

The ‘subject’ of Freeman & Johnson’s reconceived knowledge base of second language teacher education

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Abstract

This article focuses on reframing the ‘who’ of second language teacher education (SLTE), building on the framework laid out by Freeman and Johnson (FJ) in 1998 with particular attention to their notion of the teacher-as-learner. The first half of this article is conceptual, outlining one way I have found helpful for engaging with this notion since first encountering the framework some twenty years ago. The second half, being more substantive in focus, risks misinterpretation without this broader perspective: propositional ‘who’s’ that lack relevance on their own, not least in the way I see FJ’s call to engage with ‘the who of teaching’, and a focus on not just the individual, but also the context, goals, and background from which one comes to take up that role. This includes a discussion of the teacher-subject as an increasingly communicatively-complex, conflicted-compliant, and collaboratively-creative agent within the kinds of spaces that their roles can be realized against emerging contexts for ELT.

Keywords

activity theory, knowledge base of second language teacher education, sociocultural theory, teacher identity, teacher knowledge, teacher practice, teachers’ work

I Freeman and Johnson’s (1998) ‘teacher’: A learner

Freeman and Johnson’s (1998) (re)positioning of teachers within L2 education – and, in turn, L2 *teacher* education – lies in their argument that we no longer see ‘teachers [as] empty vessels’ (p. 401). With this as Freeman and Johnson’s (FJ’s) starting point, the question of ‘*who* teachers are’ becomes one of genuine, fundamental importance. FJ’s

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response to this question in 1998 was a provocation that the field move beyond then implicit assumptions of teacher-as-technician – one in need of skills and methodologies that would then enable students' language acquisition to 'just unfold' (e.g. Wallace, 1991; also Green, Reid, & Brennan, 2017, with similar concerns on the 'struggle for the soul' of teacher education in times of global governance) – to recasting the teacher as an agentic social 'subject': individuals with identities, knowledges, and experiences who are themselves engaged in an evolving trajectory of professional development. In FJ's terms, an understanding of the teacher-*as-learner*.

For FJ, each teacher – like the students that he or she teaches – is also on his or her own developmental trajectory, shaped by different sources of influence that are both individual (including, but not limited to, the teacher's own goals and motives) and situational (such as material resources and political context). Furthermore, the teacher – as learner – always brings something of oneself to each instantiation of language instruction, including their own experiences of learning (Lortie, 1975). For languages teachers, this apprenticeship is even more complex because although all teachers have been both a learner in school and a learner of language, their 'language learning' experiences may not have been as a learner of an *additional* language (hence assumptions about *second* language teaching being based on *first* language learning), or had acquired their own additional language under different conditions from a conventional classroom setting (such as in-country experience, making it difficult to reconcile *naturalistic* language acquisition with their *formal* instructional role).

Teacher 'learning' in FJ's sense, then, is Vygotskian in nature, with the teacher-subject always on a plane of potential growth. FJ's understanding of 'who' teachers are thus requires a focus beyond the individual, to understanding how each teacher is situated 'against the professional backdrop of their lives' (p. 405). Indeed, the other two domains of their reconceptualized framework extend to *where* each teacher is located (i.e. what schools 'look like', what knowledge 'matters most', etc.), along with the *practices* of teaching as an act (i.e. who the students are, how they learn, etc.).

To engage with FJ's call for new ways to understand teachers and teaching when I first encountered their framework some twenty years ago, I was most attracted to cultural historical activity theory (hereafter 'activity theory'). Affording a conceptual framework to engage holistically with what FJ highlighted as the critical issues for understanding teachers and teaching, it was an approach that helped account for complexity of the *who*, *where*, *how* and *with whom*, in relation to each other.

II Locating FJ's who: in the how, the where, and with whom: A sociocultural understanding of identity, the teacher-learner, and the subject-of-teaching-as-activity

Grounded in the work of Leontiev (1981; himself drawing on core Vygotskian concepts), activity theory understands individual behaviour as embedded within 'a system of social relations. It does not exist without those social relations' (pp. 46–47). As I have argued elsewhere on what this might mean for researching 'language teaching' from the perspective of activity theory, after Engeström's (1987) work in this area:

What language teachers do (and think) cannot be described, analyzed, and understood as something that ‘exists’ in its own right. Instead, the activity of teaching, and the thought and practices associated with it, are defined (mediated, and even constructed) in relation to the context within which that activity exists: its community, the rules that regulate that activity within that community, and the distribution of roles and responsibilities within that community (i.e. the division of labor). (Cross, 2010, p. 440)

FJ’s basis for a reconceptualized knowledge base was driven by a simple yet far-reaching question – ‘*Who teaches what to whom, where?*’ (1998, p. 405; emphasis added) – with each constituent element inseparable from and dependent upon the other. Teacher identity is profoundly tied up with understanding the activity that teachers do; and the activity of teaching is profoundly tied up with who and what the teacher him or herself brings to each instantiation of practice; this, in turn, then *continues* to define, and *re(de)fine*, who one is, and goes on to become.

Cross (2010), for example, illustrates the case of Dan, a Japanese language teacher working in the context of significant reform initiatives focused heavily on thinking, literacy, and numeracy as core skills ‘that mattered most’ in his particular space for practice. Dan’s approach to teaching Japanese, with limited target language exposure, and activities that at times seemed to prioritize numeracy over communicative outcomes, did not make sense against a conventional perspective on ‘languages teaching’. However, it does make *very* clear sense when we understand how Dan’s ‘thinking and doing’ as a ‘Japanese teacher’ – that is, what it means for *him* ‘to be’ a language teacher – had been socially and culturally constructed in the ways that it had. That is, as an instantiation of practice – ways of thinking, knowing, being, and doing – which emerged from both the broader cultural–historic domain from which, and within which, Dan’s microgenetic activity as a Japanese teacher unfolded moment-to-moment, as well as his own ontogenetic history that he brought to that activity as a basis from which he tried to make sense of it.

An activity theoretical perspective provides a rich framework for understanding identity for two significant reasons. First, although the unit of analysis within activity theory is not the individual but the system within which that individual is located, the activity system only gains meaning from the perspective of its subject. In other words, central to activity-meaning-making is how the *subject-of-activity* interprets, makes sense of – and ultimately then acts upon and engages with – that system within which their role is positioned. I agree with Varghese et al. (2005, p. 39) who argued that identity comprises elements of both practice and discourse:

In ‘identity-in-practice,’ teacher agency is seen as action-oriented and focusing on concrete practices and tasks in relation to a group and mentor(s). In ‘identity-in-discourse,’ agency is discursively constituted, mainly through language ... there needs to be a recognition that in language teacher education we must incorporate simultaneously a focus on shared practices in communities as well as individual ‘meta-awareness’. (Ramanathan, 2002)

Identity, ‘in activity’, brings both dimensions together: a personal (discursive, meaning-making) construction of one’s self grounded in, and emergent from, the (practical) activity within which that individual is situated as subject. With activity as the primary unit of

analysis, using the subject as the focal meaning-making lens of the system within which they are positioned, it is a perspective on identity that transcends an exclusive focus on either collective practice *or* individual discourse.

The second strength of examining teacher identity through activity theory, and returning to FJ's call to understand the teacher 'as learner', is that identity-in-activity is an understanding of identity engaged in an ongoing, fluid process of development. The (personal) 'self' is being continually (re)formulated in relation to the broader set of (social) practices and shared (cultural) experiences within which the subject 'takes up' and 'makes sense of' his or her role. As Roth (2004) explains from a Vygotskian perspective, 'identity is something that is continuously made and remade in [mediated] activity; it is a being in continuous becoming' (p. 8). Also drawing on Vygotsky, Penuel and Wertsch (1995, p. 84) similarly elaborate:

Taking human action as the focus of the analysis, we are able to provide a more coherent account of identity, not as a static, inflexible structure of the self, but as a dynamic dimension or moment in action, that may in fundamental ways change from activity to activity, depending on the way, in each activity, the purpose, form, cultural tools, and contexts are coordinated.

I suspect identity has remained a relatively underdeveloped construct within activity theory due to the focus of analysis typically being the *object* of the system; i.e. the problem to which the subject's attention is directed, rather than the subject him or herself. Yet the subject isn't a mere technician executing an act on the object of his or her attention. Quite the opposite, the subject is also simultaneously engaged in a dialectic process of both acting *and* being acted upon in and through activity. This was precisely Vygotsky's point when discussing the dialectic between his own 'subject' of interest – the child – and the artefacts he or she draws on to respond to an object(ive) or problem, resulting in the eventual developmental transformation of that child-subject. Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (ZPD) is often evoked within contemporary scholarship emphasizing 'the zone' as '[a] distance [i.e. between the actual developmental level ...]' (1978, p. 86). It is also typically framed as being located with 'the individual': a quality *the learner* has amassed that enables further development. Holzman (2010), on the other hand, cites Vygotsky's observations of how babies learn through interaction to argue that *activity* is the 'zone' of proximal development: a system that affords opportunities for engagement with *other* people (and resources) that, together, enable new systems of activity to unfold. Activity is a space for transformation: the subject of activity (like all of its other constituent elements) is in a (potentially) simultaneous process of 'being' and 'becoming'. This potential for growth – of being and becoming, in and through activity – lies at the core of FJ's notion of the teacher-as-learner, and is taken up and extended in Johnson and Golombek (2016) in how activity affords opportunities to work with teacher-learners, and Dang's (2013) sociocultural analysis of teachers learning from interaction with each other on paired student-teacher placements.

To conclude the first half of this article, I have found identity-in-activity useful for reflecting on 'who' teachers are in response to FJ's call for a new perspectives on teachers and teaching. Unifying both discourse and practice, it offers an account of identity as fluid, developmental, and a process of continual (potential) change and renewal as teachers themselves learn and are remade within the contexts of their practice.

III ELT teacher-subjects, 20 years on

The following section outlines three key subject positions that I see emerging from sociocultural spaces for teaching activity in contemporary times. Some are positive and optimistic, some less so; but my point, and the reason for highlighting my theoretical position in the first half of the article, is that none are static, unidimensional, or absolute. I offer them as ‘thought-tools’ that might help approach the ‘who’ question in analyses of the teacher-subject within studies of teaching.

I Teacher as a communicatively complex subject of activity

In 1998, ‘first circle’ BANA countries (Britain, Australasia, and North America (see Holliday, 1994)) largely provided the elite, preferred ELT teaching force globally. By virtue of speaking English as their ‘mother’ (and often only) tongue, teachers were exported to the world through short and longer-term training schemes. Twenty years on and recruitment has changed significantly with the global spread of ELT having created a new source of teacher supply: former English language *learners* are now the ones often taking up the position as English language *teachers*. Moreover, the bulk of their own language learning experience has been as students within their own local contexts and education systems.

Paralleling this demographic shift has been growing critical awareness of English as an international lingua franca (e.g. Phillipson, 1992), alongside the deconstruction of the native speaker ‘ideal’ (Davies, 2003). This includes increased recognition that the global spread of English can be problematic for local languages, for example, along with greater acknowledgement of legitimate regional varieties of English beyond BANA (Kirkpatrick, 2007). On ‘native speaker-ism’, not only have organizations such as TESOL established nonnative English speakers caucuses since the late 1990s, introducing a new body of important expert knowledge into the field in the last twenty years, but the very construct of the ‘native speaker’ itself has been subject to extensive critique. Consider, for example, a Japanese L1 speaker who migrates to Australia for college and marries a trilingual (English/Malay/Chinese) Australian-born Malay-heritage wife. Relocating to Hong Kong for business, they have children who grow up attending a Chinese-medium school, use Cantonese in everyday life, but speak English at home with their parents (as well as Chinese, and English, when talking with their mother). In this and many other real-life cases where multilingual households are increasingly the norm, which language constitutes whose ‘native’ tongue?

Alongside this growing critical awareness of global English and the native speaker fallacy, has been a shift to reframe language learning away from deficit presumptions. English additional language students have historically been positioned as ‘learners’, relative to a ‘native model’. The result has been labels positioning these students as ‘English second’ language speakers, from ‘non-English’ speaking backgrounds, or having language backgrounds ‘other than English’, all perpetuating a deficit view whereby the student is always, by definition, ‘developmentally behind’ the ‘English native’. As Cook (2007, p. 240) argues, ‘phrasing the goal in terms of the native speaker means that L2 learning can only lead to degrees of failure, not degrees of success’. Cook contends that

we need to instead reposition these students from being ‘English language learners’ to acknowledging them for ‘what they are: L2 users’ (p. 245): ‘the term L2 *user* is conceptually different from L2 *learner* even when it refers to the same person. L2 users are exploiting whatever linguistic resources they have for a real-life purpose’ (p. 241; emphasis in original).

Thus, in response to ‘How is the work of English language teaching understood, defined, enacted today?’, we need to acknowledge that many teachers are now taking up the position of subject within activity systems where they have a much closer, more intimate experience of their own students’ needs and backgrounds compared to the ‘export teacher’ of 1998. This new teacher-subject is an extension of Cook’s ‘L2 user’ – as it originally applied to learners – that can be understood as ‘L2 user-*teachers*’. More than mere ‘non-native’ variants of the monolingual ‘prototype’, these language teacher-subjects share a closer affinity with their students that is both linguistic (being a learner of English as an additional language themselves), and cultural (including assumptions about learning and being a learner, and the role and place of language within that situated context for learning and using English).

Indeed, this global flow of people, languages, and cultures is re-shaping the activity systems within which all ELT teachers will go on to teach. Increasingly diverse in their cultural and linguistic heterogeneity, classroom spaces have new plurilingual dynamics compared to the traditional ELT activity system that might have been more easily distinguishable as learning English as either a ‘foreign’ or ‘second’ language. Future teacher-subjects need to become apt in the use of pedagogic tools that capitalize on the affordances of these learners’ complex communicative resources, such as translanguaging (Creese & Blackledge, 2010).

In sum, advancing understandings of ‘who’ teachers are in the context of contemporary ELT relies on second language teacher education (SLTE) recognizing the increasingly super-diverse (Blommaert, 2013) activity systems within which teachers will go on to work at the micro-interactional local level with students. Yet herein lies a paradox: at the same time as needing to engage with local expertise, the global regulation of ELT at a macro scale is becoming more influential than ever. I consider the implications of this, and the impact on the teacher-subject as ‘conflicted-compliant agent’, in the section that follows.

2 Teacher as a compliant but conflicted subject of activity

In the twenty years since FJ brought attention to the significance the situated and local in understandings of teachers’ learning, the activity systems within which contemporary teacher-subjects now take up their roles are ones increasingly influenced by much wider ‘external’ pressures, and at an intensity like never before. Through both implicit and explicit mechanisms of accountability – especially standardization (e.g. curricular, coursework materials, and teacher training/accreditation) and benchmarking (including testing frameworks and outcomes) – globalization is reshaping the activity within which teachers come to realize their roles, even down to the most individual, local domains of interpersonal interaction between themselves and their students. Further, although FJ (and, indeed, everything else I have discussed up to this point) assumes teaching to be a

'human' activity – with an emphasis on the relational, interpersonal, and subjective – Bottery (2006, pp. 96–97) warns that 'globalization ... also describes processes which would continue whether human beings recognized them or not':

It is Ritzer's (1993) 'McDonaldization', with its four classic bureaucratic themes of bureaucracy of efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control. It is the world of Disney, where the artificial and the commodified replace the real; where the 'best bits' of a culture are extracted, reformulated, and packaged for quick, cheap and easy consumption When education embarks down such a road, its institutions, rather than providing liberating experience which open up opportunities to the individual, may become Procrustes' beds in which individuals are made to fit to the standard. In the process, the personal is constricted, the spiritual is shackled. (p. 98)

Such activity spaces, as Bottery goes on to suggest, are ones with *potential* to '[undermine] profoundly held beliefs, leaching out the local and the personal' (2006, p. 98). I emphasize potential because, as Canagarajah (2005) argues, the complex dynamics between the global/local often simultaneously create new and unforeseen opportunities for counter-hegemonic resistance to reappropriate the global *in* the local.

The imperative for SLTE moving forward, then, is to develop – both as a disciplinary field, as well as within its teacher graduates – a heightened critical social consciousness of not only how globalization impacts ELT, but also its teachers. In other words, a critical (and thus necessarily political) awareness of globalization's impact on individuals, and how they, as subjects of these compliance-focused systems, might identify new (creative) possibilities (a point I elaborate in the following section) to re-negotiate alternate systems of activity through their own agency. The holistic understanding of teacher practice offered by activity theory suggests having to equip teachers to also empower the objects of their activity – their own students' needs and dispositions – to develop a similarly critical stance as part of a larger, sustainable goal of transformative activity.

A call for greater critical awareness is already well-established within applied linguistics, in arguments such the need to resist linguistic imperialism, for example. What I am suggesting for a new SLTE knowledge base, however, goes much further, being intimately tied up with FJ's teachers as the very *subject* of the activity itself. While critical applied linguistics helps recognize problems with imposing certain varieties of English, for example (i.e. the 'what' of ELT), critical SLTE, in contrast, focuses on 'care' for the teacher-subject him or herself: maintaining a fundamental awareness of what *is* social, personal, relational about teaching, and reclaiming this in the knowledge base so that it is explicitly acknowledged and well-articulated, lest being left at risk of erasure. As Kostogriz (2012, p. 398) cautions, teaching is shifting from its historical assumptions of having been 'a social profession [to being] re-presented in terms of technical-economic discourses':

Outcomes, effectiveness, performance standards, service delivery to 'clients', customer satisfaction and accountability are just a few habitually used words that capture the rational-calculative mode of policy-making and managerial practices today.

Kostogriz goes on to conclude, evoking Weber (1978, p. 1002):

'Bureaucracy has a 'rational' character.' It diminishes a social activity, first and foremost, to a rationally organized activity that is oriented towards calculated ends. Thus, the rise of neoliberal accountability in education goes hand in hand with the bureaucratic drive to measure, calculate, and quantify the work of teachers. (p. 401)

Clement's (2014, p. 42) review of how externally mandated change impacts teachers includes feelings of anger, fear, frustration, and cynicism, leaving the profession at risk of feeling defeat. However, the emerging 'affective' turn in educational research (Kostogriz, 2012; Renshaw, 2017) – including increased attention on the role of emotions in teaching, learning, and learning to teach (Golombek & Doran, 2014), and on teaching and learning as an embodied practice (Mathewson Mitchell & Reid, 2017; Smith & Cross, 2017) – offers new conceptual tools that fit well with (re)claiming a humanistic perspective on 'who' the teacher is. That is, (re)centering a *person* as the subject of teaching as an activity.

What almost all of these emergent 'affective' orientations share is a recognition of the teacher as a social agent with deep possibilities for 'rule-bending' and creativity. I take up this conception of the teacher-subject in the section that follows.

3 Teacher as a collaboratively creative subject of activity

Of the little that has been written on what constitutes a 'creative teacher' (cf. how teachers can *teach* (for) creativity), it is striking how closely teacher creativity is tied up with teacher identity. Craft's (1997, p. 84) enduringly influential work in this area cites one participant who commented that 'you can't separate yourself from your teaching' as a catalyst for her own long-term exploration into the creativity of teacher practice. Further, Craft's arguments on the interrelationship between teacher creativity, identity, and 'literature on the "emotional heart of teaching"' (p. 84), relate to my earlier points on teaching as affective labour. Here, I expand on this link between teacher identity and creativity, drawing on Vygotsky's understanding of creativity to consider how the teacher could also be conceived as a 'creative teacher-subject' within contemporary spaces for ELT activity.

Sawyer (2004, p. 12) notes that teaching is often thought of as a 'creative performance', following a conventional view of creativity that suggests 'being creative' means to be 'more interesting' and 'imaginative' (Cremin, 2017, pp. 99–100) than the everyday. In contrast, I argue that we also need to recognize creativity in the 'mundane' (Holzman, 2010, p. 27), after a Vygotskian view of creativity: one that is therefore inherently collaborative and social, rather than being solely located with the individual, and one of particular relevance to FJ's understanding of teacher-*as-learner*. 'Mundane creativity', as Holzman elaborates in her work with reference to Vygotsky, unfolds in the messy processes of sense-making and meaning-making as subjects work through the resolution of contradictions within their existing activity system, leading to the *creation* of new forms of activity; i.e. new states of being, growth, and development. For Vygotsky (1978, p. 276), while *meaning* is a 'comparatively fixed and stable point ... that remains constant', *sense* is 'dynamic, fluid and complex': it carries with it the 'feeling' of a word based on the subject's own past experiences. *Sense*-making enables spaces for 'variations' and 'possibilities', 'includ[ing] meanings no longer used and possible future meanings' (Moran &

John-Steiner, 2003, p. 74). Mother tongue mastery, for example, occurs not through a systematic ‘learned’ approach to ‘meaning’ but, as children, we (eventually) come to the agreed-upon sign through a much more tentative process of sense-making (see Cross, 2012, for an example of how this unfolds the context of L2 learning). By being comfortable enough to ‘play’ with uncertainty and unknowing-ness, the child eventually arrives at the creation of something new: the discovery of something that comes ‘to be known’, and the transformation (and new growth) of themselves in that process:

Before a child has acquired grammatical and written language, he [sic] knows how to do things but does not know that he knows ... a child spontaneously makes use of his ability to separate meaning from object without knowing that he is doing it, just as he does not know he is speaking in prose but talks without paying attention to the words. (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 99)

Expanding on a point from the first half of this article, the ZPD – a space that affords an opportunity for subject to develop – is a ‘*creative, improvisational activity*’ (Newman & Holzman, 1993, 1997, in Lobman, 2010, p. 202; emphasis added). Creativity, in this sense, is ‘the human ability to make things, to build, to develop – especially in its most mundane form’ (p. 200).

This understanding of creativity within activity carries significant implications for understanding the teacher-subject, especially within the challenging spaces highlighted in both previous sections. In contrast to ‘adaptive experts’ (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005) – teachers *reacting* effectively as a response to their changing circumstances – ELT teachers in 2018 (and beyond) need a willingness to take risks and move from the known into the unknown to re-establish a *new* known: a capacity to exercise agency in shaping the spaces for their own practice. Doing so requires confidence to ‘cope with’ with uncertainty, which then affords the capacity to *think-beyond* the present to identify new possibilities for how they, themselves, might make sense of that space to create alternate opportunities for how things could be done differently.

Such creativity accords with Craft’s (2002) notion of ‘little-c creativity’ – ‘the resourcefulness and agency of ordinary people’ (p. 56) – and what Cremin (2017, p. 100) describes as ‘the democratic life-wide creativity of the everyday’. Although writing from a social constructivist perspective on creativity to empower student learners, both highlight through their references to resourcefulness and democratic logic and values that ‘mundane’ creativity is deeply intentional and deliberative: the Vygotskian creative-teacher-subject remains committed to finding ways to work with knowledge, experience, and reason, *even when* conditions seem increasingly unstable and unknown.

Taking contemporary spaces for ELT as an example, FJ’s teacher-as-learner is in a constant state of potential flux. As has always been the case, the teacher-subject is still ‘being and becoming’ (Johnson & Golombek, 2016), but with increasingly less certainty about *what* might ‘be coming’ next. The imperative is to prepare teachers who remain sure of their own capacity to navigate (and re-create) the systems within which they take up their roles as teacher-subject, despite such uncertainty. As Craft (1997, p. 85) foreshadowed some twenty years ago writing on creativity in postmodern times, the backdrop for teacher practice is one that is increasingly ‘fragmentary [with] fewer rules, fewer certainties’. Vygotsky’s understanding of creativity and development affords a

way to re-think how teachers might learn to better engage with uncertain spaces for activity that are ultimately generative, rather than defeatist. The goal should be teacher-agents with the confidence and skills to seize opportunities to make and re-make uncertainty work in their (and their learners') favor, however incrementally, than to be the ones adapting only in reactionary (cf. creative) ways.

In creativity lies a hopeful response to the challenges facing the teacher-subject highlighted in the earlier sections of this article. SLTE moving forward must better understand and foster the creative teacher-subject. It is one that affords an optimistic but realistic, tactical perspective on tensions that is generative and productive, which could otherwise too easily leave us, and our graduate teachers, defeated.

IV Conclusions


Twenty years since FJ, the importance of acknowledging what our teacher-learners bring to the teaching/learning relationship is now axiomatic in SLTE. But FJ's reconceptualized knowledge base calls for more than a focus on the learner's history. It requires understanding *how* these learners will *go on to be situated* within spaces to develop into *new ways of being*. After Vygotsky, it is a future-oriented understanding of teacher development where identity is central. The imperative is not only attend to who learners are, but who they must go on to be: relative to the conditions that will shape what and how they need to know, think, and do to be successful within such spaces for activity.

This article has provided some 'thought-tools' to consider what those future conditions might be given the changing professional landscape for ELT. Such tools are necessary given the activity systems our teacher-learners will go on to work within will be so vastly different to those we've relied on as our past points of primary reference, based on our own apprenticeship into the profession (Lortie, 1975). Key changes include the shifting demographics of the global ELT teacher workforce; globalization's attempt to standardize highly localized practices; and the uncertainty that comes when change occurs more rapidly than to which we're accustomed. The question of 'who' our focus is for SLTE, then, is answered by attending to not only the teacher-learner before us in the here-and-now, but by understanding *their* future, and who they *will be*.

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