murray (2008) outline the importance of strategic planning, and leadership capable of implementing it in order for any kind of educational organization to be successful. Part of strategic planning is defining the mission statement. Byrnes (2017) stresses the importance of revisiting the mission statement periodically to ensure it is in line with the current needs of the membership. The CEA Standards for English Language Programs and Institutions (Commission on English Language Program Accreditation, 2017) also call for mission statements to include goals, to be evaluated periodically, and to be communicated publicly. Our LTA did have a mission statement posted on the website, and I published this version in the conference program; after the fact, though, I was informed that there was an updated mission statement...somewhere. Unfortunately, it was not easily located. Very little as it turned out, was going to be easy in my role as President, making any attempt at implementing a strategic plan that would include creating a budget, updating the constitution, establishing SIGs, and articulating goals and objectives toward meeting the (updated) mission statement quite challenging.

In their book chapter, “How the experience of leadership changes leaders,” Bailey, Thibault, and Nunan (2009), two of them Past Presidents of TESOL International themselves, reported the results of their study in which they asked Past Presidents of TESOL International about their experiences in that leadership role. Twenty one Past Presidents responded to a range of topics that included, in part, describing the challenges facing TESOL at the time, skills and knowledge gained during their tenure, and changes in their attitudes and awareness as a result of being President. The authors report that “the topic of relationships was the theme that probably preoccupied the most Past Presidents” (p. 244). The responses indicated that relationship challenges within TESOL, not only among members but among various entities within the association, were difficult in general. As a leader of a board of directors, or any other kind of team, cultivating working relationships is vital to achieving the goals and objectives of the team; however, even one strained relationship with a member can make certain aspects of leadership a painful learning experience. As I planned to confront the issues affecting the state affiliate at the time, it seemed that there was a feeling that the status quo was threatened, illustrating that communities of practice “can steward a critical competence, but they can also become hostage to their own history, insular, defensive, closed in, and oriented to their own focus” (Wenger, 2000 p. 233). I had not planned for that hostage situation, and my negotiating skills were lacking.

As the Vice President, I co-chaired the state conference with the assistant director of a group advocating for dual-language programs in our state; neither she nor her group members had been members of the LTA, but they were interested in partnering to get more visibility for their grant-funded program, and they were willing to host the conference at their community college workplace; we worked well together and planned a well-organized and well-attended two-day state conference. Using TESOL Arabia’s SIG Information Packet and New SIG Application as a model to work

from (TESOL Arabia, n.d.), we attempted to get the application process for SIGs in place earlier in the year as a way to get more members actively involved in the language teaching association. I contacted two classmates of mine in the Ph.D. program and asked if they would be interested in starting a SIG for refugee concerns since both worked with that population of ESL learners. They were very organized and motivated to do so, and by the time of the state conference, they had their own SIG meeting for refugee concerns as part of the conference program. Today, this same SIG is still very active in supporting teachers of refugees and advocating for these marginalized learners of English.

At the state conference, I officially took over the role of President. Of course, I wish I had been better prepared to act in my leadership role. I would have initiated a SWOT analysis of our LTA's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats at our first business planning meeting of the year with the board members (Christison & Murray, 2008). Instead, I created an agenda of projects to accomplish based on the relative inactivity of the board. That is not to say that the board was not supportive of creating a budget, updating the constitution, cultivating the general membership for leadership positions, and increasing outreach and membership numbers, for example. They were responsive to these agenda items and were enthusiastic to work on them in many ways, but a SWOT analysis, along with establishing the goals and objectives for the mission statement, would have helped implement a formalized strategic plan, a plan Christison and Murray (2008) cite as necessary for a successful organization along with a leader who can guide their association through the process and implement it. As such, my tenure as President was only marginally effective, albeit quite a bit more productive, than I would have liked. At the annual TESOL Convention that year, I participated in a one-day English Language Teaching Leadership Management Certificate Program, but in reality, a single day a third of the way into a leadership role cannot prepare one for all that role entails.

6 Conclusion

Expanding Byrnes' (2017) argument that the language teaching profession is critically integrated with service, teaching, and research, there is evidence that it also promotes opportunities for leadership development through becoming a member and crossing the boundaries of the communities of practice. When TESOL professors, ESL/EFL program administrators, LTAs, and newcomers to the profession recognize this integration by encouraging practitioners at all levels to fully engage in professional development in LTAs, the future leadership and effective, research-based practice of ELT are secured. Before taking on leadership roles within these communities of practice, though, it would be helpful to learn from others' experiences by engaging with the available literature on leadership within language teacher associations and approaching professional development opportunities as active participants across the boundaries.

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Representativeness and Development of Leaders in Korea TESOL



Robert J. Dickey

Abstract Language teacher associations (LTAs) often face challenges in terms of leadership continuity and representativeness. While leadership development and turnover are issues facing all voluntary groups, these are particularly challenging in EFL contexts where a significant proportion of the membership may not be permanent residents. Korea TESOL (KOTESOL) is typical of one of the varieties of TESOL teacher associations where expatriates comprise the majority of members and leaders. This retrospective, descriptive, and document-based case study analyzed representativeness of leaders through the gender, nationality, workplace, and education of leaders and members across two decades, as well as the continuity (retention) and development of leaders across the organization's leadership ranks. Important considerations for diversity and representativeness include identification and role of stakeholders and members through demographic analysis, as well as organizational history and culture. No less important is enabling diversity and representation, which might be addressed through term limits, representatives from natural constituencies and interest groups, and awareness of the need for a broad-based leadership. This examination of Korea TESOL during the period 1997–2017 finds that while levels varied across time, substantive representation is in place, although numerous improvements can be made.

1 Introduction

With the recent celebrations of 50-year anniversaries by IATEFL and TESOL International, more organizations are looking to their histories. This chapter examines a 20-year case history of leader representativeness and development in Korea TESOL (KOTESOL), the national affiliate of TESOL International and an associate of IATEFL in the Republic of Korea (S. Korea). This retrospective, descriptive, and document-based case study may be helpful as other language teacher associations

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(LTAs) assess their own leadership teams. As Stewart and Miyahara (2016) observe, there is little research or clarity on LTAs: this chapter is intended to encourage organizations to look retrospectively and at their current leadership in preparation for future choices.

The terms *society*, *association*, and *organization* are often used interchangeably in language teacher groups. Similarly, distinctions between “professional,” “scholarly,” and “academic” to describe such groups are often argued by members themselves: we language specialists teach vocabulary, but can’t agree on our own terminology! LTAs dominated by K-12 classroom teachers may prefer “professional” whereas those with more university faculties often lean towards the latter terms. The various motivations and qualifications of language teachers, particularly expatriates in EFL settings, further complicate matters (Thorkelson, 2016). Here we will consider these terms to encompass those membership-based groups that offer an annual conference, scholarly and less-scholarly publications (journal, newsletter, etc.), and meetings outside of the annual conference, perhaps including regional or special interest gatherings. Defining leaders can be similarly problematic. In this chapter I examine the volunteer officers/managers elected or appointed to roles on the organization’s national council (the board of directors) and consider related experience in regional chapters or national committees as leadership preparation opportunities.

The stakeholder community in Korea is highly fractured, with some deep issues dividing the groups. For example, should English be a required language (or even an Official Language)? Do “native-speakers” provide value to the educational environment, or are they a drain of national resources? It would be difficult for any single organization to represent such divergent perspectives. This may partly explain why there are a dozen English language-teaching societies in South Korea claiming national scope, and numerous additional regional groups and narrower-focused research communities. Most include very few expatriate members and conduct the bulk of their activities using the Korean language and culture. KOTESOL, as a multicultural organization, stands apart in this regard, and sometimes struggles with differing perspectives on leadership across cultures.

KOTESOL was founded through a joining of two earlier organizations, the Association of English Teachers in Korea (AETK, established in 1981) and the Korea Association of Teachers of English (established 1989). Not a formal merger in the legal sense, the two predecessor organizations gradually wound down from a joint conference (October 24–25, 1992) into a new organization, with the first KOTESOL conference in 1993 (October 16–17). KOTESOL inherited TESOL International affiliation from AETK and became an IATEFL associate in 1996. Due to loss of records, little membership data was available to leaders in the spring of 1997 when I became involved in national-level activities, although it seems that most of the leaders in the two predecessor groups were expatriates. The founding constitution of the KOTESOL organization, however, specified that there would be Korean leadership at the highest levels in the new unified organization.

Korea TESOL is a multi-tiered organization: as of January 2018, there are 9 regional chapters and approximately 600 members. Nearly 20% of these members reside outside of Korea (international members not included in regional chapters).

Membership is nation-wide; regional chapters receive half of the membership dues from those residing in their area and retain considerable autonomy in administration and spending authority. Special Interest Groups (SIGs) are thematic and national in scope (although some have local branches), relying on grants from the KOTESOL national council. Additionally, there are national committees in KOTESOL, such as International Conference, Publications, Elections, and Publicity, along with Membership, Research, International Outreach, and Technologies, all of which function under department-style budgets of the national organization. Chairs (elected or appointed) of standing committees serve as voting members of the national council, as do the presidents from each regional chapter and the member-elected national executives. Ad hoc committee chairs are non-voting members: they, and SIG Facilitators, committee members, and chapter officers other than chapter presidents, are not included in this study.

This retrospective and descriptive document-based study begins from the officers elected at the autumn 1997 conference. Data has been compiled from archived membership and conference registries, past publications, personally-held records, and public (governmental) reports.

Do the demographics of the leadership reflect the general membership or a wider community? Such a research target leaves unanswered the question of whether they *should* do so: these “should” questions will be left for future scholars. This chapter focuses on KOTESOL national leaders and members, with occasional reference to the wider teaching community, considering various forms of representation (Guo & Musso, 2007) and length of service on the national council.

2 Literature Review

Research on leaders in teacher associations seems to be an unexplored field, with an “alarming paucity” of study on LTAs in general (Aubrey & Coombe, 2010). Few organizations even publicly recognize their long-past presidents! Even in the broader field of nonprofit membership associations, empirical research on governance is thin (Tschirhart, 2006), with few studies addressing the representational aspects of an organization (Guo & Musso, 2007) and board diversity (Gazley, Chang, & Bingham, 2010). Studies have well-established the benefits of both passive and active representation (Mosher, 1968; Vinopal, 2018) in service organizations. On the other hand, little has been done in describing membership identity in an LTA (Motteram, 2016), which would have much to do with representation. This section therefore briefly reviews some of the major areas of contention when considering leaders and representation in LTAs, as well as the distinctions in various types of groups.

Geography plays a part. Kachru’s (1985) distinctions between inner and expanding circles may be helpful as we analyze types of LTAs. Within the “native English-speaking” inner circle, LTAs may be composed of teachers from three distinct fields. Those teaching English to native-speakers of English students are engaged in L1 English teaching. The other two types may be classified as L2 instructors: those

teaching English to speakers of other languages (ESL or TESOL); and those teaching a foreign or second language to local residents (e.g., teaching the Japanese language in Canada). LTAs in the inner circle may be dedicated exclusively to one of these three fields, or inclusive of two or more types of language teaching. In expanding circle lands such as Korea, however, where English is clearly a foreign language, there is typically a sharp demarcation between organizations concerned with L1 and L2 teaching (though the Japan Association for Language Teaching is a notable exception).

The roles of expatriate teachers (non-locals) also can affect LTAs. In Korea, as in many expanding-circle lands, a significant number of foreign teachers are employed. Some of these teachers acquire permanent residence, but most are limited to an employment-based visa. Some have no qualification beyond a passport from a “native-speaker country.” In inner circle countries, the so-called non-native English-speaking teachers of English (NNESTs) may face similar challenges, perhaps feeling ‘invisible’ (Kamhi-Stein, 2016, p. 180) although they hold advanced degrees in language studies. In either case, how well are these non-local, mostly non-permanent teachers represented in the organization and its leadership? Does, as Guo and Marietta (2015) imply, popular election transmit the values of the full membership? Or only a majority? Kamhi-Stein (2016) points out that no NNEST had been elected to TESOL International’s board prior to the creation of the NNEST Caucus. Homogeneous LTAs in L1 settings may face fewer questions of representativeness, although Michels’ famous iron law of oligarchy (trans. 1915) suggests that elites will tend to become self-serving regardless of those they claim to lead/serve. KOTESOL provides a particularly heterogeneous context to analyze in this respect.

The (s)election of leaders in a membership association is an important component in their representativeness. Houle (1997) notes that members of a board of directors (leadership council) are chosen in four ways: invited by current leaders; appointed by an outside authority; elected by the general public; or selected by the membership of the association, although other forms and mixtures of these are possible. In Korea, for example, invitation, appointment, and selection by members (vote) are used in various LTAs, although appointment is more often merely an affirmation by a relevant government authority of a choice made internally. We may also consider separately the question of at-large versus constituent-based voting for various leadership roles. Does popular vote lead to representation?

Guo and Musso (2007) offer five forms of representation by leaders for constituents of an organization: substantive (acting for as a trustee, or as a delegate), symbolic (stand for, trusted by), formal (elected by), descriptive (mirrors the relevant aspects), and participatory (communicating directly with constituents). When the leadership of an organization is descriptive of the served community, the organization is more likely to advocate for the needs of those represented (Kim & Mason, 2017). A more diverse membership within an LTA calls for a more diverse group of representative leaders.

Assessing diversity in leadership can be challenging, as there are a number of measures that may be included, such as age, sex, location of residence, important elements in the constituency (that part of the general public concerned with the work

being done by the institution), important elements in the clientele, other elements in the organizational system (e.g., staff), special capacities needed, and unwritten categories (e.g., interpersonal skills) (Houle, 1997). Such elements (or sectors) in language teaching could include scholars, language teachers, linguists, and language teaching educators who are tenure/track faculty and adjuncts in colleges, teachers in primary/secondary schools and private language schools (PLS), part-time, retired and prospective teachers, para-professionals, and school administrators, all of which may be expatriates or locals, native-speakers or non-native speakers. Additional stakeholders include students and their families, current and future employers of language learners, funding sources, booksellers and TESOL training institutions, and even society-at-large (neighbors, future customers of current students, etc.). Furthermore, the leadership board should reflect not only the demographics of the organization and the community it serves, but also incorporate a wider diversity in life experiences and professional backgrounds, e.g., law, accounting, government (PMA Consulting, n.d.). Ultimately, regardless of who elected/appointed them, or their natural constituencies, leaders have a legal primary duty to the organization (Overto & Frey, 2002).

Another measure which may be related to diversity of leaders is retention or turn-over. There are those who argue for frequent rotation in the leadership, while others favor longer experience. Houle (1997) and others advocate a medium-length term of office, long enough to provide continuity of policy and practice but short enough to secure freshness of viewpoint, accomplished through definiteness in the term of appointment and limitation on the number of consecutive terms that may be served. Term limits for board members have been adopted in more than 70% of US nonprofits (BoardSource, 2010) but it seems this practice has not been adopted in LTAs in the United States or globally. While IATEFL and TESOL International limit term of service on the board, survey results of 56 other LTAs across six continents indicated that over 78% do not limit board service, although there may be term limits for specific offices (personal communications, December 2017).

Leadership development is the final key theme in this study. Day (2001) observes distinctions between leader development and leadership development, but in both cases we may take the approach that leaders and their organizations grow skills through “leadership in practice”—opportunities to lead, through developing social capital, not under an “outdated notion” for training that pulls trainees out from the network they will lead (p. 586). Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as LTAs provide many opportunities to practice decision-making and social leadership at varying levels within the organization. The experiences of leadership may transfer between organizations, though the social networks will not.

Unlike in major corporate boards, in the volunteer-based nonprofits environment most leaders wear many hats (Overto & Frey, 2002), functioning as a combination of directors, management and staff, or “doers” as well as “deciders.” Similar to guidance in BoardSource (2015), Nobre (2011) calls for succession plans and active recruitment of future leaders in TAs, along with mentoring and support. LTAs need to include on the board not only those who can speak for various sectors and consider

important policy and management issues, but also perform critical tasks for the organization (Underhill, 2006).

3 Methodology

This retrospective document-based study focuses on four periods in the past 20 years. The 12-month council term began in mid-October of the prior year for the terms identified here as 1998, 2004, 2010, and 2017. As Murray (2012) observes, document study has an impressive history in sociological research as well as present-day advocates, as it is compatible with both positivist and non-positivist research paradigms where the criteria of authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning are properly appraised.

It is important to recognize that these periods are merely snapshots that, in themselves, may not comprehensively reflect longer-term trends. Analysis of the complete 20-year period is difficult due to missing data and inconsistent reporting methods in the available documents, but where practical, brief mention of additional periods is made. For leadership development and retention, leadership rosters from only the latter ten-year period (2008–2017) are included.

Information on KOTESOL leaders was taken from the organization's national newsmagazine, the official website, and chapter records as held by past chapter officers (only for the years 2014–2016). These were compiled and confirmed with various long-term or old-time leaders of KOTESOL. Archives from the official membership databases provide numbers of members, and also allow for examination of trends in various demographic categories. However, it is important to note the limitations of the membership data: information collected in the membership process varied over time and most demographic details were not required in the membership application. Some details were based on name trends (e.g., given-name as an indicator of Korean nationality and gender, although these identifications are imperfect) and personal knowledge of individual members. Employment types were classified based on conference badges or mailing address where members did not include this in their profile; nevertheless, employment data exists for only about half of the domestic members. This study is limited to members residing in South Korea.

Leadership roles in KOTESOL were identified as those serving on the national council under one of three fields:

- (1) elected national executives (president, 1st and 2nd vice presidents, treasurer, secretary, and immediate past president) and elected national committee chairs (nominations, conference chair and co-chair), elected by the general membership;
- (2) appointed national committee chairs, nominated and approved by the national council; and
- (3) chapter presidents, directly elected by their chapter members and serving as their representatives on the national council.

In the earlier years of KOTESOL the council sometimes included appointed staff as voting members: journal editor, commercial liaison, and similar, those too are included in this study. Data came from the leadership rosters for spring/summer in each of the periods under examination, as change of office for national and non-national offices generally takes place at or after the international conference in October, with appointed committee chairs often not placed until the annual Leadership Retreat in December. The change of school year creates some turnover in January–February, thus the March–July period provides the most accurate roster of active leaders for the year.

External datasets were also incorporated. Summary totals of E2 (conversation teacher) visas are available on an annual basis, but it is unclear how well this represents the expatriate teaching community, as various other visas are available (ethnic Korean, university professor, permanent resident). For Korean nationals, there are no broad-based statistics for English teachers available. Korea's immigration law limits E2 visas to "native-speaker" passport holders from the following countries: the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa.

4 Results

As noted above, the four council years under examination are snapshots of key times in the history of KOTESOL. The expatriate teaching community in Korea, and Korea TESOL membership, was deeply impacted during the Asian economic crisis (1998–2001). Many experienced expatriate teachers, perhaps nearly half of all those employed in October 1997, had left the country by January of 1999 due to the devaluation of the Korean currency (the total number of teacher visas issued fell by 1/3, with a shift from experienced teachers to inexperienced). KOTESOL membership fell from roughly 800 in December 1997 to less than 300 18 months later. The association suffered major disruptions in leadership due to these economic factors and some personal and interpersonal issues. There were similar interpersonal issues on the council 2010–2012 along with a database transition period.

Results are divided into five sections: gender balance, nationalities, workplace, education, and continuity (retention) and development of leaders.

4.1 *Gender Balance*

Gender for all members was identified through analysis of given names. Where the gender is non-specific (e.g., Chris) and the individual is unknown to the researcher, this name has been marked unknown and removed from gender calculations. Table 1 displays the percentage of females for the following categories across the 4 periods:

Table 1 Females on council, the members, and E2 visas, select periods

	1998 (%)	2004 (%)	2010 (%)	2017 (%)
Council	26.3	34.6	33.3	25.0
Members	47.7	45.8	46.2	46.1
E2 visas	39.5	35.8	41.9	49.1

Note Visa data from Korea Immigration Service (1997, 2004, 2010, 2017)

- Members of the KOTESOL national council (the Council).
- Members of KOTESOL.
- E2 (conversation teacher) visas in use as of end of December.

Over the full 20 years of this study (including years not presented in Table 1), the highest female participation rates on the national council have been in 2006 (45.8%) and 2009 (43.5%), while the lowest rates have been in 2001 and 2002 (20.0%). The percentage of women members, on the other hand, has remained nearly constant across all periods.

4.2 Nationalities

Nationalities data has been collected and analyzed in a two-part manner: expatriates versus Korean nationals for the four periods under investigation (Table 2), and country of origin for expatriates (Table 3). Claimed nationality (passport) data for the general membership (members residing in Korea) is only available during the last two periods, and only from those members who provide such data, although Korean nationality can be roughly determined through given names and personal knowledge of many of the members. Visa figures are from December of the prior year, except for 2017 (November data).

4.3 Workplace

Workplace information as presented in Table 4 is derived from members' self-identification, mailing addresses, and conference badge data. The local term for a private language school (PLS) is *hagwon*.

Table 2 Korean participation on council and membership, select periods

	1998 (%)	2004 (%)	2010 (%)	2017 (%)
Council	47.4	34.6	11.1	0.0
Members	35.0	35.5	25.4	21.4

Table 3 Nationalities of domestic resident expatriates on council, membership, and E2 visas, select periods

	1998			2004		
	Members	Council (%)	E2 visa	Members	Council (%)	E2 visa
USA	n/a	80.0	50.6%	n/a	50.0	30.8%
Canada	n/a	0.0	41.8%	n/a	37.5	40.2%
UK	n/a	10.0	3.8%	n/a	6.3	8.4%
Ireland	n/a	10.0	0.4%	n/a	0.0	2.6%
Australia	n/a	0.0	1.8%	n/a	6.3	6.6%
N. Zealand	n/a	0.0	1.1%	n/a	0.0	8.1%
S. Africa	n/a	0.0	0.7%	n/a	0.0	3.4%
Philippines	n/a	0.0	^a	n/a	0.0	^a
Other	n/a	0.0	^a	n/a	0.0	^a
	2010			2017		
	Members (%)	Council (%)	E2 visa	Members (%)	Council (%)	E2 visa
USA	52.1	37.5	54.7%	58.8	50.0	55.2%
Canada	28.6	33.3	22.4%	21.0	30.0	16.3%
UK	5.4	4.2	9.5%	7.8	0.0	12.0%
Ireland	0.7	0.0	2.0%	0.8	5.0	2.3%
Australia	4.2	8.3	2.5%	2.5	0.0	2.1%
N. Zealand	3.2	16.7	2.9%	1.7	10.0	1.9%
S. Africa	2.2	0.0	5.9%	3.4	0.0	10.1%
Philippines	3.2	0.0	^a	2.5	5.0	^a
Other	0.5	0.0	^a	1.4	0.0	^a

Notes Dual-nationals are classified according to passport for Korean visa. Visa data from Korea Immigration Service (1997, 2004, 2010, 2017)

^aEnglish teacher E2 visas are not available to those not citizens of the seven identified countries

4.4 Education

Educational attainment and licensure are very incomplete within the KOTESOL database. Anecdotal data from TESOL training providers at KOTESOL conferences indicates attendees are more educated in this field than in the past. This aligns with higher standards for preferred teaching positions and a decline in the number of lower-tiered teaching slots for expatriates in South Korea.

The 2017 national council members were asked their educational attainments through personal correspondence. From these 20 council members, their highest qualifications are: BA or less 3 (15%); BA+Cert 2 (10%); MA (unrelated)+Cert 1 (5%); MATESOL/related 12 (60%); Doctorate 2 (10%). Additionally, seven (35%) have held teaching licensure in their home state. Incomplete data for prior council

Table 4 Workplace for Council and the Membership (Korea-based members only), select periods

	1998		2004	
	Council (%)	Members (%)	Council (%)	Members (%)
University	57.9	53.2	69.2	61.6
<i>Hagwon</i> (PLS)	21.1	15.5	7.7	21.0
Schools (grades 1–12)	10.5	23.1	11.5	16.1
Other	5.3	8.3	11.5	1.3
Overseas	5.3		0.0	
	2010		2017	
	Council (%)	Members (%)	Council (%)	Members (%)
University	85.2	59.4	70.0	62.0
<i>Hagwon</i> (PLS)	0.0	12.9	0.0	10.3
Schools (grades 1–12)	3.7	21.9	10.0	25.7
Other	7.4	5.8	15.0	2.1
Overseas	0.0		5.0	

Note The Journal editor in 1998 was an overseas member, in that time the Journal editor was considered a member of the national council

years suggests that the number of MATESOL/similar degree-holders on the council has steadily risen, I’ve seen many doing distance-studies.

Table 5 shows that the number and ratio of doctorate-holders on the national council have declined significantly.

4.5 Continuity (Retention) and Development of Leaders

Across twenty years, the number and titles of council members varied from 18–30, including 5–11 regional chapter presidents. While the number of directly-elected national executives has remained unchanged, appointive committees and the chair (who serves on the national council) have come and gone (and in some cases, returned). In many years a few (1–3) individuals held two or three council positions (they are limited to a single vote, however, and are counted in this study only once).

Table 5 Doctorates on the council—select periods

	1998	2004	2010	2017
Doctorates	6	10	7	2
Council (indiv)	19	26	28	20
Ratio	31.5%	38.5%	25.0%	10.0%

There has been a total of 467 years of service from 179 individuals serving on the national council. The most frequent council career, however, is just one year (46.4% of individuals served on the council just one year), and the median length of service is two years (21.2% of individuals). Long-term service is very prominent, with 14% of the individuals listed serving five or more years: this nudges the arithmetic mean for term of service to 2.61 years. Five individuals have served a combined 73 years, each 11 years or more. While the president and immediate past president roles were each two-year terms of office from 2009 to 2017 under the Bylaws of that time, only one of the five longest-term council members has been president/past-president (4-year total term).

In terms of retention and an “oligarchy,” it is fair to note that there were two major shake-ups on the KOTESOL council, one through a highly contested election with competing candidate slates, and one era of resignations due to dissatisfaction with communication and appointments from an “outsider” president. In each case, within a few years many of the “old-timers” returned to revitalize a broken administration, alongside some “fresh blood” who had no strong ties to either faction.

For a close examination on retention, only recent national executives and nationally-elected committee chairs (president, 1st and 2nd vice presidents, secretary, treasurer, immediate past president, conference chair, conference co-chair, and nominations and elections chair) are included, considering all the positions they have held across the full 20 years of history available.

The three most recently completed terms, 2014–2015, 2015–2016, and 2016–2017 provide a list of 14 individuals for developmental review. Three of them are among the five longest-serving board members during the 20 years of recorded history. One has completed a two-year term as national president with prior time as a national 1st vice president and chapter president, followed by national past-presidency, another has served in nearly every office in the organization and was elected national president for a one-year term starting October 2017. The third served as national president nine years earlier, and has since served in a number of roles, including five years as a subordinate officer in a chapter, 3 years as national treasurer, chapter president, and conference chair. He also served in a variety of “worker-bee” roles on the conference committees for many years.

Three others have served eight years on the council, one with four years as national president/past president, the other two with several years as national vice president. All have been chapter presidents; the two women are also active on the conference committee. All three also served in subordinate chapter roles earlier.

The 2015–2017 national president has completed her two-year term, which was preceded by one year as national 1st vice president and as national membership committee chair (a role she retained as president), and served as a chapter treasurer as well, a total of five years in formal office in national or sub-national office. She has also been active each year with the conference management team in a senior/non-executive role and was recently elected a chapter president.

Two of the three with the shortest recent terms at national council have had no identified leadership role with KOTESOL outside the national council (hence, no development within the organization, which is not to say they did not have leadership

opportunities elsewhere). The third, serving as conference chair and co-chair, has more than ten years' experience on the conference, plus a very short term as a subordinate officer in a chapter.

The remaining four would be considered mid-length terms of service on the council within this group, but all have additionally served 3–6 years on the conference committee during the past ten years. One also served two years as national president in the first years of this 20-year survey, and had been active in conference management prior to that time. The last three individuals demonstrate a “development” approach: elected as a chapter president, and prior service as an appointed national committee chair and as chapter subordinate officer before coming to executive service on the national council.

5 Discussion

Whether the leadership in KOTESOL over the years has reflected the membership, the wider ELT community in Korea, and the stakeholders in English language learning is certainly subject to interpretation. Little data is available concerning the gender of Korean teachers of English. Official statistics indicate that 48% of university English professors are female (E-People petition to Korean Ministry of Education, Sept. 22, 2017), whereas, not specific to English teaching, 69% of middle school teachers and 51% of high school teachers in Korea are women (Korean Educational Development Institute, 2016), a significant increase from two decades ago. We might suppose that more English teachers are women (versus math or science), but that data is not available. In another major Korea-based English language teachers' association, 55.7% of members are female (analysis of 2016 membership roster of PKETA).

North Americans continue to be the largest sector of KOTESOL members, leaders, and E2 recipients. Over the past decade, the numbers of those from other countries have climbed in E2 visas and membership. One important additional group not found in E2 visa data are those here on spousal visas. Many from the Philippines have married Koreans, are engaged in teaching, and are now joining KOTESOL. The E1 (professor) visa is also not limited to the seven identified “native speaker” countries, and a number of members hold that status, including one Filipino currently serving on the council as a chapter president.

Unlike the other data sources, workplace information is becoming less available. The newer KOTESOL online data system does not require workplace information, and nearly 40% of current members do not provide this data. A concern, however, is the obviously decreasing numbers of members teaching in private language schools (known in Korea as *hagwons*), both in general membership and on the national council. Impressionistic data suggest that most of the current Korean members in KOTESOL are teaching in *hagwons* with only a local Bachelor's degree (perhaps not in English or education). Educational attainment is a new addition to the membership profile, so this information is also lacking.

The statistics on council service indicate a significant degree of “fresh blood” on the council along with retention of the most experienced, however turnover is very high among the first-years (nearly 50%), and there is a smaller number of mid-length executives across the most recent three years (3 of 14). This pattern suggests that the organization could face an “experience cliff” with a sudden rapid fall in organizational knowledge and skills if more executives are not developed and retained.

6 Conclusion

It would be unfair to strictly define “leadership” by office: there are many active leaders and “doers” in any organization who do not hold formal office, just as some holding office fail to lead or perform the expected duties. From the available data, we are limited to more narrow definitions in this work.

It should be noted that in this 20-year retrospective document-based study, the data within these documents were collected and collated differently across the years. However, as one who has been involved in various leadership roles, and thus received most of the documents at the time of its collection, I believe the data is sufficient to draw general conclusions on demographics of leaders and members. However, as secondary data, it is subject to the disadvantages associated with any secondary data.

The environment and nature of teaching and membership will vary widely from one LTA to another, but the questions raised, and the concerns that may follow, are equally valid for all membership-based organizations. Based on numerous conversations at various ELT conferences, I believe that KOTESOL is not unique in the challenges that have been faced, and the representativeness (or lack thereof) in its leadership. Many council members would claim that they have made their best efforts to engage in some degree of trusteeship for groups under-represented at the council (substantive representation) while also advocating for their own interest groups (chapters, ethnic groups, workplace peers; hence formal and descriptive representation). In my own tenure as president, recovering from a mass-exodus on the board, I was far less concerned with representativeness, more concerned about attracting “doers” who could work together and encourage future council participation. Yet we constantly considered the various sub-groups within our organization.

It is unclear whether a “glass escalator” (Williams, 1992) exists in LTA leadership. Are men promoted to leadership disproportionately? The KOTESOL national council might indicate not, whereas a study of KOTESOL and other LTA’s presidents over the past 20 years suggests perhaps there may be (Dickey, 2016). Many LTAs struggle to find volunteers willing to assume the tasks of elected and appointed offices. Most KOTESOL elections have included uncontested candidacies. If women, or any other identifiable subgroup within the organization, are reluctant to run for office, can this issue be identified and addressed? As Nobre (2011) observes, developing leaders requires proactive engagement with younger members so they may feel welcomed and can experience various aspects of the organization. To install a descriptively rep-

representative leadership (Guo & Musso, 2007), the organization must identify potential leaders from each of the demographic segments of the organization.

The development of leaders can be a slow process across a number of years and organizations.

Expatriate-driven groups such as KOTESOL often see teachers come and go to other teaching lands, sometimes returning. Given the challenges in recruiting volunteer board members, it may be reasonable to allow board members to continue serving. Term limits for particular elected offices may reduce oligarchy effects, hence board limits should be viewed separately from term limits for particular offices.

Most LTAs probably need some long-term council members for institutional memory and cohesion, some mid-term for operational effectiveness, and some fresh blood for energy, new perspectives, grassroots connections, and democracy, as well as for grooming future executive leaders. On the other hand, occasional rotation off council may provide a wise middle ground, particularly where talented individuals stay involved at mid-tier or lower levels (“staying in touch with the base”).

Academic representation may be less of a concern. It seems reasonable that an educational organization would wish their leadership to be well educated, to be leaders in the academic endeavor. Alternatively, it is also useful for the council to have members who are aware of the employment and classroom challenges faced by those teaching with lower levels of recognized academic achievement. It could well be argued that as an organization of educational professionals, it simply makes sense that most of the leaders be among the best educated. It would seem unwise for novices to be advising government’s educational policies, managing scholarly publications, and coordinating academic conferences.

KOTESOL seemed to balance many of these different parameters well on the most recent council. Unfortunately, data on educational attainment for the general membership is not available for comparison. Similarly, years of experience in teaching, in TESOL, and in teaching in Korea would be useful data, and the KOTESOL website has begun collecting this information. What we do know is that the council is university-heavy. (Most ELT positions in universities in Korea require a Master’s degree, not a Doctorate.)

Whether an organization should be proactive in addressing concerns for representativeness, and what steps might be taken in that direction, such as quotas (Mayne, 2015), are questions each organization must address for themselves. One obvious fact is that an LTA cannot force members, representing identifiable sub-groups, into leadership positions. KOTESOL’s twenty-year story indicates that formal and symbolic representation may be a reality in organizations where participatory representation is affected by geography and descriptive representation has not yet been realized, with substantive representation a reasonable mid-term goal.

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The Impact of LTA Volunteerism on Leadership and Management Development: An Autoethnographic Reflection



Mick King

Abstract Many language teacher association (LTA) volunteers bring leadership and management (L & M) skills from their careers and see such volunteerism as a means of developing these skills further. This has been my case although I have never taken the opportunity to fully reflect on how volunteering has impacted my professional life. This exploratory study, informed by autoethnographic and pragmatic principles, provides insights into the extent of this impact by reflecting on emergent themes emanating from the qualitative analysis of introspective reflective narratives. These themes are: knowledge; responsibility; skills and attributes; feedback; and finally, challenges. Findings provide subjective pointers to the elements of L & M development that are most likely to be positively impacted by LTA volunteerism, which may act as a stimulus for reflection for current volunteers or those considering volunteering for career advancement.

1 Introduction

The potential benefits of joining language teaching associations (LTAs) include attending professional development (PD) to develop beyond the confines of formal education, and this can in turn benefit various stakeholders (Mizell, 2010) such as students, institutions, and the local educational sector, as improved teaching quality should lead to improved learning. But what about those who become part of an LTA's organizational arm? Embedded within this decision should be the altruistic desire to give back to the profession (Haski-Leventhal, 2009). From a motivational perspective, this may meet needs of belongingness and self-esteem. However, it also provides the opportunity to self-actualize (Maslow, 1943; Turner, 2005); not necessarily in teaching practice but in leadership and management (L & M), which may benefit those who see their educational career outside the classroom. It was such a need that led to my eight-year involvement in a regional LTA. Although

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I had managed professionally by that time, my teaching post at that point meant I needed an outlet to practice and enhance my L & M skills. I have never really reflected on how this engagement has benefitted my L & M development, so this small-scale exploratory study aimed to provide reflective data on the L & M benefits of LTA involvement. Given the personal nature of the study, it was informed by autoethnographic principles of researching the self and “story as data” (McIlveen, 2008, p. 2). Care was taken to ensure that the presentation of subjective outcomes facilitated broader reflection opportunities for others on how LTA involvement might benefit their own professional career goals. While leadership and management are often defined by transformational and executive functions respectively (Turner, 2005), McCaffery (2004) argues that they are not mutually exclusive and suggests that middle management is where they are most evidently combined. As my volunteering and professional L & M experience has been in middle management, this study considers L & M as a unified construct. The chapter first provides a professional autobiography grounded in my L & M-related experiences to contextualise ensuing data analysis outcomes. After describing and justifying the methodological approach, a theoretically-underpinned, thematic reflection gives insights into the perceived benefits of such voluntary engagement. In conclusion, potential implications and recommendations from the reflection are shared and, given the embryonic nature of LTA research, areas for further study are proposed.

2 Professional Autobiography

My formative years up to Bachelor’s graduation were a time of intrinsic shyness presented extrinsically as quiet self-confidence. A hard working rather than brilliant student, I was seen as having the management traits of approachability (Maxwell, 2011) and reliability (Markman, 2012), so I assumed student rep duties from primary through tertiary. Part- and full-time work prior to tertiary studies meant I entered university with some life experience. However, my surge in self-confidence occurred during a teaching assistantship in Germany. In the following graduation year, I could feel the change within and sensed others saw it too.

Post-graduation I taught in language academies in Spain before running my own small language school for three years. Lacking managerial experience or training, this proved extremely stressful as financial struggles meant I had a heavy teaching load alongside trying to revive the business. One positive skill developed from this time was my first experience of training, which involved preparing oral examiners for an international organization. I next taught business communication in a Dutch service management university. Although L & M duties were limited to mentoring international students, I became a content tutor, which required me to study L & M theory. This solid knowledge base served me well in ensuing posts in establishing expert power (Griffin, 2008): that is, the use of knowledge to assist in decision-making and gaining respect from others.

After three years, the university seconded me to their branch campus in the Arabian Gulf. Armed with L & M theory, I was soon asked to assume departmental leadership roles. The pioneering, small scale nature of the campus meant I became involved in strategic affairs, marketing activities, running committees, and analysing quality assurance. In this eight-year period I also lectured management and oversaw major curriculum development projects. Finally, I completed an educational management in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) M.Sc., thereby formalizing my knowledge base academically and reinforcing my expert power potential.

To pursue doctoral studies, I returned to instructional posts in a neighbouring country at a college, and later at a university. The latter included lecturing educational management and training teachers. As I had not held a leadership position for seven years, I became involved in a regional LTA to fill that void. I combined studies with my LTA involvement to start publishing papers and presenting at conferences, and eventually assumed more senior LTA roles. After seven years, I returned to a leadership function at work but twelve months later, on securing my doctorate, I chose to move countries again back to a teaching post. Moving also meant relinquishing my LTA position, but after one year I again assumed a departmental leadership role with my new employer.

This personal history provides context in relation to later reflective analysis. But first the research methodology on which reflective outcomes were reached will be explained.

3 Methodology

The research framework was driven paradigmatically by interpretivism as it strove to make sense of realities by making meaning from data analysis (Newby, 2010). Its approach, therefore, was exploratory (Boudah, 2011) and informed by both autoethnography and pragmatism. The former was related to the subjective nature of analysis (Chang, 2008). The latter focused on practical methodological choices to achieve the aims of the study (Teddlie & Tashakkori as cited in Punch, 2009), and recognized that research is rarely free of preconceived notions, as researchers carry both implicit and explicit interpretations via the filter of existing knowledge (Burton, Brundrett, & Jones, 2008). My own research preferences inclined me towards an analytical, rather than evocative reporting approach (Anderson in McIlveen, 2008), which “objectifies the story” (McIlveen, 2008, p. 14) without impeding “the ultimate goal of cultural understanding underlying autobiographical experiences” (Chang, 2008, p. 49).

Within the parameters of this research framework, a multi-method sequential approach was employed (Punch, 2009), wherein documentary analysis preceded and informed introspective reflective recordings. First, subject lines of LTA-related sent emails ($n = 1135$) and document titles ($n = 357$) were scanned. These data were converted into two conceptual activity mind maps: one covered my L & M career

while the other focused on my LTA tenure. The former was structured chronologically and informed my professional autobiography and my changing mindset in relation to L & M. The latter was LTA activity-based. Both guided the structure of the ensuing reflective recordings. These were conducted according to the mind map categories and transcribed, first using voice to text software and then editing during playback (raw data transcription = 14,953 words). Data were initially (multiple) coded, using a priori and then a posteriori coding ($n = 236$). The a priori codes were guided by my L & M knowledge base (Newby, 2010), with the a posteriori codes emanating from data analysis. This led to the formulation of 12 provisional categories. A second round of analysis led to the subsuming of codes and categories to produce a final total of five themes for theoretical underpinning and reporting.

Major ethical considerations were ensuring that the research framework was compatible with the nature and aims of the study, which included creating trustworthiness by declaring biases (Holliday, 2002) arising from my own L & M background. In addition, care was taken not to neglect the confidentiality of other players in the analyzed history (Chang, 2008). This limited what could be reported—especially when referring to interpersonal challenges faced while volunteering. Another limitation was the small scale of the study. However, sufficient data were analyzed to provide a series of recommendations to others who may consider LTA volunteerism as a stepping stone in L & M development, as well as those who, like I, had never had the opportunity to reflect on the benefits of involvement on their concurrent and ensuing career.

4 Thematic Reflection

This personal reflection on how L & M development in an LTA benefitted my professional career addresses the following themes: knowledge; responsibility; skills and attributes; feedback; and finally, overcoming challenges. In each, the role of pre-LTA knowledge and experience is also considered.

4.1 Knowledge

Knowing your field is key to performing well and gaining respect (Griffin, 2008). My ten years' L & M experience prior to joining the LTA aided me in this regard. Coupled with procedural experience was the declarative knowledge (Anderson, 1982) I gained via formal degrees and background reading when tutoring and teaching management courses both prior to and during my time with the LTA. This knowledge and experience formed a powerful tool in guiding my volunteerism and was perhaps most tangibly apparent in process design as part of a plan, organize, lead, control (POLC) approach (White, Hockley, Laughner, & van der Horst Jansen, 2008) which I

implemented when first running a special interest group (SIG) and then coordinating SIGs nationwide.

Prior to joining the LTA, formal PD such as training and attending workshops (Jones & Dexter, 2014) was something I had engaged in sparingly, but this changed dramatically as I visited, contributed to and finally organized events. During that time, I presented widely both within the association and outside it, which improved my oral communication skills and, indeed, my self-confidence, as presenting to peers can often be more daunting than teaching. Another element of professional knowledge afforded me by the LTA was the opportunity to review conference proposals and association journal submissions as well as publish my work. These new academic skills undoubtedly aided me in building my research profile, which is so crucial when assuming educational management positions in one's career (Johnson, 2011).

Knowledge acquisition is not limited to study and dissemination, however. Kempster (2009) suggests that much can be learned on how to manage and lead by observing others. In my professional career I have observed and evaluated both good and bad practice according to my knowledge, experience and beliefs. LTA involvement allowed me to do the same with established leaders in the association and with global TESOL leaders in international conferences. In most cases, what struck me was their combination of hard work, dedication and humility (Daft, 2014). These are attributes I identify with and it was refreshing to see that elevated status was not aligned with any form of self-importance.

Summing up, knowledge has been the main foundation for ensuing benefits. As I reflect on the knowledge gained from study, practice and observation, I sense that it has positioned me to be a viable option when responsibility is assigned, be that in professional or volunteering contexts.

4.2 Responsibility

While relevant declarative knowledge may be one prerequisite to assume responsibility, in my experience, senior managers like to have practical evidence by employing a form of cognitive apprenticeship model (Dennen & Burner, 2008) where they can coach and then observe one's ability to complete tasks effectively. Pre-LTA, I had already run committees, managed people, partaken in strategic decisions, and managed projects such as the development of a customized university foundation semester program, and after joining the LTA, I also redesigned an educational management module from my Master's program. In each case, I sense that I was trusted to conduct this work as my managers had concrete evidence of my ability. Similarly, I served an 'apprenticeship' in the LTA via presenting and submitting research internally alongside minor committee work and the chairing of a SIG before I was entrusted with my two major contributions to the organization: coordinating SIGs nationwide and running special sessions at the annual international conference. In my professional autobiography I alluded to my reliability and I feel this attribute allowed me to conduct both tasks effectively. Chughtai and Buckley (2008) posit

that trust must also be from the bottom up and I always sensed that this was also present from SIG and special sessions collaborators who I coordinated.

Key to coordinating SIGs was the implementation and monitoring of processes and procedures, which increased task completion rates per SIG. Conference special sessions also needed smooth processes to communicate with speakers and committee members while planning and running sessions. I felt that this fed back positively into my final year foundation program coordination at work, where I worked on enhancing procedures and processes, and I continue to prioritize this in my current post. Although I believe I am a ‘people person’, my LTA experience has validated the need to ensure that processes must be in place (White et al., 2008).

4.3 Skills and Attributes

Assuming responsibility in voluntary organizations is increasingly valued by employers who are looking to recruit leaders (Deloitte, 2016; Moore & Pound, 2011) and it will undoubtedly require certain skills and attributes which can be enhanced with practice. From my experiences, alongside learnable skills, key attributes are having both self-belief and ethical principles (Howell & Costley, 2006) while remaining humble and service-oriented (Robert K. Greenleaf Center, 2016; Senge, 2006). This combination has driven me to ensure that I conduct and complete tasks ethically and effectively. While leading others in these tasks, I apply an internal customer approach (White et al., 2008), where subordinates are seen as your first customers. Pre-LTA, this was my approach managing department faculty, and I applied it to my main LTA roles as well. In essence, by respecting and enabling volunteers, regular association members will in turn be satisfied. The internal customer approach was particularly relevant given that volunteers are not employees so often needed a transactional leadership style (Turner, 2005) of coaching and coaxing to complete tasks. Brewster and Cerdin (2018) see this as a “psychological contract” (p. 9) where you fall back on your referent power, or charismatic leadership skills, to inspire or persuade others to complete tasks as you lack the legitimate and coercive power of a paid management position (Griffin, 2008). I feel that my LTA experience in this regard served me well when teaching my work colleagues on a postgraduate certificate in education, which many felt was an unnecessary diversion from lecturing. I had to balance ensuring learning took place by using charisma and empathizing with their personal needs.

Another attribute for which the LTA provided fertile developmental ground was the drive to innovate. Major change projects pre-LTA had undoubtedly emboldened me to propose and implement new ideas. As an LTA is to an extent free of the shackles of bottom line economics, where stakeholders will often fear change (Hannagan, 2005), innovation was generally encouraged. My main outlet was in organizing conference special sessions. I developed discussion and debate sessions, chat show formats and TESOL quizzes, which added some product differentiation from the generic concurrent sessions. This has informed decision-making in my work where I feel I have more sensibility to the need to balance the aforementioned processes with

scope for proposing and encouraging new ideas to create buy-in (Senge, 2006) from my internal customers, thereby enhancing collegiality and a sense of ownership for innovations.

Linked to this, is the instilling of pride in others by supporting, empowering and trusting them to do tasks and showing appreciation for their efforts. In the cut and thrust of professional life one often forgets that gratitude can imbue solidarity and support (Jack Canfield, 2017). When assuming the SIGs co-ordinatorship, the SIGs were considered the ‘problem child’ of the organization. Therefore, my goal was not only to improve processes, but also revive their self-worth by showing appreciation. In my current post of department chair, I have again combined a dual focus on process and positivity to raise quality and morale. Finally, I believe that one should also celebrate one’s own achievements. This is pertinent as an intrinsic motivational tool (Tamir & Mitchell, 2012) and as a counterbalance to stress that is not uncommon in L & M roles (McCaffery, 2004). I am proud of what I have achieved in my career and the LTA gave ample opportunity to further this emotion via formal certification and awards but also via verbal and written appreciation. Being endorsed for your efforts is an essential form of feedback.

4.4 Feedback

My LTA work resulted in a professional service award and during those years I also received a university teaching fellowship PD grant, based partially on my professional association work. While such tangible endorsements provide positive feedback on one’s contributions, it is perhaps the smaller but more frequent forms of feedback, be they explicit or implicit, that signal more clearly the level of one’s worth to organizations (Stibitz, 2015). Being given responsibility is, in itself, a form of positive feedback on your prior endeavors and aforementioned work, and automatically allows you to develop your own feedback skills as subordinates are looking for direction and, indeed, the aforementioned appreciation.

Ansmann et al. (2014) focus on the value of networking and this played a significant role in the opportunities afforded me within the LTA. I was originally asked to join a SIG as I had worked previously with its members. After taking on the chairing of the SIG, I was able to co-host events with other SIGs and regional Chapters. These LTA events gave me the chance to make acquaintance with fellow professionals and showcase my research. This in turn led to being asked to present at conferences abroad. Publishing within the organization led to targeted requests to submit book chapters by international publishing houses. Membership also helped me to connect with academics in my specific field of study, which opened doors for the sharing of ideas for doctoral studies (Johnson, 2011).

All these engagements were accompanied by one or a combination of written and verbal feedback from fellow volunteers and attendees at conferences and events. Of particular value was the feedback I received from a conference panel discussion I facilitated, where panellists were all current or former presidents of two major

international teaching organizations. I have also valued end of service feedback at work and appreciated the validation experienced a number of times when I have been asked to reconsider my resignation. Similarly, within the LTA, when I had to give up the SIGs coordinatorship due to moving countries, the email responses of SIG chairs expressing their regret was a heart-warming endorsement of my efforts.

All of this rather celebratory feedback shows respect and validation for both academic achievements as well as practical L & M applications. However, waiting for feedback may mean you are unaware of arising issues (Kouzes & Posner, 2014) so while in the LTA, I solicited regular feedback from above and below and continue to do so in my career. Such feedback can sometimes be challenging, and it is challenges to which I turn to end this thematic reflection.

5 Challenges

Challenges are unavoidable but can be equally rewarding learning opportunities in terms of L & M development. I like to be challenged but challenge can be stressful. For example, the challenge of running a failing school in Spain was my first experience of work-related stress and this surfaced on three more occasions in my career due to a dangerous cocktail of unrealistic expectations and heavy workload. My LTA work has helped alleviate these situations as I knew I could walk away if it became too much. As I enjoyed it so much, I did not want to leave so I ensured that my input was manageable. In recent years, I feel I have become more adept professionally at managing expectations and workload by focusing on what I can do rather than what I want to do (Balzac, 2014).

In the LTA, it was the first time that I managed remotely as SIGs volunteers were located nationwide so most communication was by email. Busch, Nash, and Bell (2011) suggest that such remote management requires a slightly different approach to imbue trust and remove the sense of isolation that the remote worker may feel. This experience has proved beneficial in my current post as I manage faculty across different shifts and campuses. A major adaptation for me was the realization that I was managing volunteers rather than employees. As finding suitable volunteers can be a challenge (Brewis, Hill, & Stevens, 2010) this makes the aligning of tasks to volunteer skill sets a further issue (Eisner, Grimm, Maynard, & Washburn, 2009). This experience has heightened my awareness of organizational fit (White et al., 2008) when recruiting new faculty in my current post.

As volunteers are not beholden to coercive power management styles (Griffin, 2008) and could also walk away at any time, this necessitated a permission leadership approach (Moore & Pound, 2011), which relied on the use of charisma to engage with SIG teams. I was operating in a communal culture, characterized by a sociability and solidarity communication model (Goffee & Jones in White et al., 2008). This was especially pertinent as many of my friends were volunteers in the LTA so the potential to damage relationships was always present. This meant that I avoided conflicts where possible. However, as conflicts form an uncomfortable part of L &

M at times, they needed to be faced. Therefore, where possible I tried to resolve them according to my principles, but at times I was prepared to use an accommodating conflict management style (McCaffery, 2004) to protect the communal spirit of the organization.

My personal approach to avoid conflict where possible did not mean that conflict was not present. Through discussions with senior members, I sensed that over time the organizational structure of the LTA had grown from an organic to a mechanistic one (White et al., 2008) where it was necessary to put more procedures in place. However, I felt that the new structure appeared to create factions and tribes that lobbied according to wants and needs often emanating from former positions of power which were in danger of being lost. Earlier I alluded to the L & M learning that can occur by observing others. In the LTA, observing this lobbying proved to be a steep learning curve in relation to how non-profit organizations can be highly politicized, and interacting within them requires a political leadership approach (Turner, 2005) where one has to weigh up one's own position of power in relation to others. I must temper this by saying that almost all leaders I volunteered with were models of dedication to the altruistic values of the LTA, but it was fascinating to see how conflicts arose based on various beliefs and motivations. I am not sure what I have taken from these experiences in my own career, but I feel it is a point of reflection for anyone thinking of volunteering. Altruism will drive the mood, but conflict will likely be present.

6 Conclusion

This study aimed to give insights into the impact of LTA volunteerism on L & M development. According to McCaffery (2004, p. 57), "effective leadership is as much contingent on *context* as it is on personal attributes and qualities". Reflective outcomes suggest that in my personal context, I have had the opportunity to adopt and adapt L & M skills between the voluntary and professional sector in my career. I used prior knowledge but also learned new knowledge which has served me in my professional development. Indeed, much applied learning occurred while taking on responsibility in the LTA environment. The skills and attributes that I had were developed further and the feedback received on my contributions served me in a number of ways. First, it provided an endorsement of what I was doing; second, it also made me internalise where I needed to adapt my approach; and finally, in conjunction with the learning that took place, it provided validation and evidence that I had developed, which has almost certainly benefitted me in practice as well as in the area of securing L & M positions both concurrent to and after my LTA involvement. Finally, outcomes showed that volunteer work is not free from challenges, but one can learn from them too.

Based on these outcomes, it appears that volunteering for an LTA can provide an outlet to develop both existing L & M skills and new ones. This will happen in an environment which, though similar to the workplace, also has key differences, such

as working with volunteers rather than paid employees. This will impact on how one manages and leads. Finally, LTA involvement can strengthen one's L & M profile, which can lead to improved opportunities in the workplace.

As the field of LTA research is embryonic, a study such as this, with its focused subjectivity, makes only a small contribution to the body of knowledge in relation to field-specific L & M development. Therefore, it is recommended that more research be conducted among the population to see the extent to which the results of this study are transferable. This research should ideally include participation from those without prior L & M experience to gauge development from a different baseline.

On a personal note, this study has been therapeutic in confirming for me the benefit of my involvement in relation to the promotions I received at work while volunteering; the securing of my current middle management post; and the realization that it has broadened my abilities to function in various environments. It is also worthy to note that even though an LTA can suffer from the same political machinations as large institutions, it always maintains that spirit of freedom and innovation and is, therefore, a great breeding ground for the implementation of projects and ideas. I am grateful for this and the other opportunities that the LTA provided me and recommend getting involved to anybody who has a desire to develop L & M skills in their personal or professional lives.

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Balancing Personal Responsibilities with Association Altruism: Three Professional Development Histories in LTAs



Kevin Knight, Septina Nur Iswanti (Nina Septina) and Tim Murphey

Abstract This chapter provides details of the auto-ethnographic narratives of three different TESOL professionals who have worked in language teachers' associations (LTAs) in different global contexts. Each of the authors has provided a personal story describing what they have contributed to LTAs as well as what they have gained from the experience. The first narrative focuses on Knight's leadership development experiences in TESOL International Association in the United States. In the second narrative, Murphey shares his experiences at LTAs in the United States, Europe, and Japan. In the third narrative, Nur Iswanti describes her experiences at LTAs in Indonesia and her involvement with a global teacher development institute online. The last part of the chapter provides 12 tips on how teachers can become involved in LTAs while balancing their own personal and professional commitments. The chapter concludes that LTAs can promote personal and professional growth because they provide members with access to local and global communities of practice; i.e. lifelong relationships which nurture their well-being.

1 Introduction

"Tell me about a time when you had to organize a project under tight time frames. How did it turn out?" (Career Center, University of California, San Diego, 2017). The interviewee may respond to such a question with the widely-used STAR or CAR response (Knight, 2016b):

The first step in a STAR/CAR response is to talk about a problem or a goal (i.e., Situation and Task in a STAR or Challenge in CAR). The next step is to talk about the Action you took independently to solve the problem or reach the goal. The third step is to share the

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impressive Results that your Action achieved. You can also reflect on what you learned from that experience and connect that experience to your future career goals.

Our auto-ethnographical responses to the following prompt: “Tell us about your activities in language teachers associations (LTAs)” are shared in the first three parts of this chapter: Knight’s narrative (Part 1), Murphey’s narrative (Part 2), and Iswanti’s narrative (Part 3). As you read our narratives, you might ask yourself how and why we are framing our responses. We can assure you that our motivational relevancies for writing our narratives include and reflect our gratitude and appreciation for the professional relationships and friendships that we have gained by being active in LTAs over the years. From another perspective, our narratives (which focus on specific challenges, actions, and results) establish credibility for the third part of the chapter in which we share some of the lessons that we have learned by being actively involved in LTAs. We conclude that LTAs can promote personal and professional growth because they provide members with access to local and global communities of practice. At the same time, we offer to LTA members the same advice that we might give to any ‘freshman’ (i.e., first-year undergraduate student or new employee in a company): Take advantage of the opportunities, make long-term relationships with good people, manage your time wisely, help others, and stay focused on achieving your personal and professional goals.

Most LTAs, as reported and analyzed by Lamb (2012), seem to position themselves as focusing on continuing professional development. Paran (2016), who summarizes the articles about LTAs in the recent *ELT Journal* special edition on LTAs, concludes that, “Understanding the challenges facing different LTAs and other membership associations in the twenty-first century through researching them and researching their members must be part of the continuous professional benefits that this will bring to their members” (p. 135). He also cautions that any one definition will not “encapsulate practices and conceptualizations elsewhere: Stewart and Miyahara (2016) discuss the way in which the concept of *gakkai* in Japan does not easily map on to the Western concept of an LTAs; Padwad (2016) discusses a particular view of charity that is prevalent in India... Thus... there may be differences in the way such organizations function.” We strongly agree with the need for more research about how LTAs operate and we also think we need narratives of how individuals derive benefits from LTAs. Not only do different LTAs function differently, participants may create their own affordances from their belonging in LTAs, something we think our auto-ethnographies highlight. Following Miyahara (2015, p. 17) “...in keeping with Dewey (1938) and the poststructuralists, learning is conceptualized as essentially a social and interactive activity” for learners and teachers. And our learnings and interactions create our identities.

2 Leadership Development in TESOL International Association

Kevin Knight

“I like to view leadership as a communication process consisting of two parts: (1) communicating to create a vision and (2) communicating to achieve a vision.” (Knight, 2013).

When I take the stance of Schön’s (1983) reflective practitioner, I see that TESOL International Association has been the place where I have been able to learn about and experience leadership. Nohria and Khurana (2010, p. 7) of Harvard Business School write the following about “leader development.”

- a. Leader development should be thought of in terms that emphasize leaders’ capacity for *thinking and doing* (which puts an emphasis on various competencies).
- b. Leader development should be thought of in terms that emphasize leaders’ capacity of *becoming* and *being* (which puts an emphasis on an evolving identity).

During the time that I was learning about and experiencing leadership in TESOL International Association, I was conducting semi-structured interviews with leaders for my doctoral research. I eventually conceptualized leadership as a communication process to create and achieve “visions” (Knight, 2013), and leadership development for me has involved “making real a vision in collaboration with others” (Knight, 2015, 2017, in press; Knight & Candlin, 2015).

2.1 ESP PowerPoint Presentation

My first TESOL International Association convention was in New York City in 2008. At that time, I was elected English in Occupational Settings (EOS) Representative of the English for Specific Purposes Interest Section (ESPIS), and the outgoing ESPIS chair asked me if I would like to volunteer to create a PowerPoint presentation about ESP. As a new face in the ESPIS, I thought that I should accept the offer. After the convention, I reached out to the ESPIS community for help, and three ESPIS veterans including the co-founder of the ESPIS became my co-authors (Knight, Lomperis, van Naerssen, & Westerfield, 2010). The ESP PowerPoint is currently accessible on the ESPIS webpage.

2.2 ESPIS Academic Session

After completing my term as EOS Rep., I was asked to run for ESPIS chair-elect. I accepted the nomination and was elected. As chair-elect, I had the responsibility to create the ESPIS academic session for the annual conference of TESOL International

Association. This involved recruiting speakers, and I again reached out to my TESOL colleagues for help. The academic session was a success.

2.3 *TESOL ESPIS Community Discussions 2011–2012*

As ESPIS chair, I launched the *TESOL ESPIS Community Discussions 2011–2012* (Knight, 2012). These threaded discussions were each one month in length and took advantage of a new platform launched by TESOL International Association. I needed to recruit discussion leaders, which included the immediate past chair, the chair-elect, and a former ESPIS chair with whom I led the second discussion. The fourth discussion was led by leaders of the ESPIS and the ICIS (Intercultural Communication Interest Section). These leaders were also the panelists in an ESPIS-ICIS intersection session that I helped to create for the TESOL International Association convention. The fifth discussion was led by leaders of the ESPIS and the ESP Special Interest Group (ESP-SIG) of IATEFL. The collaboration with the IATEFL ESP-SIG included a leader exchange sponsored by the British Council. All of these discussions and projects were “firsts” (i.e., milestones) in the history of the ESPIS and showed me how I could work together with others to create and achieve “visions” on a global basis.

2.4 *Additional Projects*

Some other projects come to mind. The first is an ESP webinar created and co-moderated by ESPIS leaders in Oregon (USA), Colorado (USA), and Japan respectively and hosted by TESOL International Association (Kertzner, Knight, & Swartley, 2012). I was recruited to be on the Governance Review Task Force (GRTF) appointed by the TESOL Board of Directors; i.e., through our research, meetings, presentations, and reports, we were part of the process of creating a vision. I also became a TESOL International Association blogger in the field of ESP and have more than 130 posts to date. As a blogger, I launched the *ESP Project Leader Profiles* which feature ESP project leaders, and so far, 45 profiles have been published (on the *TESOL Blog*) describing projects on six different continents. The *ESP Project Leader Profiles* are listed as a resource in TESOL’s ELT Leadership Management Certificate Program Online. (I was also able to obtain a Leadership Development Certificate (2017) and an ELT Leadership Management Certificate (2016) from TESOL International Association.) I was organizer and moderator of a TESOL-IATEFL online discussion about how ESP projects can create positive social change that was hosted by TESOL International Association (Knight, 2016a). In addition to the above, I held the position of ESPIS community manager, and I am currently editor of *ESP News* (the ESPIS newsletter). Finally, I volunteered to lead the ESPIS transition team as we became a

Community of Practice in the new organizational structure of TESOL International Association....another vision to create and achieve with others!

At Kanda University of International Studies in Chiba, Japan, I create and teach leadership related courses with a specific focus on professional communication, project-based learning, ESP, self-directed learning, leadership development, and leadership discourse research and analysis. (See <https://leadershipconnectionproject.wordpress.com/>) For this reason, my experiences in TESOL International Association have been immensely valuable.

3 Three Continents of LTAs

Tim Murphey

3.1 USA

My first involvement with an LTA came during my MA TESOL days at the University of Florida when my mentor Dr. Patricia Byrd asked me to write something up for one of the publications that she was involved with and then suddenly I became a member of the local committee for TESOL in Gainesville, North Florida and edited a local TESOL branch newsletter myself for a year or so. Having a mentor like Professor Byrd changed a lot of things for me. She made me think that my voice was valuable and warranted listening to and that I could have an impact through helping others have a voice. She was a big influence on my professional career and still is a lighthouse in darker moments.

3.2 Switzerland

I moved to Switzerland during my Ph.D. years (7 of them) where I became involved in the beginning of ETAS (English Teachers Association Switzerland). I was on the first board and organized our first two conferences in Neuchatel where I lived and was actually able to invite Patricia Byrd to one of them as a plenary speaker. It was exciting to be involved in starting something from scratch and our regular meetings with our guiding group were a joy. But by the end of my PhD I must admit I was nearing burnout with the 2nd convention, editing newsletters and doing lots of presentations. I then got an offer to work in Japan immediately after my 7 sweet Swiss years.

3.3 *Japan*

In Japan, I became involved with JALT and was a special interest group (SIG) newsletter editor for a while in the late 1990s. I realized that I was modeling Pat Byrd when I was mentoring my graduate students and other staff with their writing projects, getting them involved in LTAs. In the early 2000s, TESOL invited me to be on the “publications board” which afforded me the opportunity to edit a series of 4 books on professional development (Byrd & Nelson, 2003; Murphey, 2003; Egbert, 2004; Murphey & Sato, 2005). I was also included in a special research group called the China Initiative in which we published 4 volumes for teacher development specifically in China (Gu et al., 2007; Murphey & Chen, 2008).

3.4 *Planet Earth*

In 2006, I became the JALT conference chair (about 20 years after I had done the same thing in Switzerland), and invited Bonny Norton and Donald Freeman to be plenary speakers. At one point in my career I was a member of two associations in Europe (TESOL France, ETAS), three internationally (TESOL, AAAL, IATEFL), and two in Japan (JALT, JACET). In 2010, I was honored to be a plenary speaker at JALT and at ETAS in 2013. I have since reduced my participation a bit, although I am still a reader for several JALT publications and other journals, and I still love to go to conferences to meet old friends and reconnect. I always look forward to contributing more when I can. Helping others become what they desire to become is one of the most gratifying things a person can do. And all those people out there who have created and run these teaching associations are doing precious work that stimulates positive growth. I am very proud to have participated and hopefully helped the growth of our associations and the cultural capital that is continuing to expand. I look forward to more participation and collaboration.

4 Daring to Reach Out, Collaborate and Be in Love!

Septina Nur Iswanti (Nina Septina)

4.1 *First Conference*

My very first involvement with a language teaching association was when I attended the TEFLIN International Conference 2010 in Bandung, Indonesia. I never thought that this conference would turn out to be the opening door to more learning oppor-

tunities in my professional development journey. Since then my life as a teacher has changed to be more than just a teacher. Continuous professional development has become part of my commitment to continuously growing and learning.

4.2 *Expanding Communities*

At that conference, I started to widen my PLN (personal learning network). Of the people I met, some later became my mentors and we were involved in some research projects which were followed up by writing and publishing our research articles (Septina & Murphey, 2013; Bray & Iswanti, 2013; Palmer & Iswanti, 2013; Murphey & Iswanti, 2014; Iswanti & Murphey, 2014). These research papers were published by, among others, *The Language Teacher*, *The ETAS Journal*, *PeerSpectives*, and the *JALT Conference Proceedings*. I've learned a great deal from my mentors about researching, writing, and publishing and they have brought about positive changes in my learning. I have always been thankful for that. From these collaborations, I was also able to participate at subsequent TEFLIN International conferences in Indonesia (2011, 2012, 2013, 2015, & 2017). Additionally, some of my papers were also presented at the MELTA International conference in Malaysia (2012), and the JALT International Conference in Japan (2013, 2014). For me to be able to go abroad and to get papers published internationally are really big things that had never crossed my mind before. But now I see that they have come true for me with small steps: daring to go to a conference, daring to introduce myself, daring to tell someone I was interested in their research and their ways of thinking. From this I have become more aware of the opportunities available to someone who dares to take small acts.

4.3 *iTDi*

At each and every single conference I have attended, my PLN circle gets wider and wider. From my PLNs, I get connected with more people not only offline but also online on Facebook or on other social media. In 2012 I came across teachers from a language teaching institute called iTDi (International Teacher Development Institute—see <http://itdi.pro/>). iTDi is a global online teacher development institute that is owned and staffed by teachers whose mission is to provide quality professional development that is meaningful, accessible and affordable for all teachers. They share a vision of a vibrant global community of educators, helping one another to become better teachers. Suddenly they asked me to join in and asked me to become one of their mentors. I did not take the offer right away, I was not sure I had the capability to become one. But they convinced me otherwise and said they would support me by giving me access to learning more from their language teaching materials and courses. That wiped away my fear and I have become more optimistic and positive. Now, I have been involved in iTDi for over 5 years and so far I have been able to mentor

other teachers in a forum on their website, contribute some articles for publication on their blog (Septina, 2013, 2014), participate and present in their MOOC (massive online open course), represent iTDi at several language teaching conferences, take iTDi advanced teaching courses and encourage other teachers to do so.

At English First (EF) in Semarang, Indonesia, I teach a wide variety of programs and age groups and enjoy doing research and applying knowledge I've learned so far from my PLNs and from my involvement with different LTAs. I was appointed the 'Senior Teacher' and the 'Young Learner (YL) Specialist' for the school, and because of that I was also sent to attend several trainings from our Headquarters. With these roles, I was responsible for disseminating the training materials to my colleagues by giving them regular workshops.

And just recently this year, I was promoted to the Senior Teaching Manager or the Director of Studies (DOS) position that entails a much bigger responsibility to carefully manage and develop the academic team to ensure the academic quality and the development of the school as a unit. Now I do more teacher tutoring and work closely with them to achieve their goals and enjoy working alongside more diverse people from inside and outside my school in the fields I've never visited before, such as staff and student retention, customer satisfaction and etc. I learn a lot, make mistakes, and learn again and all is interesting.

I am grateful for the experiences I have had with different LTAs I am involved with and the people I grew up with, also my husband and my two elementary school age children for their never-ending support. I thrive and look forward to all the challenges to grow, to develop and to serve better.

All these have made me to meaningfully be in love with my work, to appreciate the good relationships with people around me and cherish the work and the fruitful collaborations with them.

5 The Good, the Bad, and the Lessons

In light of our narratives, we go beyond what was expressed therein to share in this section of our Chap. 12 lessons that we have learned from our experiences in LTAs. We enjoy being reflective practitioners and hope that our insights about LTAs are useful to you.

1. Be brave about taking on responsibilities in LTAs.

These are opportunities to really help others and the group to grow and develop. And help is needed in LTAs since they are usually only staffed by volunteers. In retrospect all of us believe that taking on the responsibilities may have been a lot of work at the time, but that "the responsibilities grew us up!"

2. Know how to say "no" in difficult times.

We have heard this from many people and we need to recognize when the times are turning difficult. We all feel that sometimes LTA work can complement and

add to your PhD research and projects, and other times it can be very distracting. Unfortunately, we usually only know if it is good or bad after we are in the middle of it.

3. Find the right teams.

Working together and forming teams with people you barely know is exciting and a growth experience. And when you join LTAs the training is for free and exhilarating. It is most often thrilling and positive but can sometimes be a dead-end. Learn to recognize those with potential and be willing to join adventures. But notice also if the end goals match your own.

4. Recognize the opportunity to lead and create.

We all understand that LTAs give people the opportunity to create their dreams. When you share with others what you want to create, you will find people who have similar dreams or who think yours are worth promoting. However, if you don't tell anyone, it is unlikely to happen. Share. Ask. Lead.

5. Reach out and collaborate.

We have found that it is important to work together with others to create and achieve goals. Do not try to do everything alone. Just telling others what you think they should do often does not work, you need to gain the support and trust from others over time. Build long-term relationships.

6. Help others to achieve their goals.

In order to gain the support of others to help you to achieve your goals, you need to help others to achieve their goals first. Over time, we have found that teams emerge, and it is through these teams that the work gets done to achieve goals.

7. Create local and global networks.

One reason to join an LTA is to create professional networks on local and global levels. Such networks will provide you with opportunities to achieve your career goals.

8. See the big picture.

In an LTA, it is easy to have a "silo" mentality where you only interact with members of your group. We have found that you grow much more when you understand the mission of your LTA, the decision-making processes, and the interests of stakeholders. As you take on leadership roles in an LTA, it is especially important to keep stakeholders informed of your activities; e.g., the board of directors.

9. Connect internally and externally.

In our own experiences, we have found that LTAs provide you with the opportunity to connect internally with members of different groups but also externally with members of different LTAs. It is easier than ever to make such connections due to the advances in communication technology.

10. Embrace change.

LTA's do not stay the same forever. As the needs of association-members change, the organizational structure and services offered by LTAs need to change as well. Be a positive part of that process of improving an LTA.

11. Recreate yourself.

LTAs provide you with opportunities that you may not have in your workplace. You are given the opportunity to learn and to acquire new skills. Take that opportunity to become what you want to be! Expand your identity!

12. Build, notice, and appreciate good relationships.

We conclude that LTAs can promote personal and professional growth because they provide us with access to local and global communities of practice. At the same time, we offer advice to LTA members that we might give to a freshman (i.e., first-year undergraduate student or new employee in a company): Take advantage of the opportunities, make long-term relationships with good people, manage your time wisely, help others, and stay focused on achieving your personal and professional goals. There will be ups and downs, just make sure you are helping others avoid the downs and make fond memories of those treasured times when visions, actions, and altruism unite. Finally, it's the individual relationships that we make with diverse people that we think matter most and are practically never mentioned on LTA's web pages on "benefits" that they offer. They mention lots of resources (publications, courses, books, journals, etc.) but they do not mention the joy of connecting with diverse people and sharing ideas, visions, and dreams that can change the world.

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