

# Enhancing Teachers' Knowledge Base of L2 Oral Communication Pedagogy: Reflective Practices of an Online Teacher Educator

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*Over the decades, research into TESOL teacher education has grown considerably; yet studies focusing on the learning development of TESOL teacher educators remains curiously limited. With a specific focus on a postgraduate subject on second language (L2) oral communication and pedagogy, this article explores the reflective practices of a teacher educator during the subject's redevelopment. Shulman's (1986, 1987) categories of teacher knowledge are used to frame the analysis of the data collected which included three separate student surveys and two peer observations. Findings revealed that students and peers were largely satisfied with the development of the subject, highlighting a number of positive points about the teacher educator's subject matter, content knowledge, curriculum knowledge, knowledge of learners, and pedagogical content knowledge. However, further critical comments also provided greater insights into how to further enhance both subject delivery and student engagement.*

## **Key words**

Teacher educator knowledge; L2 teacher knowledge; L2 teacher education; reflective practice; L2 oral communication

## **Introduction**

In my more than six years as Academic Program Director, overseeing Postgraduate (PG) programs, including Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) programs and other specialisations, several issues have come to my attention. But the one issue of most relevance to this article is how to teach such a diverse range of students who are, or will be, English as an Additional Language/Dialect (EAL/D) teachers in a way that will enhance their critical thinking skills. These students form a continuum of inexperienced to the highly qualified, and come from the state school system (primary or secondary) tertiary English for Academic Purposes programs, early migrant programs, and private language institutions, among others. Some are

Australian students who have never taught before, while others are international students who are highly experienced EFL teachers overseas, or another mix of characteristics. They may be monolingual, bilingual, or multilingual, and have diverse English proficiencies. This group presents a significant challenge: if you give lectures that are too linguistically complex, you may lose the less proficient listeners; if they are too simple, you may frustrate the proficient ones; if you give long lectures to appease those who wish to passively listen, you may lose those who have insufficient listening skills to cope with long monologues.

O’Grady and Cottle (2015) ask the confronting question: ‘What is the point of education?’ (p. 206). From a frog’s-eye view, the answer to this question might simply be to make students ‘job ready’. However, as O’Grady and Cottle argue, this type of focus ‘leads to an approach which limits the opportunities for education to encourage learning as a community endeavour, where ideas are shared, hope exists and there is the inspiration and dream of a society which is socially just, creating space for social mobility and community cohesion’ (p. 206). At the PG level in particular, TESOL education is more than just preparing the teacher for the workplace. From a bird’s eye view, a PG qualification represents an ability to think more critically; it is the ability to adapt and respond to an ever-changing field and conditions. PG students need to be able to proactively design and develop solutions or pathways forward that will lead to positive outcomes for ever-increasingly more diverse groups of learners. PG students need to become, as Oates (2015) posits, ‘active, confident, assertive and contributing member[s] of society’ (p. 161), in this case within EAL/D educational contexts. This includes me as a TESOL teacher educator.

Thus, in my TESOL subject on L2 Oral Communication and Pedagogy, this is to some extent what I attempted to do. As part of my regular revitalisation of the subject (but especially in response to COVID-19 and the need to teach almost entirely online), I aimed to more effectively intertwine the most important aspects of what constitutes effective L2 oral communication (listening, speaking, and pronunciation) pedagogy with an advanced level of critical thinking skills. I wished for students to cultivate an enhanced ability to seek out, understand, and reflect on quality empirical research, and to integrate that understanding into more effective pedagogical practices in their own L2 classrooms. However, to meet these objectives and to enhance my own effectiveness as an L2 educator, I felt it was equally important to take a closer look and reflect strongly on my own teaching practices.

With this background in mind, this paper explores my reflective practices as a TESOL teacher educator during the redevelopment of a primarily online subject on L2 oral communication and pedagogy. The first aim of this paper was to examine and take on board both peer and students’ perspectives in this redevelopment. The second

aim was to generate an analytical tool for teacher educators to examine those perspectives. This second aim was particularly important. L2 teacher educators of L2 oral communication need to place greater emphasis on assessing and questioning their own practices, especially now that the field has identified its value to teacher education (to be discussed in detail below). The third aim was to share the findings from this reflective research to support other educators in addressing similar issues in their own programs.

### ***Teacher Education and L2 Oral Communication Pedagogy***

As the teaching of oral communication (OC) skills is considered a priority for L2 learners of English (Goh & Burns, 2012), teacher development in this area is essential. Although several OC-focused TESOL methodology books are available (e.g., Bailey, 2020; Goh & Burns, 2012; Hughes, 2002; Levis, Derwing, & Sonsaat-Hegelheimer, 2022; Newton & Nation, 2021; Reed & Jones, 2022; Vandergrift & Goh, 2012), a review of the literature has revealed relatively limited research or scholarly literature on teacher education and L2 OC (Chen & Goh, 2014; Murphy, 1991), and most have typically focused on only one aspect of L2 OC, namely pronunciation pedagogy (Baker, 2021; Burri, Baker & Chen, 2018; Brinton, 2018; Couper, 2017, 2021; Murphy, 1997). To date, however, scholarly literature specifically focused on online learning in this content area of L2 teacher education does not appear to exist. Yet, with the significant demand for online learning due in part to the COVID-19 pandemic, delivery of quality online TESOL teacher education has become increasingly more important (see, for example, Mona, Alrafeea, & Abdulbasit, 2021; Walker, Mahon, & Dray, 2021 for further discussion).

Unlike research into second language teacher education, studies focusing on the learning of teacher educators are limited. Freeman, Webre and Epperson (2019) argue that '[w]hat we generally refer to as "training of trainers" activities that are intended to move individuals from their roles as teachers to new ones as teachers of teaching, assume a type of learning process that has not been researched' (p. 22). It is the purpose of this article to provide insight into this learning process by examining my experience of enhancing how I teach teachers through a process of collaborative reflective practice. It has long been accepted that teachers who reflect on and gain insights into their own instructional decisions and practices will subsequently become better practitioners through enhanced professional growth (Richards & Lockhart, 1996; Farrell, 2016, 2021); such thinking would thus also apply to teacher educators.

Reflective practice in TESOL education programs has gradually become commonplace over the past decades, but the reflective practices of TESOL university academics

with respect to the subjects they teach are largely unexplored, with only a few exceptions (e.g., Fraser, 2021), and perhaps, as far as I am aware, nothing in the area of online education. Fraser (2021) observed that ‘we may be doing our students a disservice by not fully understanding some assessable concepts that we take for granted, such as critical reflection’ (p. 209). Effective teachers model the practices for which they advocate, and thus including peers and students in this reflective process is an integral component to teacher educator learning. Thus, I engaged in a form of reflective practice that would encompass at least some of this, eliciting feedback from peers who have achieved prominent status as exceptional teachers in the university. I also elicited the perspectives of students to gain an alternative perspective of my teaching practice. This research design aligns with Farrell’s (2015) broad definition of reflective practice as ‘a cognitive process accompanied by a set of attitudes in which teachers systematically collect data about their practice, and while engaging in dialogue with others, use the data to make informed decisions about their practice both inside and outside the classroom’ (p. 123).

### ***Teacher Knowledge base of L2 Oral Communication Pedagogy***

As part of this process of reflective practice in subject development, answering the question of what teachers need to know to teach L2 OC effectively was key. Similarly, what teacher educators need to know to teach teachers how to teach L2 OC successfully is an equally important question. Shulman’s (1986, 1987) widely recognised teacher knowledge framework provides a solid base for answering these questions. This conceptual framework has been used in numerous studies of both L2 teacher knowledge (e.g., Baker, 2014; Shi, Baker & Chen, 2019; Gatbonton, 2008; Gordon, 2019; Johnston & Goettsch, 2000) and L1 teacher knowledge across a variety of discipline areas (e.g., Ben-Peretz, 2011; Herold, 2019; Hill, Shilling, & Ball, 2004; Justi & van Driel, 2005). Shulman proposed seven categories of teacher knowledge, most of which can be directly linked to aspects of L2 OC pedagogy:

- General pedagogical knowledge (e.g., classroom management)
- Subject matter content knowledge (e.g., knowledge of oral language and skills such as the key components of pronunciation, speaking and listening)
- Pedagogical content knowledge (e.g., knowledge of how to teach oral language and skills using an appropriate selection of explanations, examples, and techniques)
- Curriculum knowledge (e.g., how does OC fit amongst other skill areas and/or content areas in the L2 curriculum)

- Knowledge of learners and their characteristics (e.g., understanding what the specific strengths and weaknesses L2 students may have with OC skills)
- Knowledge of educational contexts (e.g., understanding the dynamics and importance of OC in a community-based language school vs. intensive language program for tertiary education)
- Knowledge of educational ends, purposes, and values, and their philosophical and historical grounds.

From the perspective of the TESOL teacher educator of L2 OC and pedagogy, however, the specifics of the knowledge base must also change. I will thus focus on the four most relevant here:

- Subject matter content knowledge (SMCK): Here, SMCK is both the knowledge of oral language and skills AND how to teach them to L2 learners;
- Pedagogical content knowledge (PCK): Here PCK focuses on how to effectively teach EAL/D teachers how to teach L2 oral language and skills;
- Curriculum knowledge (CK): Here CK focuses on how OC pedagogy fits either amongst other subjects in a TESOL teacher education program and/or within a single subject;
- Knowledge of learners and their characteristics (KOL): Here KOL focuses on understanding the needs and backgrounds of adult learners who may be experienced or novice TESOL teachers, international or domestic teachers, and who may teach across different age ranges and educational contexts.

A subject devoted to OC in a TESOL degree program thus encompasses both: the knowledge base of the EAL/D teacher and the knowledge base of the TESOL teacher educator.

### ***Methodology***

This paper represents a self-reflective, exploratory case study aimed at tracing my thought processes as a teacher educator in the redevelopment of a subject called L2 Oral Communication and Pedagogy. Exploratory case studies are data driven and can provide new insights based on the experiences of the participant(s) (Duff, 2008), in this case myself. In the field of TESOL, they have been used to trace the reflective journeys of teachers during various aspects of their teaching experiences (e.g., Farrell & Kennedy, 2019; Key & Swartzendruber, 2021).

### **Teaching Context**

This is an elective subject in the various degree programs of postgraduate TESOL. These programs include: Graduate Certificate in TESOL, Graduate Diploma in TESOL, Master of Education (TESOL), and Master of Education Extension (TESOL). At the time this study took place, there were 26 on-campus students (21 of whom were international students) and 28 distance students enrolled (three of whom were international students) in the subject: a total of 54 students.

In Autumn 2021, I needed to redevelop the subject due to difficulties experienced in the previous year as a result of COVID-19 and the fact that the textbook that was used was only available in hard copy and virtually unattainable given the shipping delays. The situation was further complicated by having to address the need to provide remote access to both on-campus and online students.

### **My Philosophy of Teaching**

Underlying the redevelopment of the subject is my philosophy of teaching which is based on research-informed pedagogical beliefs that are further influenced by more than 20 years in TESOL education. This philosophy is characterised by inclusive practices and an empathetic, reflective and mentoring approach to teaching that recognises diversity in multiple types of educational contexts. I feel it is important to understand how learners learn, whether international or domestic, online or on-campus, or first or additional language/dialect speakers of English. I value being empathetic to their cultural and language needs and overall wellbeing, while at the same time having sufficient pedagogical knowledge to successfully teach, assess, and provide feedback to such a diverse range of learners. My philosophy of education focuses on the notions of student knowledge development and empowerment in the learning process. Providing opportunities for students to generate knowledge and to share this knowledge with peers is an important component of my teaching. Finally, I place heavy emphasis on teaching both theory and practice, thus enabling students to make clear connections between the two and relating both to their current/future careers as teachers.

### **Subject Design**

Based on my philosophy of teaching, my view of what constitutes a teacher's knowledge base of L2 OC and pedagogy, and my own knowledge base as a teacher educator, I re-designed the subject. The re-development of this subject was multi-pronged and reflective. It was achieved logistically via a Moodle platform and the creation of a series of weekly online 'learning books' which integrate both text-based and audio/video material along with interactive online activities. Moodle discussion forums and Q&A Zoom sessions were also used to communicate and discuss content.

The two student cohorts (on-campus; distance) shared the same Moodle site for content, but interacted separately in their own discussion forums to make peer-to-peer and lecturer-peer interaction more manageable throughout the semester. The subject also commenced with a Flipgrid introduction where all students could post introductory videos to achieve a more personal and interactive start to the semester.

The subject was designed around the topics listed below. For the purpose of data analysis to be discussed later, each topic is linked to Shulman's categories of teacher knowledge; students were not apprised of these links.

1. Understanding the listener/speaker (KOL)
2. Oral language: grammar, vocabulary & pronunciation (SMCK)
3. Oral language: discourse, genre, pragmatics (& politeness) (SMCK)
4. Speaking/listening processes & skills (SMCK)
5. Approaches to course design & assessment (PCK, CK)
6. Listening (SMCK & PCK)
7. Developing L2 OC pedagogy (PCK, CK)
8. Language-focused learning (PCK)
9. Designing & evaluating materials (PCK)
10. Access to fluent communication (PCK)
11. Exploring recent issues in L2 OC (KOL, SMCK, & PCK)
12. Final discussion (KOL, SMCK, & PCK)

There were three main assessment task types in the subject, each again aligned with Shulman's categories of knowledge:

1. Essay (KOL, SMCK) – Write an essay about a target group of learners (a class), focusing specifically on their learning needs and strengths in relation to their OC skills in English.
2. Discussion & reflection through discussion forums (KOL, SMCK & PCK)
3. Professional task—Unit design, rationale & poster (PCK, CK)

The assessments have three overarching purposes:

- Be practical – involve tasks that expand teachers’ KOL, SMCK, PCK and CK that they can then use to enhance their teaching practices;
- Be innovative – push students, many of whom have been teachers for a number of years, to move beyond what they have been doing for many years and introduce new practices into their classrooms;
- Be scholastically sound – develop students’ understanding of why they make the choices they make and be able to seek out and apply findings/ conclusions from empirical research/scholarly literature to determine best practices for their specific teachings, as expected at the PG level.

Of the tasks, the second task is the main focus of this paper as it is the most interactive assessment task, requiring students to engage with each other. This task involved participation in five discussion forums over the course of the semester to promote critical thinking. Unlike discussion forums I have designed in the past, this forum involved students delving into the university’s online library to find specific types of scholarly literature (not just Google searches which could unearth poor quality ‘research’ published in predatory journals). This was done in the first week of the two- (or three-) week forum. They were required to do more than simply summarise their article. They needed to write a reflective piece that responded to the following questions: How did their article relate to the focus of that forum (e.g., topics 4-5)? How did it relate to their target group of learners? And how might it assist them to address Assessment Task 1 and/or 3? Thus the discussion forum was not just a standard student or lecturer-driven Q&A; it was a cohort-sized group project, where every member had a role to play, but one in which no one would be disadvantaged if an individual neglected to do their share of the work—a common complaint of group work. More importantly, by finding relevant research and sharing it, the rest of the class would benefit from reading research that they might also relate to their own teaching contexts, especially after reading the reflective piece and seeing how their peers articulated their own thoughts about the literature. From there, in the final week of the forum, students responded to at least two of their peers’ posts that they deemed most relevant to their own projects, discussing their thoughts on the literature and its relevance to their own contexts.

Thus, I was encouraging them to engage with scholarly literature, think critically, and reflect on how they might relate that literature to a teaching context that was meaningful and relevant to them. A frequent criticism of PG programs is that when students are done, they are unable to apply their knowledge to their future classrooms or feel insufficiently prepared to teach (e.g., Faez & Valeo, 2012). This task, as well as the other two, invited students to apply this new knowledge to their own classrooms.



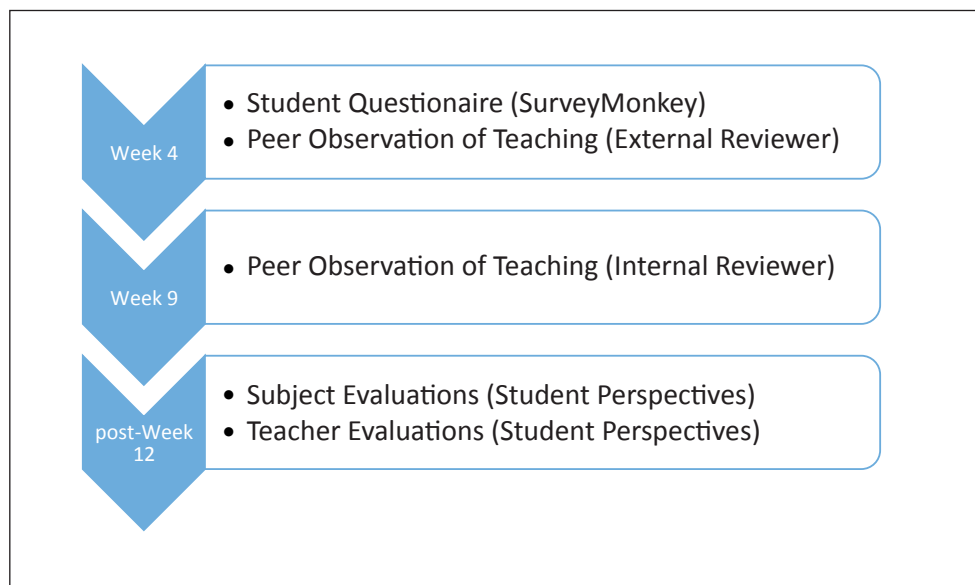
The subject re-design was intended to be responsive to student and peer feedback elicited at various points throughout the semester. As such, at the beginning of Week 4 of the 13-week semester, two forms of feedback were elicited: 1) student perceptions of the design collected through an anonymous SurveyMonkey questionnaire and 2) one peer review of the first three weeks of the course. Adjustments were made to the online delivery of content accordingly. (These adjustments will be discussed in the findings section of this article.) At the end of the semester, additional feedback was elicited from: 1) a second peer review by a different peer; 2) Subject Evaluation (student perspectives); and 3) Teacher Evaluation (student perspectives).

### **Data Collection**

Thus, as described above and summarised in Figure 1, the following data was collected for this reflective research:

1. Use of a SurveyMonkey questionnaire data that I collected in Week 4 of Autumn 2021. Specifically, this Week 4 Survey (W4S) contained four questions as follows:
  - a. Which cohort are you enrolled in? (Choose from: Online or On-Campus)
  - b. What's your student status? (Choose from: Domestic-in Australia; Domestic-Overseas; International-in Australia; or International-overseas)
  - c. What do you like about this subject and how I'm teaching it?
  - d. What improvements would you like to see?
2. Use of the university's teacher evaluations (TE) for the subject – Autumn 2021 (responses to open-ended questions). These TEs are specific to the teacher's performance as a teacher in the subject, according to student perspectives.
3. Use of the university's subject evaluation (SE) for the subject – Autumn 2021 (responses to open-ended questions). These SEs are specific to the design and overall delivery of the subject, according to student perspectives.
4. Use of the two reports submitted by my two peer reviewers as part of the university's Peer Observation of Teaching (POT) process that were conducted in Autumn 2021. These POTs were conducted by one Internal (I) Reviewer and one External (E) Reviewer. The POT(I) was conducted by a colleague who specialises in literacy education in the same School in which I teach, while POT(E) was conducted by a Learning Teaching and Curriculum specialist/academic within the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Portfolio of the university. Both reviewers have accolades in Teaching Excellence.

Figure 1. Research Timeline - Autumn Session 2021



Ethics approval was obtained for the use of all data above. Of the four items above, the first three are completely anonymous and thus I was unable to contact the students to obtain their permission to use the data submitted. For the fourth one, I sought and obtained informed consent from both reviewers to use their reports and to quote from them.

### **Data Analysis**

A thematic analysis was conducted on all the qualitative data from the four sources of data. Four categories from Shulman's (1986, 1987) categories of teacher knowledge (SMCK, PCK, CK and KOL) were used as overarching categories, but a data-driven thematic analysis was conducted of the qualitative data to derive themes that were later aligned to Shulman's framework. This analysis focused on 1) positive comments about how the subject was taught/delivered and 2) what aspects of this teaching/delivery could be improved. Unlike previous analyses of L2 teachers' knowledge I have conducted using Shulman's framework in the past (e.g., Baker, 2014; Burri & Baker, 2020; Shi & Baker, 2022), this case study was different as the current study involved the analysis of teacher educator knowledge during the teaching of knowledge relevant to L2 teachers. Thus, the difficulty in analysing the data was ensuring that 'what' is considered SMCK, PCK and KOL for L2 teachers was all categorised as SMCK for the teacher educator whereas 'how' to teach SMCK, PCK and KOL to teachers was categorised as PCK for the teacher educator (e.g., using mini-online lectures and

discussion forums effectively). This difficulty was alleviated by reviewing the data analyses numerous times to ensure the data was categorised appropriately.

### ***Findings and Discussion***

Overall, the use of four categories of Shulman’s (1986, 1987) teacher knowledge framework provided a comprehensive overview of the elements of subject content and delivery that were deemed beneficial to student learning. The results of the analysis of the Peer Observations of Teaching (POTs), both Internal (I) and External (E), as well as the student data from the Week 4 Survey (W4S), and the end of the semester Subject (SE) and Teacher (TE) evaluations from both on-campus (O-C) and distance (DIS) students, identified a number of details considered important for student learning. It is important to note, however, that online surveys have always attracted limited response rates from students, and that was true here as well. Of the 54 students enrolled in both DIS and O-C instances of the subject, 14 (9 domestic; 5 international) responded to the W4S, 22 (7 DIS; 15 O-C) responded to the TE and 12 (6 DIS; 6 O-C) responded to the SE. It is likely that the same students responded to both the SE and TE, but it is impossible to know for certain. Table 1 provides these results.

**Table 1**

#### ***Teacher Educator Knowledge and Peer/Student Feedback***

Knowledge Category	Best aspects of Subject/Teaching	Subject/Teaching Improvements
Overall	No improvements necessary/Keep as is (16) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• POT(E)</li> <li>• W4S - 6 students</li> <li>• SE - 1 student (1 O-C)</li> <li>• TE - 8 students (6 O-C; 2 DIS)</li> </ul>	
SMCK	Overall Knowledge of Teacher (5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• POT(I)</li> <li>• TE - 4 students (2O-C; 2 DIS)</li> </ul> Provision of scholarly content knowledge (e.g., through content/readings) (9) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• POT(I)</li> <li>• POT(E)</li> <li>• W4S - 5 students</li> <li>• TE - 1 student (1 DIS)</li> <li>• SE - 1 student (1 DIS)</li> </ul> Provision of pedagogical knowledge (4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• POT(I)</li> <li>• POT(E)</li> <li>• SE - 2 students (2 O-C)</li> </ul>	N/A

Overall, using Shulman’s categories of knowledge highlights what peers and students consider important for PG student learning in an online environment. The majority

reported that nothing about the subject needed to be changed (16 sources). In terms of SMCK, a number of participants highlighted several points of value, noting in particular my overall SMCK on L2 communication and pedagogy (5 sources), the provision of scholarly content knowledge through the readings and additional content provided for students (9 sources), as well as more practical knowledge in terms of how to teach L2 OC (4).

In terms of my PCK, this category elicited the majority of comments from peers and students. The usefulness of, and student engagement in, both the discussion forums (9 sources) and the Moodle book mini-lectures (8 sources) were especially favoured. Instructional clarity (7), feedback on assignments (5), and the benefits of the Zoom sessions (5) were also elements of how I taught the subject that were considered beneficial for student learning.

For the final two categories, there were a few additional insights as well. For CK, one area that received a great deal of commentary was appreciation for the overarching instructional design of the subject (16). Finally, for KOL, two areas were appreciated as well. Specifically, this was responsiveness to student queries/needs (5) both in the form of my comments on online forums and via email, and overall supportiveness (5), particularly in light of COVID and the impact that it had on students at the time.

The analysis of the data as related to subject/teaching improvement provided additional insights into the individuality of student preferences to learning. Of the four categories of knowledge, only PCK received any data; there were no comments made for either SMCK, CK or KOL. These results are encouraging as they support the overarching finding that most participants felt no changes were required for the subject and my teaching approach. Nonetheless, the analysis of the PCK data warrants closer attention. One of the most notable was that some students (5 sources) stated a preference for full, weekly lectures. However, most of the remaining data with at least two sources expressed a desire for more of what was already being provided. In particular, some wanted more interaction (4 sources), especially after business hours, and the POT(I) noted that more opportunities for oral interaction would be beneficial. Others wanted more audio/video mini-lectures (4) and interactive Moodle activities (2). The remaining comments for improvement were fairly isolated to a single individual and demonstrate how diversified our students are. That said, POT(I)'s suggestion to provide more opportunities for critical thinking as per Bloom's Taxonomy (Krathwohl, Anderson, & Bloom, 2001), another student's preference for an introductory overarching lecture, and another's recommendation to enhance the design of the forums to align with the aim of enhancing students' critical thinking skills warrant further consideration.

Looking more closely at the data, it is important to comment more specifically on how the early feedback from the beginning of the semester led to further refinements of the subject in subsequent weeks. The early feedback from both the POT(E) and the SW4 results served to assist this redevelopment. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive: 'I like the way that Amanda provides the audio practices and explanations in the Moodle book. It is more lively than pre-recorded lectures'; 'I really enjoy the outcomes for each topic at the beginning of the Moodle books. As there is a lot of content each week, it really helps to pull out the main ideas. Also, your short audio/video clips throughout are great!'; 'I like that Amanda is constantly giving guidance throughout the course, and I like her prompt response on the discussion forum.' When asked what could be improved, many said there was nothing to improve: 'Everything is perfect! No improvements needed so far'; 'You are doing great'; 'N/A' etc.

Nonetheless, there were a few constructive comments for improvement that I adopted immediately post-Week 4. The most notable comment was simply more of what I was already doing: 'Loved the immediate [audio] feedback in the "review of key concepts and terms" matching activity. Could we have more of these? Great way to monitor my own level of understanding and immediately identify areas that I need to revisit.' I have thus endeavoured to incorporate more of these audio clips into subsequent Moodle books (and will add more next year when I re-teach the subject). In the case of unrealistic expectations though, I posted a note on the Moodle site expressing my thanks but also explaining why I could not do as they wished. For example, 'I think that a short (60 min) Zoom meeting or similar after normal work hours every fortnight with breakout rooms would allow greater interaction between students'. While this is an excellent idea, I explained that with the various face-to-face sessions I was running for the on-campus cohort (four sessions instead of the normal 12 sessions throughout the semester due to the uncertainty surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic) plus the weekly 30 minute (or longer if needed) afternoon Zoom sessions along with the opportunities to ask questions via email or in the Q&A forum, that adding an additional timeslot in the evening was beyond my ability to manage. Furthermore, with students taking the subject from all over the world, providing a perfect time for everyone would be impractical. However, I suggested that they instead, for those that were interested, set up their own student-driven Zoom sessions and I would be happy to assist them in learning how to set it up if they wished for more engagement during a timeslot that suited them better.

Nonetheless, overall, I believe that my POTs summarise my efforts throughout the subject. In Week 4, POT(E) commented that:

While engaging with [Amanda's] design and delivery of teaching in her online subject, I felt this to be one of the few examples of online teaching that I have

reviewed for which I was unable to recommend enhancements or changes to teaching practice to improve the student experience. I found her teaching to be, what I consider, exemplary. I would like to commend Amanda on a well-considered, beautifully delivered teaching environment.

Later in Week 9, POT(I) echoed POT(E)'s assessment. Based on reviewing the online redevelopment of the subject in subsequent weeks (Weeks 6-9), she wrote:

Dr Baker is a clever and clear-thinking academic with a deep understanding of her content and the nature of her learners. Her online pedagogies are exceptional and well worth sharing with others who are looking to improve their teaching.

This last comment in many ways inspired the writing of this journal article to share with my peers. While the approach taken in this subject represents but one way to teach at the PG level, it may provide helpful insights to other TESOL teacher educators faced with similar challenges.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The categorisation of teacher knowledge with respect to feedback from both peers and students provides teacher educators with a tool for assessing their own knowledge to determine the value and effectiveness of their own subject designs, at least from the perspective of knowledgeable peers and students. As noted by POT(E) in my meeting with her, we tend to focus on the 'negative' feedback but the objective categorisation of feedback provided here clearly demonstrates the overwhelmingly positive points about the subject along with a number of useful suggestions for making further enhancements to an already successful subject. To that end, in valuing both peer and student feedback, providing 'more of the same' is a key improvement point for the current Autumn 2022 semester, providing four instead of five discussion forums, with additional requirements for student-student interaction in the forums and a new option to provide oral commentary instead of text-based commentary, along with more interactive tasks to encourage higher levels of critical thinking by students as suggested by POT(I) with respect to Bloom's Taxonomy. And in light of student preference for full lectures instead of mini-lectures, but still with my strong desire to encourage less passive learning, I have taken on board the feedback from one student who expressed a desire for one to two introductory/overarching lectures by having one at the beginning of the subject introducing aspects highlighted in this paper, focusing specifically on how KOL and SMCK (Topics 1-4) and PCK and CK (Topics 4-10 in particular) are represented in this subject. In fact, in this lecture, I have specifically discussed how subject content and

my teaching of it aligns with Shulman's framework. It will be interesting to see how students view this revised way of teaching when I receive the teacher and subject evaluations in a few months from now.

From here, my hope is that this reflective piece inspires future teacher educator-oriented research. Such research can provide invaluable insights into how the normal, everyday activities of any teacher educator (or any classroom teacher) can be used not only as a form of professional development but also a way in which we can contribute to knowledge sharing with professionals in our respective fields.

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