



Profession as a Change Agent: Round Table Discussion notes

If we are to be change agents, we must stay true to our core values, professional knowledge & agency. Being a change agent means being an innovator, being ethical, being steadfast & patient. It means to help local teaching realities resonate globally

Micro concerns

- Teachers can help with the meso & macro level, just need to learn how; change can be granular
- Teachers work together to build self-esteem, work on internal motivation, don't necessarily know how to evoke change; teachers underestimate their influence and power
- Create change agent PD for everyone; try not to focus solely on English
- Teachers highly respected some places, not respected in other places; Most are poorly paid which lowers social respect
- Getting girls to school: in some places, girls say it is unsafe to get to school and be in school
- Invite community leaders to speak at schools about the [new world of work](#)
- Students believe teachers can do no wrong; remind teachers of the all-round importance
- Teachers as reflective practitioners; mentor programs/guidance and funding are needed
- Teachers are overloaded with various tasks; do not see value in joining the conversation or they wrongly feel they have nothing of value to add to the discussion.
- There is a practice gap b/t theory and practice; practitioners to create a wish list for research
- Teachers are not confident to create materials; there should be a greater exchange
- The new teacher should fight against the present teacher status and stand on their own 2 feet
- Grassroots efforts require unification
- When teachers reach their optimal development, they should leave the classroom
- Teacher Professional defined as: dynamic agent that keeps changing & open-minded to accept that L1 need not be eliminated; to be a professional you need accreditation, qualifications, and certification; we are agents/responsible for teaching English - privileges of English language teachers - access the world, greater marketability
- Research: teachers are researchers, they just need to know that they are; feel restricted as researchers; provide training for action research and that research can be used in making policy; payment for teacher research would help; data for teacher influence on students needed; collect data from teacher-to-teacher observations and quantitative surveys; What kind of research can help with this?
- Individual impact is still at the micro level; who/what are teacher change agents for?
- Is change for student sake or for teacher sake?
- Teachers voices should be a part of research and policy. Collect testimonials. How can we amplify the teachers' voice? (thru publications?) Does student voice play a role?

- How do you influence policy makers/decision makers to make reforms to education teachers?
- Teachers can be empowered by having a common message/synchronizing voices.
- Teachers need to speak to each other – collegiality and interaction.
- Bring teacher research to teacher preparation programs.
- Prioritizing objectives that have importance when talking about change.
- See strategic alliances and optimizing relationships.
- Include training in profession as a change agent in teacher preparation programs.
- Efforts to be organized.
- Collaborating with publishers in bringing in changes.
- Collect documents in different voices.

Teacher Association (TA) concerns

- Create networks for teachers and stakeholders to share stories from different contexts; develop collaboration for potential change agents; address the root of the problem: pay and respect
- Write a communiqué to the general media, publish, and policy makers
- Unify TAs: some cater to private schools, public schools, expats, local; we should all be together
- TAs must not be led by only "top" university professors
- Research: connect academic research outlets together; we need to start sharing our thinking; provide research questions to local teachers that need to be answered
- TAs should become research organizations to systematically collect information to show policy makers what does and does not work
- Create focus groups to gather more information and inform hiring officials/policy makers
- Standards should include leadership skills and social responsibility benchmarks
- As advocates, TESOL needs to say: This is what we do and this is how we make a difference
- Time, Money, Access (to the MOE and policy makers); TAs work in isolation; TAs should be agents of change, but need to look inward first to identify their best ways how; timing is key
- Increase an association's "brand" – look for opportunities to offer accreditation, approve course book choices, gives them legitimacy and power, brings them to the attention of MOEs; TA must go to Ministries, not wait for Ministries to go to TAs; find reliable contacts in gov't
- Provide trainings on how to speak to politicians; step into the void and education them
- Through the network of TAs, teaching initiatives should be publicized and connect teachers (especially student/novice teachers) worldwide
- Highlight diversity as an asset
- Some believe it is parents & communities who can change Ministry opinions; include parents in association work; find ways to build trust
- Communications can bridge the gap between TAs around the world, publishers and national level stakeholders
- Associations and organizations need hear and heed the options of other professionals; collaboration and upgrading relationships habitually
- Be dynamic in messaging; create accountability measure and hold people accountable
- Collect case studies from teachers for in order to speak in a common voice to policy makers; enhance dialogue between teachers and communicate our knowledge and perspectives
- Marrying TESOL & IATEFL
- How do we prevent TAs from becoming exclusive? or dysfunctional?
- Can TAs become more entrepreneurial?

- How do we define teacher professionalism?
- Should TAs lobby for teachers? Should unions get involved?
- How can TAs reach remote areas?
- TAs may be hindered by governments.
- Transparency of TAs can support their recognition.
- TAs identifying questions to be addressed.
- TAs incorporating more teacher educators
- TAs providing training (workshops) to teacher educators

Political concerns

- "culture eats policy for breakfast"
- Things that need to change are the things we take for granted; even these changes start with governments and bureaucracy
- Gov't are researching unnecessary topics; should look at research that shows incompetence and do something; create policy examples that work in various contexts
- Policies should look at CLIL as an option
- The media has to play its part and get involved, i.e. op-eds, attend TESOL events & report out
- Connect actions to practical ideas; change is not necessarily perceived as positive; bottom up policy change happens everywhere, i.e. Ecuador, Somalia, Australia
- Teachers are not always a part of the policy process; university professors have a better voice; teachers have to be part of the policy process and could well be policy makers
- Pressure publishers to cater to different contextual needs as well as differentiated materials
- A perspective: Let policy makers make policy, practitioners will make adjustments as necessary
- A perspective: Teachers not allowed to implement new strategies b/c not supported by admin
- Without follow-up from ministries, projects get lost
- Losing the "non-native" descriptor to simply say "English language teacher", "Local English Teacher", "Multilingual English Teacher", or "Language teaching professional"
- It's not just TESOL policy that needs to change, the entire education system must change; private sector included
- What is the authority that teaching has in public policy? Why is it lower/higher in some places?
- What's going on at the macro level? If we knew this, we might be able to move faster
- how many countries have to make changes in policy to make a global difference?

Contextual examples

- Turkey: Started as directors of schools of foreign languages and grew in numbers. Started to formalize meetings and plan to make their voices heard. Established a board of six members and approached HE Council as representatives of all the universities in Turkey. Next aim is to establish a TESOL branch in Turkey, an accreditation board. Feels that the current national professional teachers' association has lost its vision is quite passive and inactive.
- Tunisia: MOE started to work with the teachers' associations. Resulting action, three major associations had a joint conference, brought together ideas to jointly present to the MOE.
- Philippines: Professional teachers' organizations can get endorsement from the MOE, officials are invited to the events, they come, ignore invitation or send representatives; EL TWO program - Online journal where teachers share classroom experiences, very open to contributions
- Korea: Primary/secondary TAs are separate from tertiary educators and do not communicate.

Tertiary conferences are during the day, school teachers cannot attend, big gap. Pressure on to publish in international journals, do not address Korean context, power games, lack of time/willingness to collaborate; policy meetings not open to teachers

- Japan: JACET is for Japanese college teachers, JALT is for foreign English teachers, they don't really communicate with each other.
- Georgia: Teachers' association CETE (an affiliate of TESOL and an NGO) which receives no funding from the government. Very challenging circumstances, teachers don't have the money to pay for membership. But it is needed as an agent for change.
- Kuwait: it was hard to register as an NGO; TA built a positive reputation, now a successful organization with a raising profile
- Iran: its TA changed policy; a drop-in teaching hours, TA fought for change, hours have returned
- Nepal: ministry officials are also in TA; support from bureaucracy from high levels
- Egypt: engineering ways to get all major players involved: ministries, universities, British Council, everyone feels welcomed to join the TA; reaches out to Rotary Clubs and American Chamber of Commerce
- Mexico: TA is very politically active
- UAE: had to register with gov't's economic department because they collect money
- Moldova: Ministries bring in stakeholders so that all change introduced & implemented are explained by gov't officials. Stakeholders can raise questions & feel like their voices are heard
- Georgia: gov't open to discussion with schools & teachers, this has created a good working relationship, salaries are increasing, national curriculum is based on CEFR; formal decisions come from gov't
- China: policy is dictated by the gov't; TESOL professionals belonging to associations are part of policy making; national curriculum standards created by university professionals chosen by gov't; proficiency framework being developed and schools will comply to these standards; these collaborations are promoted and others can give feedback to teachers
- UK: TAs cannot affect policy making and TESOL training opportunities are fewer due to funding
- Ukraine: English teachers are favored of all teachers; gov't uses online platform for primary schools' feedback, this year moving to secondary schools; English is used as a vehicle for change; head master/officer has a great deal of control over what gets implemented
- Singapore: decided that education was key to economic growth, used education ministry and departments and gov't as a doorway
- Vietnam: tried to start a TA but stopped
- Brazil – effective use of social media group to address various issues.

Countries plans for next steps

- Brazil to have a similar summit
- Iraq to write articles, won't be placing ads for native speaker only
- Honduras will formalize TESOL and generate projects with regional groups
- Indonesia will provide messaging similar to what was at the Summit and through facebook
- Uruguay is brainstorming how to work with policy makers; borrowing from other countries
- Rwanda is share about this Summit at its country's conference
- Bangladesh will organize forum at home with mentoring and networking for younger colleagues
- UAE can start its discussion at the TESOL Arabia conference in May

Micro: teacher in the classroom

Meso: institution level, system level: where policy makers, administrations, and burocrates work

Macro: the big society we all work in