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ELT Teaching Competencies Rooted in the KASA Framework: An Effective Means to Classroom Success

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***Abstract*:** Teaching competencies come in many forms, have likely existed, been expressed, and certainly morphed in myriad ways since the time of the very first classrooms, and, of course, can often depend on both contexts and subjects. For this reason, some degree of simplification is needed, especially for English Language teachers. This comes in the form of five broad, general categories: (1) teachers and teaching, (2) learners and learning, (3) language and culture, (4) self and other, and (5) educational institutions, community, and professional life. Clear articulation is essential, which can be incredibly helpful for ongoing reflective practice and, ultimately, profound professional development. But, these five broad categories are not enough by themselves. KASA, or knowledge, attitude, skills, and awareness are four component parts that can help pinpoint, specify, and allow for deep exploration of each one. Through ongoing (classroom and self) observation, critical analysis, and any needed recalibration, teachers' focus, vision, and skills can sharpen and develop in very rich, life-changing ways, which will be to the great benefit of their students. And that is the purpose of this paper: to help understand this valuable educational, teacher tool via explicit explanations and personal examples.

***Keywords* –** competencies, culture, identity, KASA, professional development, reflective practice

I. Introduction: Teaching competencies

Teaching competencies are a set of professional skills that help enable a teacher to be successful in the classroom [1]. With a vast array of responsibilities, expected expertise, needed perspicacity, and critical decisions that teachers must manage with careful dexterity on a daily basis, there is much to consider, utilize, implement, and reflect on [2]. Any literature review will reveal a myriad number of competencies that are both relevant and important for most (modern) ELT environments, to include (very briefly):

- *Communication* (interactional knowledge, skills, processes and dispositions that help students acquire, develop and transform ideas an inspiration, make connections, share ideas, express opinions, deepen learning, and accomplish things)
- *Learning management* (identify, prioritize, and reformulate learning components each student must work on – that is, knowledge, skills, strategies, attitudes, etc., which includes addressing stated objectives and purposes of intended learning)
- *Personal and social* (abilities that help students identify in the world – both in society and their communities)
- *Professional development* (self-assessment, reflective practice, action research, and cooperation and collaboration)
- *Thinking* (knowledge, skills and processes associated with intellectual development which help students take concepts and content and transform them into new understandings) [3].

With so many overwhelming possibilities in this regard, teachers need some degree of simplification. Fortunately, Donald Freeman (University of Michigan School of Education) can help with this via KASA.

II. KASA Framework

To shed light on this, the KASA Framework is based on an article that Donald Freeman wrote for TESOL Quarterly back in March 1989 titled, "Teacher training, development, and decision making: A model of teaching and related strategies for language teacher education". His primary aim was to "untangle (teaching or educational) terms so that we (as teachers) could work from a shared operational vocabulary" [4]. By way of

example, teacher education could be used as a superordinate or umbrella term, with things like teacher training, preparation, and teacher or professional development as categories under it [5]. In other words, he examined and analyzed the subject matter and processes of language teacher education (i.e. language teaching) and described a model of four component parts (*knowledge*, *attitudes*, *skills*, *awareness* or KASA) [6] that intertwine and interconnect through teachers' decision making, with two key, collaborative education strategies: training and development. *Knowledge* involves content, context, and location (i.e. methodology and approaches, SLA theory, language skills, resources, subject matter, students and their needs, and sociocultural, institutional, and situational circumstances). *Attitudes* are emotions, feelings, beliefs, behaviors, perceptions, energies, etc. that teachers have about all aspects of their job or career, which, hopefully, culminates in a genuine sense of caring and kindness, a willingness to share responsibility in the classroom, a sincere sensitivity to students' needs, a strong motivation to provide meaningful learning experiences, and an enthusiasm for stimulating creativity. *Skills* are the constant processing of options a teacher must deal or contend with on an everyday basis (e.g. lesson planning, materials design and development, classroom management, instructions, scaffolding, feedback, assessment, etc.). *Awareness* is the capacity to recognize and monitor the attention the teacher is giving or has given, as well as direct action related to this, which is vitally important on a moment-to-moment basis in the classroom and an essential aspect of ongoing reflective practice (as we need to know how impactful and our experiences were). Of these, awareness helps integrate all four into a unified whole, and, if harnessed and utilized well, it can help teachers grow, change, blossom, and flourish.

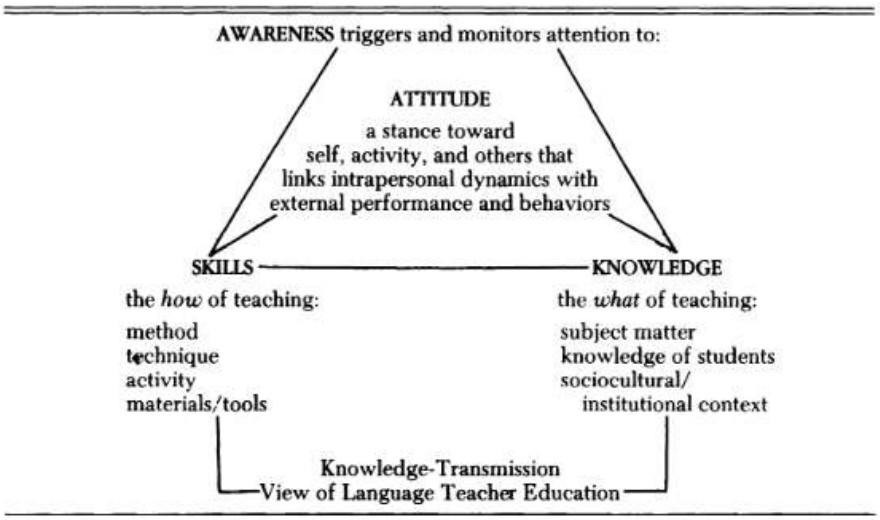

*Fig. 1: Donald Freeman, TESOL Quarterly, 23, No.1 (p.36)

KASA alone is a great start, but it still needs shaping, elaboration, and personalization for application and reflective use. The following five categories are helpful for this:

- Teachers and teaching
- Learners and learning
- Language and culture
- Self and others
- Educational institutions, community, and professional life [7].

III. Teachers and Teaching

"Teaching is the highest form of understanding." (Aristotle)

Generally, or hopefully, experienced teachers enjoy and benefit from the overall learning and teaching process. They should, among other things, be knowledgeable about theories, methods, and materials of language teaching, be able to clearly articulate and explain their beliefs and principles that underlie their personal approach in the classroom, and make use of teaching techniques and other educational resources in ways that are appropriate to help students acquire appropriate linguistic skills and intercultural communicative abilities. Moreover, they should understand theories and practices of assessment, and be able to accurately determine learner progress, effectively deal with classroom management and learning formations, and help students develop the skills and awareness necessary for self-assessment and, ultimately, self-directed learning.
More specifically, in terms of KASA, teachers should be proficient in the following ways:

First of all, teachers should have knowledge about their learners via needs assessment (e.g. reasons for needing English or studying, future language use and needs, proficiency, previous learning experiences, learning preferences, attitudes, interests, personalities, motivation, intercultural competence, neurophysiological capacity, etc.) [8] and ongoing feedback, rapport and community building (i.e. how to establish, build and maintain it). Additionally, they should know how to create interest and activate background knowledge, optimize learning conditions, and demystify the learning process with plenty of examples and models. Furthermore, in-depth knowledge of methodologies and language teaching approaches, curriculum development and course design, materials selection and presentation or implementation, lesson planning, activities and tasks, meaningful and supportive practice, (a wide range of) available resources and forms of support, effective and explicit instructional modes, assessment and evaluation, multimedia and online learning, cultural differences and similarities, social-emotional factors, interpersonal communication and counseling, and disability issues are also very important for classroom success [9].

Second is attitude. Without question, teachers need to enjoy and feel passionate about what they do, respect and care for all of their students in every way possible (no matter how difficult that may be at times), try to be their very best based on everything noted above each and every single day, and be willing to constantly adapt, modify, change, and evolve depending on the circumstances and/or their environment(s) [10].

Thirdly, in terms of skills, teachers, again, need to engage in regular, critical, and in-depth reflective practice (which includes seeing, describing, inquiring into, and making hypotheses about students' learning and the teaching context, and taking intelligent, pro-active action based on this process). In addition, they need to create a safe, nurturing, welcoming, and positive learning environment, consistently stay true to and implement teaching beliefs, deeply know the four language skills and three language systems (to include how to teach all of these effectively according to institutional standards and expectations), maximize learning potential in every way possible, and provide meaningful practice and extension (i.e. homework) options outside of class that help foster autonomy and a desire for continued learning [11].

Finally, teachers to be aware of the relationship between learning and teaching, their own assumptions about these two, the impact that teaching has on learners and their learning, what helps and hinders learning at all times, and the impact that reflective practice has on continued growth and professional development [12].

Below is an example articulation in a holistic, unified way that stems from my own experiences and beliefs:

My time in classrooms over the years have helped me re-learn (time and time again) that language teaching approaches, methodologies, and techniques are useful heuristic devises only. Their effectiveness is determined by the strength of my knowledge and beliefs about me as a language teacher, my students, and course content, as well as my understanding of the complex cultural and institutional environments in which I work, and my ability to navigate the social values in which they are embedded.

Through the type of reflective practice I've done over the years, I have also come to realize that my personal history serves as a powerful determinant of my perceptions and classroom practices. Tacit thoughts and concepts I had of my teaching life and career were made explicit through means of narration and reconstruction. Taking this subjective knowledge and constructing meaning out of it via a community of learners has not only proved to be a fruitful source of insight and discovery as I try to extrapolate my own theories about teaching, but it has also resulted in an understanding that reflecting on my past is the key to future development and change. In other words, I clearly see how this autobiographical consciousness can lead to critical awareness and personal and professional transformation.

As important as self-knowledge is, I must also understand who my students are and where they're at (i.e. be tuned in at all times). In order to gain a better understanding of their learning processes and, in turn, help them attempt to realize their full potential, I need to gather information about their cultural backgrounds, prior learning, abilities, needs, interests and expectations. This is particularly true because my students will integrate new experiences and knowledge into their information structure and learn according to their own conditions.

As each student is unique, it is vital for me to understand that one person's roadmap to learning is not identical to that of someone else. There is no standardized, mass-produced instruction that is good for all. As there is no singular mold, the learning environment and what is learned needs to be shaped to my students. For this reason, I have to meet them where they are in the learning process, not from where I assume them to be. When we do come together, we enact the curriculum [13]. This enactment is a socially constructed negotiation of our needs, goals and objectives. It also involves working with my students to monitor and analyze progress, as well as build on successes and learn from challenges. Seen in this way, teaching and learning are symbiotically unified.

While we are working together, I feel that it is important to guide my students to reflect on their own action and what they are learning. This will allow them to connect what is being learned and its meaning with their previous experiences and knowledge, and then develop a critical awareness of the language learning process. By helping learners to understand how their meaning-structures are changing, their ability to control and direct their learning will be enhanced.

Knowing myself, understanding my students, and enacting the curriculum together are each germane to my personal teaching (and learning) framework:

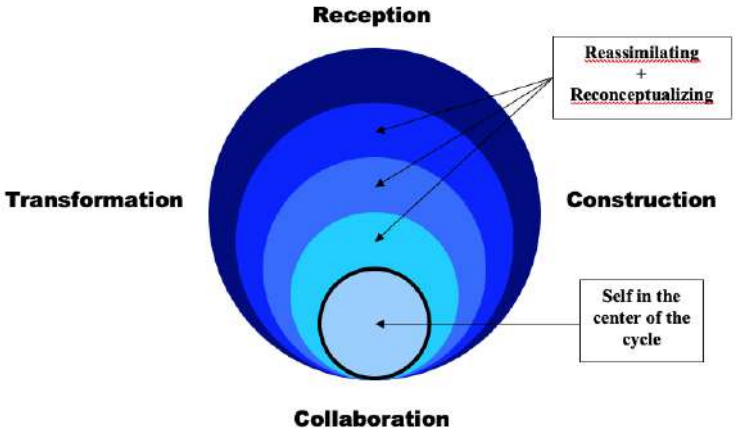

*Fig. 2: Scott Smith

They all involve taking input received and making meaning out of it in collaborative ways. It is a matter of learners and teachers working together to arrive at enhanced understanding. As an ongoing process, learning and teaching necessitates re-assimilating and reconceptualizing these understandings. What results is a refinement of what we once knew or believed, as well as an enriched relationship with one another. From a teaching standpoint, this will allow me to continue developing the type of connection with students that I desire. At times in the past, I tended to overemphasize lesson planning and syllabus design. To illustrate, I used to orchestrate and sequence lessons in a way that I saw fit. The focus was on my agenda and assumptions I made about the class as a whole; not on addressing their needs as learners with their own experiences or on their diverse ways of thinking, feeling, perceiving, and behaving. Typically, I taught at my students by trying to accomplish particular objectives instead of learning with and understanding them from the inside [14]. Fortunately, my ongoing experiences over the years have helped me become of aware of this tendency and its impact on my students.

IV: Learners and Learning

"We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time" (T.S. Eliot)

Teachers are, again hopefully, curious about their students and how they learn. They are knowledgeable about learning theories and practices in general, as well as language acquisition and learning theories and practices in particular. They are aware of the interrelated roles of language and culture in the acquisition process, and of their relationship to how one sees the world. They respect the learner as a whole person – mind, body, emotion, spirit – and the uniqueness of each individual's contribution to the learning experience. They recognize and accept individual learning styles. They are able to observe, describe, inquire into, and generate alternative explanations for learner language and behavior, drawing upon theories of second language acquisition, as well as their own experiences as learners. Finally, they can accurately select the most valid hypotheses about learner language or behavior, and identify and implement appropriate educational strategies to respond to each learner [15].

More specifically, in terms of KASA, teachers should be proficient in the following ways:

First of all, teachers should (as mentioned above) have knowledge of second language acquisition (at least to some degree), language learning principles for different contexts (i.e. levels and ages), learning styles and multiple intelligences (for the selection and presentation of materials at a minimum despite widely held myths to the contrary about these), assessment concepts, and learning strategies (specifically how to help students turn them into skills and use independently) [16].

Second, again, is attitude. Teachers absolutely need to be curious about learners and the learning process, specifically who they are and where they need to place their energies. Moreover, there has to be respect for the whole person (i.e. body, mind, emotions, and spirit), as well as respect for the (possibly great) diversity in each and every class (multilevel class). Additionally, not necessarily every student wants to learn or benefit from the same things, so attention needs to reflect this potential diversity. This also means that teachers need to allow learners interest in learning to guide their teaching (which, understandably, is clearly a challenge to varying degrees based on the administrative requirements in places of employment) [17].

Thirdly, skill development and advancement is clearly so important for learners. There's obviously a long list for this one, but these can be fostered via effective course design, lesson planning, materials design and development, activities and tasks, instructions, scaffolding, classroom management, feedback, and assessment. Essentially, it's a result of the everyday art of teaching. Sure, the more experience you have, the easier it tends to get in this regard, but it's a never-ending journey. Moreover, despite the strong fundamentals, the playing field is constantly shifting, especially with new technologies, approaches, innovations, and unexpected global changes (e.g. COVID-19 and software programs like Zoom and Webex to help with classes online) [18].

Finally, teachers need to be aware of the relationship between learning and teaching (especially as it is most definitely a two-way street that requires energy and attention in both directions), the assumptions about their own learning and teaching (particularly as everyone doesn't learn in the same way), and the positive and/or negative impact that their teaching has on student learning [19].

Again, here is an example articulation in a holistic, unified way that stems from my own experiences and beliefs:

Learning is an exploratory and transformative process that leads to new yet familiar knowings. Through exploration, we receive input from many different sources, interpret and make meaning in context, negotiate our understandings with others, and, as a result, gain new insight and change our current knowledge in some way. As a process, it is active, fluid and dynamic, rife with tension and conflict, and continuously modified by experience. Knowledge, as Freire (1972) once said, only emerges through invention and reinvention [20]. This necessarily implies that all learning is relearning – much like Bruner's (1960) spiral below [21]:

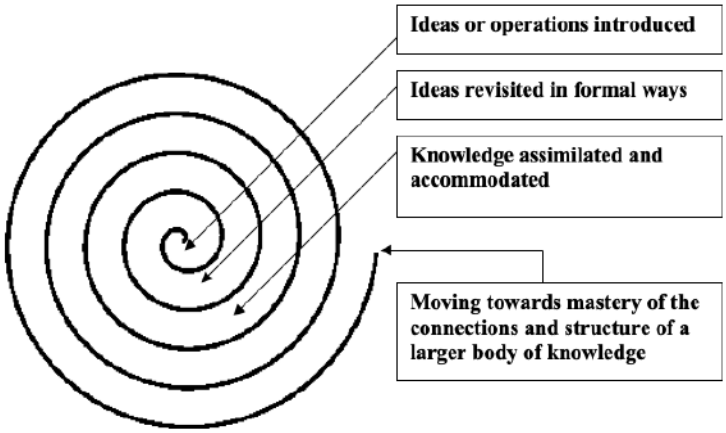

*Fig. 3: Jerome Bruner, "The Process of Education"

Meaningful learning necessitates action. For this to happen, our tacit knowledge must first be made explicit. This can be achieved through critical reflection on experience and subsequent collaborative, hermeneutic inquiry. What results is a critical knowing; a greater understanding of self and how one's actions have been shaped and informed by social, cultural and historical forces. Critical knowing is then transformed by revising beliefs, assumptions or expectations into new ways of seeing the world, and then acting on the new understandings [22].

For learning to be significant, it must personally affect the learner, either by resulting in an expansion of skills, sense of self, or life perspective, and be subjectively valued by the learner [23]. This is because our learning interests are embedded in our personal histories, in our visions of who we are in the world and in what we can do and want to do. To facilitate learning, learners' knowledge and beliefs must be articulated, built on, and then integrated into a new, more refined knowing. And this must happen in environments where reciprocal recognition of worth among all participants is promoted [24].

V. Language and Culture

"Language expresses, embodies, and symbolizes cultural reality." (Claire Kramsch)

Teachers, once gain hopefully, are interested in language and culture. They are knowledgeable in the subject matter of language teaching, as well as in the various content areas that their students are studying. They try to be as fluent as they can be in the target language (as much as that may be possible), and try to communicate appropriately in cultural contexts where this language is used. They understand the nature of language, culture, and intercultural communication in general, as well as understand the cultural, linguistic, and communicative dimensions of the particular language they teach. They understand, at least to some degree, linguistic and cultural theories, and are able to analyze and make valid explanations of linguistic and cultural phenomena, to include drawing upon these theories as needed and an awareness of their own culture and use of language.

First of all, teachers should have knowledge of the nature and components of language, culture, and intercultural communication, as well as their own culture(s) and the target culture where they work [25].

Second, teachers need to have an awareness of respect for cultural and linguistic diversity, a desire to learn about and from people of other cultures, and be open to change as a result of cross-cultural communication and experiences [26].

Thirdly, teachers need the skills of exploring and analyzing linguistic and cultural phenomena, and appropriately apply these to their teaching context(s). Additionally, they clearly must be able to use the language they teach – that is, conduct their classes with relative ease and confidence at all instructional levels with fairly high levels of accuracy, fluency, and appropriateness. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, teachers must enter, exist in, and learn from new cultures in effective and respectful ways [27].

Fourth, teachers need to be aware of the relationship between language and culture, their own cultural and linguistic worldview(s) and identities, themselves as learners of language and culture, and the role that culture and language play in learning.

Once again, here is an example articulation in a holistic, unified way that stems from my own experiences and beliefs:

The words people use when they communicate refer to a common, shared experience. They express facts, ideas, or events that are communicable because the participants in a communicative event share similar, identifiable knowledge about the world. What is communicated also reflects a point of view, belief, and attitude that are shared among the participants. Not only do members express experience, they also create it through language. Meaning is given to experience through the medium participants in a communicative act choose to communicate with one another, to include both verbal and non-verbal aspects of expression. Language is also a system of signs that has cultural value. Speakers identify themselves and others through their use of language. In short, using language is a cultural act because the participants in a communicative event co-construct the very social rules that define them as members of a discourse community [28].

Knowing that language as a communicative event is inextricably interwoven with culture is something very profound for me in the classroom, especially in terms of teacher training (as I teach culture classes annually in one my of graduate school departments). In the past, I, frankly, tended to relegate culture to the back burner in favor of language skills and systems, even when using authentic materials. In other words, I tended to focus on skills, tasks, functions, situations, strategies, and grammar; emphasizing who, what, when, where, and how, but rarely why. I gave little attention to what it means to say and do things and to the contexts in which interactions occur. Shamefully, I didn't think much about the fact that by acquiring another language, we are acquiring another culture. Now, however, I believe that this is essential for me to keep in mind as I plan lessons and interact with my students in any capacity. Put another way, I can now see that language is communicated and received, meaning is constructed in cultural contexts and collaboratively in social interaction, and language is then transformed through the experience of the communicative event and what results from it.

Pat Moran's (2001) adaptation of the experiential learning cycle for what he calls the "cultural experience" is also significant for me [29]. In his book, "Teaching culture: Perspectives in practice," he talks about four kinds of culture learning, or cultural knowings: knowing about (facts, data, or knowledge about products, practices, and perspectives of culture), knowing how (behaviors, actions, skills, saying, touching, standing, or other forms of 'doing'), knowing why (the perceptions, beliefs, values, and attitudes that underlie or permeate all aspects of the culture), and knowing oneself (one's own values, opinions, feelings, questions, reactions, thoughts, and ideas). These four stages are positioned on an iterative cycle that corresponds to the four orientations as posited by Kolb (1984) [30]:

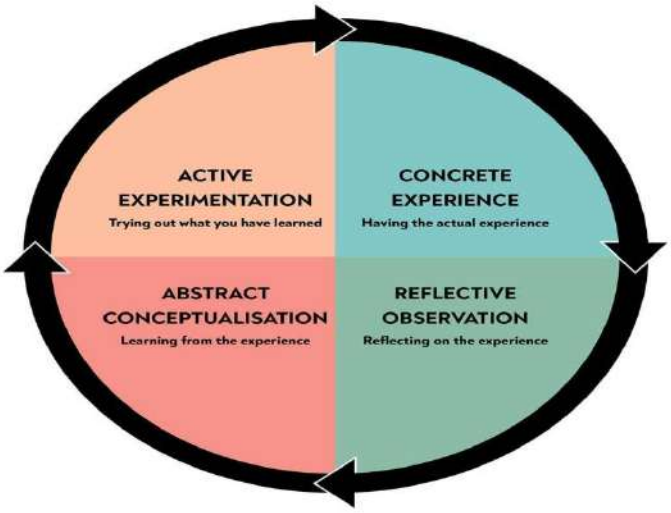

*Fig 4: David Kolb, "Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning"

According to Moran, learners acquire personal information, develop cultural behaviors, discover cultural explanations, and then articulate personal responses to what they are learning. The significance for me is that by taking the time to learn about other cultures and languages we become more conscious about our own. This leads to a greater overall knowings.

As the encounter with difference lies at the heart of culture learning, I believe it is imperative that we, as teachers, need to increase opportunities for personal experience with diversity, foreignness, and other cultures, and then critically reflect on, interpret, analyze and evaluate our experience. The input received and resulting knowings can be enhanced if this is done collaboratively, especially in a community of learners. The path to intercultural competence thus begins with conscious perception of and reflection on different behaviors, the desire to learn more about them, and the transformative action taken to do so. From then on out, it requires constant mutual and reciprocal understanding and respect.

VI: Self and Other

"Affective education is effective education." (Gertrude Moskowitz)

Teachers are clearly very self-aware. They are able to recognize their own feelings and opinions about interpersonal and group experiences and distinguish them from the events of these shared experiences. Moreover, they actively seek out other participants' understandings of these shared experiences, are able to articulate their understandings of these experiences, and are aware of how they relate to others and accept the importance of learning from human diversity. Finally, teachers recognize, value, and work with diverse perspectives in order to promote the development of the group, individuals within the group and themselves, and are skilled at observing, reflecting, and modifying their own behavior in the best interest of the group.

In terms of KASA, teachers should have knowledge of theories and practices of group dynamics and identity development, to include the multiple dimensions of identity (i.e. their own and others), which encompasses language, class, race, gender, sexual orientation, physical abilities and disabilities, culture, and religion [31].

Secondly, teachers should have attitudes of openness to valuing of differences in people, as well as a commitment to helping their students become more open-minded, more tolerant and accepting of people who are different from them [32].

Thirdly, teachers should have skills of listening with empathy by attending to and reflecting on content and feelings, communicating in a proper and professional manner across differences, and creating an environment where divergent views can be expressed and heard [33].

Fourth, teachers must have awareness of their own feelings and opinions as a participant in group experiences. Moreover, they need to be aware of their feelings, opinions, interaction styles, and the way they affect others, as well as the uniqueness of their experiences of a shared event. Furthermore, teachers need awareness of differing perspectives in the classroom and how to handle them adroitly [34].

Below is yet another example articulation in a holistic, unified way that stems from my own experiences and beliefs:

It is impossible to carry out learning in an emotion- and value-free climate. Feelings are inseparable from thinking and learning. How we feel about ourselves, others, and what we learn as we learn influences how we learn. The better we feel about ourselves the more likely we will be able to achieve and grow. Maximizing learning potential can thus be achieved by drawing on personal experience and cultivating positive, socio-affective learning environments that maintain and promote the self-concept (i.e. the totality of attitudes one has about oneself), engage the whole person (knowing, feeling, feeling, and valuing; both the intellectual and emotional dimensions), facilitate greater self-fulfillment and self-actualization, stress reciprocal respect and recognition of worth, heighten awareness and appreciation of difference, foster acceptance by others, and promote group cohesiveness (i.e. making learners feel like they are part of a community). The idea here is that by developing more positive feelings about themselves and their classmates, students will increase their level of self-esteem and understanding in the classroom. This will facilitate growth in the direction of being more self-actualized, and, in turn, result in increased levels of motivation and learning [35]. What it boils down to is satisfying our basic psychological needs: dignity, belongingness, love, and esteem [36]. Considering that all of this is congruent with how we want to make our way in the world, it is hard to fathom that there is a tendency to overlook the role emotions play in learning.

As a teacher, it is vitally important for me to make every effort to embody and model the type of behavior that I would like to see in others. This is particularly true as the relationship between self and other lies at the heart of it all. In other words, it's about the connection we have with others in the learning process. Whether through direct communication with those around us or through interaction with texts, we first receive input from other people. Immediately upon receiving the input, we attempt to construct meaning out of it. Because input does not spring from nothingness (i.e., it does not exist in a vacuum), there is necessarily some sort of collaboration. Even if we are contemplating an idea, the source of our inspiration is connected, in some definable way, to something already in existence. The very act of mental interaction involves working directly with the input source – in this case, someone else. And this, for me, is what constitutes the very act of learning: working and (then) sharing with others.

VII: Educational Institutions, Communities, and Professional Life

"Do not go where the path may lead; go instead where there is no path and leave a trail." (Ralph Waldo Emerson)

Teachers are committed to developing a career in second language education. They actively draw upon their experiences living or traveling in other cultures, and are committed to becoming increasingly multicultural and multilingual. Additionally, teachers are able to evaluate their own work, and to invite and act upon evaluations of colleagues and learners, active and contributing members of professional organizations, aware of their status as teachers in the schools and communities where they work, committed to using their influence in socially responsible ways, and aware of themselves as members of the world community.

First of all, in terms of KASA, teachers should have knowledge of policies, procedures, and practices of schools and educational institutions, to include how these can impact their teaching. Furthermore, they should know relevant professional organizations, as well as theories of contextual influences on language education [37].

Secondly, teachers must have attitudes of commitment to a career in second language education, valuing multilingualism and multiculturalism, responsibility for the needs of students, colleagues, institutions, and larger communities, and, of course, professionalism in their work [38].

Thirdly, teachers need the skills of developing an approach to language teaching based on well-articulated and defended assumptions, evaluating and thinking critically about their own work and modifying its direction, and inviting, understanding, and acting upon evaluations of their work by colleagues and students. Additionally, they need to further their education as a professional educator by contributing to the field in some way and engaging in professional development opportunities, applying their experiences living or traveling in other cultures to their work, actively participating in professional organizations, and analyzing contextual influences on education in a particular setting [39].

Fourth, teachers should have awareness of themselves as a life-long learner of teaching, their own values as an educator, the connection of their work to the larger world community, schools, educational institutions, and host communities as distinct cultures, the social impacts of their work, and the socio-political dimensions of language teaching [40].

For the final time, here is an example articulation in a holistic, unified way that stems from my own experiences and beliefs:

Teachers are not simply vessels waiting to be filled with theoretical and pedagogical skills. Instead, with prior experience as students and language teachers, they are individuals who have personal beliefs and principles that inform our knowledge about teaching and shape what we do in our classrooms. Teaching is not simply a mastery of the rules of practice, but rather a long-term process of exploring what informs such practice.

Likewise, classrooms are not just settings for implementation and replication of educational practices. Instead, they are frameworks for knowing which create and sustain meanings and values.

As a classroom teacher, I constantly receive new and familiar ideas, rename prior teaching and learning experiences, construct meaning and reflect on these through existing understandings, shared what I learn in collaboration with others, and then modify, reconstruct, and renegotiate new information on the basis of what I already knew and believed. This process has led me to consistently question, examine and articulate the assumptions that underlie my teaching, and regularly result in a transformation of previous knowings. The input I receive and the experiences I rename are continuously re-assimilated and re-accommodated in an effort to learn more about myself as a language teacher and the profession of language teaching. As I continue to push forward with professional development, my aim is to stay deeply rooted in reflection, to include exploring the nature of my classroom practices, learning more about the contexts in which I work, and develop strategies for development, improvement, and needed change. Doing all of these things will continue to imbue me with a sense of purpose and direction as I blaze a trail throughout the remaining years of my career.

VIII: Conclusion

As you can see, articulation is the key – both for professional development and teacher training purposes. These can obviously, and possibly, shift to varying degrees, especially with ongoing reflective practice. The key is to simplify, clarify, and (attempt to) crystalize. From understanding comes knowledge, wisdom, and (further) development. And the cycle, very hopefully, continues and results in possible positive recalibration on a regular basis.

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