

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

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Choosing to become a teacher is a decision that holds great significance and carries profound responsibilities. It transcends the mere dissemination of knowledge and assumes the role of shaping young minds and futures, while also playing a pivotal role in the holistic development of individuals, communities, and society as a whole.

The decision to pursue a career in teaching necessitates the acquisition of a distinctive teacher identity, which significantly contributes to establishing a sense of purpose, direction, and professional identity within the realm of English Language Teaching (ELT). This identity extends beyond a simple grasp of subject matter and pedagogical techniques; it requires a profound understanding of language acquisition theories, cultural sensitivity, and effective classroom management strategies tailored to language learning environments. By embracing a well-defined teacher identity, educators are empowered to exert a profound and enduring influence on their students' language learning endeavors.

Moreover, embracing a teaching career entails a commitment to ongoing professional development. Education is a dynamic field that continuously evolves with new research, methodologies, and technological advancements. It requires teachers to remain dedicated to staying abreast of these changes, engaging in professional development opportunities, and consistently refining their instructional practices to meet the ever-evolving needs of their students.

These ongoing endeavors enable teachers to enhance their pedagogical skills, stay updated with the latest teaching methodologies and technological advancements, and effectively address the ever-

changing demands of their students. In doing so, an environment conducive to effective language acquisition is fostered, promoting optimal learning outcomes.

### **Teacher Identity**

Identity has been extensively studied in various research contexts. The essentialist perspective perceives identity as a set of personal characteristics that are unique to an individual. It encompasses an innercore that develops in childhood and remains stable throughout one's life (Hall & Du Gay, 1996). This core identity includes personal attributes and characteristics (Jones & McEwen, 2000). Waterman (1985) defined identity as “having a clearly defined self-definition, comprising goals, values, and beliefs that the individual finds personally expressive and to which they are unwaveringly committed” (p. 6).

In the field of English Language Teaching (ELT), the concept of teacher identity is crucially important as this key term provides a sense of purpose and direction in the classroom. When teachers have a clear understanding of their roles, beliefs, and values as educators, they are better equipped to design and deliver effective language lessons. This sense of identity helps them establish a cohesive teaching philosophy and approach that guides their instructional decisions. Teacher identity fosters a strong connection with students. Besides, when teachers have a clear sense of who they are as educators, they can create a supportive and inclusive learning environment where students feel valued and motivated. This connection enhances the teacher-student relationship, leading to better engagement and learning outcomes. Teacher identity enables continuous professional growth and development. Teachers with a strong sense of identity are more likely to seek opportunities for professional learning, engage in reflective practice, and collaborate with colleagues. They are open to exploring new teaching methods,

incorporating innovative technologies, and adapting their instructional strategies to meet the diverse needs of their students. Furthermore, teacher identity contributes to teacher resilience and job satisfaction. When teachers have a strong sense of their professional identity, they are more resilient in the face of challenges and setbacks. They can draw upon their beliefs and values to overcome obstacles and find creative solutions. This, in turn, enhances their overall job satisfaction and fulfillment.

In summary, developing and embracing a teacher identity in the field of ELT is essential for teachers to thrive and make a positive impact on their students. Therefore, English language teachers, like any other teachers, need to continually update themselves both theoretically and practically, given the high demand for professional development and adaptation in their field.

### **Professional Development**

To address the evolving needs of learners in the modern world, teachers in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) must actively pursue professional development. This entails critically assessing and reexamining their teaching beliefs and practices while taking personal responsibility for their professional growth. Teacher professional development is not only crucial for career advancement but also carries moral significance. Teachers have an ethical obligation to strive for excellence as they nurture learners' minds, impart skills, and introduce current techniques that foster successful and thoughtful learning. Given the critical function teachers play in shaping future generations and contributing to society, their professional development is of utmost importance.

Professional development holds equal importance for all teachers, as teaching materials, techniques, and methods constantly evolve. Teachers' initial education alone is insufficient to sustain their entire

careers. Professional development for teachers entails a lifelong commitment to learning and evolving as educators, as their work is never complete. Fullan (1991) defined professional development as “the sum total of formal and informal learning experiences throughout one’s career, from pre-service teacher education to retirement.” Teachers are always acquiring new knowledge, sharing insights with peers, and creating innovative strategies and resources. This constant dissemination, learning, and reflection are inherent to the teaching profession. Teachers must be provided with regular opportunities for learning in a supportive environment, enabling continuous improvement for themselves and their learners. Research has shown that an inspiring and well-informed teacher is the most significant school-related factor influencing students’ achievements. Hence, it is crucial to prioritize the training, development, and support of both novice and experienced teachers. For English language teachers, self-development holds particular importance, serving as the foundation for the English language teaching process, particularly in the fast-paced and ever-changing professional landscape. Professional development is key to maintaining a long and successful career.

Professional development can take various forms, including workshops, degrees, coursework, conferences, training sessions, online resources, discussion boards, and classes. Some notable approaches include:

- **Case Study Method:** involves presenting students with real-life cases that require them to make decisions and solve problems collectively. It fosters group communication, builds confidence in problem-solving, and enhances group dynamics.
- **Consultation:** offers systematic problem-solving support to individuals or groups to clarify and address immediate concerns. It provides structured guidance, helping employees learn to follow correct procedures in a timely manner.

- **Coaching:** focuses on enhancing an individual's competencies in specific skill areas through processes of observation, reflection, and action. It promotes thoughtful engagement and encourages employees to think before acting.
- **Communities of Practice:** facilitates collaborative learning and networking among teaching teams to achieve organizational goals. It involves engaging in shared inquiry and learning with individuals who share a common objective, thus improving professional practice.
- **Lesson Study:** involves professionals systematically examining their practice to solve practical dilemmas related to intervention or instruction. It promotes a collective learning experience, allowing for collaborative problem-solving.
- **Mentoring:** involves an experienced or knowledgeable individual guiding a less experienced or knowledgeable person through a personal developmental relationship. It fosters self-assessment and reflection, helping individuals recognize their own abilities.
- **Reflective Supervision:** supports the development and evaluation of employees' performance through an inquiry-based process that encourages understanding and articulation of the rationale behind their practices.
- **Technical Assistance:** supports individuals and organizations in their improvement efforts by providing resources, information, and support for networking and change initiatives. Professional development is a comprehensive term that encompasses diverse individuals, interests, and approaches. Those who engage in professional development share a common goal of enhancing their skills and knowledge to improve their work. At the core of professional development lies individuals' commitment to lifelong learning and the desire to continually enhance their abilities.

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The VietTESOL International Convention 2022 serves as a scholarly platform dedicated to disseminating research and knowledge in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT), with the aim of promoting teacher identity and professional development. The meticulous selection of strands and themes for this convention reflects a deliberate return to fundamental principles. By incorporating three distinct strands, the VietTESOL International Convention 2022 seeks to foster a deeper understanding of teacher identity and support professional growth.

As we bring the VietTESOL International Convention 2022 to a close, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to all the participants, presenters, and organizers for their active engagement, thought-provoking contributions, and unwavering commitment to the field of ELT. This convention has achieved resounding success by facilitating meaningful discussions, forging connections, and igniting inspiration among professionals worldwide. We encourage you to continue the dialogue, share the knowledge acquired from this event, and implement the innovative approaches and best practices discussed here to further enhance English language education.

Let us sustain the momentum generated by this convention and work collectively towards shaping the future of ELT. Through the cultivation of collaboration and the nurturing of our professional community, we can foster continuous evolution and growth within the field. With great anticipation for the upcoming VietTESOL International Convention in 2023 centered around the theme "ELT for 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Excellence”, we eagerly look forward to future partnerships that will contribute further to substantial advancements and the expansion of our professional community and elevate and transform English language education, propelling it to new heights.

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