



## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN LISTENING AND SPEAKING SKILLS FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS OF ENGLISH: RHIZOMATIC EDUCATION

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### Abstract:

This study suggested a five-strand model for secondary school ELT teachers to develop teachers' professional development (TPD) at their own pace, particularly aiming to improve teachers' speaking and listening skills. The reasons for this PD project were given. Different theoretical models related to teachers' career development were reviewed and compared with the assistance of AI-powered tools such as ChatGPT, Copilot, Gemini, and DeepSeek to identify common ideas aligned with previous research before constructing the suggested model. Five common strands that help build an effective TPD model have emerged, including needs analysis, workshops, practices, personal learning communities, collaboration, and assessment tools. This project also provided theoretical frameworks for teachers to construct conceptual frameworks for their own PD model design. Based on principles of rhizomatic education, resources for each strand of this five-strand model were provided as 'doors' for teachers to implement further explorations. Limitations and recommendations for TPD were also given in this paper.

**Keywords:** professional development, teacher professional development, career development, listening and speaking skills for secondary school teachers of English, rhizomatic education

### 1. Introduction

Professional development (PD) and teacher professional development (TPD) are common terms in the teaching world. These terms are currently often related to teacher-training workshops organized by schools, institutions, or educational services. However, the impact of these workshops is often vague, which may not encourage teachers in their continuous professional development (CPD), and as a result, can harm school improvement (Zimmerman & Campillo, 2003). Furthermore, if teachers are not willingly

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participating in PD programmes, teachers may not meet students' needs (Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley, 2007). While the traditional professional development strategies may face resistance, therefore, educators ought to utilise support that is pertinent, individualised, and adaptive. Teachers require upgraded skills via TPD to adapt to new teaching situations, new curriculum standards, effectively use new technology, and fulfil the academic requirements established by new teacher evaluation systems.

## 1. Professional Development

### 1.1 What is Professional Development?

Professional development for teachers typically aims to introduce new tools, skills or update existing skills. It is seen as an essential aspect of the teachers' profession. As the European Commission states, *"Teaching competencies are ... complex combinations of knowledge, skills, understanding, values and attitudes, leading to effective action in situations. The range and complexity of competencies required for teaching in actual societies is so great that any one individual is unlikely to have them all, nor to have developed them all to the same high degree."* (Galaczi et al. 2018, p. 9). PD needs to be a systemic, long-term skills development process, as voiced by teachers themselves below:

*"In order to become the best teacher I can, I need to feel confident I have a plan in place to develop my professional skills efficiently and appropriately."*

*"I am a good English language teacher and the demand for top-quality teaching is high – but nothing stands still, the bar keeps going up, and my skills have to keep improving."*

*"I am a qualified English teacher, and I just started a job at a secondary school in my country, but my English isn't good enough. I need to be able to improve both my English and my teaching skills in English."*

*"I graduated from the Faculty of Economics at my university, and now I am employed to teach English because I speak excellent English, but I need to get some professional training specific to teaching English to help me with doing my job."* (Galaczi et al. 2018, p. 38).

## 2. Teacher Professional Development (TPD)

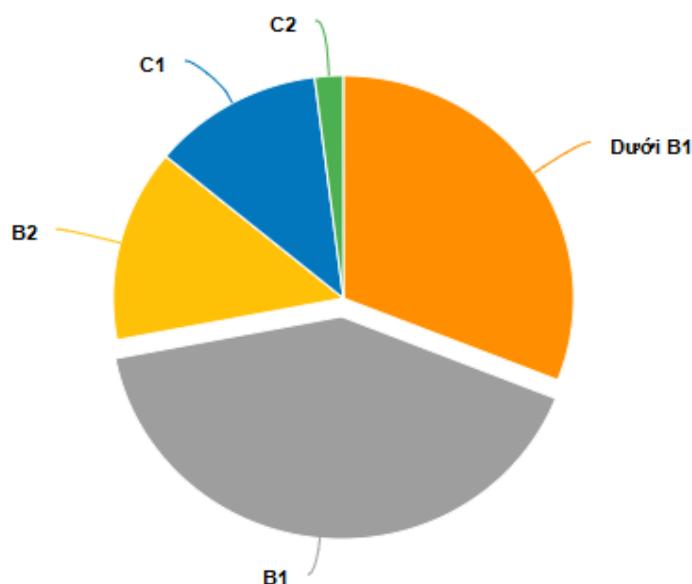
### 2.1 Why Do We Need TPD?

In several countries, there is a deficiency of qualified English Language Teaching (ELT) educators who possess at least operational proficiency in English. This shortage is attributed to insufficient teacher training and the tendency of proficient English speakers to pursue careers in more appealing private sectors rather than education. A survey in the Asia-Pacific region has been implemented. It reported that several teachers in the region possess poor English skills. In Libya, another study was conducted on their

communicative practices. The study resulted that the target teachers had limited communicative skills. These examples are evidence of the impact on learners of the low levels of English proficiency in teachers, which is the reality in many educational contexts (Galaczi *et al.*, 2018, pp. 22-23).

There is increasing awareness of the gap between the language level that Ministries of Education want their teachers to have and the existing reality; the need to upgrade teachers of English, including ELT methodology, is increasing, when research shows that English language teachers, especially those in rural areas of developing countries lack communicative abilities at an operational level. Certainly, their poor English skills and shortage of TPD programmes make it difficult to construct an effective learning environment for their students to develop their learning abilities.

Ministries of Education in Uruguay and Vietnam are trying to fill this gap between existing and desired levels of English. In Uruguay, a project named *Ceibal en Inglés* was initiated to resolve the issue of a deficiency of specialised English teachers in public schools. Laptops were offered to teachers and students as well to provide access to technology. The target teachers were retrained via video-conferencing with more qualified teachers to improve their levels of English. In Vietnam, the government launched a national project 2020, aiming to upgrade teachers of English at secondary schools nationwide. Recently, a largest city of Vietnam -Ho Chi Minh City has surveyed 50,300 teachers of English working at primary and secondary schools of English located in the surveyed area (Tuoi Tre, 2025; VnExpress, 2025). The test included four skills of English based on the CEFR framework.



**Figure 9:** Results of the Test on English Proficiency Held by HCMC Department of Education, Vietnam (source: VnExpress, 2025)

The results show that nearly half of the candidates (31%) resulted in A1-A2 of English proficiency, the lowest level in CEFR. Most of these English teachers come from

secondary schools. It is estimated that around 30-30% of secondary school teachers' English proficiency in the city is below the B1 level, 38-43% achieve B1, and only 27-29% teachers reach B2, including those whose major is in a bachelor's degree in English (VnExpress, 2025). Although the survey was criticised as 'inappropriate' or 'unreliable' (TuoiTre, 2025), as the test did not choose the right sampling method for selecting the sample of 50,300 candidates taking the test, research confirms that if teachers develop their profession, they will lead to obtaining sound knowledge to assist their students. It seems there is a correlation between "*effective teacher professional development programmes that lead to real improvements in students' learning*" (Galaczi *et al.* 2018, p. 2). However, TPD needs to be viewed as merely an intervention to upgrade teachers' weaknesses in knowledge and practices, but as an approach to help teachers recognise their strengths and use these strengths for further learning in teachers' professional development programmes, which can be self-designed by teachers themselves. PD will be most effective when it employs a strategy that focuses on teachers' strengths rather than their weaknesses. Effective PD can be achieved through motivation that inspires educators to integrate their earlier experiences with existing knowledge and innovative concepts (Galaczi *et al.*, 2018). There is a gap between the language level that Ministries of Education of countries want their teachers to have and the existing reality, as indicated above. There is also an increasing need to upskill teachers of English in general and in secondary schools in particular. Despite great efforts carried out by projects hugely funded by governments, many English language teachers, especially in developing countries and in schools in rural areas, do not speak English at an operational level. Their poor language skills and lack of access to appropriate professional development make it difficult to create an effective learning environment for their students.

### **3. Secondary School Teachers of English: Reality and Challenges Faced in Listening and Speaking Skills**

Based on educational trends and the realities that ELT teachers are facing, this study recognizes that teachers of English at secondary schools worldwide, especially those teaching English as a Foreign Language in the Asia-Pacific region, are facing the following issues, as pointed out by Galaczi *et al.*'s (2018) report:

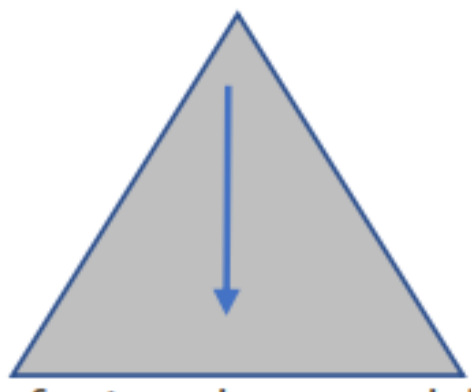
- Inadequate or limited professional training,
- Teachers' low proficiency in English,
- Ineffective teaching and learning environments,
- Time constraints,
- Lack of experience using technology (Galaczi *et al.* 2018, p. 14)

These issues need effective TPD projects which are scientifically and systematically designed, guided by meaningful training models that bring success to schools' TDP programmes.

### 3.1 Theoretical Models for TPD

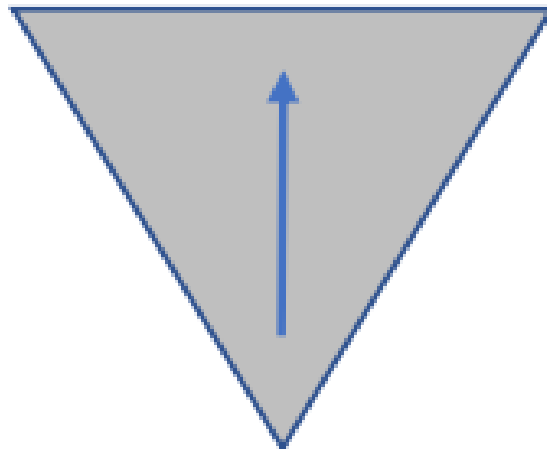
There are three approaches that should be viewed when constructing PD models: the top-down approach, the bottom-up approach, and the interactive approach, which secondary school teachers can use to construct their own PD models. These approaches have their roots in second language reading (Anderson 2018, pp. 3-5).

Through a top-down approach, teachers will be depended on their schools or institutions' curriculum to implement their PD programmes. In a top-down approach, educators perceive schools as the principal providers of professional development, prioritising institutional requirements over those of the instructors. Richards (2015) refers to this as a "*expert-driven process*" (p. 697). This approach is not recommended to secondary school teachers as it opposes teachers' self-regulation in the rhizomatic education recommended in this article.



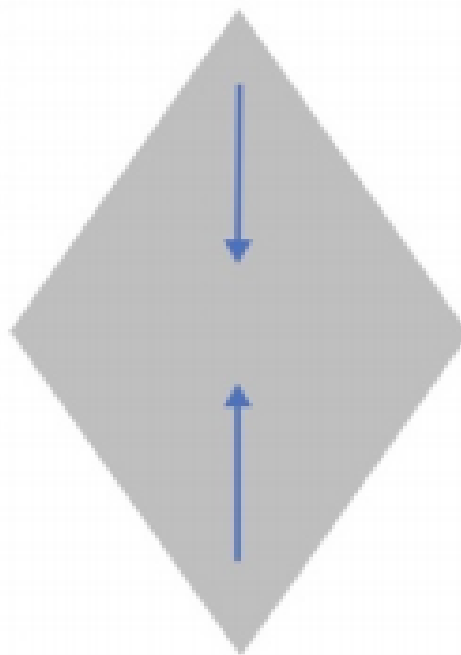
**Figure 1:** The Top-down Approach Is Visually Presented in a Triangle

A bottom-up approach to TPD is an approach that is entirely directed and guided by a single educator. This method is expected to succeed just for exceptionally driven educators who possess a mechanism to ensure accountability for their professional growth (Anderson, 2018, p. 4). This approach is recommended for secondary school teachers' PD as teachers will decide on their own pace what they need to use for their own designed PD model. This approach aligns with the principles of rhizomatic education recommended for teachers' autonomous learning in this paper. However, it is worth noting that teachers who choose this approach should be highly motivated.



**Figure 2:** A Bottom-up Approach

An interactive approach is considered the most effective approach for constructing models of teacher professional growth, similar to models of L2 reading development. This strategy incorporates information from institutional needs analyses and individual teachers who have recognised their own PD needs.



**Figure 3:** An Interactive Approach

Richards (2015) asserts that *“when PD is aligned with institutional objectives and individual teacher aspirations, structured models are more efficacious in fostering transformative change for both institutions and teachers”* (p. 706). Crandall and Finn Miller (2014) say that *“sustained, content-focused professional development proved most effective when it actively engaged teachers in tangible methods and focused on specific instructional practices rather than abstract pedagogical discussions”* (pp. 631-632). This underscores why an interactive approach for TPD may be the most effective strategy. This approach provokes

*“collaboration between the institution and educators in identifying teachers’ professional development training and in holding teachers accountable for their growth to enhance their teaching and, consequently, student learning.”* (Anderson 2018, p. 5).

Current research into models for effective PD recommended the choice of an alternative approach as it is difficult for secondary school teachers to ignore their school educational goals. An interactive approach will bring out success if collaboration between schools and teachers is established. Teachers should consider the following factors when choosing an approach to create good models for TPD:

- a) a focus on content;
- b) opportunities for active learning and participation;
- c) a focus on team-building and collaborative activities;
- d) coherence with other professional development experiences; and
- e) content delivered over time, including at least 20 hours of contact time (Desimone, 2011).

Models for effective PD also give teachers experiences that are:

- a) long-term and intense rather than brief;
- b) centred on standards and content implemented in classrooms;
- c) encourage inquiry-based and active learning;
- d) facilitate teacher collaboration;
- e) support teacher leadership in PD and implementation;
- f) implemented and incorporated into daily educational practices and culture,
- g) align with educators' learning objectives, and
- h) reflect the school's mission and reform aspirations (Elmore, 2002; Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001; Wei *et al.*, 2009).

Models built should align effective professional development, emphasising teachers' knowledge, abilities, and attitudes, with educators regarded as integral members of a professional community (Newmann, King, & Youngs, 2000). PD strategies work best when instructors are supported in the classroom and given time to prepare for classroom implementation (Penuel *et al.*, 2007). To facilitate greater discussion and cooperation, a number of models have been proposed to support teachers' wishes to participate in self-regulated inquiry-based research. Based on these criteria, this paper introduces two models for secondary teachers to their PD.

### 3.1.1 The Five Ps of Effective Professional Development



**Figure 4:** The Five Ps Model of TPD (see: Anderson 2018, p. 5)

This interactive model for TPD is suggested by Anderson (2018). The five Ps mean the five principles: Purpose, Personalization, Priority, Passion, and Professional Learning Community. Anderson explained that the first P as Purpose must be clear and be aligned with the school and individual perspectives. He recommended that teachers can refer to a Leadership Development Certificate Program (LMCP) by “*the TESOL International Association that can assist program leaders in learning the basic principles involved in the creation or updating of a mission statement*” (p. 6). The second P emphasises the Personalisation of professional development, as Personalisation is “*essential for attaining one’s objectives.*” An interactive approach to PD is essential for the success of any institution. When an educator tailors their PD requirements, significantly greater success will ensue. Fink (2013) emphasises the significance of personalisation by accentuating the necessity of self-regulation among educators. He points out that “*when we learn about ourselves, we might learn something that helps us understand who we are at the present time; this kind of learning changes or informs our self-image. At other times, we might learn something new about the person we want to become; this gives us a new self-ideal. Both are important, and either may happen intentionally or as a by-product of the formal aspects of our education.*” (Fink 2013, p. 51)

The third P Priority emphasises the need for professional development. Educators must prioritise their developmental areas and concentrate on one issue at a time. Educators can take initiative by initially compiling a list of potential PD goals and subsequently narrowing that list to a singular problem for sustained concentration. This method is to avoid being inundated by the multitude of options for TPD.

The fourth P is Passion for professional development. This P can provoke teachers to accomplish their goals. Anderson said, “*if we want passionate learners, we must have passionate teachers*” because “*student motivation is related to the teacher’s motivational practice*” (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008, pp. 72-73). The final P as Professional Learning Communities that focuses on professional learning communities. Learning and teaching can be social processes. Crandall and Finn Miller (2014) point out that “*The research*

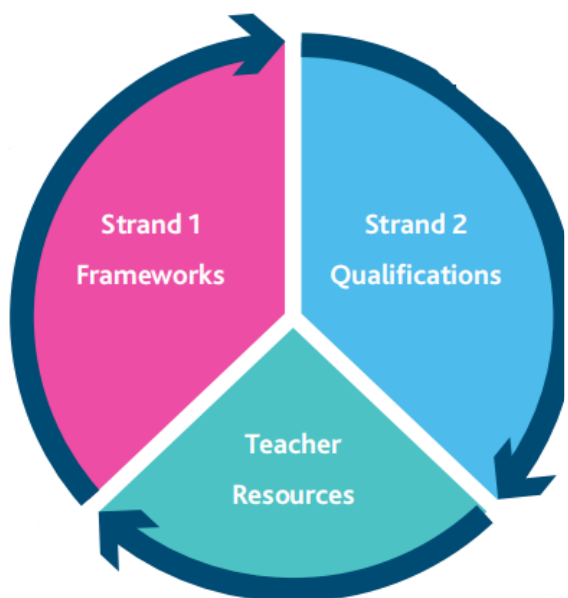


*evidence suggests that educational institutions that align their performance goals to teachers' professional development through professional learning communities (i.e., groups of teachers who meet regularly to plan, problem solve, and learn together) achieve positive outcomes."* (p. 632). This P strengthens the idea that institutions and individual educators can work together for a professional learning community.

### 3.1.2 Cambridge English Professional Development for Teachers: A Three-Strands Model

This organization suggested a three-strands model for TPD (see Fig. 5). The three strands include:

- Strand 1: Frameworks,
- Strand 2: Qualifications,
- Strand 3: Teacher Resources.



**Figure 5:** Cambridge English Professional Development for Teachers

This model consists of three strands: frameworks, qualifications, and resources for teachers.

### 3.2 Frameworks

The aim of this framework is to define effective teaching across three domains: the information teachers possess, the competencies teachers have, and the resources/tools they utilise. The framework outlines a framework of competences across four phases of TPD progression, and five types of knowledge and competencies at each phase:

- Language and language learners,
- Instruction, education, and evaluation,
- Linguistic competence,
- Linguistic knowledge and awareness,

- Professional development and values.

The framework serves as a profile grid, not a performance evaluation instrument, and aims to illustrate the stages of a teacher's development at a specific moment, rather than delineate the characteristics of an exemplary teacher. The framework will help teachers identify their developmental priorities related to school professional needs.

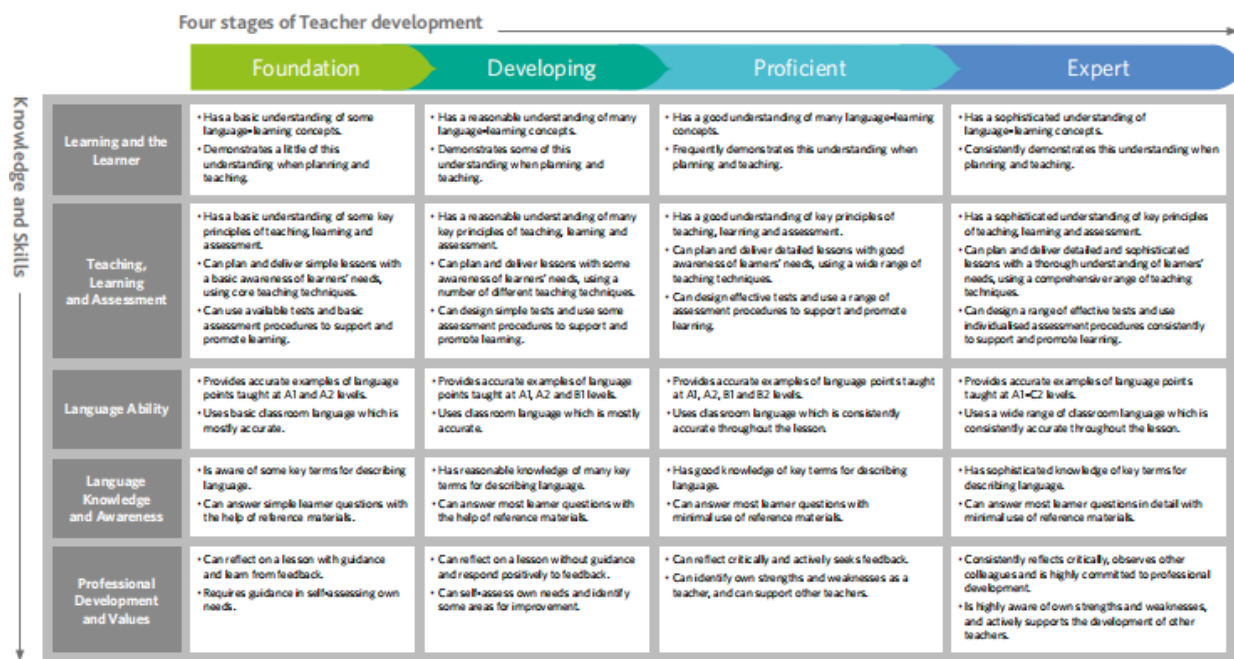


Figure 6: Cambridge English Teaching Framework (see Galaczi *et al.* 2018, p.11)

### 3.2.1 Cambridge English Trainer Framework

This second framework, established by Cambridge English, emphasises trainer competencies. The Cambridge English Trainer Framework was developed in partnership with the Norwich Institute for Language Education (NILE) to facilitate trainer training and development.

The framework (see Fig. 7) delineates trainer capabilities across three developmental stages and five dimensions of trainer knowledge and skills:

- Comprehension of individuals and circumstances.
- Proficiency in pedagogy, instructional methodologies, and educator professional development.
- Strategising, executing, and assessing training initiatives.
- Assisting, monitoring, providing feedback on, and evaluating instruction.
- Professional advancement and principles.

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- Strategising, executing, and assessing training initiatives,
- Assisting, monitoring, providing feedback on, and evaluating instruction,
- Professional advancement and principles.

### Cambridge English Trainer Framework Summary



	From Teacher to Trainer	Autonomous Trainer	Lead Trainer
Understanding of individuals and situations	Conducts training in familiar or predictable situations largely based on the trainer's own teaching experience. Deals with predictable individual needs using basic strategies. Demonstrates basic sensitivity to diversity when planning and conducting training.	Conducts training for diverse groups in a variety of situations based on their own and others' teaching experience. Plans in advance to deal with individual needs and attempts to deal with emergent needs using a range of strategies. Demonstrates a diversity-oriented approach to planning and conducting training.	Based on thorough advance needs analysis, often in unfamiliar situations, efficiently deals with needs of individuals, including emergent needs, using a wide range of strategies. Demonstrates deep sensitivity to diversity when planning and conducting training.
Knowledge of teaching, training and teacher development	Demonstrates a clear understanding of language systems, including basic language analysis strategies, and core principles of effective teaching practice, which in turn informs their training. Is aware that training differs from teaching. Demonstrates basic training principles. Uses a limited range of resources.	Understands a number of language analysis strategies. Demonstrates a range of effective core teaching principles and practices. Is aware of non-core teaching practices. Demonstrates a clear understanding of how training is different from teaching. Demonstrates effective training principles. Uses a wide range of resources.	Uses a wide range of language analysis strategies. Demonstrates a wide range of effective core and non-core teaching principles and practice. Demonstrates a range of training approaches, in-depth understanding of a wide range of theoretical concepts in the field as well as practical know-how. Uses an extensive range of resources.
Planning, conducting and evaluating training activities	Conducts pre-prepared training activities with given materials with support. Demonstrates a basic ability to plan, conduct and evaluate teacher training activities.	Adapts given training materials for a particular audience appropriately. Demonstrates a clear and coherent approach to and rationale for planning, conducting and evaluating teacher training activities.	Designs, through principled application and innovation, learning units and courses to meet a wide range of individual needs. Manages the complex interplay of situational factors related to planning, conducting and evaluating training activities.
Supporting, observing, feeding back on and assessing teaching	Sets up and conducts classroom observations using given tools and procedures. Offers general feedback on areas for improvement in teaching and suggests basic strategies for teacher learning. Generally applies given assessment criteria accurately.	Employs a range of observation methods. Applies given observation tools and procedures appropriately. Offers specific feedback on areas for improvement. Suggests clear and appropriate strategies for teacher learning. Consistently applies assessment criteria accurately. Critically appraises given assessment criteria and feeds into their development where necessary.	Creates, through principled application and innovation, tools and procedures for observing and giving feedback. Nurtures specific needs, including emergent needs, and suggests a wide range of clear and appropriate strategies for teacher learning. Researches assessment tool effectiveness and develops assessment criteria for specific situations.
Professional development and values	Uses beliefs about own teaching practice to inform training values and practice. Responds positively to feedback on their training and demonstrates basic understanding of trainer and teacher-in-training roles in the training process. Is aware of resources available to support trainer professional development.	Uses own and others' teaching practice and beliefs as a basis for reflection and developing training values and practice. Seeks feedback on their own training and demonstrates good understanding of trainer and teacher-in-training roles in the training process. Is actively exploring avenues for their own development and specialisation within the field of teacher training.	Exemplifies own values and clearly defined beliefs through training practice. Acknowledges diverse viewpoints and encourages the articulation of emerging beliefs of teachers-in-training. Builds feedback on their own training into the training process and demonstrates a deep understanding of trainer and teacher-in-training roles. Uses contemporary research and critical reflection to continue own professional development while supporting others in developing appropriate specialisms.

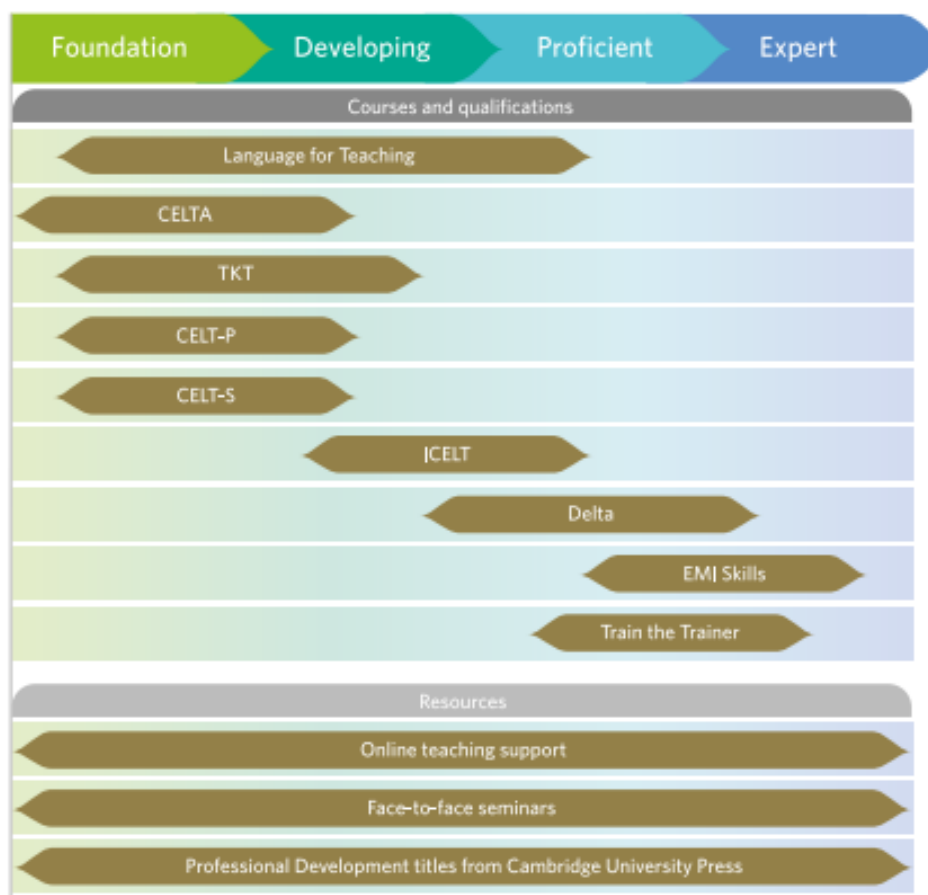
**Figure 7: Cambridge English Trainer Framework**

### 3.3 Qualifications

Alongside the creation of frameworks that offer systematic descriptions of pertinent competences and function as effective diagnostic instruments, Cambridge English presents a collection of credentials, courses, and resources aimed at:

- Enhance instructors' overall English language ability and instructional language.
- Present and inform educators on techniques that enhance learning outcomes.
- Help teachers instruct their subjects in English within education settings.
- Cultivate the competencies required for trainers to educate and assist educators.

Key courses and examinations include: Language for Teaching, Certificate in English Language Teaching –Primary/Secondary (CELT-P and CELT-S), Certificate in EMI Skills, Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT), and Train the Trainer.



**Figure 8:** Cambridge English Courses, Qualifications, and Resources for Teachers

### 3.4 Resources for Teachers

As shown in Figure 8, teachers can use resources such as online teaching support, face-to-face seminars, and PD books/textbooks published by Cambridge University Press as primary resources for their PD/CPD.

In summary, the review of related literature shows that most designed model for TPD focus more on the students' side than the teachers. Not many studies have investigated the reality of secondary school teachers of English. A clear picture or a clear roadmap for secondary school teachers to develop their PD or CPD has not been found out except some models or theories like the one recommended by Cambridge English Professional Development for ELT teachers in general (Galaczi *et al.*, 2018; Anderson, 2018; Jena & Barad, 2024), not for secondary school teachers of English in particular.

### 3.5 Elements of Effective TPD and Drawbacks of Ineffective TDP

In today's world, teachers are required to be innovative and adaptive. With TPD projects, they often improve their knowledge and abilities to become adaptable and introspective professionals who can meet the requirements of 21st-century language teachers (AbdulRab, 2023). A teacher involved in a Cambridge English professional development initiative stated, *"We all need a refresher in whatever profession we are in, but teachers perhaps face some of the greatest challenges right now as they are using curricula based on an education*

*system which is 200 years old and which is not suitable for students of the 21st century, so this makes the importance of training and professional development so much more important."*

Teachers need to be able to evaluate what they do or use in class. They must stay updated. Thus, effective TPD leads to improved teaching and, in turn, to improved students' learning. Teachers' low English proficiency often leads to a tendency to use the learners' mother tongue in classes, thus limiting the amount and quality of English input, which is essential for developing learners' English skills. As a result, they tend to create teacher-dominated classroom environments, as this approach allows teachers with limited English proficiency to avoid being pushed out of their linguistic comfort zone. Teachers' limited English proficiency also limits opportunities for learners to engage in meaningful communication, since the activities chosen by teachers are often drilling of grammar rules, memorising vocabulary in isolation, and reading aloud, which do not give learners opportunities to use English communicatively. Such an approach positions English as a subject to be taught about, rather than a language to function in.

Galaczi *et al.* (2018: 2) state that in order to assist teachers succeed with their TPD, there are ten factors that should be paid attention to:

- Educational context,
- Growth mindset,
- Relevant support,
- Appropriate teaching/learning approaches (e.g. bottom-up, top-down approach),
- Reflection and critical engagement,
- Collaboration and mentoring,
- Theory and practice,
- Competences,
- Teaching, curricula and assessment are integrated,
- Outcomes that can be observable, realistic and efficient.

Digital learning or digital education through a rhizomatic approach is here to stay, and it is highly likely that in the next five to ten years the use of technology to enable TPD will only increase. Digital technologies provide opportunities for PD which are ever more flexible, affordable and accessible, allowing just-in-time learning for teachers. *"Digital professional development empowers teachers to learn more effectively and more independently; accordingly, we should re-evaluate our expectations, ensuring that we advocate professional development that has a real impact on teachers' professional practices and on the learning outcomes of their students."* (Galaczi *et al.* 2018, p. 31).

The importance of support is highlighted by Guskey (2002) and Short (2013). This might include lesson observations, conferences with teachers and feedback from researchers or teacher educators (Short, 2013). For example, some PD programmes for EMI teachers in Hong Kong include workshops and follow-up school visits, during which teacher educators from tertiary institutes or the Education Bureau will co-plan lessons and materials with the workshop participants, observe their lessons and conduct a debriefing discussion. In the PD programme reported in Cammarata and Haley's study (2018), the teachers were also engaged in four rounds of lesson study (i.e., co-planning

lessons, implementation and debriefing discussion). School support helps teachers implement the new ideas or strategies they have learnt in PD workshops, reflect PD workshop effectiveness, with the support of experts. This is likely to sustain the teachers' efforts in trying out new initiatives and also improve the effectiveness of these trials. PD programmes must also allow some time for teachers to internalise the new ideas, try them out and then reflect on their effectiveness. As Cammarata and HaleyElements (2018) observed, *"it took a year and a half of diligent collaborative work for motivated and willing participating teachers to begin to feel comfortable with planning and teaching, using an integrated approach"* (p. 343).

It has been proposed that a strong PD programme should include a good assessment tool so that teachers can evaluate their own progress (Short, 2013).

Finally, an increasing amount of research on PD programmes has highlighted the important role played by collaboration (Cammarata & Haley, 2018; He & Lin, 2018). Such collaboration could occur between small groups of teachers, who are engaged in co-planning, teaching and peer observation, and joint reflection. On the other hand, by trying out innovative practices and pedagogical frameworks in authentic school contexts, teachers can provide useful feedback for PD programmes and theoretical models. Hence, through the collaboration among teachers, schools and universities, 'communities of practice' (Wenger, 1998) might be established, which could facilitate situated learning and the professional development of all parties involved (He & Lin, 2018).

#### **4. Digital TPD Programmes for Secondary School Teachers of English to Develop Their Listening and Speaking Skills**

Digital learning for TPD is here to stay, and it is certain that in future, technology will enable teachers to construct their own TPD. Digital technologies provide opportunities increasingly flexible, affordable, and accessible alternatives for professional development, facilitating just-in-time learning for educators. *"Digital PD enables educators to enhance their learning autonomously and efficiently; thus, we must reassess our expectations to promote professional development that significantly influences teachers' practices and their students' learning outcomes."* (Galaczi, et al. 2018, p. 31).

##### **4.1 Theoretical Framework: Rhizomatic Education**

Rhizomatic education has its name from the *rhizome*, a form of plant that Deleuze and Guattari (2001) posited as a compelling contrast to rooted plants. In her essay named *'Deleuze, Education, and Becoming'*, Inna Semetsky delineates the relevant distinctions of the rhizome.

*"The underground sprout of a rhizome does not have a traditional root. There is a stem there, the oldest part of which dies off while simultaneously rejuvenating itself at the tip. The rhizome's renewal of itself proceeds autopoietically: the new relations generated via rhizomatic connections are not copies, but each and every time a new map, a cartography."*

*A rhizome does not consist of units, but of dimensions and directions.*' (Semetsky, 2006).

Deleuze and Guattari proposed the rhizome as a model opposing Western rationalism. Rhizomatic education includes pedagogical practices that are influenced by their theories. It has recently been recognised as a method for 'technology-enhanced learning'. Unlike goal-oriented and hierarchical learning theories, it asserts that learning is most effective when learners can adapt to changing circumstances, maintaining curiosity and passion. With rhizomatic education, "*the community is the curriculum*," which challenges traditional instructional design where objectives precede student engagement. Based on findings recommended by Galaczi, *et al.* (2018) and Anderson (2018), the overall framework that secondary teachers of English can use to develop their autonomous PD can be defined in three linked areas:

- What teachers need to know,
- What teachers should be able to put their knowledge into classroom practice,
- The resources and tools teachers can use for their PD or CPD.

#### 4.2 Basic Principles for Practices

Rhizomatic education requires teachers to follow its basic principles:

- *Community as a curriculum designer.* A learning community is a collaborator for teachers to refer to issues while carrying out their self-taught mode of TPD. Knowledge will emerge through interactions among community members. Therefore, the school curriculum should not be fixed. The fixed curriculum fails to reflect the expertise of its learning community. Learning is implemented via networked learning.
- *Decentralized authority.* Fixed curriculum through hierarchical structures are replaced as they block community members' creativity and expertise. Teachers act as facilitators or co-learners who contribute actively to knowledge shared, challenging teacher-centred models.
- *Learning is self-regulated as rhizomatic education is anchored on.* Teachers recommend resources through which learners freely explore more on their own pace, anytime, anywhere. Learners construct knowledge via their rhizomatic personal learning environments (PLEs) that help develop their critical thinking to resolve real-world issues (Lian, 2011; Trang, 2020).

These basic but important principles of rhizomatic education are aligned with the basic principles suggested by Galaczi, *et al.*'s (2018) three-strand model and the five Ps PD model (Anderson, 2018) for TPD, which have been reviewed above.

#### 4.3 A Suggested Model for Secondary School Teachers' PD

A review of the literature related to TPD models, together with the use of AI-powered tools (e.g. *ChatGPT*, *Gemini*, *Copilot*, and *DeepSeek*) to seek the key elements of TPD, has



revealed the fact that an effective model for secondary school teachers' PD commonly includes the following elements:

- Needs analysis aligning with school goals,
- Workshops or seminars that assist teachers in their blended learning,
- Practices or practical activities,
- Collaboration from Personal Learning Communities (PLCs),
- Assessment tools for self-evaluation,

These key elements are illustrated in the following visual pie chart:



**Figure 9:** A Suggested Five-strands Model

These five elements are the main elements to form effective TPD projects. It should also be noted that *relevance*, *collaboration*, *flexibility*, and *reflection* are the key principles of this model, as these principles effectively assist the model to run smoothly, which are aligned with rhizomatic educational principles. The five elements are illustrated in detail below:

- **Needs analysis:** should be done first, as this model requires teachers to analyze their personalized goals, aligning with their school goals.
- **Practices:** In order to help teachers' practices, resources, especially online resources, should be available. However, as this model is based on a rhizomatic education in which learners' autonomy or self-regulation plays a very important role in their PD, the target teachers should be provided with relevant resources from which they will continue to further explore other related resources or needed materials (Lian, 2011; Trang, 2020).
- **PLCs and Collaboration:** Based on rhizomatic principles, PLCs and Collaboration should be one of the key elements of the suggested model as rhizomatic education emphasise networked learning to obtain creative and real-life expertise from learning communities' collaboration.



- **Workshops:** Interactive workshops in which teachers have the opportunity to engage in activities that improve teacher participants' fluency, pronunciation, intonation, etc.
- **Assessment tools:** Tools that help teachers self-assess their skills progress.

The following section will describe in detail the resources of this five-strands model for teachers' PD.

## 5. A Five-Strands Model

### 5.1 Strand 1: Needs Analysis

Built on the *Cambridge English Professional Development for Teachers* framework, and by deeply reviewing literature related to common elements that the models have recommended, the researcher of this paper comes to a conclusion that a workable model for secondary school teachers to develop their self-taught mode, especially for their listening and speaking skills should include five strands in which teachers themselves are able to build their own learning/teaching resources, have the abilities to self-assess their skills progress as shown above. Based on this framework (Galaczi *et al.*, 2018), together with the principles of rhizomatic education (Deleuze & Guattari, 2001), teachers can autonomously construct their own framework for their CPD. Teachers themselves will determine resources and methods that best assist them in their PD process (Lian, 2011; Trang, 2020).

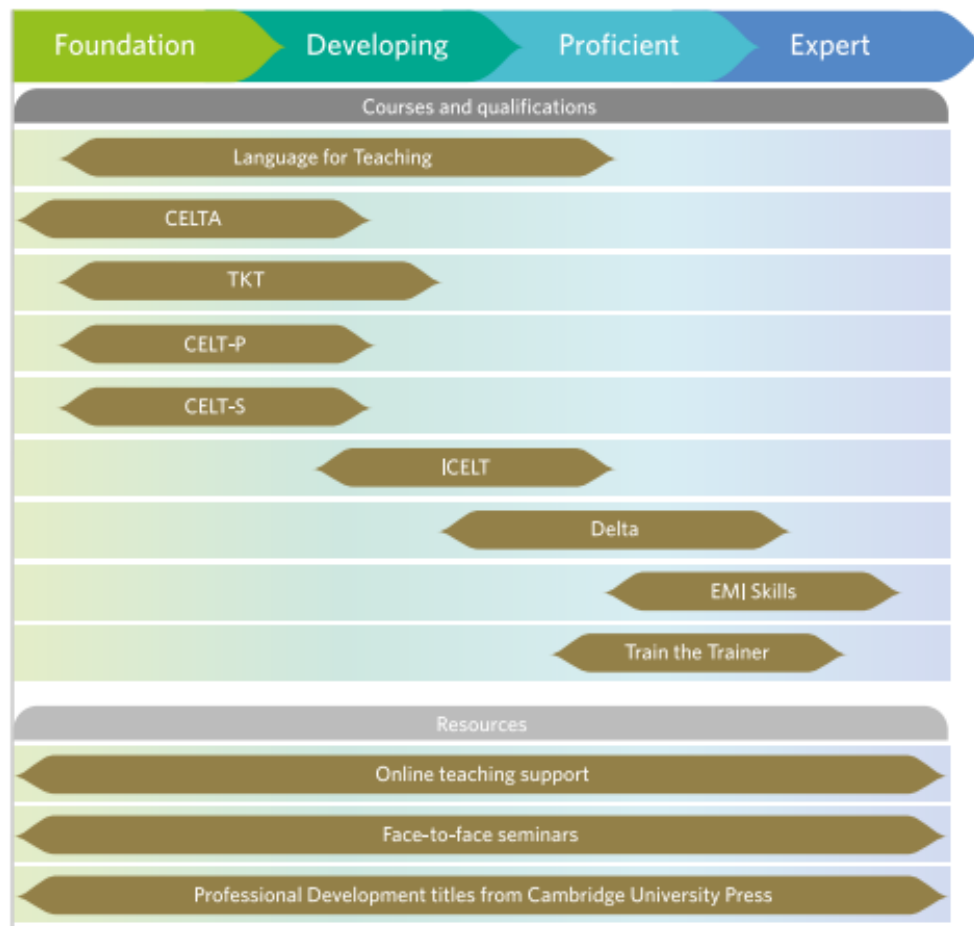
### 5.2 Strand 2: Practices

'*Practice makes perfect*' is the key principle of this strand. As the participants in this model are secondary school teachers, it is recommended that they should perform their practices based on their individual or personalized needs and/or school goals. Practices include teaching techniques or teaching methods that bring out the best results for their academic lives. First, they need to have their own on-site or their own classroom practices, especially in small groups of teachers or students, aiming to build self-reliance in developing speaking and listening skills for their CPD. Perhaps these small-scale practices should receive feedback from their peers, colleagues or even from their students, which helps teachers evaluate their strengths and weaknesses in the two skills. These practices are indeed 'Micro-teaching' sessions. Also, let's keep in mind that these practices should be blended with related theories because teachers "*should evaluate theories in the light of their own and others' practices. A theory/practice integration could be established through supporting teachers in conducting classroom-based research either individually or collaboratively in teams.*" (Galaczi, *et al.* 2018, p. 13).

The following recommended websites that help develop both teaching and communication skills are worth noticing:

- **Coursera** offers courses on communication paired with in-person workshops.

- Cambridge English Trainer Programmes** ([www.thedigitalteacher.com](http://www.thedigitalteacher.com)). This organization has built very clear programmes for ELT teachers to develop their CPD.



**Figure 8:** Cambridge English courses, qualifications and resources for teachers

Details of these teacher training and teacher trainer programmes can be read at *Cambridge Assessment English Perspectives: Teacher Professional Development* (see Galaczi *et al.* 2018, pp. 18-25).

### 5.3 Strand 3: PLCs and Collaboration

Professional Language Communities (PLCs) are educational channels through which teachers can share their educational resources, teaching/learning feedback, lesson plans, and discussions with their colleagues. Based on rhizomatic education, PLCs are ‘roots’ from these roots teachers can explore more potential for their CPD. PLCs here can be specialized in helping teachers develop their less fluent skills, which are listening and speaking skills. I recommend that teachers join PLCs in which there are professors, especially English-speaking ones who are generously sharing their resources with the target teachers, helping teachers to have opportunities to perform their practices in the two skills in which they are not yet competent. The following channels are the doors to assist teachers in exploring further PLCs suitable for their needs or goal setting.

- **Edutopia** provides a wide range of resources, articles, and videos that promote effective teaching practices, collaboration, and professional development. It offers valuable insights and practical strategies for educators in PLCs.
- **Teaching Channel** features a collection of videos showcasing effective teaching practices across various grade levels and subjects. Educators can use these videos to spark discussions, gain new ideas, and reflect on their teaching practice within their PLCs.
- **Social Media Groups:** *Facebook* and *LinkedIn* have dedicated PLC groups where educators share insights and strategies. *Twitter/X* hashtags like #PLCs and #TeacherCollaboration can help teachers find relevant discussions.

It is noted that PLCs work well to help teachers in need by holding monthly meetings to share resources, lesson plans, and discuss challenges faced. Peer coaching is another form of teachers' reciprocal observations and feedback. Member mentorship is also worth establishing. It brings experienced teachers with their expertise to share their experiences with novices in implementing teaching/learning strategies.

#### 5.4 Strand 4: Workshops and Seminars

Training workshops and seminars are often seen as methods to upgrade and upskill teachers' professional knowledge. Workshops focusing on core skills that are aligned with secondary school teachers' needs analysis should be an encouragement to teachers' participation. Here are some forms of workshops and seminars that teachers can participate in:

- **Virtual Webinars**

Nowadays, conferences with in-person presentations are often replaced by virtual or online conferences as organizers of these events see the convenience and reduction of fees. With the development of technologies, teachers can attend conferences of prominent keynote speakers via virtual conferences or seminars. It is not hard to find channels on social media to seek virtual conferences relevant to TPD, focusing on speaking and listening skills development. In addition to virtual webinars, YouTube videos provide updated TESOL/TEFL conferences that teachers of English at secondary school levels can make full use of to update their speaking and listening skills, just like they attended these events in person. The following channels recommended here should be taken with notice:

- TED-Ed,
- Khan Academy,
- Education Week,
- Brightstorms.

These channels offer a wealth of great resources that can assist the target teachers in developing their speaking and listening while improving their EFL teaching methods as well.

- **Core Skills Workshops and Conferences**

Teachers of this study may interest in workshops or seminars which help them develop core skills that they want to improve, (e.g. Listening and Speaking skills). Based on their own needs, workshops on listening and speaking techniques will assist them in fostering their less fluent skills. Active listening and academic listening theories and techniques recommended by Wilson 2008; Rost (2009); Nation & Newton, 2009; Nguyen 2020) are good resources the target teachers can refer to. Public speaking strategies, facilitating debates, and Socratic seminars can certainly help teachers develop their speaking skills. Tools like *Flipgrid* can be used for teacher recordings, podcasts, and AI-powered apps or tools can also be used to help teachers in speech analysis. At present, when STEM is becoming an integrated skill, 'cross-curriculum strategies in which embedded listening and speaking for teaching STEM school subjects (e.g. for science presentations, historical reenactments) should be prioritized.

- **Interactive workshops:** Teachers are encouraged to attend interactive workshops focusing on teaching active listening, pronunciation, intonation, and speaking fluency. Such workshops should focus on practical activities like role-plays and debates.
- **Conferences or Conventions:** National or international conferences and conventions are held for researchers. Teachers can participate in these annual events, particularly by selecting appropriate strands of the conference to help develop their listening and speaking skills. TESOL Convention and Expo (<https://www.tesol.org/professional-development/education-and-events>) is organized yearly. This association provides opportunities for secondary school teachers to take part in the annual international conventions, even as online attendants.
- **Project-based plans:** This kind of TPD projects will involve outlining a teacher training course or a module on the topic of listening and speaking, based on what teachers consider to be the most important elements to include. It is best done if a group of teachers or trainees is kept in mind. The following plan should be clearly made:
  - a) Create an initial assessment instrument for your group. What do your group members already know about teaching listening and speaking skills? What are their current practices? What do you feel they need to know?
  - b) Choose at least three training-oriented books or online courses for listening and speaking skills development.
  - c) Find at least five extracts of audio or video recordings of lectures from teachers/researchers in the area of listening and speaking that your group would like to include in the course.
  - d) Ask group members to give their feedback on your group design self-taught outline:

**Resource 1:** Courses, especially online courses for teachers' listening and speaking skills development (Rost, 2009).

- Short lecture clips of experts in ELT,
- Texts and glossary lists with key concepts explained,
- Actual classroom video clips in which listening and speaking are taught, demonstrating the concepts in action,
- Application tasks and discussion questions to put in.

Table 1 below suggests plans for a short-training training module on listening:

**Table 1:** A short-training module training on listening (Rost, 2009)

LESSON	SESSION A	SESSION B	SESSION C
1 Understanding listening	Listening processes	Listening skills and strategies	Listening problems
2 Preparing a three-stage listening lesson	Before listening	While listening	After listening
3 Selecting listening materials	Finding sources of listening input	Using different types of listening	Using multimedia for listening
4 Designing tasks	Recognising four modes of listening	Devising tasks	Promoting self-access
5 Assessing listening	Designing your own tests	Reviewing standard tests	Self-assessment

**Resource 2:** Listening teaching techniques

Wilson's *How to Teach Listening* is a very practical book. The book can be used for:

- Listening to real English spoken out of classroom
- Learning different listening strategies
- Using rich listening sources and listening tasks

Three main stages of listening (pre-, while-, and post-listening) are designed in listening tasks that can be helpful to secondary teachers' listening skills development. The book also includes self-assessment including a discussion of reflection and types of responses.

**Resource 3:** Teaching ESL/EFL Listening and Speaking.

This teacher training book by Nation and Newton (2009) suggests an integrated approach to teaching and learning listening and speaking. With this book, teachers/learners can:

- Learn through meaning-focused input to develop listening and reading skills.
- Learn through meaning-focused output to develop speaking and writing.

The book deals with models of listening (as an active process), types of listening (one-way versus two-way), and listening processes (bottom-up and top-down).

**Resources 4:** Books on listening and speaking skills development published by prestigious ELT publishers for TPD. Here are two examples:

- Cambridge Assessment,

- TKT Knowledge.

### 5.5 Strand 5: Assessment Tools

- **Ongoing Evaluation:** Implement a system for ongoing evaluation to monitor the TPD programme's effectiveness and make necessary adjustments. This can include pre- and post-assessments, surveys, and reflection activities.
- **Online Self-Assessment:** Language assessment in English education is a challenging process, especially when assessing listening and speaking skills -- basic skills for communication. Bygate (2001) claims that assessing speaking is hard as 'interlocutors are normally all able to contribute simultaneously to the discourse and to respond immediately to each other's contributions.' (p. 14). Furthermore, during the spoken communication process, individuals engage in the act of delivering meaning based on their intentions, communication objectives, and the speaker's intended message (Green, 2013). Evaluating speaking proficiency involves considerations (Goh & Burns, 2012), as educators need to pinpoint an effective tool or approach for assessing learners, whether in real-time or through recorded presentations (Ginther, 2012).

**Table 3:** Instruments used for assessing listening and speaking (Ginther, 2012)

Items	Private and Public High Schools				
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I use paraphrasing and summarizing.	1.0%	8.8%	26.5%	43.1%	20.6%
I use projects.	1.0%	5.9%	21.6%	37.3%	34.3%
I use e-portfolios.	8.8%	6.9%	14.7%	25.5%	44.1%
I use listening and speaking tests.	11%	3%	7.5%	10%	68.5%
I use reading-aloud tasks.	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
I use conversations.	60.0%	30.0%	5.0%	3.0%	2.0%
I use picture-cued tasks	20%	8%	0.0%	40%	32 %
I use questions and answers.	8%	4%	13%	6%	69%
I use interviews.	62%	10%	5%	6%	17%
I use oral presentations.	0%	2%	9%	8%	81%
I use retelling stories.	40%	28%	20%	12%	0%
I use games.	50%	20%	0%	20%	10%

Table 3 demonstrates that when teaching and assessing students' listening and speaking abilities, teachers worldwide can use the above techniques. For secondary teachers whose two skills are not good, they are now student-teachers; they can also use these items to self-develop their skills individually or via learning groups.

- **Using Online Technological Tools for Evaluating Listening and Speaking Proficiency:** Using technologies can help teachers assess these two skills. For example, regarding listening, Abdulrahman *et al.* (2018) and Naidionova and Ponomarenko (2018) said that teachers can engage with online podcasts to evaluate their listening comprehension. Turmudi (2020) encourages synchronous speaking assessment. Consequently, teachers can make use of technology to provide speech assessments. Vurdien (2019) says the use of videoconferencing in speaking exercises is more stimulating for educators since it facilitates real-time contact. Ghanbari and Nowroozi (2021) predict that changing from face-to-face

assessment to virtual assessment has significantly impacted on language skills assessment, especially when technology is used to design and develop classroom evaluation practices.

To evaluate speaking and listening proficiency online, educators can utilise platforms that enable the recording, uploading, sharing, and reviewing of audio or video files. Instances of such instruments comprise:

- Audio recording applications: *Audacity*, *SoundCloud*, or *Vocaroo*;
- Video conferencing platforms include *Zoom*, *Skype*, and *Google Meet*, while online quizzes and games comprise *Kahoot*, *Quizlet*, and *Duolingo*.

Each tool possesses distinct features and limits; therefore, it is essential for educators to evaluate them before implementation.

- **Provide Timely and Specific Feedback**

Feedback is crucial for learning and enhancement, particularly in online courses where learners may experience isolation or frustration. To facilitate effective feedback for speaking and listening abilities, it is essential to provide feedback promptly following the evaluation. This must be precise, pertinent, implementable, equitable, affirmative, and courteous. Moreover, feedback ought to be interactive, encouraging educators to pose enquiries, express their viewpoints, and establish personal objectives. Timely and detailed feedback enables teachers to identify skill deficiencies and enhance their confidence, autonomy, and competency in online course participation.

- **When Teachers Need Qualifications**

External assessment necessitates that learners undertake standardised or accredited assessments to evaluate their language proficiency. Cambridge English Assessment is among the external-assessment that secondary school teachers can trust for their certified qualifications (<https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/teaching-english/>). *TKT* is a flexible series of modular teaching qualifications that show how teachers of primary and secondary schools can gain their qualifications. *TESOL Certification* granted by TESOL International Association (<https://www.tesol.org>) is another channel teachers can benefit to gain internationally-recognized qualifications.

## 5.6 What is Next for TPD?

Digital learning is here to stay, and it is possible that in the next five to ten years, the application of technology for YPD will increase. Digital technologies provide opportunities for professional development which are ever more flexible, affordable and accessible, allowing just-in-time learning for teachers. Digital PD empowers teachers to learn more effectively and autonomously based on rhizomatic education to satisfy teachers' expectations, ensuring that TPD has a real impact on teachers' professional practices and on their students' learning outcomes.



### **5.7 Funds and Supports by Educational Institutions**

Educational institutions must continue to finance and support training and development for their teachers. However, the presence of frameworks and professional development opportunities, informed by best practice principles as outlined in this paper, will empower institutions to establish pertinent and organised objectives for their teachers, while also allowing teachers to engage in self-assessment and goal-setting. Primarily, institutions and educators should leverage the capabilities of digital technologies to enhance student learning outcomes.

### **5.8 Sustaining Passion, Curiosity and Creativity in Innovative Teaching Approaches for TDP**

Passion helps teachers develop their designed PD, improve their teaching methods, driving them to accomplish their goals (Anderson 2018). Like their students, teachers must upgrade their language skills to meet requirements of their teaching world -a preparation for both present and future time (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008). By adopting innovative pedagogical methods based on rhizomatic learning facilitated by digital technologies, teachers' spirit of curiosity and creativity towards these novel approaches will always remain for better learning and teaching outcomes that well serve their teaching communities.

## **6. Conclusion**

This paper has outlined research projects that focus on developmental goals for secondary school teachers of English to continuously develop their listening and speaking skills via a five-strand PD model based on principles of rhizomatic education. The paper aims to introduce teachers to the process of developing their listening and speaking skills via this suggested PD model, after discussing the strengths and weaknesses of other PD models. The model has been designed to place the teachers as facilitators in their self-regulated learning process. Theories and resources relevant to the model were also recommended, which can help teachers establish a framework constituting a valuable course on listening and speaking for language teachers.

### **6.1 Limitations**

Designing a model for teachers at secondary schools to develop their listening and speaking skills in this five-strand PD model may face the following challenges:

- Not all teachers/learners like learner autonomy.
- Learner autonomy may not suit all individual teachers.
- Rhizomatic education requires a process-oriented learning with suitable assessment tools to assess teacher progress (e.g. online assessment tools, e-portfolio, peer feedback).



- Open structures in networked learning, community-contributed curriculum require cultural shifts in educational paradigms to suit learners from different communities and different countries.
- Centralized authority may be the biggest challenge to teachers' self-regulated PD.

## 6.2 Recommendations

To avoid conflict with centralized authorities, teachers should align with the school designed curriculum. However, teachers should wisely design their own TPD programmes/curriculum for their own professional development.

- Self-regulation is the key to success,
- Personal motivation is highly recommended,
- Curiosity and innovation in self-taught design courses/curriculum are also a contribution to their PD success.

## Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

## About the Author

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