Speaker Notes

Teachers' Professional Development in ELT

Halis Bereket | BEREKET ELT Archive

Use these notes alongside the 22 slide seminar presentation. The wording supports a conversational delivery. Pause for the activities and adapt examples to the participants' teaching contexts.

01 Teachers' Professional Development in ELT

Welcome. This workshop is about making professional learning manageable and useful in our English classrooms. We will look at a fictional teacher's experience, examine examples from my archive, and prepare a small development plan. You do not need expensive equipment or a perfect starting point. You need a question that matters to your learners and a way to examine what happens when you try something different.

02 Our workshop outcomes

By the end, I would like each of you to have one specific teaching question, one source of feedback and one classroom trial to undertake. Keep a real class in mind. A useful question could be: how can I help quieter students take part in pair work? It is easier to learn from a focused question than from a general ambition to become a better teacher. Our final plan will include a date for reviewing the trial.

03 A recent change

Please talk to a partner about something you have changed recently. It may be a different listening task, clearer instructions, a new way of grouping learners, or a decision to wait longer after asking a question. What made you try it? A learner's comment, a colleague's suggestion or your own observation may have started the process. Invite two examples. Accept small changes as meaningful examples and do not ask participants to rank each other's teaching.

04 Experience and learning

Experience gives us knowledge of learners and the practical demands of teaching. It deserves respect. Professional development asks us to examine that experience: what is working, for whom, and what might need to change? Years alone do not tell us whether a method still meets the needs of a particular class. Equally, a familiar method may work well and deserve to stay. We need reflection and classroom evidence rather than a demand for constant novelty.

05 Daniel's Story

Daniel is a fictional teacher whose story was developed from the Mualla teacher activity in my archive. Read the full story in Teacher's Notes, or ask participants to read it silently. Explain that it is a discussion case, not a judgement of a real colleague. Ask them to listen for the conditions that made learning difficult and the small steps that helped him start again. Do not reveal an ideal answer before they have considered the situation.

Daniel had wanted to become a teacher since he was a student. When he began teaching English at a busy school, he arrived with enthusiasm and a notebook full of ideas. His classes were larger than he had expected, and learners needed different kinds of support. He prepared late into the evening, read about teaching and asked experienced colleagues for advice.

During his first year, Daniel tried several ways of teaching listening and speaking. Some activities worked well. Others needed clearer instructions or more preparation time. He began to understand that a lesson plan was a starting point and that learners' responses could help him improve it.

As the years passed, his responsibilities increased. There were lessons, marking, meetings and family commitments. At home, he shared the care of his children and later helped an older relative. He still cared deeply about his students, but finding time to read or discuss teaching became difficult. Familiar materials helped him manage the workload, so he used them more often.

One afternoon, a colleague invited him to a short discussion about classroom participation. Daniel almost declined because he had papers to mark. He joined for twenty minutes and mentioned that some learners rarely spoke during pair work. His colleague asked a simple question: did they have enough time to prepare before speaking?

The question stayed with him. In his next lesson, Daniel gave learners a minute to think and write a few words before speaking with a partner. He observed the pairs and asked what had helped them. Some learners said the preparation made it easier to begin. Others wanted a model of the first exchange. Daniel noted both responses.

He decided to make a small plan. Twice a week, he would spend ten minutes reading or reviewing a lesson. Once a month, he and a colleague would exchange one useful idea. The school agreed to provide a short meeting slot for teachers who wanted to share classroom trials. Daniel could sometimes take part and sometimes needed to attend to other responsibilities.

Over the following weeks, he adjusted the task and reviewed his observations. Not every change helped every learner, but he had a clearer reason for his decisions. He kept useful familiar activities and improved others. His experience still mattered, and he was learning how to examine it.

Daniel did not suddenly find unlimited time. He found a manageable way to continue learning, with support from people around him.

06 Daniel’s choices

What pressures did Daniel face? His teaching load and family responsibilities matter. Avoid explaining the problem simply as a lack of motivation. Ask each group to suggest one action he could realistically manage and one thing his school could do. Useful answers include protected time, a supportive colleague, shared resources and fewer unnecessary tasks. If a group suggests a demanding daily programme, ask whether Daniel could continue it during a difficult week. Invite different answers.

07 My development programme

In my earlier seminar materials, I proposed daily lesson preparation, thirty minutes of listening, five pages of reading, a monthly ELT article presentation and a monthly lesson plan submission. These show that I wanted development to become regular and concrete. Today I would offer the programme as a menu. A teacher can start with ten minutes of reading twice a week or one monthly exchange with a colleague. The aim is a useful

routine that fits the teacher's circumstances, not compliance with fixed quantities. Source: teachers self development_seminerden.pptx, slide 3.

08 A focused teaching question

Here is a focused question. We are not labelling quiet learners as a problem or assuming that every learner should speak in the same way. We are asking how our task design could offer better opportunities. A possible trial is to give preparation time and rotate simple partner roles. We can then observe who contributes and ask learners what helped. Participants may choose another question related to listening, vocabulary or instructions. The question should be small enough to explore in several lessons.

09 Reflection after a lesson

A reflection does not have to be a long diary entry. Describe what happened before explaining it. For example: four pairs began speaking immediately, but three waited for help. Several learners asked what they should do first. Next time I will model the first exchange and ask a learner to explain the instructions. Notice the difference between a classroom observation and an interpretation. We may think learners were unmotivated, but unclear instructions could also explain the delay. Ask participants to write a brief reflection and share it only if they wish.

10 Learning from students

I used a student questionnaire to examine my teaching and shared the results in my book discussion presentation. This gave me information to think about and act on. For a new version, I suggest short questions about learning rather than questions that invite a personal judgement of the teacher. Allow anonymous responses where possible. Explain that learners may skip a question and that their answers will not affect marks. Look for patterns across responses and lessons. One comment is a reason to investigate, not a complete explanation. Tell the class what you plan to change. Sources: T Evaluat form 2.pdf; Lutfen_bu_kitabi_okurmusun.pptx, slides 25–28.

11 A feedback question

A statement such as 'The pace helps me follow the lesson' asks about one part of the learning experience. Include Never, Sometimes, Often, Always and Not applicable. Follow it with an open question: what would help you learn? Avoid combining pace, enjoyment and understanding in one statement, because a learner may have different answers to each. Younger learners may need simpler language or an oral explanation. This is a classroom feedback tool, not a validated instrument for formally rating teachers.

12 Learning with a colleague

Peer observation works best when colleagues agree on a focus before the lesson. For example, one teacher could note which pairs begin a speaking task and which need clarification. Record observable events rather than personality judgements. Afterward, the teaching colleague speaks first about what they noticed. The observer then shares evidence and asks questions. Together they choose a next step. Keep the conversation supportive and separate it from formal appraisal. A ten-minute observation of one task may be more manageable than observing an entire lesson.

13 Learning together through a book

In February 2002, I led a book evaluation meeting about Hasan Yilmaz's Ogretmenim, Lutfen Bu Kitabi Okur musun. All the teachers had read the book. I used questions and a competition to revisit important ideas, and colleagues contributed points that were not on my slides. The archive records twelve questions and book prizes for eleven teachers across the first three places. I offer this as an example of colleagues learning together. A new group can use a short article instead of a whole book, and participation can be cooperative. We should ask which idea we will test afterward. Source: Lutfen_bu_kitabi_okurmusun.pptx, slides 1–2 and 54.

14 A book sharing activity

Give each group an appropriate short text, or invite members to choose an idea from something they have already read. Ask what the author proposes, where it might help, and what would need adapting for their learners. The group then plans a small trial. At the next meeting, teachers return with observations rather than simply a summary of the reading. Respect differences of opinion. A published idea is a starting point for discussion, and we should examine its evidence and suitability. This activity can take place without prizes or scores.

15 My teaching toolkit

My archive includes an 'I am a teacher, I am a car' discussion activity. We can preserve its reflective purpose through a simpler teaching toolkit metaphor. Ask what is working well, what needs attention and what support would help. Avoid ranking teachers by expensive car brands or treating confidence as proof of effectiveness. Participants can discuss their own strengths privately, then choose one area they are willing to explore. This is reflection, not a test. Source: I_am_a_car.pdf, adapted activity concept.

16 Technology with a purpose

A technology decision should begin with a learning need. For example, short replayable audio may help learners revisit a dialogue before speaking. Ask whether everyone can access the material and whether a simpler option would do the job. Teachers differ in their familiarity with tools, and that should not become a label for their professional value. We can replace the archive's attitude categories with a supportive question: what do I need to learn to use this tool well? Source: attitudes_to_technology.pdf, discussion theme adapted.

17 A classroom inquiry

A small classroom inquiry gives our learning a structure. Choose a question, try a change, gather a little relevant information and review it. For our pair speaking example, we could compare several lessons before and during the use of preparation time. Keep task difficulty and group conditions in mind. Observations and learner comments may suggest that the change helped, but they do not prove that it caused every difference. For everyday development, the important result is a better informed next decision. Formal research requires additional design and ethical consideration.

18 A four week plan

This four-week schedule is a proposal, not a universal requirement. In week one, choose a question and observe current practice. In week two, read a short relevant text and discuss one idea with a colleague. In week three, try the change and gather a few observations or learner comments. In week four, review what happened and decide whether to continue, adapt or stop. Teachers can extend the schedule during busy periods. Learning should remain sustainable, and a trial that does not help can still teach us something useful.

19 Your development plan

Please complete the planning sheet using a real class. Write a question, an action, the information you will collect and a review date. Include someone who could support you, if that is useful. A partner can ask: is the action specific, is it manageable, and will the information help answer the question? Avoid turning this into a commitment to do everything in the seminar. One focused action is enough. Participants may keep the sheet private and share only the part they choose.

20 Support and time

Teachers need conditions that allow learning. Shared materials and brief, protected discussion time can help. School leaders should consider workload and access before asking for additional activities. Professional development can include collaboration during the working day, rather than always extending the evening. Research reading in the supplied materials discusses both personal motivation and organisational support. Several sources concern teacher education, so we should adapt their ideas rather than assume the same findings apply to every experienced ELT teacher. Sources: Machekhina, Teachers' Self-Improvement as a Development Resource for Modern Schools, supplied 3.pdf; Ivaniuk et al. (2020), DOI 10.7596/taksad.v9i4.2873.

21 Reviewing progress

Keep a brief record of the question, the trial, your observations and your next decision. Include difficulties as well as encouraging signs. Learner feedback, classroom observations and examples of learner work may tell different parts of the story. We should consider them together. A development portfolio can be a small collection of useful records, not a large folder made for appearance. Return to the original question and decide what to keep, what to adapt and what remains uncertain.

22 One next step

To close, complete this sentence: in my next lesson, I will try... Choose something you can realistically do. It could be a clearer model, a short feedback question, or a conversation with a colleague. Our professional learning develops through trying, noticing and revisiting our choices. Thank you for contributing your own experience. I hope the activities help you build a routine that supports both your teaching and your learners.

References and source notes

Bereket, H. (2002). Book evaluation presentation on Hasan Yilmaz's Ogretmenim, Lutfen Bu Kitabi Okur musun. Unpublished school presentation, 8 February 2002. Source: Lutfen_bu_kitabi_okurmusun.pptx.

Bereket, H. (2005). Teacher self-development seminar extract. Unpublished teaching archive. Source: teachers self development_seminerden.pptx.

Bereket, H. (2001–2002). Student feedback form and accompanying classroom feedback examples. Unpublished teaching archive. Sources: T Evaluat form 2.pdf and book evaluation slides 25–28.

Machekhina, O. N. Teachers' Self-Improvement as a Development Resource for Modern Schools, pp. 522–524. Supplied PDF 3.pdf, also duplicated as 8.pdf. Publication year and containing volume are not established in the supplied excerpt.

Ivaniuk, H., Venhlovska, O., Antypin, Y., & Vovchok, Y. (2020). Self-Development as a Factor in the Professional Growth of Future Teachers. Journal of History Culture and Art Research, 9(4), 77–86. https://doi.org/10.7596/taksad.v9i4.2873