
EDITORIAL

It is reasonable enough to prepare students for jobs that we might be confident will exist in the future such as teachers, doctors, and nurses. It is harder to prepare our students for jobs that we cannot imagine. It will be even harder to prepare them for a future that is always, to some extent, uncertain as it is now. In many ways ‘disruption’ has become the new normal.

While global inequalities of poverty, health and education are abundantly evident, we as teachers need to understand how a ‘world language’ such as English operates in what is an ‘uncertain’ and ‘uneven’ world. Previously teachers have been seen as basically ‘doers’ rather than ‘thinkers’. The doing of teaching was thought of as a set of instructional behaviors that is carried out systematically and had the potential to lead to some degree of success for the students regardless of the instructional or social context.

English as a world language holds out the promise of social and economic development and a language of equal opportunity. However, it is also exclusionary in favoring different people, different countries and cultures. It is a language that creates barriers as much as it presents possibilities. ELT may have as much to do with the creation as alleviation of inequality in the world. A number of these issues are touched upon in this present issue of the *New English Teacher*.

Hickey and Choi discuss the rapid influx of refugee students in the U.S. and the learning experience that this involves both for students and teachers. As part of this movement of population that we are seeing in unprecedented numbers since WWII, understanding and misunderstandings in cross-cultural communication will be a problem as described by Small in Japan. This situation is well underlined in Tan’s account of new articles reporting on the Diaoyu/Senkaku issue from both the Chinese and the Japanese perspective. Interestingly Fu Yezhi has made a study of motivation and strategies in the learning of English by middle-aged and the elderly in China in what s call LaoNian DaXue or Senior citizen Universities. This study seems to underline the importance of English even among the older generations.

More related to the classroom, one of the more widely used approaches to effective communication in English, is 'Genre' based approaches as described by Piriya Silpa in her review of this development in Thailand. Singchai and Jaturapitakkul, on the other hand focus on narrative essays of EFL students in Thailand, an area that many students have considerable difficulty with because of the linguistic demands required in this genre. Jivavorrannum describes a study of reading genres and the questions asked in English textbooks for the O-NET and GAT major examinations in Thailand.

In another study, effective communication is underlined in Pradaphon's account of transactional oral communication in an office situation, where the staff is in a face-to-face encounter with the 'clients'. Kekua looks at the different communication strategies used by customers in the business world, specifically related to email interaction across countries in the South-east Asian region. Kim's study on the development of the students' mother tongue (Korean) and a foreign language (English), illustrates the importance of using not only developing their skills in these languages but also the value of translanguaging in their interactions.

Finally the book reviewed in this issue is Glenn Fulcher's *Re-examining Language Testing* and the gate-keeper role testing often plays, a timely reminder of the need for teacher's to be *thinkers* as well as *doers*.

J. A. Foley