

# EFL teachers' reactions to reflective interviews

Quint Oga-Baldwin  
Fukuoka University of  
Education

## Reference Data:

Oga-Baldwin, Q. (2011). EFL teachers' reactions to reflective interviews. In A. Stewart (Ed.), *JALT2010 Conference Proceedings*. Tokyo: JALT.

Teacher reflection has been shown to be a powerful form of feedback for improving self-efficacy. To date, the study of the development of teacher self-efficacy in second language education has been an underdeveloped area. This study outlines how reflection works with teacher beliefs to improve pedagogy, the ways in which reflective practice can influence teacher self-efficacy, and presents observational, longitudinal, qualitative data taken from in-service teachers. Six university level EFL teachers were interviewed ten times each during the 2009 Japanese school year. Each interview used a preset battery of questions to elicit statements about feelings of success and failure, attributions for those feelings, and changes in teaching in response to those experiences. In the final interview, teachers were asked about their reactions to the experience, and how they applied the experience to their teaching. Results indicate that the teachers studied believe reflection to be valuable, reporting that the interview process did indeed improve beliefs about their own effectiveness to differing extents; however, they may not necessarily want to continue to participate in a peer-supported reflection program.

教員自身による反省は自己効力感を向上させる効果的なフィードバックであることが示されている。しかしながら、今日において外国語教員の自己効力感の開発に関する研究は未開発のままである。この研究では教員による反省の理論を定義し、反省と自己効力感の関係を示すことで大学教育現場の教員に行った長期的な質的研究の結果を提示する。2009年度において6人の大学外国語教員に各10回インタビューを行った。インタビューはあらかじめ決められた項目を用い、成功・失敗の信念とその理由、また信念や行為の変化について聞き出す質問を使用した。成果として、「教員自身が反省をするのは役に立つ」という意見があり、インタビューのプロセスが自己効力感を向上させたこととらえることができる一方、教員達が同僚が互いに支援し合う反省プログラムへ参加し続けるかどうかは疑問である。

**A**s Wright (2010, p. 277) noted regarding the training procedures of language teachers, “relatively little has been published which examines what actually happens in formal institution-based training sessions.” While effective practices in first language (L1) teacher education programs have been documented (Korthagen, Loughran, & Russell, 2006; Brouwer & Korthagen, 2005), very few articles have covered what standard practices are involved in second language (L2) teacher training at either the undergraduate or graduate levels. This lack of knowledge leads to an inability to speak about the backgrounds that L2 teachers bring to their fields, especially expatriate native speakers (NSs) teaching in the foreign language environment who may not have a background in education. While the use of reflection in teacher education has been strongly emphasized in the literature (Farrell, 2004; 2007; Richards, 2004; 2008; Richards & Farrell, 2005), and there have been documented cases of



its implementation in language teacher training (Chiang, 2008; Luk, 2008; Farrell, 2004; 2007; 2008), it is unclear as to whether reflective practice is used in all undergraduate situations, whether the practice continues for in-service teachers (Chiang, 2008), and how the practice can be successfully scaffolded in distance education settings (Hall & Knox, 2009). This article will lay out the theoretical underpinnings for the creation of a formal in-service reflection process designed to improve teachers' self-efficacy beliefs for use in an EFL setting.

### Self-efficacy and education

The importance of self-efficacy for teachers has been well documented (Bandura, 1997; Klassen, Tze, Betts, & Gordon, 2010). Teacher self-efficacy refers to a teacher's belief that they can teach all students, including difficult ones (Guskey & Passaro, 1994). The idea stems from a teacher's belief in their own abilities as an educator and confidence in their ability to carry out specific teaching tasks. While a complete summary of all the research on teacher self-efficacy over the past three decades is beyond the scope of this paper, a short summary of the features of and important benefits offered by this concept will be offered (See Klassen et al., 2010; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998).

In the field of general education, teacher self-efficacy is believed to have a positive influence on educational outcomes, such as student achievement and motivation (Bandura, 1997). Specifically related to student learning, teachers with improved self-efficacy have been noted to use a more humanistic, less control oriented, and more flexible instructional style. Teacher self-efficacy has also had a positive effect on how they teach and what they believe about their teaching (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). Additionally, more humanistic and constructivist approaches toward classroom instruction have been indicated to improve student motivation for learning (Roth, Assor, Kanat-Maymon & Kaplan, 2007).

Specific applications to L2 teaching have been relatively few, and currently offer limited information to both teachers and teacher trainers, with little validation for positive learning effects in the field of foreign language education. Chacon's (2005) mixed-method study of non-native English teachers in Venezuela found that teachers' self-efficacy was correlated with their English language proficiency, as would be expected. Likewise, teachers reported feeling more capable of using instructional strategies than managing their English classes effectively. It should be noted that this study offers some parity with EFL instruction in the Japanese context, as high school teachers in Chacon's study also predominantly relied on the grammar-translation method (Chacon, 2005). Many teachers also avoided using communicative language teaching methods, largely from a lack of communicative training. While Chacon's study provides some cross-sectional evidence on EFL teachers' beliefs, it does not provide significant evidence of how teachers' self-efficacy develops.

The other directly related study of EFL teachers investigated the development of student teachers' sense of self-efficacy in relation to teaching practice fieldwork experiences. Chiang (2008) documented how Taiwanese pre-service teachers' self-efficacy developed using a pretest-posttest design with qualitative interviews. The posttest revealed an increase in students' perceived self-efficacy for teaching after their fieldwork experiences. The author indicated that one of the main influences on the improvement of these teachers' self-efficacy beliefs was the use of deliberate reflection mediated by a teacher trainer. The study concluded that in-service practice with a reflective element functioned as a beneficial formative experience for these pre-service teachers. While this 2008 study does provide some qualitative indications for how teachers develop self-efficacy through reflection, it has only been applied to non-native speaker (NNS) pre-service EFL teachers rather than NS EFL teachers after academic placement.



The theory of self-efficacy posits that self-knowledge is necessary in order to develop the belief that one can effectively perform a task. In order to develop this belief, teachers must reflect on their performance in the classroom and compare their performance against their underlying beliefs about what constitutes good educational practice. Additionally, teachers with higher self-efficacy mediated by personal learning goals reported being more likely to seek out opportunities for feedback and reflection (Runhaar, Sanders & Yang, 2010).

### Reflection as teacher development

Reflection has been characterized as crucial by numerous researchers (Farrell, 2004; 2007; Richards, 2004). One description of an effective teacher training program states that “[r]eflection is seen as the essential tool for linking practice and theory” (Korhagen, Loughran, & Russell, 2006, p. 1024). In order to develop strong beliefs connected to real world practice, teachers must properly reflect on in-class incidents in order to get the most benefit out of their theory training. Teachers form their beliefs based on their early experiences, but it has also been noted that these beliefs may be quite stable over time (Krecik & Ivanus Grmek, 2008; Marsh, 2007a), indicating teachers may become less reflective over the course of their teaching careers. Krečič and Grmek (2008) found in a study of group learning, that late career teachers were less likely to value collaborative professional development than new and mid-career teachers.

For the purposes of teacher development, beliefs have been described as difficult to change (Murray & MacDonald, 1997). Martin and Ramsden (1993) noted that promoting staff development required slow training and retraining in order to promote improvements in teaching practice. Further, Kagan (1992) describes the necessary prerequisites of programs looking to improve teacher quality:

If a program is to promote growth among novices, it must require them to make their preexisting personal beliefs explicit; it must challenge the adequacy of those beliefs; and it must give novices extended opportunities to examine, elaborate, and integrate new information into their existing belief systems. (p. 77)

In order to get teachers to properly reflect on their practice, it is also necessary for them to make explicit the underlying conditions and assumptions that inform their practice. To this end, reflection is essential to teacher development.

Additionally, in work on the longitudinal development of university teachers based on student evaluations, Marsh (2007a) found that over time teachers generally show very little change, and without intervention may decline in perceived effectiveness. Marsh found that, based on feedback from statistically validated class evaluation surveys, university teachers' scores and teaching styles are generally quite stable over time, with a slight but noticeable negative trend. This may indicate a lack of reflection and self-regulation on the part of teachers when faced with feedback from students' evaluations alone, due to the fact that the teachers studied, in spite of receiving feedback, are obviously not acting upon it in an effective fashion. However, Marsh is quick to discuss other studies that have made proper use of student evaluations for positive effect, (e.g. Marsh, 2001; Marsh, 2007b; Marsh & Roche, 1993; 1994; 1997; 2000) citing the fact that outside intervention for improving teacher effectiveness can lead to positive outcomes for student learning.

According to work on effective teaching programs by Korhagen, Loughran and Russell (2006), one of the best methods for developing effective teaching is for teachers to work together on reflection toward developing an understanding of how to act in specific situations related to the teaching. They state that effective teaching programs make use of peer relationships to bolster both motivation and teaching skills. The study describes the



effect the peer group can have on the overall motivation of the group, and suggests that peer-supported learning groups can help teachers develop not only individually, but also as a group. By developing peer-supported learning groups, teachers not only improve their effectiveness, but also their self-regulation and modeling of self-regulated learning. This creates a virtuous circle of positive self-belief, wherein the individual teacher succeeds, reflects on the reasons for success through work with the peer group, which improves the belief that teachers are able to succeed.

## Methods

Based on the concept of self-efficacy where success leads to beliefs about success, which in turn leads to further success in a positive cycle, it therefore follows that in order to prevent the plateau effect described in Marsh (2007a), teachers need intervention to ensure positive growth. As suggested by Korthagen, Loughran, & Russell (2006), one effective method of intervention used in pre-service programs has been the use of peer-supported reflection. By promoting in-service reflection, these programs may serve as a model for how to institutionalize teacher development and effective professional practice.

While the necessity of intervention for improving teacher quality, as well as the benefits of an in-service reflection program, can be found in the literature, the question remains as to whether such a program would be perceived as useful for teachers. Such an institutional program will be of little use if teachers find it intrusive or unnecessary. In order to answer the question of teachers' perceptions of the program, the current study was designed as a longitudinal, qualitative investigation of teachers' uptake of a reflective program, investigating the following research question: *Having experienced a peer-supported reflection program, how do university EFL teachers react to and report applying the opportunity for reflection?*

Six university EFL teachers' reflections about their teaching were recorded in ten short semi-structured interviews over the course of the 2009 school year. The teachers involved were all non-Japanese working in a four-year tertiary institution in western Japan. The participants represent a voluntary convenience sampling. Of the six volunteer participants, five were full-time contract lecturers, with the remaining teacher working part-time. All teachers involved were in either their first or second year working at this particular university, though all had also worked at other levels of education, such as conversation schools and primary and secondary schools, for varying periods of time (See Table 1 for the teacher profiles). Additionally, all had done postgraduate class work, and while a majority had completed their master's degrees, not all were finished.

Table 1. Teacher profiles

Teacher	Employment Status	Previous Tertiary Teaching Experience	Time at current university
A	Part-time	0 years	1 <sup>st</sup> year
B	Full-time	1 year	1 <sup>st</sup> year
C	Full-time	4 years	3 <sup>rd</sup> year
D	Full-time	4 years	3 <sup>rd</sup> year
E	Full-time	7 years	2 <sup>nd</sup> year
F	Full-time	10+ years	10 <sup>th</sup> year

The university has compulsory first- and second-year English courses for all majors. Classes are generally comprised of a mix of students from different departments, which are leveled



using standardized testing measures. This university does not offer English major classes, with most students coming from the Faculties of Economics, Management, Business, Culture, or Engineering.

The interview questions were coordinated with the literature on self-efficacy (Bandura, 2006), and EFL teacher reflection (Farrell, 2004; 2007; Richards & Farrell, 2005). These interviews were designed to elicit reflection with regard to beliefs, goals, successes, failures, and reactions in response to the above (See Appendix 1 for the complete set of interview questions). Interviews were controlled for day, time, and class subject to reflection. The interviewer conducting the interviews was equally ranked with the full-time interviewees, and could not make hiring or institutional assessment decisions. This allowed participants to respond to questions without worry that their responses might be used in a formal institutional assessment.

In the final interview, teachers were asked to comment on the changes they perceived with regard to their teaching as a result of the interview process (See Appendix 2 for the reaction questions). Data was handled following the guidelines set out by Richards (2005). These reactions were transcribed and coded, and anonymously checked by two independent reviewers for external qualitative validity and reliability. The reviewers for the coding scheme were two researchers from other universities with doctoral degrees in the social sciences from western institutions. Reviewers were chosen for neutrality, having no outside knowledge of the interviewees, and read coded files with all personal information for review. The coding scheme looked for statements indicating positive or negative affect for the reflection process, applications of reflection, and lack of applicability. Initial reliability was checked by clean coding the data (i.e., codes were re-applied to an uncoded copy of the data sets, and compared for cohesiveness of coding). Where there was discrepancy, both codes were rejected for the sake of clar-

ity of the scheme. While no quantitative measure was used in identifying validity and reliability, the researcher and reviewers discussed the coding scheme and applications extensively and reached agreement on the researcher's analytical choices and coding terminology.

Based on discussions with the reviewers, subjects' opinions should be viewed with healthy skepticism. Due to the nature of the collegial relationship between the researcher and subjects, interviewees may have attempted to spin their opinions as positively as possible. While the reviewers agreed that the statements coded appeared to represent the ideas presented accurately, the nature of this relationship may have influenced answers and formed an underlying bias that may not have been present were participants dealing with a less situated researcher.

## Results

Presented below are the teachers' individual comments in reaction to the interview process. These results include each individual teacher's time and experience teaching English at the tertiary level. Based on specific requests from participants to preserve maximum anonymity, age, gender, education level, and specific previous work experience will not be included in each teacher's profile, as several teachers believed it could be used to identify them. As a result, gender based pronouns will be replaced with the neutral "they" for purposes of description.

### *Positive affect for peer-supported reflection*

Almost all the teachers surveyed had positive things to say about the process of peer-supported reflection. While the degree of positive affect varied from teacher to teacher, teachers said that they found the process to be "non-threatening," "therapeutic," (Teacher E) and "very valuable" (Teacher C).



One teacher stated that doing the interviews after class was “like a debriefing” (Teacher E). They seemed to feel that that element of the process, presenting the class events as objectively as they could remember them, was useful. Another teacher (Teacher B) stated that they felt that the interviews helped them by starting the process, saying, “When we do the interview, I think about my class more, about what I’m doing with my class.” Teacher A had a similar opinion, stating, “It makes me think, makes me reflect, on what I’ve been doing, on what I need to do, just by talking about it, and having myself listen to what I’ve been doing, that makes me think a lot about what I need to do.” Teacher D thought it was beneficial for “getting a discussion started and thinking in proactive terms.” Finally, Teacher F thought that they “might be looking at some other things a little more critically” as a result of the interviews.

Among the teachers who found it especially useful, Teachers C and D indicated that they might not otherwise be reflecting without the interviews. This data aligns with the work done by Marsh (2007a), which indicates that teachers may not act on feedback without some sort of external stimuli. Teacher C summed up this opinion, saying, “You’ve got so little time to prepare, so little time during the week, you don’t really reflect...Otherwise, I wouldn’t, you know, if I’m rushed for time, I wouldn’t really think about it too much.” Teacher D shared a similar opinion about the reflective interviews: “I think getting a discussion started about it and thinking about it in proactive terms [is helpful]. ‘What can I do next week? Hmm, what could I do next week?’ And then thinking about it.” This was one of several signals that Teacher D might not otherwise think about their classes in the same way without the interviews. The repeated posing of the somewhat rhetorical question about what to do next week seemed to say that it was the interview process that elicited the question that the teacher might not consider, or perhaps not consider in the same concrete fashion.

Some teachers felt that the reflection was a chance to shine, so to speak, and found the interviews a source of motivation with regard to their classes. Teacher C indicated that the interviews helped them through “the fact that I [sic] know you’re going to ask me what I’m doing and why I’m doing it, I have to think, it makes me think.” Teacher B reported, “I think I should do something great so I can have something great to tell you.” This teacher’s desire to “do something great” in reaction to the process indicates a potential motivating element to the interviews. Likewise, Teacher E felt that there was benefit in the interview process based on the idea that the work that they do could benefit other teachers, saying, “I feel like you’ll spread my ideas around, and maybe you’ll get ideas, and it’s fun to spread ideas around... it’s good to talk to people about what I’ve made.” While it should be noted that the researcher was not able to do so as a matter of ethics, the intention to share ideas may also represent motivation toward the task not only of teaching, but also of reflection towards improving practice. Both of these comments from these particular teachers should be treated carefully, for reasons to be illustrated below.

### Negative affect for the peer-supported reflection

Contrary to the researcher’s initial belief, there were very few negative statements with regard to the process of reflection itself. In looking at how teachers reacted to this process, it was expected that some teachers would find the reflection intrusive or burdensome. At the same time, the paucity of negative affect cannot be generalized, as there were teachers at this school who opted not to participate, potentially for the reasons expected above, thus representing a non-response bias within the sample. Further, as noted above, due to the existing collegial relationship of the interviewer and subjects, directly negative statements may have been purposefully avoided.



This does not, however, indicate that teachers were entirely positive. Indeed, one teacher found the process, rather than being outright negative, to be contrary to their existing way of operating. Teacher F stated, “these are kind of things that I’ve been doing for quite a while...so I often don’t really objectively look at what I’m doing and what I’m planning. I do it more of a natural way.” This teacher, as the most experienced of the group, relies on that experience and their ability to make “natural” judgments based on that experience, and therefore did not appear to endorse the process of the interviews. From this, it can be assumed that this teacher, based on past success, feels capable that their methods are sufficient for achieving the desired educational outcomes. In short, this statement is one where the teacher is displaying feelings of self-efficacy. Teachers with a high degree of confidence in their abilities may, at the same time, feel that an outside intervention runs counter to their existing method.

### ***Lack of applicability of the process***

Negative affect for the process took the form of feeling that the process was somewhat redundant, or did not prompt the change in the individual teacher’s practice that the researcher had hoped. With regard to redundancy, this was most pronounced in the beginning with more experienced teachers. Teacher E, in spite of their comment earlier that they wanted to “spread ideas around,” contrasted this statement by saying “I’m pretty motivated anyway, so I think, I don’t feel like ‘Oh, you’re going to interview me, so I’d better make something special.’” While wanting to share their ideas, this teacher also did not find the interview process itself to motivate them to produce anything above the level they were already doing, perhaps indicating satisfaction with their capabilities as a teacher, and thereby higher teacher self-efficacy. On the other side, their statement that they have been doing these classroom activities for a long

time also indicates how teachers might, in spite of reflecting, rely on default practices and decide not to change, or have a “set style” that they use to resolve issues that may come up, as was also shown by Bakkenes, Vermunt and Wubbels (2010).

Two teachers also noted that the interview did not have a strong influence on their behavior. Both Teacher B and Teacher F indicated that they did not feel that the interviews had an effect on their work in or out of class. Teacher F summed up their opinion succinctly, saying, “I don’t think I’m doing anything differently.” Teacher E’s statement that they did not feel the need to “make something special” because of the interview contrasts with Teachers B and C, who did feel the desire to perform for the purpose of the interviews. These individual differences are understandable, though the reason may be due to the experience of the teachers. Teacher E has spent more time teaching at this level, and therefore may not feel the need to produce specific ideas for the purpose of the interviews, due to their self-efficacy for their abilities as a teacher.

Additionally, Teacher B, who above claimed they felt they “should do something great” also indicated that, “usually I forget about it by the next day, so I don’t think it really does change what I do.” While for this teacher, the interview may have been perceived as having a positive motivational effect, the teacher also did not feel that it had the desired outcome of moving them to action. This is important to note due to the fact that these teachers represent both ends of the spectrum of experience; where Teacher B is relatively new to the profession, Teacher F has many years experience teaching at the university level.

It should be noted that Teachers A, B, E, and F all indicated that the peer-supported reflection was somewhat redundant for them, as they already reflected on their classes. Teacher E’s reflection was generally quite informal aside from normal record keeping. Teacher A indicated, “I think I do that every single class, every time, I would think ‘Oh, that wasn’t good, I’ll



change that next time. Oh, that was a pretty good idea I should save that for next time.” Similarly, Teacher B expressed a similar feeling: “Thinking about what I’m doing, what went wrong, I do that kind of anyway, especially the first year here.” Both of these newer teachers seemed to believe that they would reflect independent of the interviews, though both also indicated that the interview was the only formalized reflection that they did. It should be noted that the statements made by the newer teachers may show how a lack of self-efficacy may motivate the teachers to pursue practices which will improve said belief.

Teacher F indicated that they also reflected outside of the interviews, though unlike Teachers A and B, Teacher F had a more concrete and formalized reflection method. They kept a formal log of their classes, and gave an explanation of their use of the notebook:

I keep a log of what we’ve done. I have a plan, a term plan, and a general class plan, and a general approach, but there’s always flexible elements...Keeping [sic] track of those flexible elements and where we are in the overall plan. I keep a log on that. I keep a log on homework, and I also put down my impression on the effectiveness of certain activities, and the general mood of the class, and certain things that I think groups should be doing more of, certain things groups need to do less of.

This may provide a reason for Teacher F’s feeling that the interview process had little influence on their teaching; they were already quite disciplined toward active formal reflection independent of the interviews. The reason for this appears to be a function of this teacher’s earlier experiences. When asked to expand on why they used this method, they explained:

In one of my previous jobs, we had to do some reporting on particular classes... I had to keep logs and then I

would be kind of expanding on them, putting comments on it, and that kind of thing, and it grew over time to be a specific kind of notebook.

These statements tell some of the reasons why this teacher used reflection for their classes, but also how they got to be this way. This may further indicate that early induction based on the nature of the job is necessary to push teachers toward a more active form of reflection. While this teacher did not provide much positive evidence for the process, they did indicate how reflection might influence a teacher, and be related to more positive self-efficacy, as was also indicated by Runhaar, Sanders, & Yang (2010).

### ***Applications of the supported reflection process***

While several of the teachers claimed that the process was redundant, several also said that the process had applications to their classes. Teachers A, C, and E in particular, felt that there were positive effects in their classes. Teacher A claimed that “by having you interview me with what I thought about the class, it gave me ideas of what I need to work on.” Teacher C had a similar opinion: “With the same text book, I’ve been using the same activities and strategies that I’ve incorporated.” This teacher found applications not only within the specific class that was the subject of the reflection, but also in other classes of similar level. As most of these teachers had several different classes using the same text book throughout the school week, being able to apply the lessons from the reflection in one class meant having new ideas and tactics for several of their other classes.

Teacher D likewise thought that the reflection had a useful impact on their classes, but did not find the same degree of applicability for their other classes. They explained, “This was a good class to talk about, precisely because it’s a little bit of an exception from the rest, so in this particular case, I think it was a



little more class specific." Based on the fact that their class posed unique problems, they were able to find some solutions by talking over the issue using the interview format. While another class may have had a stronger effect on other classes, this class specifically was one that needed attention for this teacher.

Finally, one of the more experienced teachers, Teacher E, claimed that this was a chance for review. They appeared to believe that participation in the interviews was a method of preparing for the following classes. They expressed their belief saying, "I can go over what I'm going to do next week, and solidify and remind myself what I'm going to do." While this reaction represents one of the original purposes of the interviews, the teacher in question recognizes this fact and feels that this is of use to them.

### Analysis

In response to the research question, teachers generally exhibited positive affect for the idea of reflective interviews, and several stated that they did actively, if informally, reflect on their teaching. As can be seen from the code map in Figure 1, the two teachers who expressed the highest self-efficacy for their teaching abilities were also, not coincidentally, the most experienced. These two teachers, while willing to fully participate, were also likely to disagree with the approach. Interestingly, it was the teacher who was the most actively reflective who found the process to be somewhat counter to their existing method, while other teachers did not exhibit as strong a negative reaction.

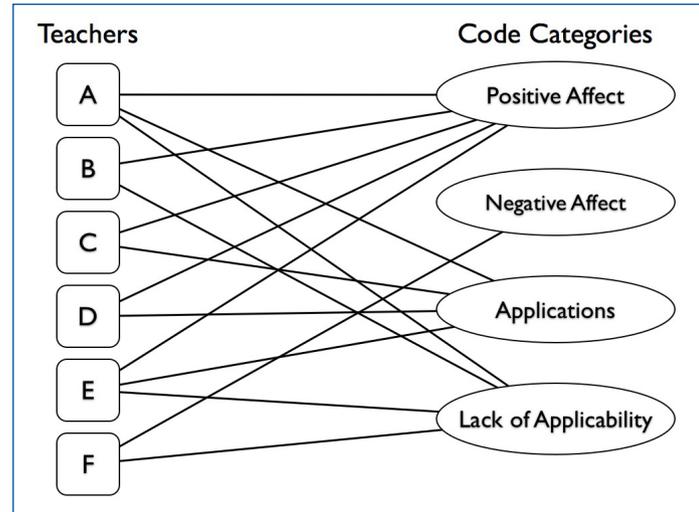


Figure 1. Code map of teachers and coding category connections

One positive sign is that the newer teachers claimed to be reflective in practice without the aid of professional development intervention. This may be due to the fact that these teachers had previous professional teaching experience in private conversation schools and public and private elementary and secondary schools before becoming university level instructors, and therefore recognized the usefulness of reflection. It may also highlight the ways reflective teaching practices are being used in more recent teacher preparation classes and professional settings, as Teacher F indicated, though this requires further investigation, and remains beyond the scope of this limited investigation.

Where both of the less-experienced teachers appeared to feel that the process was somewhat redundant, Teacher A also

felt that it helped apply new ideas to their classes and Teacher B found the questions motivated them to think of new ideas. While there is redundancy based on these teachers' use of reflection, their reflection tended to be more informal. In improving these interviews for the future in order to overcome Teacher B's concern that it did not provide a method for behavioral change, adding a concrete planning phase to the interviews may improve the applicability of these studies. Additionally, these two teachers indicated that the primary reason they reflected was that they were new to teaching at the university level in general and this university specifically. This may represent lower feelings of self-efficacy for teaching, motivating these teachers to behave in a way that will improve said self-efficacy. As a result, it may indeed be that, while these teachers would do this anyway, peer-supported reflection can be beneficial nonetheless as a way to promote self-efficacy development and provide structure to their existing reflections.

In this study, it was the middle teachers who exhibited the fewest negatives and most positives with regard to the interviews. These teachers reported both positive affect and applicability for the process of peer-supported reflection, and seemed to indicate that they might not otherwise reflect without some sort of outside intervention, just as was noted in the research by Marsh (2007a). Just as in this study, teachers at the three- to four-year mark appeared to start a gradual slide away from more active development of their teaching. Where both the earlier and later career teachers claimed that they did reflect outside of class, either formally or informally, the middle group appears to be at the greatest risk of avoiding this productive behavior. While this is by no means a conclusive result or one that can be generalized beyond the scope of this study, based on the teachers in this study there is some indication that peer-supported learning of this type may have more value for brand-new and intermediate-level teachers looking to improve their practice than for more experienced teachers, as the more experienced

teachers using this format may find the process either redundant or perceive it negatively.

## Conclusion

Understanding the large scale lack of change presented by university teachers over time (Marsh, 2007a), and based on the need for improving teacher quality for both pedagogical and economic reasons (Hanushek, 2010), some form of intervention on the part of institutions seems to be required. In L1 education, a properly scaffolded program for reflection has been shown to have positive effects with regard to teacher competence and quality (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Korthagen, Loughran, & Russell, 2006), which in turn improves teacher self-efficacy beliefs.

While the directly stated affect towards the interviews was generally positive, the perceived need on the part of the teachers in this study was mixed. While all the teachers did appear to do some form of reflection in their own way, teachers at the lower and higher ends of the experience scales used in this study displayed slightly less self-perceived need for the intervention than did the teachers toward the middle, primarily as a result of the redundancy of the process. This may indicate simple individual differences in level of induction towards professional development, but may also indicate a point at which teachers may benefit the most from a professional intervention by their peers.

The finding that more experienced teachers appear to want less intervention in their teaching does not necessarily contradict the work done on peer-supported reflection (Korthagen, Loughran, & Russell, 2006; Martin & Ramsden, 1993), as much of this work has been about work done with pre-service and very new in-service teachers. This does not necessarily mean that these teachers will not benefit from an intervention (Marsh, 2007a), but rather that they may either not agree with the full value of such a proposed program, or may not feel that partici-



pation will benefit them to the same extent as newer teachers. This also aligns with Murray and MacDonald's (1997) conclusion that changing beliefs about teaching may be a difficult venture for instructors with extensive experience, as well as with work on teacher learning with regard to externally imposed educational innovations by Bakkenes, Vermunt and Wubbels (2010), where several in their sample of 94 experienced teachers also demonstrated resistance, negative reactions, and a return to older practices.

Based on the results here, it is clear that in order to properly test teachers' willingness to engage in a peer-supported reflection program, a valid quantitative measure must be developed. If, indeed, willingness toward and induction into collaborative professional development activities are the key differences in teachers based on experience, a validated statistical measure may be able to show where an institutionalized peer-supported reflection program could improve teacher quality. A much larger scale study on the beliefs of teachers regarding peer-supported reflective practice could offer some suggestions about how and where they may have the best reception, a crucial factor in demonstrating the effectiveness of a new program. If reflective programs are to be successful, they should be implemented first with teachers who will be most willing to make use of them.

## Bio Data

**Quint Oga-Baldwin** is a full-time EFL educator and teacher trainer at Fukuoka University of Education. He has been teaching in Japan since 2003, and is a graduate of the Temple University Master of Science in Education program. His research interests include EFL teacher development, primary level foreign language study, and student language learning motivation.

## References

- Bakkenes, I., Vermunt, J. D., & Wubbels, T. (2010). Teacher learning in the context of educational innovation: Learning activities and learning outcomes of experienced teachers. *Learning and Instruction, 20*(6), 533-548.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York: Freeman.
- Bandura, A. (2006). Guide for constructing self-efficacy scales. In F. Pajares, & T. Urdan (Eds.), *Adolescence and education, Vol. 5: Self-efficacy and adolescence* (pp. 307-337). Greenwich: Information Age Publishing.
- Brouwer, N., & Korthagen, F. (2005). Can teacher education make a difference? *American Educational Research Journal, 42*(1), 153-224.
- Chacon, T. C. (2005). Teachers' perceived efficacy among English as a foreign language teachers in middle schools in Venezuela. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 21*(3), 257-272. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2005.01.001
- Chiang, M-H. (2008). The effects of fieldwork experience on empowering prospective foreign language teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 24*(5), 1270-1287.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2006). *Powerful teacher education: Lessons from exemplary programs*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- Farrell, T. S. C. (2004). *Reflective Practice in Action*. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press.
- Farrell, T. S. C. (2007). *Reflective Language Teaching: From Research to Practice*. London: Continuum Press.
- Farrell, T. S. C. (2008). 'Here's the book, go teach the class': ELT practicum support. *RELC Journal, 39*(2), 226-241.
- Gordon, S. C., Dembo, M. H., & Hocevar, D. (2007). Do teachers' own learning behaviors influence their classroom goal orientation and control ideology? *Teaching and Teacher Education, 23*, 36-46.
- Guskey, T. R., & Passaro, P. D. (1994). Teacher efficacy: A study of construct dimensions. *American Educational Research Journal, 31*, 627-643.



- Hanushek, E. (2010). The economic value of higher teacher quality. National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper Series. Available from <<http://www.nber.org/papers/w16606>>.
- Hall, D. & Knox, J. (2009). Issues in the education of TESOL teachers by distance education. *Distance Education*, 30(1), 63-85.
- Krecic, M. J., & Ivanus Grmek, M. (2008). Cooperative learning and team culture in schools: Conditions for teachers' professional development. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 24(1), 59-68. doi: 10.1016/j.tate.2007.02.011
- Kagan, D. M. (1992). Implications of research on teacher belief. *Educational Psychologist*, 27, 65-90.
- Klassen, R. M., Tze, V. M. C., Betts, S. M., & Gordon, K. A. (2010). Teacher efficacy research 1998-2009: Signs of progress or unfulfilled promise? *Educational Psychology Review*. doi: 10.1007/s10648-010-9141-8
- Korthagen, F., Loughran, J., & Russell, T. (2006). Developing fundamental principles for teacher education programs and practices. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 22(8), 1020-1041. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2006.04.022
- Luk, J. (2008). Assessing teaching practice reflections: Distinguishing discourse features of 'high' and 'low' grade reports. *System* 36(4), 624-641.
- Marsh, H. W. (2001). Distinguishing between good (useful) and bad workload on students' evaluations of teaching. *American Educational Research Journal*, 38(1), 183-212.
- Marsh, H. W. (2007a). Do university teachers become more effective with experience? A multilevel growth model of students' evaluations of teaching over 13 years. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 99(4), 775-790. doi: 10.1037/0022-0663.99.4.775
- Marsh, H. W. (2007b). Students' evaluations of university teaching: A multidimensional perspective. In R. P. Perry & J. C. Smart (Eds.), *The scholarship of teaching and learning in higher education: An evidence-based perspective* (pp. 319-384). New York: Springer.
- Marsh, H. W., & Roche, L. A. (1993). The use of students' evaluations and an individually structured intervention to enhance university teaching effectiveness. *American Educational Research Journal*, 30, 217-251.
- Marsh, H. W., & Roche, L. A. (1994). *The use of students' evaluations of university teaching to improve teaching effectiveness*. Canberra: Australian Department of Employment, Education, and Training.
- Marsh, H. W., & Roche, L. A. (1997). Making students' evaluations of teaching effectiveness effective. *American Psychologist*, 52, 1187-1197.
- Marsh, H. W., & Roche, L. A. (2000). Effects of grading leniency and low workloads on students' evaluations of teaching: Popular myth, bias, validity, or innocent bystanders? *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 92, 202-228.
- Martin, E., & Ramsden, P. (1993). An expanding awareness: How lecturers change their understanding of teaching. *Research and Development in Higher Education*, 15, 148-155.
- Murray, K., & MacDonald, R. (1997). The disjunction between lecturers' conceptions of teaching and their claimed educational practice. *Higher Education*, 33(3), 331-349.
- Richards, J. C. (2004). Towards reflective teaching. *The Language Teacher*, 33, 2-5.
- Richards, J. C. (2008). Second language teacher education today. *RELC Journal*, 39(2), 158-177.
- Richards, J. C. & Farrell, T. S. C. (2005). *Professional development for language teachers*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, L. (2005). *Handling qualitative data*. London: Sage Publications.
- Roth, G., Assor, A., Kanat-Maymon, Y., & Kaplan, H. (2007). Autonomous motivation for teaching: How self-determined teaching may lead to self-determined learning. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 99, 761-774.
- Runhaar, P., Sanders, K., & Yang, H. (2010). Stimulating teachers' reflection and feedback asking: An interplay of self-efficacy, learning goal orientation, and transformational leadership. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26(5), 1154-1161.
- Skaalvik, E. M., & Skaalvik, S. (2007). Dimensions of teacher self-efficacy and relations with strain factors, perceived collective teacher efficacy, and teacher burnout. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 99, 611-625.



Tschannen-Moran, M., Woolfolk Hoy, A., & Hoy, W. K. (1998). Teacher efficacy: Its meaning and measure. *Review of Educational Research*, 68(2), 202-248.

Wright, T. (2010). Second language teacher education: Review of recent research on practice. *Language Teaching*, 43(3), 259-296. doi: 10.1017/S0261444810000030

## Appendix 1

### Reflection Interview Questions

- What were your original goals for class today?
- What are your current goals for the end of the semester?
- What did you do in class?
- What did you do to prepare for today's class?
- What were you thinking about when you prepared for the class?
- Why did you choose the activities you did today?
- What was a successful part of today's class?
- Was there any part of class where you weren't satisfied?
- Was there anything you felt should be changed if you did this class again?
- Is there anything you want to change for next week?
- What are you planning to do in next week's class?

## Appendix 2

### Reaction Questions

- Please discuss how you felt with regards to the interviews this year.
- Did you find anything helpful in the experience?
- How have the interviews influenced your classroom practice?
- Has there been any effect on your other classes?
- Have you been doing any formal reflection otherwise?

