

Materials reviews

Existence: Eight LGBTQIA+ inclusive ELT resources

Peter J Fullagar

2024

63 pages

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There has always been, and continues to be, a gap in ELT materials where LGBTQIA+ inclusion could and should exist. Peter J Fullagar has been striving to create and share accessible LGBTQIA+ inclusive materials to start to fill up this empty space, providing teachers with diverse options. This collection of eight resources spans levels A2–C1, featuring LGBTQIA+ (or Queer) people, stories and experiences as they are, in a usualised/mainstreamed way. Educators have a range of levels and realistic topics to choose from. The materials do not erase, marginalise or present Queer people or their loved ones and allies in a negative way. Fullagar shows LGBTQIA+ identities existing, not as taboos or issues.

Each lesson features a grammar point and/or language focus and an LGBTQIA+ identity, with many of them featuring intersectional topics including age and disability. There are two lessons for each level, giving educators variety and choice. Lessons contain opportunities for students to use English to practise all four skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing. Every lesson contains 10–15 activities/exercises, teacher notes and answers, and an acknowledgements page. All acknowledgements contain image sources and, depending on lesson contents, useful links/helpful resources and/or sources for text inspiration/adaptation. It's clear that Peter has included these as support for educators to adapt or extend the materials to meet their learners' needs and contexts.

As the reader advances through the book's materials in advancing level and content, both LGBTQIA+ identity and grammar/language, we feel as though we are going on the development journey with the teachers and learners who will use these resources: as the English language use develops, so does our understanding of Queer people's existence – an existence which has much in common with the educators' and students' own. This book shows us we are one community, living lives with much in common. We work, do free-time activities, and learn about a film director's life's work, research another, and then write an email to one of them. We face life changes and challenges, talk about our families and loved ones, and think about housing and the variety of homes people will have lived in by the end of their lives. We learn about feeling invisible, misconceptions and raising awareness. We even think about lifelong love stories and marriage.

Existence has lessons for a variety of needs and is ideal for any educator who wants to be more inclusive: its accessibility, relatability and community are a strong place to start – together.

Helen Slee

Freelance, the UK

helenteacheseng@gmail.com

Stories of Mentoring Teacher-Research

Edited by Richard Smith, Seden

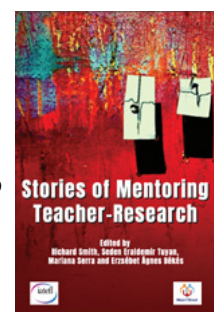
Eraldemir Tuyan, Mariana Serra and

Erzsébet Ágnes Békés

IATEFL Research Special Interest Group
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mentoring_teacher-research.pdf](https://resig.weebly.com/uploads/2/6/3/6/26368747/stories_of_mentoring_teacher-research.pdf)



Stories of Mentoring Teacher-Research is a publication by the IATEFL Research Special Interest Group (ReSIG) in collaboration with MenTRnet, a network dedicated to mentoring teacher-researchers. This book brings together 20 powerful narratives from mentors all over the world who voluntarily supported their fellow teachers to conduct research in their classrooms. What makes this collection truly remarkable is its humble storytelling style that follows a bottom-up, practice-oriented approach without placing anyone on a pedestal. If there is a hero in these stories, it's not the mentor, but the teachers themselves. The use of stories as opposed to opting for an academic genre is intriguing in itself and it appears that the collective of the co-authors and the co-editors unanimously chose this style for a reason. In the words of the editors: 'The narrators of the stories in this book emphasize their own emotions and actions, and we have tried to help them configure these into a believable story in a well-described local context' (p. 6).

The book's raw and authentic storytelling tone blends hands-on wisdom with captivating stories of how the co-authors supported their peers to conduct research in the classrooms, facilitated academic publication in contexts where resources and connections are scarce, and fostered their peers' professional and academic growth through genuine selfless support. To me, more than anything else, this book is a testament to how a relatively more experienced person can make lasting changes in a person's life. The narratives in the *Stories of Mentoring Teacher-Research* make a strong case that mentoring teacher-research is not about imposing external methodologies but about enabling teachers to reflect critically on their own practice and discover solutions that work in their unique settings. This book is the living proof that mentorship networks, such as MenTRnet, can play a crucial role in maintaining engagement and fostering long-term teacher development in different contexts.

Though I found all chapters equally captivating, one particular story captured my heart. 'The Value of Teacher-Research Mentoring in War-Torn Iraq' by Mayamin Altae opens the book with a profoundly moving account that resonated with me for two reasons. First, my home country, Iran, stood on the other side of one of the wars she mentions in her introduction to this chapter (p. 15) for eight long years, so I am familiar with the profound economic and psychological scars such conflicts leave behind. Second, her powerful story inspired me to expand my own mentoring teacher-research in my country of residence in South America to my home country, and contribute to the empowerment of my peers in the country where I was born. In this chapter, Altae begins with providing context on what is meant by 'War-Torn Iraq' and depicting the current situation English teachers face in Iraq. Then, she vividly illustrates how teacher-research can serve as a tool for

resilience in the face of educational instability. She highlights the formidable barriers to mentorship in Iraq due to unreliable internet access, psychological stress among teachers, and a lack of institutional support. But her story proves that teachers who engage in research under mentorship can always find new ways to improve classroom practices and foster student engagement despite adversity.

To sum up, I think *Stories of Mentoring Teacher-Research* is going to be an enjoyable read for teacher educators, mentors and anyone interested in fostering practitioner research in education. This book truly succeeds in its goal of demonstrating that mentoring teacher-research is not just about guiding others but about creating lasting, sustainable cultures of inquiry in education.

Omid Kalantar

Assistant Professor, Universidad Nacional de Educación (UNAE),
Ecuador

omid.sahranavard@unae.edu.ec

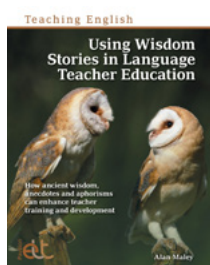
Using Wisdom Stories in Language Teacher Education

Alan Maley

Pavilion ELT, 2024

300 pages

ISBN 9781803883601



I've long been aware of the power and usefulness of stories in teacher training and development work. I also know that it's not easy to find ready-made volumes of stories for the trainer to just pick off the shelf, as they are rather thin on the ground. For these reasons, I welcome this volume wholeheartedly, especially since it comes from a man who, like me, is an aficionado of narrative in teaching and learning.

The subtitle of the book is 'How ancient wisdom, anecdotes and aphorisms can enhance teacher training and development', and as both title and subtitle suggest, this is a collection made up partly of traditional stories and partly of texts created by teachers and trainers.

In the introduction to the book, Alan Maley makes a compelling case for using stories in the training room, making the point that much of the teaching we do focuses on the left side of the brain, often said to be the 'logical' side. Stories, however, move the emphasis to the right side of the brain, 'with its focus on feelings,

physical sensations, intuition, imagination and musicality'. The book is then divided into two parts.

Part One comprises 'wisdom stories', which the author describes as offering absurd, creative and often nonsensical narratives that work on many levels, are open to interpretation, and easily spark discussion and debate. This part is made up of stories which come from a wide variety of traditions: Zen, Sufi, Aesop, Grimm, Andersen, Nasrudin stories, to name but a few. There are some old favourites here, such as *Is the Jar Full?* and *The starfish*, but I also found stories that were quite new to me. The author suggests ways of working with the stories in the introduction. For example, ask trainees to suggest a moral for the story or relate the story to a class they've taught or are teaching. In addition, following each story, there are discussion prompts. All 85 stories are very rich sources of discussion, making this a real treasure-trove of traditional stories to be used in training.

Part Two is mainly made up of personal anecdotes by ELT colleagues, poems, metaphors and quotations. There is also a list of 'non-specialist' books, such as *The Tao of Pooh*, and Kate Clanchy's *Some kids I taught and what they taught me*. These titles, the author suggests, are suitable for longer readings, and he has indicated the issues covered by each book.

The critical incidents section is a part of the book where you will certainly find stories you've never read before, for these are real stories by ELT people such as Adrian Underhill, Cynthia Beresford and Michael Swan. Again, each critical incident is accompanied by discussion prompts which focus on what we can infer about teaching and learning. I also enjoyed the poems by ELT professionals, again with accompanying questions, and the metaphors and quotations by everyone from Prabhu and Ken Robinson to Lyndon B. Johnson. The whole volume ends with a useful bibliography of books of stories and books about stories and how to use them.

In this book, Maley furnishes the trainer with the stories for training and provides excellent pedagogical support and resources. This combination will attract both the trainer who is already converted to the power of stories, and the one who has yet to truly discover how effective they can be. This is a practical, useable book in which the author's love for stories comes through on every page.

Sue Leather

Author and ELT Consultant
sue@sueleather.com

From the SIGs

Celebrating a decade of TEASIG webinars: a reflection on inclusiveness, communication and professional growth



The first TEASIG webinar took place on 7 January 2015 and attracted 45 participants. Since that date, TEASIG has hosted more than 65 sessions, and welcomed numerous speakers and over

5,000 attendees from all over the world. To celebrate 10 years of TEASIG webinars, on 22 January 2025, we organised a special online event where we looked back on the past decade together with our guests, including former speakers, friends and collaborators.

We talked about what TEASIG means to teachers and testers, how the TEASIG webinar series has helped to spread language assessment literacy within and beyond the IATEFL community, and even recalled some humorous anecdotes from our online encounters. The anniversary

event was hosted by **Neil Bullock**, who helped develop the webinar series for TEASIG and moderated from 2015 to 2021, **Anna Soltyska**, who took over in January 2021 and has been coordinating the series since, and **Reshmi Murali**, who joined the team in October 2022.

The event started with an interactive quiz that tested attendees' knowledge of TEASIG webinars' history. Questions covered statistics and trivia, such as the number of webinars hosted (62), the most frequently used word in webinar titles (assessment), and the record