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Enhancing ESL Instruction Through Reflective Teaching: A Resource Guide for Administrators of Intensive English Programs

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Enhancing ESL Instruction Through Reflective Teaching: A Resource Guide for Administrators of Intensive English Programs Teaching Young Adults (Ages 18 – 24)

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The Faculty of the School of Education
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In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements of the Degree
Masters of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

by
Wes Weston
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in

TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

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Under the guidance of the committee, and approval by all the members, this field project has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree.

Approved:

Dr. Onllwyn Dixon	December 17, 2015
Instructor/Chairperson	Date

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INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

- Teaching English in South Korea! No experience necessary!
- NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY! 8000 RMB+! NOT an Agency! – Shanxi, Taiyuan, China
- Part-time ESL Instructor – Kirkwood Community College, Monticello IA Minimum Qualifications: Bachelor's degree from an accredited university

These headings were taken from job posts in the educational fields of English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Language instruction in ESL refers to second language learners who are living in an English-speaking country. EFL instruction is when learners study English as a school subject in a country where English has no recognizable language status (Nayer, 1997). Within each of these educational sectors, teaching candidates invariably find employment opportunities with low barriers of entry. This is simply because the global economic need for English language instruction has caused teacher demand to exceed teacher supply. According to the British Council, one quarter of the world's entire population, roughly 1.75 billion people, speak English at a usable level ("The English Effect," 2013). The high demand for English instruction has created a systemic problem that has resulted in a large number of English language teachers in need of ongoing professional development.

Quality language instruction in both ESL and EFL has been impacted because hiring practices have typically placed credence in English-speaking skills as being the principal qualification for teaching the English language. This, therefore, lowers the standard of admittance, which then fosters a high rate of turnover among people entering and leaving the profession (Breshears, 2004). The transient nature of the industry, combined with the lack of

educational credentials and practical experience of prospective teachers, has become the norm among English language institutions. The global demand for English instruction dictates this permeable facet of ESL and EFL may not readily change. As a result, effective language instruction diminishes as teachers enter the industry having realized only a fraction of their teaching potential. Ultimately, this does not mean teachers entering the profession, even those with minimal qualifications, have nothing of value to offer language learners. By improving teaching methodologies, preparedness, and willingness to adapt, teachers can enhance his or her English language instruction to create a productive and dynamic learning environment.

Nowadays, there is a pressing need within the ESL community to foster successful teaching practices in Intensive English Programs (IEPs), which are language institutions geared to prepare students for college or university. David Gaddol (1997), a British linguist commissioned by the British Council to research the role of English in today's modern world, references the Hooke model which "forecasts that international demand for specialist courses of English as a second language will multiply sixfold by 2025 and that most of this will be satisfied by UK, US, and Australian providers" (p. 45). Before international students begin their academic studies, many enroll in IEPs to receive language preparatory skills. Thus, it is important IEPs maintain effective English instruction, especially in the US, which is globally renowned for its higher education institutions. In order to achieve the desired level of teacher excellence, IEP administrators should encourage and support ongoing professional development. A useful and effective way to facilitate such professional growth is through the implementation of reflective teaching practices.

The practice of reflective teaching has recently garnered much attention with Western education systems, although the concept has been around for some time. Stanley (1998) cites

John Dewey's definition of reflection, which is "that which involves active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or practice in light of the reasons that support it and the further consequences to which it leads" (p. 584). Osterman and Kottkamp (2004) define reflective practice as a meaningful strategy for professional growth in which the way of thinking supports personal learning, behavior modification, and better performance. The practice of reflective teaching, therefore, allows teachers the opportunity to reflect back on the experience with the purpose of enhancing subsequent lessons (Cruickshank & Applegate, 1981). Reflective teaching practices significantly aid the improvement of individual teacher-preparedness and also enrich pedagogical approaches in language instruction by means of collaboration and observation. This, in turn, will allow administrators to uphold quality programs while increasing overall student satisfaction.

As previously mentioned, due to growing international demand to receive a tertiary education in the US, it is evident incoming foreign students (ages 18 – 24) need a high level of English-proficiency in order to succeed in their academic education. For IEPs to provide quality English instruction to the aforementioned foreign student populace, school administrators must foster the ongoing development of language teachers. According to Richards and Lockhart (1996), the level of each teacher's professionalism is interrelated between working conditions, attitudes and beliefs, career ambitions, and the work opportunities available to language teachers in their community. Professional development of ESL instructors is irrevocably tied to quality classroom instruction, and IEP administrators should help shape the teaching staff's work environment through the use of reflective practices. Such practices maintain ongoing professional development while placing English instruction, and the learning institution as a whole, on a trajectory of sustainable quality instruction.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this project is to provide IEP administrators a resource guide on how to encourage and conduct useful reflective practices among the teaching staff. When determining the characteristics of expertise, Farrell (2013) states that teacher expertise within the field of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) is gravely misunderstood due to the lack of credible research. However, upon concluding his case study, *Engaging in Critical Reflection* was listed as one of the five main characteristics of expert ESL teachers. Thus, in order to provide the best instruction for the students, it is crucial that school administrators utilize reflective teaching as a means of institutional best practices. There is an inherent value in reflective teaching because it presents teachers with a "bottom up" view of their practice (Richards & Lockhart, 1996). Teachers attempt to gain a better understanding of their instruction by examining the methods they use and why they use them. Richards and Lockhart (1996) note the meaningful impact of reflective teaching:

> The approach is often teacher initiated and directed because it involves instructors observing themselves, collecting data about their own classrooms and their roles within them, and using that data as a basis for self-evaluation, for change, and hence for professional growth. (p. ix)

Thus, one could conclude that reflective teaching necessitates an internalization of instruction by the teacher, and such self-reflection is outside of administrative control. However, in being aware of and facilitating the process, administrators can support both the initial and latter stages of the reflective practice and help guide teachers on a path of continuous improvement.

The goal of this field project is to outline the various approaches and methods in which reflective teaching practices take place and provide IEP administrators a means by which to implement and follow up on these practices. For example, Murphy (2013) discusses some of the tools involved in reflective teaching for gathering information such as teacher assessment

surveys, questionnaires, classroom observations, peer collaboration, as well as teaching journals. This project will examine some of the different methods of reflective teaching and note the merits and potential challenges involved. Upon implementing these practices, administrators will need to follow up with the teaching staff to determine appropriate conclusions and outcomes that further sustain teacher awareness. The practice of reflective teaching is cyclical, and once ESL teachers are able to identify, contemplate, and change any process of instruction (e.g., preparedness, structure, methodology), the reflective practice may begin anew to support ongoing teacher development.

Theoretical Framework

This field project is rooted in the work of John Dewey and Donald Schön. In particular, I focus on Dewey and Schön's conceptualization of reflective thought and reflective practices respectively. According to Dewey (1910), reflection is the act of turning a topic over and inspecting it in various ways and in a new light so that nothing is overlooked or disregarded. Reflective practices, according to Schön (1983), serve an important purpose in education where teachers must consider all facets and view the different angles of instructional content, facilitation, and development.

John Dewey articulates reflective thought as a transformative tool that is guided by our experiences. Rodgers (2002) articulates Dewey's view of reflective thought using four distinct criteria:

1. Reflection as a meaning-making process
2. Reflection as a rigorous way of thinking
3. Reflection in community
4. Reflection as a set of attitudes

These criteria encompass the profound understanding a person gains from one experience and how it relates to other experiences. Such comprehension is developed among interaction

with others and is rooted in scientific inquiry. Reflective thought then takes a person through a circular process from practice to theory and theory to practice (Rodgers, 2002). By enacting reflective thought, people may ultimately embark on a pathway to personal development. Dewey (1910) contends that educators should appreciate the difficulties involved in this positive transformation because it represents the impetus of reflective inquiry. Thus, reflective thought and teaching are deeply intertwined.

Donald Schön, a renowned social scientist who has done extensive work on reflective practices, is notably known for his concept of reflection-in-action. According to Schön (1983), the practice of reflection-in-action is the artful skill by which practitioners suitably handle situations that may be uncertain and unpredictable. Reflection-in-action goes beyond just the technical knowledge of a practitioner by allowing a form of reflection to enhance professional excellence. Schön demonstrated the use of reflection-in-action in a Teacher Project at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Schön (1983) notes:

> In this Teacher Project, researchers have encouraged a small group of teachers to explore their own intuitive thinking and apparently simple tasks in such domains as mathematics, physics, music, and the perceived behavior of the moon. The teachers have made some important discoveries. They have allowed themselves to become confused about subjects they are supposed to "know"; and as they have tried to work their way out of their confusions, they have also begun to think differently about learning and teaching. (pp. 66 – 67)

In undergoing reflection-in-action, people become researchers within the context of their active professional lives. They accept the uncertainty and uniqueness of certain situations and handle it by incorporating a process by which thinking becomes doing (Schön 1983). Dewey (1910) supports this notion stating perplexity, hesitation, and doubt are sub processes that are part of every reflective task. In the classroom setting, teachers face constant uncertainty because the

profession brings them in direct contact with a multitude of people who convey a plethora of emotions, experiences, and motivations within any given classroom environment.

Both reflective thought and reflective practice greatly influence the development of this field project. In order to effectively utilize reflective practices among a teaching staff, administrators need to understand the process of implementation and the process of change. First, administrators should be aware of the methods involved in teacher reflection and when to implement them within the course timeframe. Schön (1983) compares teaching to a type of performance in which he contends, "we can think about doing something while doing it." (p. 54). Course instruction may vary in time and duration, yet the period of action (i.e., performance) could be viewed as the course in its entirety, and Schön suggests fascinating revelations can spawn during the midst of a performance. Administrators can help support these revelations as they guide the implementation of various reflective practices.

Additionally, administrators must be cognizant of how the reflective process may change teacher practice and behavior. Schön (1983) suggests that throughout the period of instruction teachers may reflect on the phenomena they directly encounter, as well as on previous experiences that have stemmed from their conduct. Upon such reflection, a teacher is then capable of fine-tuning approaches, making situational changes, and adjusting behavior. According to Dewey (1910), the changes that teachers may consider from reflective inquiry are "a consecutive ordering in such a way that each determines the next as its proper outcome, while each in turn leans back on its predecessors" (p. 2). The end result of such reflective thought is a succession of changes that develop from one another and are strengthened with each step of the process. In recognizing the effect reflective teaching has on teacher development,

administrators can promote the longevity of such practices while encouraging enhanced teaching methods.

Significance of the Study

The intended beneficiaries of this project are administrators of IEPs working with academic-bound students (ages 18 – 24). These students are preparing for studies at a university or college; therefore, a high level of English proficiency is mandatory for success. Breshears (2004) states professionalization within the [ESL] industry remains underdeveloped because economic forces control hiring standards instead of a governing body. Thus, teachers entering the ESL industry often do so at the low end of his or her full teaching potential; thereby justifying the need for professional development through reflective teaching.

Intensive English programs stand to benefit greatly from using this resource guide for implementing reflective practices, and there are over 1,000 different IEPs in the US alone that can take advantage of this opportunity to improve their programs (Szasz, 2009/2010). The benefits of reflective teaching practices, as outlined in Florez (2001), include *flexibility* among varying learner populations, *practicality* between teacher time and professional development, *professionalism* with ongoing exposure to theory, and *sustainability* of teacher growth and improvement. The implementation of reflective practices, however, may present unique challenges. Hatton and Smith (1994) acknowledge problems associated with reflection among new teachers, which include preconceived teaching notions, time for development, and possible reactions to the insistence of practices. Murphy (2013) notes challenges teachers face in trying to view their language instruction with multiple perspectives because "we are often too close to recognize our strengths and weaknesses" (p. 510). Due to the challenges reflective teaching presents, IEP administrators should implement these practices in order to maintain objectivity.

Moreover, teachers would be more willing to accept reflective practices if they are a regular part of the institutions operational procedures. After viewing this resource guide, IEP administrators should feel confident working through potential challenges when initiating reflective practices. Administrators will be more prepared to respond to questions about reflective procedures and assist teachers throughout the development process. Upon reviewing the various methods of reflective teaching, administrators can use practices that best coincide with the IEPs learning environment.

Definition of Terms

Accrediting Council for Continuing Education and Training (ACCET): One of two main accrediting bodies that helps establish benchmarks for industry standards.

Commission of English Language Program Accreditation (CEA): One of two main accrediting bodies that helps establish benchmarks for industry standards.

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

EnglishUSA: Organization, formerly known as the American Association of Intensive English Programs, whose mission is one of support, standardization, and advocacy for IEPs (EnglishUSA, 2013).

F-1 Visa: Visa issued to foreigners studying in a full-time academic program. Students must be accepted by an approved school, document they have sufficient fund to cover 12 months of expenses and demonstrate academic preparedness to succeed in the program (Ruiz, 2014).

IEP: Intensive English Program

Microteaching: An educational technique for teachers designed to help improve critical teaching skills (Allen, 1967). The method was designed and utilized by Dr. Dwight Allen of Stanford University in the mid-1960s.

Professional Development: Influencing the quality of teaching by improving requite traits and functions of a teacher (Breshears, 2004).

Reflection-in-Action: A reflective process by which we are able to think about what we are doing while actually doing it (Schön, 1983).

Reflective Inquiry: A special form of thinking used as means of problem solving an issue by linking and sequencing interconnected ideas (Smith & Hatton, 1995).

Reflective Practice: A professional development strategy that fosters meaningful change among individuals and organizations through a continuous learning cycle (Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004).

Reflective Teaching: A practice that provides teachers the opportunity to teach and then reflect back on the experience with the purpose of enhancing subsequent lessons (Cruickshank & Applegate, 1981).

TESOL: Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this field project is to enhance ESL classroom instruction through the use of teacher reflections. The project pertains to the implementation of reflective teaching practices at the administrative level of IEPs that instruct young adults (ages 18 – 24) on an academic-bound track. The review of literature summarizes the current discourse in the following areas: the scope of English as a second language and English as a foreign language, international students on an academic-bound track, the need for professional development in language instruction, the value of reflective teaching and professional growth, and reflective teaching practices for administrators to implement.

Scope of English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

The two distinct learning environments for studying the English language are ESL and EFL. According to Nayer (1997), ESL and EFL diverged into two distinct fields by the 1950s. ESL instruction was recognized as being taught in countries where English plays a prominent role in national and social discourse. EFL instruction, on the other hand, was recognized as being taught in foreign countries where English does not have a central role in one's social life.

Even though there is a distinction between ESL and EFL, both fields are irrevocably intertwined. One way to comprehend the intricate relationship between ESL and EFL is by Braj Kachru's concentric circles of World Englishes. Kachru (1991) contends that English has been given a renowned social status within a global ideology, and no other language has transcended cultural and linguistic boundaries to touch billions of lives. Furthermore, Kachru explains the global community of English speakers by way of three concentric circles: the Inner Circle, the Outer Circle, and the Expanding Circle. The inner circle represents native English speakers who

exhibit high proficiency levels and from there expands outward towards the expanding circle where lower levels of proficiency are found. According to Gaddol (2006), the world will likely witness a de-emphasis in the traditional EFL model because the world continually adopts the notion of English being a global language and thereby tends to shift inward from the expanding circle. Gaddol contends that, over time, more countries will be viewed less as foreign language learners and more as second language users, an example being that of several countries in Western Europe.

The economics of the English language is at the heart of its expansion in regard to the demand of both ESL and EFL. According to a report published by the British Council, The English Effect (2013), there is a strong economic incentive to learn English. Major global businesses from Europe to Asia have adopted English as the primary language of communications due to its competitive advantages. The report stated, "In a 2012 survey by the Economist Intelligence Unit, 70 per cent of executives said their workforce will need to master English to realize corporate expansion plans, and a quarter said more than 50 per cent of their total workforce would need English ability" (p. 7). In today's modern world, learning English is no longer a choice for many countries and its citizens, but it is considered a vital economic need synonymous with employment opportunities, educational benefits, and personal enrichment (Gaddol, 2006). Ultimately, English has transformed into the de facto medium of global communications.

Given the global perception of English proficiency and economic mobility, the need for ESL and EFL instruction is monumental. The English Effect (2013) reports a growing increase in the demand for English instruction, especially among developing countries such Brazil, Mexico, and Indonesia. Two other countries, China and India, which boasts enormous

populations, have also seen a significant scale of demand. Across the globe, this heavy demand for English instruction has resulted in a shortage of teachers who are native speakers of the language even though there are roughly 12 million native-speaker teachers throughout the world today.

The English language is clearly the dominant global language of the 21st century. The widespread reach of English has caused some to refer to it as the language on which the sun never sets. This assertion is attributed to the language's prominence in communications, science, business, entertainment, and diplomacy. Thus, English can aptly be viewed as the operating system for global conversation (The English Effect, 2013). People from around the world, especially younger generations, are looking to connect with this operating system. In order to do so, they are willing to go to great lengths even if it means moving to an English-speaking country.

International Students on an Academic-bound Track

Presently, the perception of the international community is that the United States has the best universities in the world. According to the 2015 *Academic Ranking of World Universities*, which is complied by researchers at the Center for World-Class Universities of Shanghai Jiao Tong University, the United States is home to 33 of the top 50 universities worldwide. Furthermore, the *US News and World Report* lists the US as having 32 of the 50 best universities across the globe. According to Ruiz (2014), the US hosted over 800,000 international students in the 2012-2013 academic year, which represented around 20 percent of the global student population who was studying abroad.

American educational institutions have created a strong international demand among both students and professionals who are seeking possible advantages in a globally competitive market, and their numbers in the US is on the rise.

International students enter the US for academic studies on an F-1 visa. Once an approved school accepts an international student for a full-time academic program, the prospective student can apply for an F-1 visa at a US Embassy or Consulate. Ruiz (2014) states:

> The number of foreign students on F-1 visas in US colleges and universities grew dramatically from 110,000 in 2001 to 524,000 in 2012…[and] the most significant growth occurred among foreign students pursuing language training, whose numbers mushroomed from fewer than 2,000 in 2001 to nearly 165,000 in 2012. (p. 8)

In order to succeed in higher education, international students are aware of the need for academic English proficiency. Therefore, many students chose to study ESL in an English-speaking country, and they may begin their studies in IEPs.

Perceived Value of ESL vs. EFL

Many international students chose to study ESL instead of EFL because they believe studying in a country in which English is the primary language provides an added exposure that will benefit their level of proficiency. When studying abroad, students are inevitably forced to utilize their language skills outside of the classroom. The additional comprehensible input is derived from students' day-to-day life because of the environment in which they are immersed. Research conducted by Kang (2013) examined the effects of study-abroad experiences on 60 Korean university students in English speaking countries. The study evaluated their proficiency when brought back into an EFL context. After having completed an eight-week study abroad in an English-speaking country, Kang noted a measurable development in the learners' willingness to communicate, speaking abilities, and participation in classroom interaction. International students, therefore, not only come to the US for its renowned universities, but also come for

English study before beginning their academic courses at a university or college. This greater exposure to the English language plays an important role in second language awareness, as studies have shown ESL students being much more aware of their language choices than EFL students due to the necessity of communication (Schauer, 2006). Although concrete evidence between the advantages of ESL instruction over that of EFL instruction is scarce, the sheer volume of students choosing to study ESL reinforces the perception of its added value. Language learners often believe in the benefits of immersion in regard to language proficiency, and IEPs help facilitate students' language exposure by giving them the option to study in their English programs.

Intensive English Programs

The demand for English education among international students has created a need for IEPs, which offers students a variety of instructional programs from academic English to English for Specific Purposes (ESP) such as aviation or hospitality. IEPs adhere to specific industry standards through an arduous accreditation process conducted by either the Commission of English Language Program Accreditation (CEA) or the Accrediting Council for Continuing Education and Training (ACCET). If an IEP receives accreditation by either CEA or ACCET, this recognition serves as a mark of quality and integrity in the program (Szasz, 2009/2010). Thus, reputable IEPs receive their accreditation from one of these two major accrediting bodies.

Over the years, IEPs have grown in numbers alongside the rise in international students entering the US. According to Szasz (2009/2010), in 2006, the "Department of Homeland Security reported there were 1,287 English-language programs operating in the US with the ability to offer students I-20s to procure F-1 visa status" (p. 197). Given the scope of English instruction in the US, the challenge for the ESL industry is to maintain levels of excellence in the

face of high demand. Nevertheless, international students continue to flock to the US at prolific rates, and IEPs have been tasked with the responsibility of preparing many of these students for academic proficiency in English.

The Need for Professional Development in Language Instruction

Professional development is vital in maintaining effective educational institutions. Even though the use of English is ubiquitous, and its global importance is well established, an overall lack of qualified teachers still persists. This is mostly a reflection of the fact that the development of quality language instruction has not been keeping pace with the development of English demand. In a 2012 survey conducted of English teachers at primary schools worldwide, 21% of felt they were not fully qualified to teach English. When asked if they would be interested in some form of professional development, 79% said they would be if it were available (Emery, 2012). These statistics not only indicate the global need for professional development in English instruction, but they illustrate the willingness and desire among teachers to receive professional development if offered to them.

With regard to ESL and EFL instruction, the industry has established low standards of admittance for those wishing to enter the profession. For example, Breshears (2004) raises the concern of industry hiring practices. Often, institutions wrongly emphasize native-speaking English skills as a benchmark of instructional qualifications. In addition, some in the industry have questioned the effectiveness and honesty of IEPs, which are sometimes accused of prioritizing money over effective instruction. Such programs exploit the staff they hire with poor working conditions and are thereby inclined to hire teachers with minimal qualifications and experience (Szasz (2009/2010). Thus, in lowering the entry bar for prospective English teachers, people may begin their teaching careers at a lower threshold of their full potential. This does not

mean that all ESL and EFL teachers are unqualified for their positions, but rather a number of teachers could enhance their instructional skills with ongoing professional development.

This need undoubtedly applies to ESL teachers in the US. According to Szasz (2009/2010), there were 72,659 students in US with F-1 visas that stated they were here for language training. Although exact figures are difficult to determine, this sizeable number of international students entails a large ESL teaching force within the US alone, and in order to keep pace with the country's desired ESL workforce, educational institutions have started offering certification programs and master's degrees in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). Nevertheless, even higher education credentials from reputable American universities have been scrutinized as to the effectiveness of their teacher-training programs. Govardhan (1999) suggests that teachers who have received an MA in TESOL may still lack preparedness when going to teach abroad. He cites potential challenges teachers may encounter such as educational culture, lack of instructional resources, large class sizes, and student attitudes towards English. The coursework in many TESOL programs does not instruct prospective teachers to handle such situations. This conclusion was drawn from analyzing 237 different job ads and cross-referencing over 800 courses in more than 100 related MA TESOL programs. Therefore, when cross-examining the global demand for English teachers with the availability of ESL and EFL teachers, it is evident that language instruction within this enormous market could benefit greatly with proven methods of professional development.

Given the strong demand for English education among international students seeking admissions to higher education in the US, IEPs should maintain quality instruction. For international students, IEPs can aptly be viewed as the bottom rung in climbing an educational ladder in the US. If the initial steps are tarnished due to ineffective teachers and unreputable

programs, this will influence the student's ability to move higher. Thus, integrity and accountability in America's ESL industry is a means for maintaining the renowned status of the US academic system as a whole, and an effective way of bolstering the instructional paradigm at IEPs is through the implementation of continuous professional development.

The Value of Reflective Teaching and Professional Growth

In traditional professional development, it is presumed that teachers may make changes to their instructional methods and approaches due to access to some new information. Reflective practices, however, draws on a teacher's development from within (Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004). This is an intricate process because reflective thought cannot readily be viewed through the lens of statistical metrics. Schön (1983) suggests scientific inquiry initially stems from uncertainties and doubt, which duly serve as the impetus for reflection. Thus, he considers reflective practices to be a form of art because the process itself is not rooted in quantitative data. In trying to understand the value of reflective practices, qualitative data provides a beneficial assessment of worth and efficacy.

The significance and perceived benefits of reflective teaching have been noted in a multitude of educational capacities, as well as in ESL. In a two-year study conducted to determine teacher expertise in ESL, three experienced ESL teachers revealed the importance of critical reflection. The teachers divulged that sessions of professional development, open discussion, and teacher collaboration were great ways to reflect on their classroom experiences. One participant expressed a strong interest in how teachers can work together to resolve issues and noted that such collaboration complements overall team building. The teachers also revealed that reflection allowed them to examine and critique their own teaching methods while at the same time comparing those methods to others. As a result, good teaching practices were

enhanced, which provided greater learning opportunities to the students (Farrell, 2013). In another case of reflective teaching, Stanley (1998) references a previous study she conducted in which participants expressed positive feedback in regard to the realization that they were beginning to think reflectively as well as use reflection through writing and conversation. Reflective teaching clearly demonstrates that the act of teaching is a learning process in and of itself. Over time, teachers develop and evolve from reflective inquiry, thus affording them the opportunity to facilitate better learning processes.

Reflective practices, however, are not without challenges. Florez (2001) provides an example of an instructor who took part in a series of workshops on developing reflective teaching practices. Upon compiling a portfolio of her work on which she reflected and analyzed, she noted the strong commitment needed in order to foster self-development. She determined the process to be emotionally challenging as the time needed to enhance and refine reflective practices involves discipline as well as the ability to confront one's own teaching philosophy and competence. Due to the commitment one must make in order to continuously undergo reflective practices, it is advantageous for a teacher not to pursue this path alone. Murphy (2001) emphasizes the need to gather information on one's teaching with outsider perspectives. This outside perspective could be that of a supervisor, colleague, or even the students. Given these potential challenges of teacher commitment and collaboration, it is important that administrators take an active role in facilitating reflective practices. Administrators can support the commitment to reflective teaching through the implementation of various methods, and they can also assist in scheduling, organizing, and encouraging teacher collaboration. Such measures will diminish potential challenges in undergoing reflective practices as well as ensure their success.

Overall, reflective teaching practices offer unique advantages, especially when it comes to professional development. By implementing reflective practices, teacher development is not solely dependent on acquiring knowledge but rather complemented by applying prior knowledge in effective ways. While traditional professional development may begin with a solution, reflective practices begin with a question or problem. Through use of reflective practices, teachers can use their prior knowledge as a tool to derive possible solutions, making the learning process personal and holistic (Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004). The end result from prolonged reflective teaching practices is improved instruction, a better learning environment for students, and increased collaboration among the teaching staff.

Reflective Teaching Practices for Administrators to Implement

In order to effectively facilitate reflective teaching practices, an administrator must understand the processes involved in order use reflective methods appropriate to the given learning environment. The teacher development that originates from reflective teaching practices involves a complex internal process (Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004); however, the various stages of the reflective process may be studied, discussed, refined, and practiced.

The process of reflective teaching is multifaceted and comprised of various procedures. Each stage in the process complements the next in a circular form of thought. According to Stanley (1998), reflective teaching practices may be observed in a series of phases: (a) engaging with reflection, (b) thinking reflectively, (c) using reflection, (d) sustaining reflection, and (e) practicing reflection. Each phase builds on the next as teachers move along a path from the initial decision to begin reflecting on their experiences all the way to the point where reflective teaching becomes unconsciously embedded into ones practice. Florez (2001) provides a simpler view of reflective teaching by outlining the process in four integral steps: (1) collecting

descriptive data, (2) analyzing data, (3) considering how instruction could have been different, and (4) making a plan that integrates new insights. Upon completing these steps, teachers may renew the process for continuous self-improvement as well as strengthen their understanding of reflective teaching. Although there are differing ways in which the procedures of reflective teaching may be perceived, the stages of teacher development remain encapsulated in a circular arrangement. The reflective teaching process in its entirety could aptly be viewed as a circular staircase leading teachers to higher forms of growth and development.

A better understanding of the reflective teaching process will help administrators effectively implement and facilitate the practice. In language instruction, reflective teaching practices should be collaborative, informative, and easily supported at the administrative level. Additionally, there are two important features that can maximize the benefits of reflective teaching. First, these practices should offer access to multiple perspectives in order to gather a plethora of information. Second, feedback should be conveyed in a variety of modes so that teachers ultimately gain a more profound understanding of their work (Murphy, 2001; Brinko, 1993). Therefore, the most effective reflective practices for administrators to implement, facilitate, and support include microteaching, peer observations, and the use of surveys.

Microteaching

Microteaching is an educational technique for teachers, which allows them to enhance a variety of teaching skills. The effectiveness of microteaching is twofold. First, microteaching consists of brief, mini-lessons ranging between five to ten minutes. The lessons are conducted in front of a small group of colleagues who may provide feedback from their observations in regard to teaching competency. Given such a short timeframe, teachers must apply clearly established teaching skills and carefully craft each lesson (Allen, 1967). The technical components of

teaching are then emphasized, such as presentation skills, modeling, and pacing. Second, sessions of microteaching are often videotaped, which provides teachers the opportunity for a self-evaluation of their own performance. According to Brinko (1993), the feedback gathered from oneself is effective because it is highly regarded and viewed as more credible than other sources. Also, microteaching participants value their self-critique because videos provide clear and irrefutable evidence of the lesson being taught. Overall, microteaching gives teachers the unique ability to reflect on various teaching skills while watching themselves perform.

The practice of microteaching was first developed and utilized by Dr. Dwight Allen of Stanford University in the mid-1960s. In the past few decades, microteaching has been used worldwide as an instrument of teacher training and development, as well as a tool for facilitating teacher reflection (Smith & Hatton, 1995). In a microteaching study conducted with 18 prospective teachers, Fernandez (2010) reported that the participants placed importance on reflection and collaboration because it allowed them "to learn from considering alternate points of view to see differently and reframe events or problems within their lessons" (p. 360). In another study of the effects of microteaching on pre-service teachers in Nigeria, an overwhelming majority of participants, 95.6% (483 of 500 participants), claimed they were influenced by their reflection after microteaching (Igwe, Uzoka, & Rufai, 2013). During this study, the pre-service teachers would reflect on their microteaching lesson with their supervisor and discuss methods for improving practice. Methods of microteaching have proved useful in English language instruction as well. A study by Savas (2012) investigated the perceptions of 40 EFL teacher-trainees on the effectiveness of microteaching lessons on English language teaching skills. Trainees used microteaching videos to analyze the skills of experienced and effective teachers while reviewing their own teaching videos to reflect on their performance. The

information collected from questionnaires showed participants identified three principal areas in which they felt microteaching was most helpful. More than 75% of teacher-trainees claimed microteaching improved: 1) their teaching of English, 2) their giving instructions, and 3) problematic areas in teaching English. Each of these studies outlines the unique value of microteaching and how its reflective process improves teaching skills.

The ultimate goal of microteaching is to bolster core teaching competencies so that teachers have a better understanding of the skills expected of them. According to Allen (1967), this is accomplished by breaking down the act of teaching into simpler and identifiable parts. In providing a constructive setting for both self and collaborative reflective practices, microteaching affords teachers the ability to scrutinize their strengths and weaknesses in order to appropriately modify teaching behavior (Fisher & Burell, 2011). School administrators can take advantage of the benefits of microteaching by using it as a form of professional development. The use of microteaching in teacher development is not only effective, but its implementation among school administrators is straightforward and practical. Through the use of microteaching lessons, teachers will utilize forms of reflective inquiry embedded in the practice, which may also promote active reflection in other facets of the teaching process.

Peer Observations

Classroom observations are a practical and constructive way to enhance teacher development. Observations provide value to both the "visited" and "visitor" teacher, whose collaboration before and after the observed lesson promotes active reflection. By engaging in reflective inquiry with another person, a mutual level of trust is established in order to openly evaluate the lesson, discuss potential change, confront issues, and strengthen best practices (Murphy, 2001; Smith & Hatton, 1995). Whereas microteaching emphasizes understanding

primary teaching skills, observations provide a deeper insight into the complexity of teaching as a whole (e.g., classroom environment, student-teacher interactions, instructional applications). In order to facilitate successful peer observations, collaboration is essential to foster active reflection, which is then necessary to obtain formative feedback for professional growth.

Before a peer observation takes place, it is crucial to establish the purpose of the visit. According to Dewey (1904), observation is not merely collecting material to be used in one's own teaching, but getting information for psychological analysis and reflection. Therefore, the teachers involved in the process should maintain an open dialogue leading up to the observation. For example, the "visited" teacher could elaborate on teaching skills of which he or she would like the observer to take note. Thus, the function of the "visitor" teacher should be limited to only gathering descriptive information throughout the lesson (Murphy, 2001; Richards & Lockhart, 1996). Upon completing the peer observation, the "visitor" and "visited" teacher reflect on the information gathered, sharing insights and ideas in order to facilitate learning (Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004). The reflective process ultimately helps fulfill the purpose of peer observations in laying the groundwork for new growth and development.

All teachers have distinct viewpoints and perspectives, which they have developed from their own unique experiences. In a case study conducted among 12 experienced and non-experienced ESL teachers, Mok (1994) found most teachers, no matter the amount of teaching experience, shaped their beliefs about teaching practices and theory around personal experiences as learners and as teachers. This reveals the subjectivity of the reflection process in which different individuals may come to dissimilar conclusions and display diverse opinions. Murphy (2001) points out that differing attitudes and beliefs among teachers may guide them when conducting an observation, which circles back to the importance of clarifying the purpose of the

observation. Communication between the teachers involved in the process is imperative in peer observations because it creates a positive environment for obtaining feedback and is not viewed as an evaluation of instruction. Additionally, open communication supports a harmonious collaborative effort in which reflective practices foster development.

Peer observations present a unique way for educational administrators to promote reflective practices and encourage continuous improvement. Rather than evaluating a teacher's performance as a supervisor, peer observations are effective measures for gathering and analyzing useful information about teaching practices (Richards & Lockhart, 1996). The teaching staff then becomes united in a common goal of professional growth. In addition, administrators can easily support the teaching staff throughout this process by scheduling observations accordingly. Osterman and Kottkamp (2004) note that as teachers identify, analyze, and challenge their own practices, the support offered by colleagues helps inspire one another and maintains commitment throughout the difficult process of change. Administrators should nurture such change in order to help mold each teacher to be the best educator possible.

Surveys

Surveys are useful ways of collecting information from both students and teachers. Teachers and administrators use surveys because it allows them to quickly gather larger amounts of information. Upon receiving the survey feedback, those who administered the survey are then able to reflect on the information gathered and determine changes to enhance teaching practices.

Teachers may use surveys to find out how students feel about classroom activities, instructional comprehension, learning preferences, and motivation (Richards & Lockhart, 1996). Teachers solicit feedback in order to give the students a voice in the learning process, which also creates a more inclusive classroom environment. Surveys also allow teachers to obtain the

feedback they desire, especially if teachers are given control over the survey content and implementation. Teachers typically give students surveys at the end of the their courses. However, there are alternative ways teachers may conduct surveys. Murphy (2001) discusses 5-minute papers, which entails students writing a recap of a lesson after it is complete. This type of survey provides teachers with direct information in regard to lesson activities. Teachers may also give mid-session surveys to gauge how students feel at the halfway point of a course. This lets teachers know what changes they could apply in order to make improvements on remaining lessons.

School administrators can utilize surveys to gain practical insight in a quick and efficient manner. Normally, administrators will survey students in regard to teaching performance and classroom environment. However, they may also survey their teachers to receive feedback in regard to the curriculum, policies and procedures, teaching methodologies, and work environment. By providing teachers with a platform for expressing their views, administrators demonstrate the value they place on teacher input (Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004). Most importantly, administrators may use surveys as a means for promoting reflective thinking among the teaching staff. For example, surveys that question teaching practices such as student group and pair work, planning interactive activities, and the use of school resources encourage teachers to reflect on their actions and behavior in the classroom. The results from this survey could then be discussed as a group between colleagues and supervisors to examine whether perception matches expectation.

Conducting surveys, whether done by teachers or administrators, is a direct method for collecting descriptive information. The feedback provided allows both teachers and administrators to piece together a picture of current practices and the behaviors that shape them

(Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004). Once the picture comes into full view, the reflective process can begin to determine prospective changes based on the information acquired. Administering surveys and reflecting on the outcomes is a continuous process, one that will bolster professional growth and increase the awareness of those who utilize them.

Summary

In summary, the literature review revealed five major themes: the scope of English as a second language and English as a foreign language, international students on an academic-bound track, the need for professional development in language instruction, the value of reflective teaching and professional growth, and reflective teaching practices for administrators to implement.

The review of literature found a great need for teacher development in language instruction, specifically within the ESL industry. The global demand for English has greatly surpassed the supply of qualified and experienced teachers. Many ESL teachers, therefore, can benefit greatly from ongoing professional development, especially at IEPs preparing international students for higher education in the US. The research uncovered meaningful information in regard to the value of reflective teaching practices and evidence supporting its role in teacher development. The studies reviewed demonstrated the effectiveness that reflective practices have on identifying classroom strengths and weakness. This information is vital for supplementing any behavior modification necessary for instructional improvement. The research revealed different methods in which IEP administrators may implement reflective teaching practices to help promote professional growth. Microteaching, peer observations, and surveys can all be used to effectively foster teacher development. In addition, the majority of research illustrated the importance of collaboration throughout much of the reflective process in order to

support fellow colleagues and create an environment where teaching can be used as a tool for learning.

Given the vast need for professional development in ESL, it is important IEP administrators understand the value behind reflective teaching practices and how they can contribute to the betterment of their institutions. Thus, a resource guide for IEP administrators would not only help school officials to perceive the benefits of reflective teaching, but it would also help them support the teaching staff in professional growth while providing better language instruction to students.

CHAPTER III
THE PROJECT AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

Description of the Project

This project consists of a narrated PowerPoint presentation that is comprised of two principal sections: information on the need for reflective practices and effective methods to encourage reflective thinking. In the first section of this PowerPoint, the need for reflective teaching is demonstrated by providing a detailed analysis of the current state of English instruction. Beginning with the scope of ESL and EFL instruction, the presentation explains the global demand for English and how this affects the industry as a whole and the challenges it presents. A solution is provided on how to foster ongoing professional development, specifically through the use of reflective teaching practices.

The second section of this presentation demonstrates effective methods to elicit reflective inquiry among a teaching staff. The presentation explains three effective reflective practices for IEP administrators to implement: microteaching, peer observations, and surveys. With each method, the presentation illustrates the process and potential value it adds to professional growth. In addition, suggestions are given as to how administrators might facilitate and support teacher development. By providing a clear and concise presentation for understanding and implementing reflective teaching practices, school administrators will be able to utilize the information and methods outlined in the presentation as a meaningful and practical approach to professional development.

Development of the Project

This project was conceptualized during my time as an administrator at an IEP that caters primarily to students who plan on pursuing higher education in the US. The impetus behind my

desire for more professional development in ESL began after conducting a number of teacher observations and witnessing many teacher demos from prospective employees. I noticed that some basic teaching methodologies, which I believed vital for language instruction, were not being utilized in the classroom. For example, teachers were giving long lectures with little student interaction, directions were sometimes unclear, time management wasn't effectively utilized, and the modeling of examples was not thorough, leaving students confused. After I provided feedback, some teachers changed their approaches albeit temporarily before reverting back to the same poor teaching habits, which seemed to have become fossilized within their practice. Therefore, I began to consider ways to address these issues in a meaningful way. I sought to implement ongoing professional development. However, receiving outside professional development was not practical given the cost and the schools financial resources. In the end, I turned to various methods of reflective teaching to facilitate, support, and encourage teacher development.

Over the course of nine months, our center used microteaching, peer observations, and surveys as a means of stimulating reflective inquiry. Each method was spaced accordingly throughout this timeframe to allow for proper reflection. During monthly staff meetings, I would elicit feedback from the teachers, as well as queried their thoughts and opinions through anonymous surveys. Overall, the teaching staff had a positive view towards the practices implemented by our administrative staff. Thus, this project presented me with a platform to share my experience while addressing the need for more teacher development in ESL.

In deciding how to convey the information I gathered, I chose to create a narrated PowerPoint presentation. This presentation would be easy for administrators to follow and re-watch as needed. This format gave me the ability to design an appealing and eye-catching

presentation to emphasize points of interest and convey the research in a more palpable manner. Furthermore, it gives me the capability to present my findings in a variety of venues such as workshops, seminars, and conferences.

Upon completion, this presentation will be shared with organizations aimed at supporting IEPs and English language instruction such as English USA (formerly the American Association of Intensive English Programs) and the NAFSA Association of International Educators. It is my hope that this presentation will be shared, discussed, and the content within may be implemented at IEPs throughout the US.

The Project

Enhancing ESL Instruction Through Reflective Teaching

CHAPTER IV
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Increasingly, people all over the world are learning English. Today, globalization has accelerated the use of English around the world, and the spread of English as a global language has been a fuel for globalization (Graddol, 2006). The codependent proliferation of both the English language and globalization has created an enormous need for instruction. Schools and institutions are attempting to match the heavy demand, but in attempting to do so have created a void in teacher competency. If English schools, in particular IEPs, are to keep up with the demand for English instruction and teach students effectively, then there must be a recourse for ongoing teacher development.

As a result, there is a need to provide a guide to IEP administrators on how to implement reflective teaching practices. ESL teachers can benefit greatly from the continuous growth these practices provide, which would then better support students who are striving for English proficiency. Reflective teaching supports professional growth because it essentially "encourages teachers to be students of teaching" (Cruickshank & Applegate, 1981, p. 553). If a teacher allows his or her practice to be observed, questioned, and analyzed by themselves and others, reflection will ultimately help prompt changes to improve said teacher's craft, performance, and overall instruction.

The purpose of the project was to aid IEP administrators in implementing reflective teaching practices. The suggested methods may be utilized to further teacher development, which is the overall intention of this presentation. When teachers are able to improve their practice, learning may be facilitated more effectively, which leads to higher levels of education and enlightenment. Lastly, the end goal is for the effects of this presentation to reach ESL

students, who are the final beneficiaries of this project. By enhancing English language instruction, we increase communicative competency, which ultimately gives everyone a better understanding of one another and the world in which we live.

Recommendations

This field project provides IEP administrators with a guide to help them implement and facilitate reflective practices. There are two important recommendations for realizing the practices in this guide. The recommendations deal with deciding which methods to apply and how to convey these practices to the teaching staff.

First, school administrators should consider certain factors before implementing reflective methods. Before utilizing the aforementioned reflective methods, administrators need to take into consideration the type of English programs offered, the duration of the courses, the size of the teaching staff, and the previous experiences each staff member brings with them. This due diligence will help administrators in the implementation of reflective practices, specifically when it comes to scheduling methods and collaborative efforts.

Second, administrators need to clearly explain the process and reasoning of each reflective method in order to validate the purpose of reflective inquiry, as well as maximize perceived benefits. Throughout the reflective process, teachers will receive feedback through multiple perspectives. According to Brinko (1993), feedback is "more effective when recipients voluntarily engage in the feedback process as part of routine professional expectation" (581). Thus, if administrators establish reflective practices as a professional norm, teachers will be more open to learning new teaching skills and collaborating with colleagues.

Finally, there are two suggestions to further develop this guide. First, the guide could be redesigned to incorporate more animations and sound effects. Such production values would

give the guide a more professional veneer and draw more interest from the audience of school administrators. Second, the guide could be expanded to include a written component to further explain individual steps of implementation for microteaching, peer observations, and surveys. A supplemental written guide would offer additional assurance to administrators in facilitating these methods and give teachers more information about the processes involved in reflective practices.

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