



David McMurray

Graduate students and teaching assistants are invited to submit compositions in the form of a speech, appeal, memoir, essay, conference review, or interview on the policy and practice of language education. Master's and doctoral thesis supervisors are also welcome to contribute or encourage their students to join this vibrant debate. Grounded in the author's reading, practicum, or empirical research, contributions are expected to share an impassioned presentation of opinions in 1,000 words or less. Teaching Assistance is not a peer-reviewed column.

Email: jaltpubs.tl.ta@jalt.org

In this issue's Teaching Assistance column, a recent graduate student explains how the synergy from combining his studies in MATESOL and MBA programs are helping him to teach English in Turkey. Cem Yucel received his Master of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages from La Trobe University and a Master of Business Administration (MBA) from Kaplan Business School in Melbourne, Australia. He is passionate about creating lesson plans that combine foreign language learning theories and frameworks of intelligence with various management skills he picked up, such as coaching and mentoring, negotiation and conflict management, organizational change and innovation. He speaks English, Turkish, Spanish, German, and Russian. He also plays the qanun, a traditional Middle Eastern stringed instrument, during his tutorials to raise the listening comprehension and pronunciation skills of his students who work in companies in Turkey.

Value of Reflective Practice for Language Teachers

Cem Yucel

EFL Instructor at Address Education Centre, Izmir, Turkey

Prior to the pandemic, I was a face-to-face learner in Australia. Concomitantly, I was a language teacher and had students from Japan, Brazil, Colombia, and Thailand. When I relocated to Turkey last year, I began teaching online at a language school center where all my learners were adult Turkish citizens. In this essay, I will share the basics of reflective practice by introducing five seminal frameworks from intelligence theory which I learned during my MBA studies. These models helped me to understand the value of reflective practice for language teachers: The Johari Window, Emotional Intelligence, Cultural Intelligence, Multiple Intelligence, and the Hierarchy of Needs. These core beliefs sustain my classes whether they are conducted face to face or remotely.

Reflective Practice

I engage in reflective practice to critically analyse my own needs and to help me make necessary changes so that I can continuously improve as a language teacher. Learning from my own mistakes requires acknowledging and correcting these mistakes, and this leads to ongoing self-improvement. I also encourage my adult students, who are business professionals, to engage in reflective practice for learning English. Reflective practices are techniques that help individuals, as well as the whole class, to reflect on their experiences and actions in order to engage in the process of continuous learning. This can be achieved with as simple an approach as lessons utilizing open-ended questions that begin with "What, Why, Which, Where, Who, and How." The technique is also useful for colleagues where I work. I have found that fellow teachers are capable of learning from their own mistakes and in turn, they can assist other co-workers in gaining similar insights.

The Johari Window

According to Luft and Ingham (1955), the Johari Window can help us to identify reflective practices at workplaces (see Figure 1). For instance, let's suppose that at the end of an intensive, reflective day, a manager discovers a personality trait that he hasn't spotted before, such as his rigidity, or narrow-mindedness. This self-discovery regarding his narrow-mindedness would be his blind spot, represented in the quadrant "Blind Area" on the Johari Window. This personality trait might have been recognized by his subordinates and gossiped about covertly for a long time. Discovering his negative trait, apologizing to his co-workers for his narrow-mindedness, as well as trying to fix it, could boost the manager's relationship with his co-workers. It could also spread reflective practices all around the workplace. On the Johari Window, identifying traits that are "Not-Known to Others" could also assist the manager to build rapport with his co-workers. As another example, if the manager knew that he had a sense of extreme tidiness and hygiene but did not openly share this with his

co-workers, they could harbor irritated emotions towards him. Admitting that an obsessive-compulsive disorder could be the underlying cause of his extreme tidiness could relieve such tensions. A profound meditation and reflective journey could lead the manager to figure out that it would be much wiser and healthier to explain his sickness with his co-workers. This effort could dramatically strengthen the mutual relationship between the manager and his co-workers.

Figure 1
Diagram of the Johari Window

Quadrants	Known to Self	Not Known to Self
Known to Others	Open Area	Blind Area
Not Known to Others	Hidden Area	Unknown Area

Emotional Intelligence (EQ)

Goleman’s (1996) influential EQ theory on self-awareness and empathy has allowed me to identify my own strengths and weaknesses and has assisted me in becoming a more aware, more productive teacher. I practice putting the needs of my students first by putting myself in their shoes. For instance, while I was teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) in a multicultural class, a Colombian student suddenly rose from his seat and left the classroom during my lesson without saying anything. Though I was filled with anger and felt a sense of disrespect, I suppressed these initial feelings. I waited until the following day to find the root cause of my student’s vanishing act. I realized this was an opportunity to consider others’ needs and desires (Fisher & Ury, 1981). During a one-to-one chat prior to the group lesson, I listened to him attentively without judging him. It turned out that the student had been desperately looking for a job and was having some serious family issues. Also, he apologized to me several times for leaving the classroom during the lesson. This incident demonstrated that having a calm, empathetic attitude towards students is superior to reactive approaches which can destroy positive teacher-student relationships. Keeping EQ in mind while I work has led to more productive and healthier relationships not only with my colleagues and learners, but also with my friends and partner.

Cultural Intelligence

Another useful theory that I learned during my MBA studies that I apply to my foreign language teaching classes is cultural intelligence. Earley and Ang (2003) suggest that cultural intelligence assists people to integrate themselves into new cultures and environments. The capability to adapt to local lifestyle patterns by noticing cultural cues, understanding local values, as well as having the willingness to build rapport with other cultures, helped me to adjust to teaching and learning in Australia (see Figure 2).

Figure 2
Photograph of the Author (wearing flags) at a Conference in Australia



Multiple Intelligence

I believe the way I approach teaching improved when I began to mentor and coach language learners to be better versions of themselves academically and spiritually. I encourage learners to highlight each of their strengths, while at the same time diminishing their weaknesses by relying on Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence Theory (1983). For example, I will be on the lookout for which of my students display linguistic intelligence. They are likely to be sensitive to spoken and written language and have the capacity to use language to accomplish certain goals. Students with musical intelligence respond well to my lessons that include singing along to the *qanun* for rhythm. Students with kinesthetic powers respond well to my language games and activities related to football. When I identify students with spatial, naturalist, interpersonal, or logical-mathematical intelligences, I will try to customize my lessons to further draw out and nurture each individual.

Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's seminal Hierarchy of Needs Theory (1943) has allowed me to comprehend that basic needs such as accommodation, money, and family are indispensable. This theory reminded me that my students are less likely to perform at their full potential if their basic needs are unmet. Personally I will aim to fulfill aesthetics and self-actualization needs that are located higher up on the pyramid model of this theory. To achieve this goal, I will read more widely, more actively engage in music as a *qanun* performer, and spread my love for the English language, music, and sports to those who surround me. I believe that sustaining such an approach and helping my students to get what they need will create an ongoing synergy, harmony, and unity in our lives (see Figure 3).

Conclusion

I value the use of reflection practices as well as the tenets of business psychology in my language teaching career. These core beliefs sustain my classes, whether they are conducted face to face or remotely. I hope English teachers will be encouraged by my experience and apply these practices in their own teaching.

References

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Figure 3

Photograph of the Author and Students at a Coffee Shop in Turkey



[JALT PRAXIS] WRITERS' WORKSHOP



Jerry Talandis Jr. & Rich Bailey

The Writers' Workshop is a collaborative endeavour of the JALT Writers' Peer Support Group (PSG). Articles in the column provide advice and support for novice writers, experienced writers, or nearly anyone who is looking to write for academic purposes. If you would like to submit a paper for consideration, please contact us.

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Overcoming Writer's Block

Jerry Talandis Jr.

In my previous Writers' Workshop column, "Understanding Writer's Block" (Talandis Jr., 2021), I discussed common reasons why we sometimes get bogged down in our efforts to produce academic prose. The causes are myriad, complex, and intertwined, but they tend to fall into three categories: lack of knowledge, workflow-related issues, and emotional/physical reasons. Once you understand the causes,

the next step is coming up with solutions for overcoming the problem. That's my aim for this column: providing a brief overview of some tried and true methods for unblocking your academic writing. In truth, there are many ways of dealing with writer's block, more than I can fit into the small amount of space allotted to me here. However, I'll aim to get you started with solutions which address the three categories of causes.

Start With Acceptance

Academic writing is hard, so a great place to begin is accepting this fact. While a degree of pain and