

# EAP Teacher **Development** for the 21st Century: the role of research and reflection

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# Outline

- Aim of professional education – to develop expertise
- TEAP Competencies: description of expertise?
- Nature of expertise – knowing what and knowing how
- Researching practice vs practicalising research
- The importance of reflection
- External inputs for reflection
- The appropriate stance towards research

# Aim of professional education

- To develop teachers with expertise – aspirational
- No-one sets out to develop mediocre teachers.
- Not all competent teachers develop expertise.
- Difference between competence and expertise?

# TEAP Competency Framework

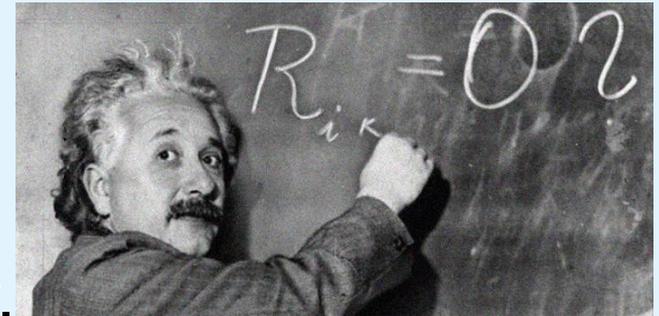
- A description of the core competencies of a professional EAP practitioner
- Intended to provide an understanding of the role of an EAP teacher and guidance for professional development
- Informed by a 3-stage survey of EAP practitioners
- Reflect best practice as viewed by **experienced** practitioners
- Why was the working party unwilling to say **expert**?
- Immodest to claim expertise – judged by others.
- How is competence different from expertise?
- What does it mean to acquire expertise?

# Views on the nature of expertise

1. Harry Collins and Robert Evans: Centre for the Study of Knowledge, Expertise & Science at Cardiff University – research expertise in relation to government policy advisors
2. Ben Kotzee: published on the nature and development of expertise in professional education
3. Amy Tsui: four case studies of Hong Kong ESL school teachers, examining the nature of expertise in language teaching and how it develops

# Views on the nature of expertise

- Current view of expertise = fluency: skillful & practised manual activity
- Expert different from novice
  - can suspend thought
  - enter the zone
  - act in the moment
- Emphasise the development of context-free, generic skills in place of theoretical knowledge
- Reacting against intellectualist view.



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[http://i.telegraph.co.uk/multimedia/archive/02590/Andy\\_Murray\\_2590815b.jpg](http://i.telegraph.co.uk/multimedia/archive/02590/Andy_Murray_2590815b.jpg) and <http://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/past-exhibitions/einstein> 17.11.14

Kotzee, 2014

# Views on the nature of expertise

## Intellectualist view

- All expertise located within scientific community
- Specialised domain of intellectual activity
- Offered best chance of finding objective scientific truths
- Expertise can be acquired through direct instruction of facts, rules and procedures



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Collins and Evans, 2007; Kotzee, 2014

# Views on the nature of expertise

Challenge to legitimacy of science

Science = socially constructed truth

- Scientific tribes and territories
- Knowledge contingent, based on social legitimation & consensus
- Problem of extension – who then is qualified to advise on science?
- How to distinguish experts from non-experts or charlatans?



Collins and Evans, 2007; Kotzee, 2014

# Views of the nature of expertise

- anti-intellectual view of expertise
  - ♦ Development of intuitive tacit understanding
  - ♦ Personal interpretation and reinterpretation of their own work – *reflection in* and *reflection on* action
- Not possible for experts to explain practice fully
- Mystifies professional education
- Emphasises context-free, generic process of developing fluent performance = knowing how



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# Views of the nature of expertise

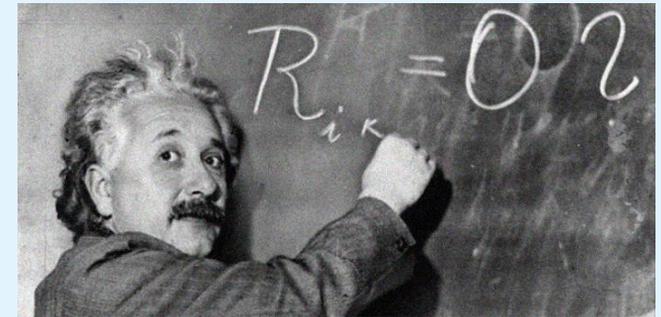
- Social-realist position: expertise > individual experience
- Expertise = social phenomenon, socially constructed
  - ♦ Involves understanding social rules and conventions
  - ♦ Entitles the expert to give advice to or act for others
- Expertise = real & objective & contextualised
  - ♦ Ability to accomplish something that others cannot
  - ♦ Emphasises both performance (knowing how) and theory (knowing what) in specific social domain

Kotzee (2014)

# The nature of expertise

Recognise different types of expertise depending on the degree of theoretical knowledge, physical skill and social skill involved,

- playing tennis,
- doing quantum physics



Images retrieved from

[http://i.telegraph.co.uk/multimedia/archive/02590/Andy\\_Murray\\_2590815b.jpg](http://i.telegraph.co.uk/multimedia/archive/02590/Andy_Murray_2590815b.jpg) and <http://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/past-exhibitions/einstein> 17.11.14

Kotzee, 2014

# Types of expertise

- Ubiquitous expertise – gained from living in culture:
  - ♦ ability to use language
  - ♦ ability to use politeness norms
- Specialist expertise based on knowledge of culture
  - ♦ Beer mat expertise – know facts, compete in quizzes
  - ♦ Popular understanding – know about established science, not at the disputed edge
  - ♦ Primary source knowledge – access to original papers on internet but no access to subject specialists or to level of certainty about core disputes

# Types of expertise

- Contributory expertise – working at disputed edge of field
  - ♦ Building knowledge and specialist language in field through primary research
  - ♦ Understand level of certainty around core disputes.
  - ♦ Able to transfer knowledge and understanding to new recruits directly through teaching



Collins and Evans, 2007

# Types of expertise

Interactional expertise – acquiring language of field without content

- ◆ Able to translate field knowledge or teach field language:
  - ◆ technical translator
  - ◆ ESAP practitioner
- ◆ Interactional expertise can be latent in contributing expert:
  - ◆ artist who claims work ‘speaks for itself’
  - ◆ subject lecturer who says ‘good writing – you know it when you see it’



# Interactional expertise

Skill in speaking a specialist language

- ◆ Developed through interaction with contributors: lecturers and students
- ◆ Not from other interactional experts
- ◆ Has to be acquired by each individual

Requires skill in generalised abilities

- ◆ ability to talk, write and interact with subject specialists and with texts
- ◆ ability to reflect = **analyse** what **kind** of thing is happening in a specialised domain



# The nature of expertise

- Expert performance – automatic and effortless
- Expert knowledge
  - ♦ Complex
  - ♦ Tacit
  - ♦ Integrated
  - ♦ bound up with context
- What is your EAP knowledge like?

# Complex but unintegrated knowledge



# Principled expert knowledge



# Expertise in teaching – HK case studies

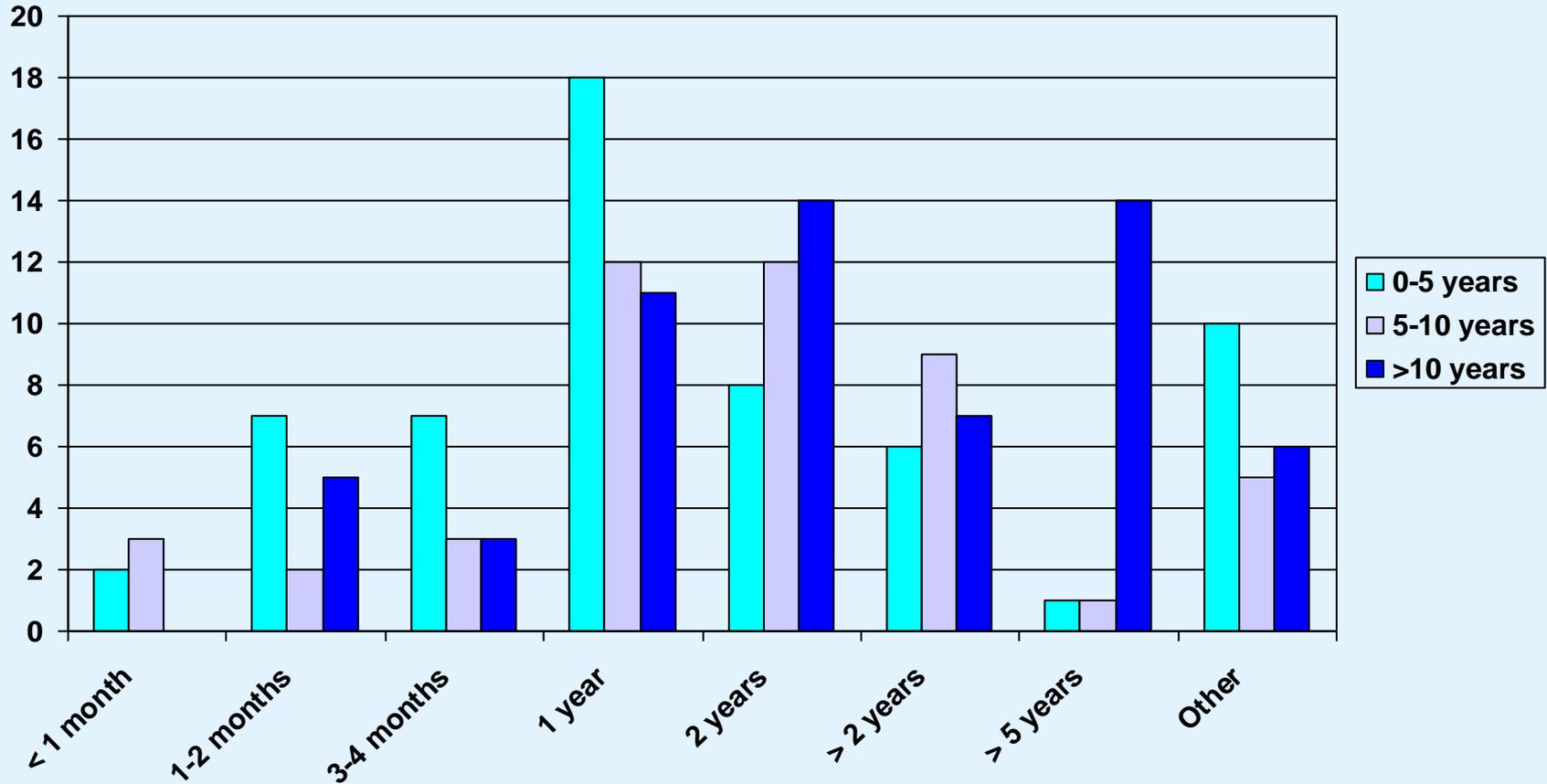
## Experienced non-expert

- accepts automated routine performance
- unable to integrate aspects of knowledge and context in teaching
- works within their comfort zone
- tends not to reflect
- delivers materials

## Expert

- constantly problematizes the routine – seeks challenges
- integrates knowledge and exploits possibilities from context in teaching
- works at the edge of their competence
- engages in constant reflection
- recognises & promotes learning through materials

# Experienced teachers and expert teachers



Time taken to feel confident teaching EAP

# Unknown unknowns

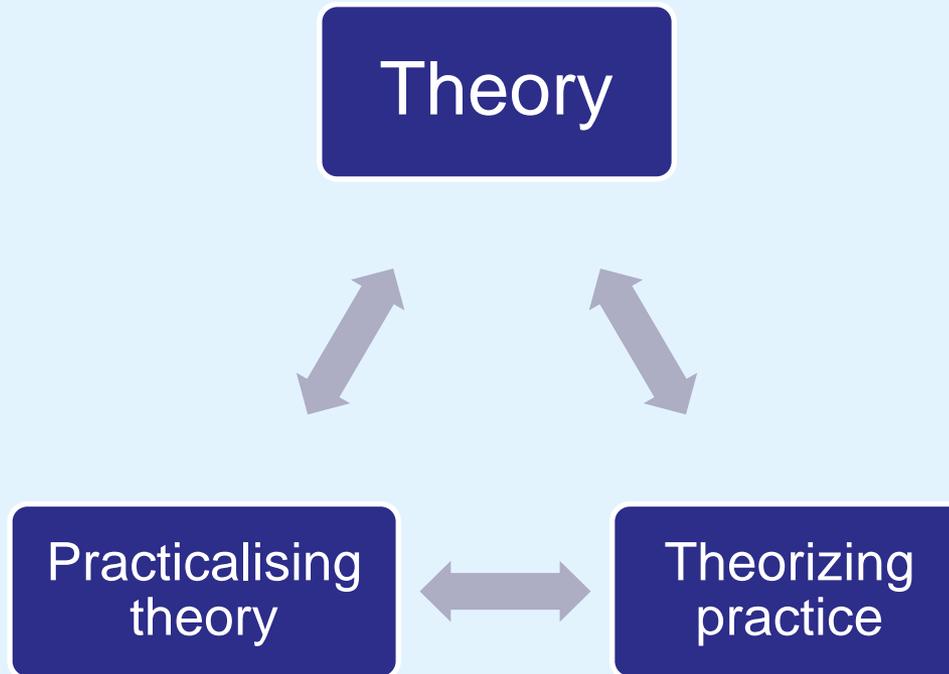
- *I truly believe that EAP can be picked up with practice, and support, and that there is really no need for a distinct qualification in this field.*
- Over-confident – EAP involves much more than applying current CLT expertise to new materials & contexts.



# Developing Expertise in teaching

- Expert performance – automatic and effortless
- Developing expertise – a process
  - ◆ constant engagement in experimentation/exploration
  - ◆ problematizing the unproblematic
  - ◆ looking for challenges
  - ◆ requires reflection and conscious deliberation
  - ◆ if stop exploring & experimenting > no longer expert

# Linking theory to practice



Making personal interpretations of theoretical knowledge to apply to practice

Making explicit tacit knowledge gained from experience using explanations from theory

# Linking theory to practice

- Teachers need to recognise a gap in knowledge or practice
- Theory & research findings must strike an intuitive chord – to address the gap
- Teachers must recognise the inherent validity of theory & research for their teaching
  - ◆ in a light bulb moment
  - ◆ or internalised gradually in a life changing paradigm shift



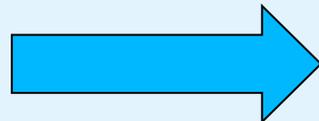
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# Early professional development



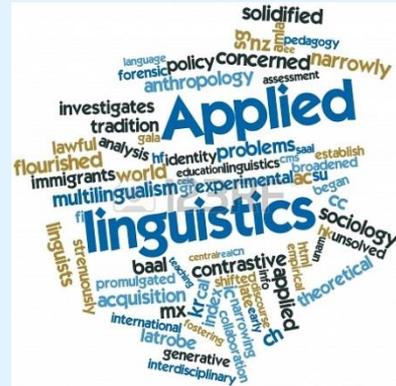
Mainly consisted in finding out what I didn't know e.g. how to teach postgraduates to write essays

# Critical incident – problematizing



Postgraduate

Undergraduate



Images retrieved from <http://www.studydiscussions.com/phd-linguistics-courses-in-usa/>;  
<http://www.skiclub.co.uk/skiclub/infoandadvice/uksnowsports/ukslopesmap.aspx>;  
<http://www.chemistry.umu.se/english/education/> 8.11.14

# Seeking understanding from theory

A master's programme does **not** make you a master

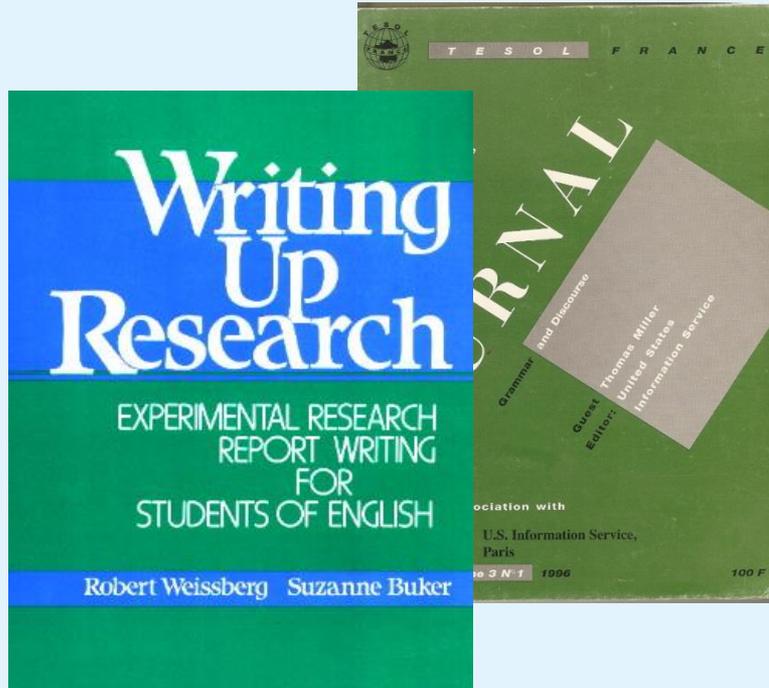


A master's programme teaches you how to read research

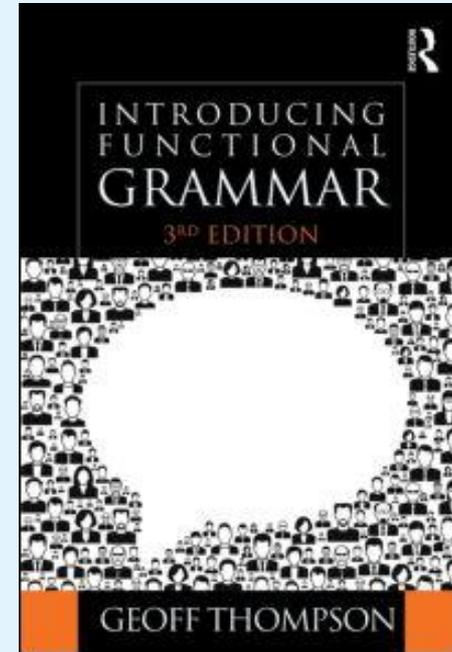


Essential for theorizing practice and practicalising theory

# Reading about theory and practice

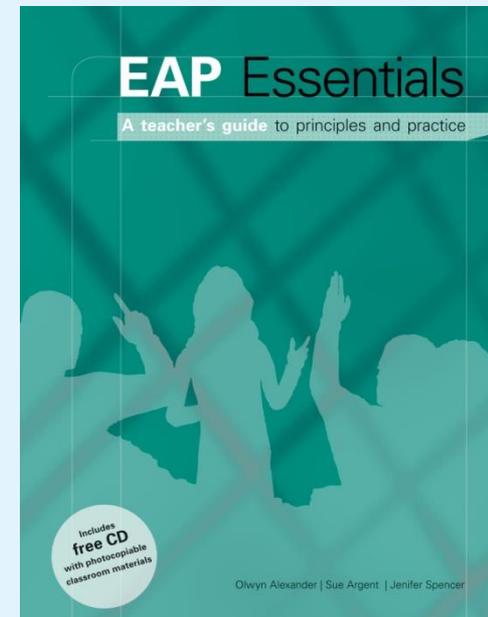


Practicalising theory



Theorizing practice

# Researching practice



Colleagues to argue with, a corpus to play with and a writing challenge

# Professional development

Requires practitioner reflection

– *in action* and *on action*

- ♦ Not in a self-referential way

Reflection against validated external sources

- descriptions of competence e.g. BALEAP TEAP CF, HEA psf
- theories of language, language learning and education more broadly



# TEAP Competency Portfolio

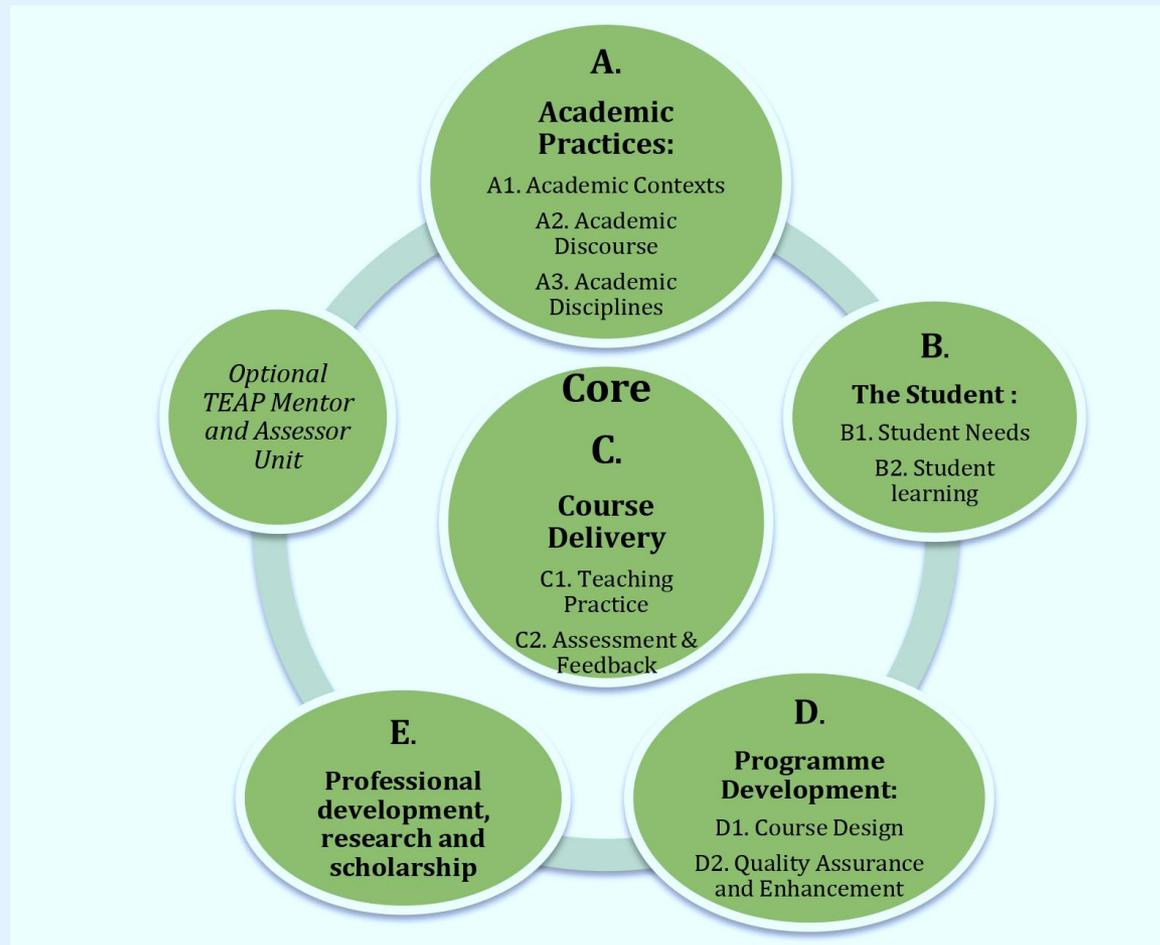
To facilitate the professional development of those involved in the teaching and scholarship of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) in order to enhance the student academic experience.

Competency  
Accreditation



Professional  
Development

# TEAP Portfolio – description of competence



# TEAP Role Descriptors

## Associate Teacher

- Competently **deliver** effective EAP teaching, support, assessment and feedback

## Fellow

- **Manage** teaching / **design** and **develop** courses

## Senior Fellow

- Through their own scholarship **enhance the practice of others** within and beyond the institution

## Senior fellow of BALEAP

Recognizes the importance of engaging with current research & scholarship to go beyond basic competence

*An EAP practitioner will recognize the importance of applying to their practice the standards expected of students and other academic staff whilst engaging individually and collaboratively in continuing professional development, research and scholarship in the TEAP discipline.*

Requirement to work at the disputed edge as a contributing expert in TEAP?

# Problematizing research

## Research

- Fundamental for development
- Must be treated with 'reasonable scepticism'



'being open minded and willing to be convinced, but only if authors can adequately back their claims'

Wallace and Wray (2011:5)

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# What type of research contribution?

- Discovery research – most valued, seeks new knowledge and understanding – theory building
- Applied research – application of existing knowledge and skills to solve problems in society – theory testing
- Integrative research – synthesising knowledge and understanding, e.g. writing a textbook – practicalising theory
- Pedagogic research – engagement with scholarly contributions on teaching and learning – theorizing practice
  - ♦ reflection on one's own teaching practice and the learning of students within the context of a discipline
  - ♦ communication of practice and theory about teaching and learning – in general and within a discipline

Boyer (1990) in Healey (2005a); Jenkins and Zetter (2003) in Healey (2005a)

# Research types and fields

- Discovery research
  - Applied research
  - Integrative research
- } contributory expertise  
narrow & deep focus
- 
- Pedagogic research  
(e.g. Exploratory practice)
- } interactional expertise?  
parasitic on other fields  
wider focus but selective

Research fields / specialist domains of expertise: applied linguistics, psychology, education, computer science...!

# Problematizing research in specialist field: Applied Linguistics



Mentalist  
Cognitive

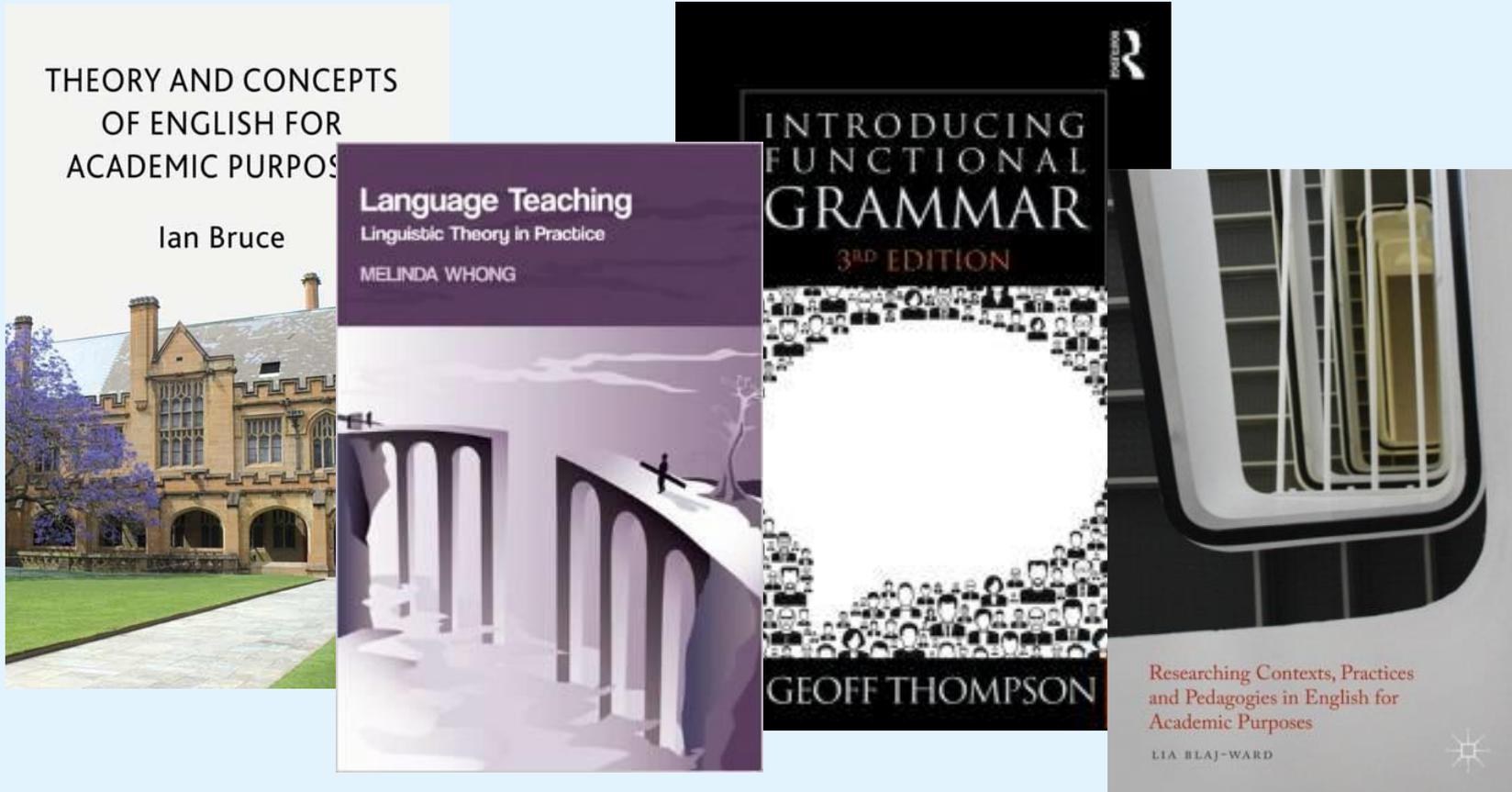
Sociocultural  
Functional

- Focus is narrow and deep
- Mutually exclusive paradigms
- Do not interact with each other

# Problematizing research

- Focus of contributing expert can be very narrow with no interest in application of research outcomes.
  - ♦ I am, frankly, rather sceptical about the significance, for the teaching of languages, of such insights and understanding as have been attained in linguistics and psychology.
  - ♦ It is the language teacher himself [sic] who must validate or refute any specific proposal. There is very little in psychology or linguistics that he can accept on faith.

# Practicalising theory



Not all contributing experts hold this view

# Problematizing research

- Classrooms – complex, dynamic, interactive, rapidly-changing environments
- Teachers – evolved over millennia to be intuitive, pattern-recognising, social beings
- Most of what happens in classrooms or in teachers' and students' heads is not accessible to researchers
- Research theories take decades to develop
- Research knowledge is contingent – liable to change
- Need confidence to start with intuitive understanding of the classrooms and seek confirmation from theory

# TEAP research = pedagogical research

- Butterfly approach – focus is wide-ranging but selective
- Choose paradigm most useful for theorizing practice
- Requires interactional expertise in several paradigms
- Not possible to achieve same depth of contributory expertise as parent field – leads to lower status
- Important to exercise ‘reasonable scepticism’



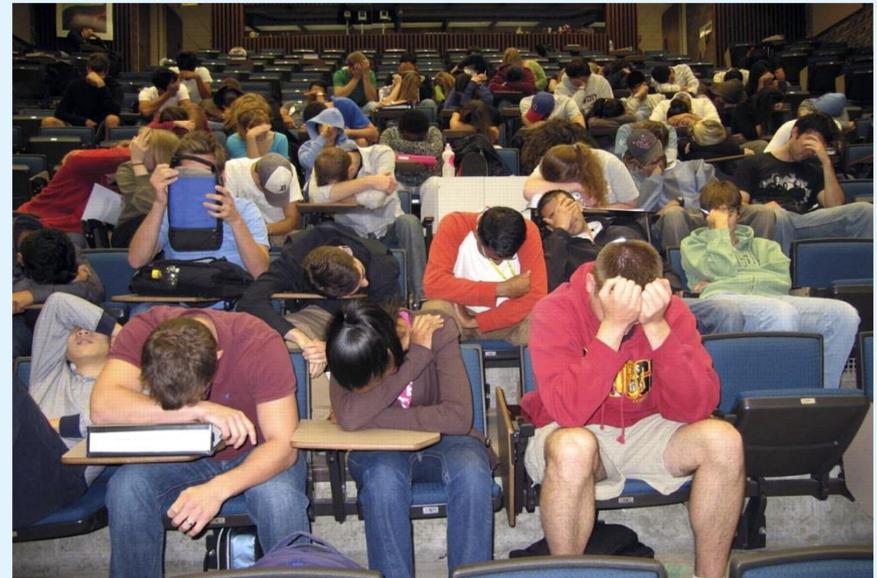
# Being reasonably sceptical about research



- What was the context for the research?
- To what extent is this context similar to my own?
- Who were the students/teachers in the sample?
- How similar are my students/teachers to the sample?
- What constructs were used and were they defined?
- How well do they reflect the reality of my classroom?
- Which theoretical paradigm underlies the definition of EAP, grammar, language teaching?
- What knowledge claims are made?
- Are these warranted on the basis of the results?

# Problematizing research

Becoming a researcher does not make you a good teacher or a good teacher trainer



# Evidence-based teaching

- There is no need for a world where everyone is suddenly an expert on research, running trials in their classroom tomorrow: what matters is that most people understand the ideas... and that evidence can be used to improve outcomes.
- Teachers simply need to know how to theorize practice
- A coherent set of systems for evidence based practice listens to people on the front line, to find out where the uncertainties are, and decide which ideas are worth testing.
- Researchers need to pay attention to practicalising theory

Goldacre, 2013

# Conclusion

- Expertise is not a state but a process
- Developing expertise involves
  - problematizing the routine – seeking challenges
  - working at the edge of your competence
  - engaging in constant reflection
- Reflection requires external input
  - ♦ From statements of competence
  - ♦ From reading and engaging with research
  - ♦ From researching your own practice
- Engaging with research requires reasonable scepticism

# Developing expertise



Some days, however, you just feel like being experienced

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