# Teachers driving their own professional development: Theory and practice

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*This article provides an overview of what is considered best practice in professional development in English language teaching by researchers and professional bodies. It then presents a research project investigating how satisfied English language teachers are with their own PD. The qualitative study involved a background survey of 92 teachers and 10 semi-structured interviews. The focus is on the teachers' satisfaction with their current programs and desired future programs. The findings along with research are combined to make recommendations about how centres can allow teachers to have more input into every stage of professional development programming and become more autonomous and reflective as teachers and learners.*

## *Introduction*

Professional development (PD) offers a means for teachers to develop their teaching practice through activities within and outside of their centres. At least on paper, government-accredited centres in Australia offering English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) must have some kind of PD program, although requirements are vague (Australian Government, 2017, p. 10). There is a lack of information about what ELICOS centres' PD programs actually entail and how successful they are. Do they meet teachers' developmental needs? Do they improve teaching and learning? Are the programs offered research-based and aligning with best practice as recognised by our sector? We simply do not know. This article will summarise what research and professional bodies suggest as best practice for PD programs in TESOL and outline the findings of a research project designed to find out the satisfaction of English language teachers in ELICOS with their own PD.

There has long been a criticism of traditional ways of conducting PD, involving large-scale seminars where experts convey wisdom to passive participants, who all attend the same PD regardless of experience-level, need or interest (Hoban, 2002; Kumaravadivelu, 2012). There is a danger that traditional PD can become overly

general, decontextualised and irrelevant for teachers, making few inroads into real professional learning (Burns, 2017). Certainly, in many centres there has been a move away from lecture-style PD towards a workshop style where participants learn in a more active way. However, the manager might still be the gatekeeper and decision-maker in the PD program and perhaps the 'expert' presenter, and the teachers may all continue to do the same PD, regardless of whether it meets their needs or not. If this is the case, little may have fundamentally changed aside from a few practical activities and reliance may still be on short-term thinking rather than long-term development.

Alternatives to traditional PD come from different directions but are surprisingly complementary. Richards and Farrell (2005) write about *teacher development* as a long-term plan for a teacher's career, where they are able to be reflective and drive their own development based on need. They separate development from *teacher training*, involving compliance for industry standards or required by management. This is an important distinction which is not always clear in our sector: does the PD offered in our centres satisfy teachers' needs or compliance/managers' needs? Others have supported a longer-term view of development grounded in teachers' needs and reflective practice (Burns, 2017; Diaz Maggioli, 2004; Grimmett, 2014; Kumaravadivelu, 2012; Wright, 2010). This aligns with Vygotsky's (1978/2017) views of development as being a long-term, life-long process that is intertwined with learning. Vygotsky's views have influenced the sociocultural movement which promotes a wider view of learning than traditional PD and often emphasises the influence of peers and communities of practice in individual learning (Grimmett, 2014; Johnson & Golombek, 2016; Lave & Wenger, 1991). In sociocultural learning, people learn through social interactions and then internalise what they have learnt, not by reproduction but by transforming external knowledge into something that is uniquely relevant to them (Johnson & Golombek, 2016). The learner autonomy literature reveals that each person learns differently, and that learning occurs through interactions with others as well as self-reflection (Benson, 2011). If we believe in learners having 'the capacity to take control of one's own learning' (Benson, 2011, p. 58), and we accept that teachers are learners when they undertake PD, then teachers should have some say over the direction of their own PD. However, it has been pointed out that teachers are sometimes expected to foster autonomy in their classrooms without having experienced it in teacher training (Kumaravadivelu, 2012; Vieira, 2017) and, we might expect by extension, professional development. This would suggest a disconnect between beliefs about teaching and learning in the English language classroom and staffroom.

Three major frameworks from around the world have drawn on research and thinking

that PD should be more teacher-driven and reflective. English Australia's Continuing Professional Development Framework (English Australia, 2020a) and its companion online tool, the English Language Teachers of Australia Register (ELTAR) (English Australia, 2020d) encourage teachers to set their own goals, pursue them through PD activities, reflect on their progress and share their experiences with colleagues. These tools can be seen to promote teacher autonomy, reflection and collaboration. The English Australia model is built on international models such as the Cambridge English Teaching Framework (Cambridge English Language Assessment, 2018) and the European Profiling Grid (EPG, 2013) which had a similar ethos of teacher-driven goal-setting.

In practice, there are interesting examples of how teacher-driven PD can be applied in centres. One study documented groups of teachers in two TESOL centres, one in Thailand and one in Australia, as they were offered a PD program which focused on teachers' long-term continuous professional development and allowed them more self-direction and control of their PD goals and activities (Chappell & Benson, 2013). Teachers in both contexts felt that there had been positive outcomes for themselves and their learners and enjoyed the collaborative aspect of the new PD programs. A case study of Curtin University shows the evolution of its PD program over three years (English Australia, 2015, pp. 22-25). There is a particular focus in this case study on teacher learning over time, and the gradual transition to more teacher control over professional development. For example, by the third year of the evolving program, peer observations became mentoring opportunities and a chance for the observed teacher to research and decide on the focus of the observation, reflecting and facilitating a workshop based on their reflections. The Teacher's Choice Framework (Diaz Maggioli, 2004) offers an interesting model for a whole-centre PD program, with practical, research-based examples. It discusses how to conduct needs analyses for individuals and centres, set up a collaborative professional community and manage professional development through a committee of stakeholders (including teachers). There are inspiring stories of whole-centre PD programs and their implementation on offer at conferences like the English Australia Conference and the NEAS Management Conference, but they are unfortunately rare in the research literature.

There are, however, many accounts in the literature of the application of individual PD initiatives in centres which offer some interesting insights. Action research has been shown to have sustained effects on teachers' approaches to learning and teaching, allowing participants to develop a 'research perspective' (Edwards & Burns, 2016, p. 13) which can be used to critically evaluate classroom situations and materials. An important element of action research is the focus on reflective practice, a field that has been influential in teacher training and professional development recommendations

(Farrell, 2016). In reflective practice, teachers systematically analyse their own teaching practice and beliefs and use this information to make informed decisions, which many teachers have found to be helpful in gaining awareness about their own practice (Farrell, 2016). Other examples of teacher-driven PD which have been shown to be beneficial for teacher development are professional learning communities, which promote group reflection (Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008), peer coaching (Ostovar-Nameghi & Sheikhahmadi, 2016), exploratory practice (Benson, Chehade, Lara, Sayram, & Speer, 2018) and peer observation and collaborative problem solving through 'critical friends' groups (Vo & Nguyen, 2010). Communities of practice have emerged from sociocultural theory as a model for PD to occur through the social interaction of members of the community. The idea is a kind of apprenticeship model where newer members learn from more experienced members of the community (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Collaborative PD can make teachers feel as though they are part of a community (Ostovar-Nameghi & Sheikhahmadi, 2016) and have positive effects on their motivation (Vo & Nguyen, 2010). Ultimately, there are many different kinds of beneficial professional development activities; limiting opportunities to whole-staff seminars or workshops restricts other opportunities for longer-term, meaningful learning.

The lack of research into whole-centre PD programs as well as the absence of teacher voices in the research around PD inspired this research project. Empowering teachers to drive their own PD means involving them much more in PD programs, from conception to evaluation (Diaz Maggioli, 2004). This project aimed to illuminate teachers' voices by discovering their perspectives on PD and finding out what they would like in future PD programs.

## *The study*

The study was conducted over the course of a year as part of a Master of Research at Macquarie University with Phil Chappell as supervisor and collaborator. The findings were documented in a thesis (Reed, 2019).

### Context

The study was designed for English language teachers in Australian ELICOS centres. It was expected that the recent introduction of the English Australia CPD Framework might have impacted these centres. The commonality of English Australia being the peak body and some similarities between ELICOS courses meant that it was easier to compare responses from this group rather than including teachers from a wider group.

### Design

There were two phases of the study: an initial background survey of teachers and in-depth semi-structured interviews. The survey was designed in Qualtrics, was quick to

complete (less than 10 minutes) and focused on teachers' current experiences, beliefs and attitudes to PD and desired PD programs (see Appendix A). Likert-style, multiple-choice and open-ended questions were used. Teachers were asked if they would like to self-select for an interview and 10 were chosen by the researcher. The interviews were conducted in four locations (Melbourne, Sydney, Canberra and Brisbane) over two months. They lasted approximately one hour and the interview questions were divided into two parts: 'current experiences' and 'desired PD programs' (see Appendix B). A visual representation of the interviewees' desired PD program, through a mind map, was co-constructed with the interviewer (see Appendix C).

**Research focus**

The project was aimed at understanding teachers' experiences of professional development, their beliefs and attitudes towards teacher autonomy in PD and their ideal professional development programs.

**Participants**

The survey used voluntary sampling, through ELICOS centres and social media, to recruit participants. Managers of ELICOS centres received an email about the study and staffroom posters. A short description was posted in the #AusELT Facebook group (https://www.facebook.com/groups/AusELT/), a large community of English language teachers. Survey participants were required to be English language teachers who were currently employed. Some teachers from non-ELICOS centres in Australia enquired about the study and were allowed to participate. However, in the end, only teachers at ELICOS centres completed the survey and this has made it easier to compare responses.

A great diversity of teachers was represented in the survey. Of 158 respondents, 109 met the criteria above and 92 completed the survey. The respondents from around Australia taught at a variety of centres including university English language centres, private centres and intensive English centres attached to high schools. More experienced teachers responded than other groups (44% had more than 10 years' experience) and full-time, part-time, contract and casual staff took part.

About half of the survey respondents volunteered to be interviewed and, of those, 10 were chosen. As one aim of this study was to explore a diverse group of teachers' voices, selection was based on the greatest number of variables possible, including demographic factors, experience level, qualifications, centre type, attitudes towards PD, and PD offerings at their centres. Interviewees came from Sydney and Melbourne (three each) and Brisbane and Canberra (two each). Survey respondents and interviewees have been given pseudonyms in order to protect their identities. For some general information about the interviewees' backgrounds, see Appendix D.

### Data collection and analysis

The data sources for this study are survey responses, interview transcripts, mind maps and the lead author's reflective journals. The timeline for the project was as follows:

**Table 1**
***Project Timeline 2019***

| | |
|---|---|
| January-February | Planning and ethics approval |
| | Survey piloting |
| March-April | Survey promotion, release and collection of data |
| | Initial survey data analysis |
| May-June | Conduct interviews (Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra, Brisbane) |
| July- August | Data analysis |
| September-December | Findings written up in thesis |

Survey responses were analysed in Qualtrics, which gives some simple statistics and an overview of responses. Open survey questions were analysed in NVivo, a data analysis software. This was also used to analyse interview transcripts, mind maps and the interviewer's reflective journals. NVivo allows users to analyse data from large to small or small to large, i.e., to choose whether to begin with the forest or the trees (Bazeley, 2013). Due to the time constraints on this project and the importance of focusing on information directly relevant to the research questions, an outside-in approach was used, where data was categorised according to the three research questions, and then subsequent sweeps of the data identified emerging sub-themes.

In order to gain in-depth insight into participants' experiences, a qualitative methodology was used. This involves the researcher and the participants jointly constructing understandings to the questions being asked (Croker, 2009; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Mind maps used in this study demonstrate the co-creation of data, as the interviewee gave instructions for the creation of the mind maps which were carried out by the researcher drawing the mind map. The mind maps were checked throughout the process of creation and function as a kind of on-the-spot 'member check' (Shenton, 2004, p. 68), where interviewees could confirm that what was being documented reflected their intentions. Mind maps added an extra dimension to the data, allowing participants to conceptualise and describe their ideal PD programs. Reflective journals can be used by researchers to consider their own position and thought process throughout a research project (Roulston, 2010), increasing the rigour and quality of the research (Mann, 2016). The journal entries written by the lead author throughout the project were thematically analysed along with other data sources and helped in the development of the recommendations given here.

There is no attempt to generalise the findings of this study across all ELICOS teachers. Instead, this study illuminates the views of some teachers which may shed light on some areas to consider when planning PD. The findings, combined with research on best practice, have been used to make recommendations, which managers and teachers can apply in ways that are relevant to their own individual and centres' needs.

### *Findings and discussion*

Most participants in this study experienced a modified version of traditional PD, which we will call *traditional PD+.* Traditional PD+ entailed top-down, management-run PD programs for all staff, which mostly consisted of regular workshops or seminars with the occasional opportunity for peer observation or another activity. The finding that this was the most common experience is consistent with researchers who have suggested that most PD in TESOL is still very traditional (Burns, 2017; Diaz Maggioli, 2012). Teachers experiencing a program of traditional PD+ were somewhat satisfied with their programs; there was an overall appreciation of the regularity of sessions, but participants did not find all sessions were relevant to their goals or teaching context. Others, like Vivian, found PD sessions repetitive, involving ' . . . an awful lot of sort-of lolly sticks and pieces of paper on the floor and things like that.'

Participants who experienced greater autonomy in their own PD were more satisfied with their development. These participants could set their own goals with a manager, had options about PD activities to complete, and had a long-term vision for their own development. They had control over many facets of their own development and felt that they were supported to challenge themselves, explore areas of interest and solve classroom challenges. The long-term focus and flexibility of their programs allowed them to integrate PD into everyday activities, collaborate with others and find ways to meet their goals in new and innovative ways. Teachers in this group defined PD differently from other participants, seeing PD as embedded in their working lives as opposed to an extra activity, as 'part of my professional practice as a teacher' (Mona, interviewee). Unfortunately, this group was a very small sample of those who participated.

A final group had limited PD options available in their centres, and were the least satisfied with PD. Jesse, for example, said that 'the only PD we really have is being observed by our manager every so often.' Teachers in this category were expected to find their own PD, which ostensibly suggests a recognition of their ability to drive their own PD and view of them as autonomous learners. However, in reality, the teachers experienced significant barriers in completing PD. In these centres, the lack of managerial support for PD, time to complete PD, and funding to allow for a variety of PD options, all contributed to limited options and dissatisfaction with

the PD programs. The barriers of time and funding faced by these teachers also emerged as a theme with other participants in the study, although they were less severely affected. This finding is consistent with other research on the vital nature of institutional support for PD (Edwards & Burns, 2016).

### *Key recommendations*

The eight points below came out of the research project as practical recommendations for managers and teachers to jointly establish a whole-centre professional development program which would meet teachers' development needs.

**1. Involve teachers in PD planning, especially through teacher-led committees**

If teachers are to feel ownership of their PD program, it is important to include teachers' voices in the planning stage of PD. The strongest way to implement this would be for teachers to be involved in the management of the centre's PD program, as per Diaz-Maggioli's model of a collaborative committee (2004). In her interview, Mona described a variety of models that had been used in her centre to plan and manage PD, but fondly remembered the time that a teachers' committee ran it, as it then had the teachers' needs at heart and passionately advocated for the development needs of the staff. She believed that a diverse committee should be formed again which would lead to 'more bottom-up stuff going on.' Many participants' programs were run by their manager(s), often without teacher input. While managers have teaching experience and hopefully a good understanding of their staff, a planning committee is more likely to be able to represent the needs of the whole centre. In addition, the collaborative aspect of planning can help provide leadership opportunities for teachers, which is in itself a form of development.

**2. Provide mechanisms for regular teacher feedback on the PD program**

The evaluation of a centre's professional development program is an integral part of discovering and improving its effectiveness. If teachers are seldom asked about their experiences of the PD program and their perceptions about its impact on their teaching or working lives, it is doubtful that managers will be able to ascertain whether or not it is meeting their needs. It is important to distinguish teacher evaluation of PD from key performance indicators or standardised industry requirements which can be a feature of more management or corporate-centred PD (Burns, 2017). One survey respondent felt that 'what passes for PD is mostly trying to keep up with compliance and auditors' requests', demonstrating the problem with evaluating PD simply by its alignment with requirements rather than actual effectiveness for teachers. Most teachers interviewed for this study had no formal mechanism for teachers to evaluate or provide input into the current PD program, even in a rudimentary way, such as evaluation slips after a PD session or a yearly review. It is important to provide more

transparent means for evaluation of PD which allow teachers to give honest feedback, perhaps through providing the option of anonymity.

### 3. Initiate individual PD programs negotiated between teacher and manager, where the manager facilitates the developing autonomy of the teacher

Teachers who were the most satisfied with their PD programs in this study were able to discuss their development goals with their manager and create a bespoke program which fitted their needs. Crucially, managers (and other colleagues and senior teachers) provided support during the practical steps to work on these goals between meetings. In Sean's words, 'what works is a supportive system within which you actually just check or assess or help people to develop' through planning individual and collaborative goals and checking in regularly. Some teachers interviewed were encouraged to pursue their own goals, or sent communications about PD opportunities, but were not given ongoing support to make concrete plans, carry out or evaluate their PD activities. The result was that in some places a very limited amount of PD was taking place, presumably because teachers needed more support and scaffolding to achieve their goals.

In addition, successful programs followed a learning cycle from developing goals to undertaking appropriate, staged PD activities to help meet their goals, followed by reflection and evaluation of the process. Without this learning cycle, teachers focused on the activities themselves rather than the outcome: in other words, the completion of PD activities was the aim, rather than what the teacher learnt and how that related to the teacher's long-term development goals. These important steps of deliberately planning PD for learning, and reflecting on it afterward, should be embedded in the PD program. The EA CPD Framework offers an excellent model of this process (English Australia, 2020b). Many participants were aware of the framework, but important aspects of goal-setting and reflection were ignored with the main focus on achieving points. At an institutional level, centres can assist teachers to work through the important stages of the framework and focus on long-term development.

### 4. Set a PD expectation with teachers, with flexible options on how to meet goals

Flexibility emerged as an important factor for teachers in their PD programs. The predominant sentiment of teachers in this study was that compulsory PD activities were demotivating. As Amy said in her interview, 'I don't think it should be compulsory . . . whenever you're forced to do something then maybe your interest also decreases.' However, all the teachers interviewed believed that PD was an important part of their practice and were therefore in agreement with an overall PD expectation. The recommendations in the EA CPD Framework of the number of PD points that a full-

time teacher may strive to reach in a year (English Australia, 2020c), could be a good starting point for centres to use as a guide. In addition, flexible study options such as learning online or at different times or different ways would assist teachers to meet their PD goals on their own terms.

**5. Support teacher access to PD through funding, time and energy**

Even where teachers in the study were theoretically able to undertake individualised PD, a lack of funding, time and managerial support were significant barriers to autonomy. One participant in the study, Millie, was encouraged to follow her goals through the EA CPD Framework. She describes the situation in this way: 'What we are encouraged to do is to go to the English Australia website and have a look at the PDs they have . . . there's no money to travel around for PD so they advise us to do webinars.' However, Millie preferred to learn through sharing and collaborating with others, and there was no time or management support available to pursue PD goals, so she had completed little PD over the previous years. Conversely, teachers who had funding available, either through an individual allocation or through application to their managers, found that it helped them to attend external events and complete further qualifications.

Many teachers discussed the difficulty of finding time for PD while juggling an increasing list of teaching and non-teaching responsibilities. A common issue was that accommodating PD into an already packed schedule was stressful. 'There's always the issue of time and being time-poor, so sometimes people feel a bit under pressure' (Wendy, interviewee). Others found that even when they enjoyed PD, completing it left less time for other activities. Stella said that 'while I was doing this [action research], I fell really behind in my other classes.' This was echoed by Vivian, who remembered a PD session she attended being 'great . . . but all I could think about was all the marking that was on my desk.' She concluded by saying that 'timing is important.' Interestingly, this seemed to be less of an issue where more flexible options were available about how teachers undertook PD. Teachers in flexible programs were continuously working on PD goals throughout their week in small steps, sometimes alone, sometimes collaboratively with other teachers or their students, in a continuous process of learning. Teachers experiencing traditional PD were more likely to see PD as a separate event or responsibility and sometimes a burden depending on the relevance and timing of the expected PD activities.

**6. Preference PD options that are collaborative and teacher-led, including action research and communities of practice**

As discussed in the introduction, there is considerable support for more collaborative long-term approaches to PD, building on sociocultural approaches to learning such as

communities of practice. In this study, sharing and collaborating, both formally and informally, were seen by teachers to be very effective, if not the most effective ways of learning. This sentiment was explained by one survey respondent who believed that 'all centres need to recognise that REAL development often happens in an informal sense – through reflection or simply through chatting/socialising with colleagues who are of a generous and open nature, rather than bitter and jaded.' By far the most common PD activity of the participants in this study was seminars or workshops, with interactive workshops considered to be more useful than lecture-style seminars provided by a manager. However, there are a plethora of other activities which could make more use of collaboration and draw on teachers' knowledge and experience. These include collaborative action research, teacher discussion groups, team teaching and peer observation. Additionally, one-off sessions do not provide as many benefits as long-term professional development (Burns, 2017), and any sessions should be in the context of teachers' overall PD goals.

**7. Embed ongoing PD into all aspects of practice throughout the institution**

Teachers in the study who experienced individualised professional development described PD as part of the culture of their centres. Sean said that PD was part of the 'ecosystem', 'the process' and 'the environment' of his centre. Because teachers like Sean could follow their development goals during their normal classroom and out-of-class activities as well as pursue some extra activities they believed to be important, everything that they did became part of PD. From these teachers' perspectives, they were part of an organisational culture of PD. If centres are striving to achieve this, then seeing PD as a continuous process that is meaningful to each teacher, rather than a series of events per year, may assist in achieving this vision.

**8. Value and promote teacher leadership through mentoring**

As teachers become more experienced and autonomous through their classroom practice and development, they can become role models and leaders in their centres. In order to take full advantage of the wealth of lived experience these teachers can offer to others, they need to be mentored and encouraged throughout their careers. In this study, centres which offered ample opportunities for teachers to become involved in new projects and professional development at all stages of their career kept teachers engaged, motivated and challenged. Because structures already existed where teachers could periodically discuss their development, there was a greater feeling that the manager was involved with their development and invested in them as teachers and people. Several teachers mentioned being encouraged by their managers to step outside their comfort zones, leading to positive results, particularly in the cases of action research. Jesse said that his manager had 'really pushed us to do the action research', which had given him a 'new perspective on just

what your job is as a teacher.' In some centres, managers demonstrated how much they valued teachers' development activities by including the results of their action research into their curriculum or processes. The valuing of teacher development in this way has benefits for both the teacher and the centre but is often not capitalised on (Edwards, 2018).

It was a common experience in this study for teachers to attend seminars run by other teachers. Most teachers found this to be a positive experience as these sessions were often practical and classroom-focused. However, there were often no other opportunities for teachers to use their considerable knowledge to assist other teachers with different skillsets or less experience, for example through mentoring, facilitating a discussion group or being part of an organisational committee. Some experienced teachers interviewed in the study expressed some frustration that they had never been asked to run a session in an area they knew well, highlighting the lack of agency for teachers in those centres. This seems to be a wasted resource when experienced teachers can be so valuable to the fabric of the staffroom and the development of others, and may gain considerable satisfaction from doing so.

## Conclusion

While this is a small study, it gives an interesting insight into the perspectives of teachers in professional development programs in ELICOS centres. It also aligns with research and literature into best practice for PD involving more autonomy for teachers, greater program flexibility, collaboration and reflection. Professional development can be a valuable tool for teachers and managers to create lasting, positive change in centres. Each centre needs to consider whether their PD program is genuinely meeting the collective and individual needs of teachers and the centre as a whole.

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## Appendix A
## Online Survey

**Consent**

Dear survey participant,

This survey is part of a study about professional development for teachers in English Language Centres. We are interested in finding out how teachers feel about professional development and how much control and choice they have over professional development in their workplaces.

The study is a Master of Research project by Melissa Reed, supervised by Dr Philip Chappell of the Department of Linguistics, Macquarie University, Sydney.

The survey should take less than 15 minutes to complete and your responses will be private. At the end of the survey, you can go into the draw to win a $50 gift card, if you choose.

Thank you for your time in completing the survey. We hope that its results will highlight teachers' voices in professional development. If you would like a summary of the research project on its completion, please email Melissa Reed.

*I have read and understood the information above and I would like to continue to the survey.*

Yes

No

Introductory questions

*What is your main occupation?*
Teacher of English

Academic Manager

Other

*Are you currently employed in an English Language Centre in Australia which offers intensive courses to overseas students and/or migrants?*
Yes, I am employed in 1 English Language Centre

Yes, I am employed in 2 or more English Language Centres

No, I am not employed in an English Language Centre

**Importance of PD**

*How important is ongoing professional development for you?*
Very important

Moderately important

Not important

**Professional development activities**

*Roughly how much time per month do you spend on professional development activities?*
Less than 1 hour per month

1-5 hours per month

6-10 hours per month

11-15 hours per month

More than 15 hours per month

*Over the last year, have you participated in the following professional development activities?*

*Please select each activity you have participated in.*
Attended a seminar or workshop in my own centre

Attended an external seminar/workshop/conference

Took part in a webinar

Presented a seminar or workshop in my own centre

Presented a seminar or workshop externally

Participated in an action research project

Read a journal article/online article/book relevant to my teaching

Participated in an online forum for teachers

Written a reflective diary

Engaged in a teacher discussion group in my centre

Participated in a teacher meet-up outside of my centre

Been involved in peer observation

Been involved in the planning of professional development activities at my centre

Other professional development activity (please specify)

**Your English Language Centre**

*These questions are about what currently happens in your centre. If you are working at more than one centre, please answer about the centre where you spend the most time.*

*Please rate the following statements about the professional development activities at your centre from strongly agree to strongly disagree.* [5-point Likert scale was provided]

- Participating in professional development activities is expected at my centre
- I have adequate time to complete professional development at my centre
- The management of the centre is supportive of my professional development
- I have choices about what professional development I complete
- Professional development activities offered at my centre are relevant to my teaching needs
- Teachers and managers work together on professional development goals
- Teachers support each other in their professional development
- I create professional development opportunities myself

*What is the best thing about your centre's professional development program?* [open answer-box provided]

*What would you like to change about your centre's professional development program?* [open answer-box provided]

**Opinions about professional development**

*The following are statements about how you feel about professional development and what you would like in your professional development program.*

*Please select the answer which most closely fits your feelings from strongly agree to strongly disagree.*

- Managers should decide on the professional development activities of teachers
- Teachers should have their own individual professional development programs
- Teacher discussion groups are a valuable way to share information
- Teachers can improve by reflecting on their own practice
- I prefer a structured professional development program in place at work
- I value research conducted by teachers in their classrooms (action research)
- Teachers can run effective professional development themselves

- It is important to have flexibility and choice about professional development
- Teachers need to create their own networks (online or in real life)

**Demographics**

[Multiple choice options were provided for each of the following questions but were omitted in this article for space reasons]

*What is your gender?*

*What is your age range?*

*Select the qualications that you have attained relating to English language teaching (for example in education, linguistics, TESOL or another related qualification). You can select more than one answer.*

*How long have you been teaching for (including teaching children or other subjects)?*

*How long have you been teaching in an English Language Centre?*

**Optional**

[Full instructions/explanation provided in survey]

- Enter details for draw to win 1 of 5 $50 gift cards
- Enter details for possible future interview

## Appendix B

## Interview Guide

**Briefing**

- Explain purpose of the interview – find out teachers' views on PD. What their experiences are and what they would like in a PD program
- Remind them about audio recording
- Tell interviewee that the interview will be confidential, they do not need to mention the name of their school and any identifying information will not be used in publication
- Provide consent form and give time to read and sign
- Remind them that they do not have to answer any question and they can stop at any time

**Introductory**

- Could you tell me a bit about yourself?
- How did you become an English language teacher?
- What does professional development mean to you?

**PD activities**

- Can you tell me a bit more about your centre's PD program? (Flexibility? Autonomy? Collaboration? Time? Reward?)
- How do you feel about this program?
- Do you do any other PD activities aside from this program? (Details?)

**Experiences of PD**

- Can you tell me about the most rewarding professional development experience you have had?
- And the least rewarding?
- Has doing professional development had any impact on your teaching/any other aspects of your working life?
- How does the workplace culture at your centre affect your professional development?

**Ideal PD program**

Now we're going to brainstorm a bit about what you would like to see in a professional development program for you – your ideal PD program. We're going to work on a mind map together. I'll draw the mind map with your ideas.

So first:

- What are the most important aspects of a PD program for you?

*Draw big bubble with PD program, draw smaller bubbles around it with keywords*

Elaborate on keywords:

- What does this mean?
- Who would you do this with?

Become more specific. Activities? Time? Collaboration? Autonomy? Flexibility?

- What else would be important in your ideal PD program?

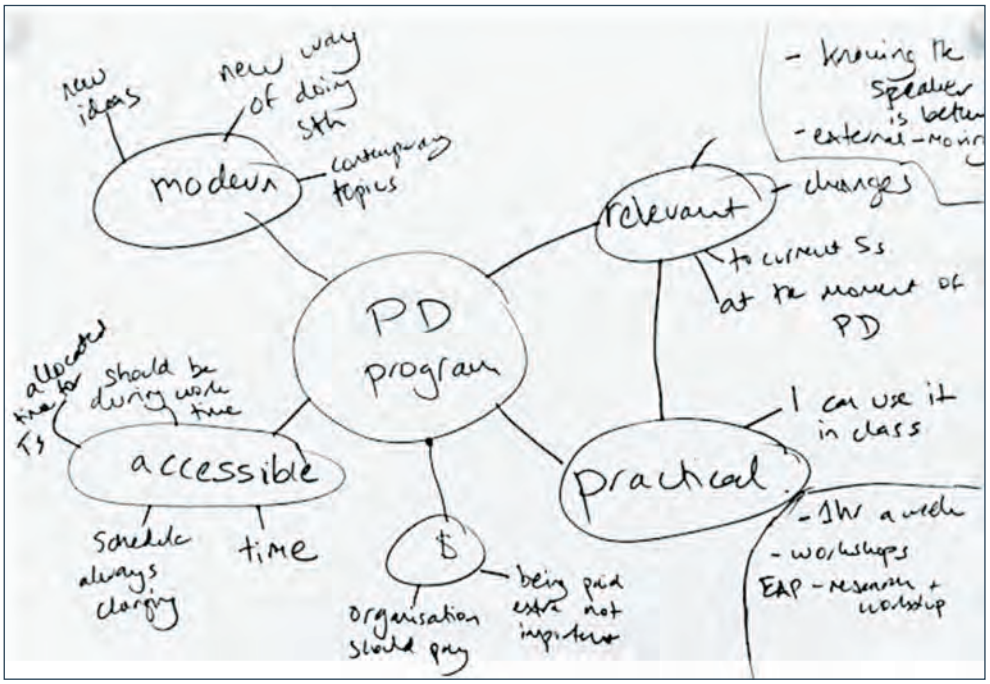
Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about PD that we haven't already talked about?

Thank you for your time.

Give gift card and sign.

## Appendix C

### Example Mind Map (Millie)




## Appendix D

### Interviewee Information

| Pseudonym | Employment type | College size | College type |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Amy** | Permanent part-time | Medium | University English Language Centre (ELC) |
| **Greg** | Casual | Large | Private ELICOS centre |
| **Jesse** | Fixed-term contract | Small | TAFE |
| **Millie** | Permanent part-time | Small | University ELC |
| **Mona** | Permanent full-time | Large | University ELC |
| **Sean** | Permanent full-time | Large | University ELC |
| **Stella** | Permanent full-time | Small | Intensive English Centre attached to a high school |
| **Tia** | Casual | Medium | Private ELICOS centre |
| **Vivian** | Fixed-term contract | Medium | Private ELICOS centre |
| **Wendy** | Permanent part-time | Small | TAFE |