# Every teacher is an expert: Empowering teachers working in low-resource classrooms

### Jason Anderson





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## In this presentation, I hope to...

- find out about your opportunities for development
- talk a little about how I (a white, male teacher educator from a Western 'Anglophone' country) try to empower colleagues I work with
- provide a few examples and pictures
- share a few ideas that might be useful for teachers and teacher educators (you will decide)
- get you involved so get ready to start typing!

#### Type your answers in the chat box

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  - 0 I had no freedom (i.e. my employer / line manager told me what to do) 10 – I was completely free to choose (my employer trusted me)

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  0 I had no freedom (i.e. my employer / line manager told me what to do)
  10 I was completely free to choose (my employer trusted me)
- 4. How happy are you with your current CPD options?

e.g. answers: :D :) :I :( >:(

## Quick poll



The voting window should appear. Tick any that apply:

Which of the following CPD opportunities have you had over the last 12 months:

- 1. A supervisor observed me
- 2. I went on a top-down 'training course'
- 3. I participated in an *in-school* workshop
- 4. I read something (e.g. a book; an article; a paper) to do with teaching
- 5. I visited a conference
- 6. I observed one of my peers
- 7. I did some research in my classroom (e.g. action research, exploration)
- 8. I've helped my colleagues to develop (e.g. by mentoring, observing, etc.)
- 9. Some other CPD not here
- 10. NOTHING I haven't had any CPD opportunities

### A little 'reflexivity': Who am I?

- Originally 'EFL' teacher from UK (since 1996). Worked in many countries incl. Ukraine, Italy, UK, both with adults and younger learners.
- Entered teacher education through Celta training (2003).
- Worked in Eritrea and Rwanda with VSO 2007-2011.
- 2010 onwards, started working as a consultant around the world, continued private ELT, but also in development sector (e.g. UNICEF, British Council, MoEs).
- Other stuff resource books, more recently research.
- I don't see myself as a 'global issues' teacher...



## Some of the principles I share with teachers

- 1. you are the expert on your learners and your context
- 2. teach **from within** the mother tongue, don't deny its power or neglect its influence
- 3. your English is the best English for your learners
- 4. TALULAR
- 5. keep becoming a better expert
- 6. and don't trust me

## You are the expert on your learners and your context

- Important to build on prior knowledge: students' world, experiences, interests, language, culture.
- Providing examples: Can you think of an example you provided that you knew your students would understand? What did you choose?
- When did you last see an example context in a textbook that wasn't helpful to your learners? What was it? Why was it unhelpful?







## Teach from within the mother tongue

You can't ban the mother tongue. It's racing round every brain in the room.

When you plan, think about your learners' language(s): What impact will it have on their learning today?

How can you simplify the grammar rules in the book? Perhaps there's an equivalent 'future tense' or way of saying 'used to'...

How can you speed up vocabulary learning? Link it to the mother tongue. Eliciting a translation takes less time than an explanation.

Enable them to do things in English, but make use of the MT too! Let them ask questions about grammar, translation of lexis.

Become a translingual teacher (e.g. 'sandwiching' technique: Butzkamm & Caldwell 2009)



#### Who do you agree with?

"I want my learners "I want my learners to to speak international speak British English, English that people just like the kings and from any country can queens of England." understand." Grace Paul I want my learners to speak English with a Kenyan accent and be proud of it." Judy (from Anderson, 2015)

Imagined example: Learners' progress in English proficiency

#### Our current 'level'





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Imagined example: Learners' progress in English proficiency

Our teacher = Our best model

### Our current 'level'



More likely to speak a regionallyappropriate variety of English Accent more accessible Grammar 'L1-tailored' Uses cognates effectively

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# Imagined example: Learners' progress in English proficiency

Our choice (if needed in the future)

Keep our own L1 identity

International English – ELF

A specific variety (e.g. East Asian, UK, African, General American)

Move towards 'native-speaker' norms if required (e.g. academic publishing)

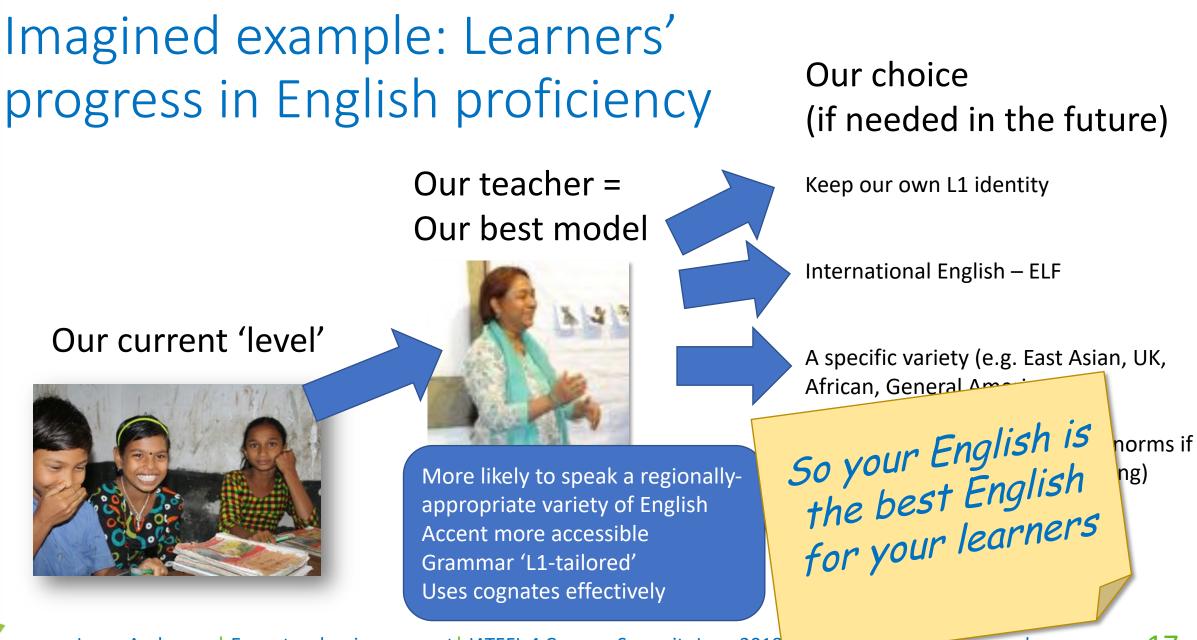


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Our best model



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 Teaching And Learning Using Locally Available Resources



Dr. Gibson Zembeni Malawi

### TALULAR

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## Keep becoming a better expert

Don't always trust your instincts.

- Get frequent feedback.
- Do regular research.

Develop with your colleagues.





## And don't trust me

 Best practice in ELT is often disseminated from 'the West' (Philipson 1992; Holliday 1994; Canagarajah 1999) based on the assumption...

#### It works here...

Small, classes of motivated learners with different L1s in private schools in the UK, USA, etc. (i.e. the privileged context)



#### ...so it should work here

Larger classes of (sometimes) less motivated learners with (often) a shared-L1 and fewer resources in secondary and primary education around the world.



## But who's actually the expert?

#### Jason (on a good day)



Genet Ghebretensei



Tesfahannes Negash



## However, I still get asked to do a lot of this:



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# Some of the principles I share with teacher educators

- 1. contextualise your own practice
- 2. spend as much time as possible learning about the context(s) of course participants
- 3. do show them what you do, but get them to critique it
- 4. allow time and space for this critical discussion and allow rejection to be a valid response
- extend it beyond the 'training course' in both directions
- 6. empower them to reject **you**





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	Teaching <b>English</b>
A Handbook for Exploratory Action Research Richard Smith and Paula Rebolledo	
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#### https://goo.gl/iWDR5m

### **Over to you:**

- What do you think of *my* principles?
- What's missing?
- What do you disagree with?
- What are *your* principles for teacher education?

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