

Frozen in thought? How we think about what we do in ELT

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Reasoning

(figuring out, justifying, explaining)



To ***reason***
about
something

To ***give reasons***
for something

Reasons as ‘myths’– common beliefs that
serve a purpose.

They are not right or wrong but useful.



Myths and frozen thinking

- Myths are not 'right or wrong'
The myth of **'direct' causality**
- Each has **'useful and misleading aspects'**
The myth of **'sole responsibility'**

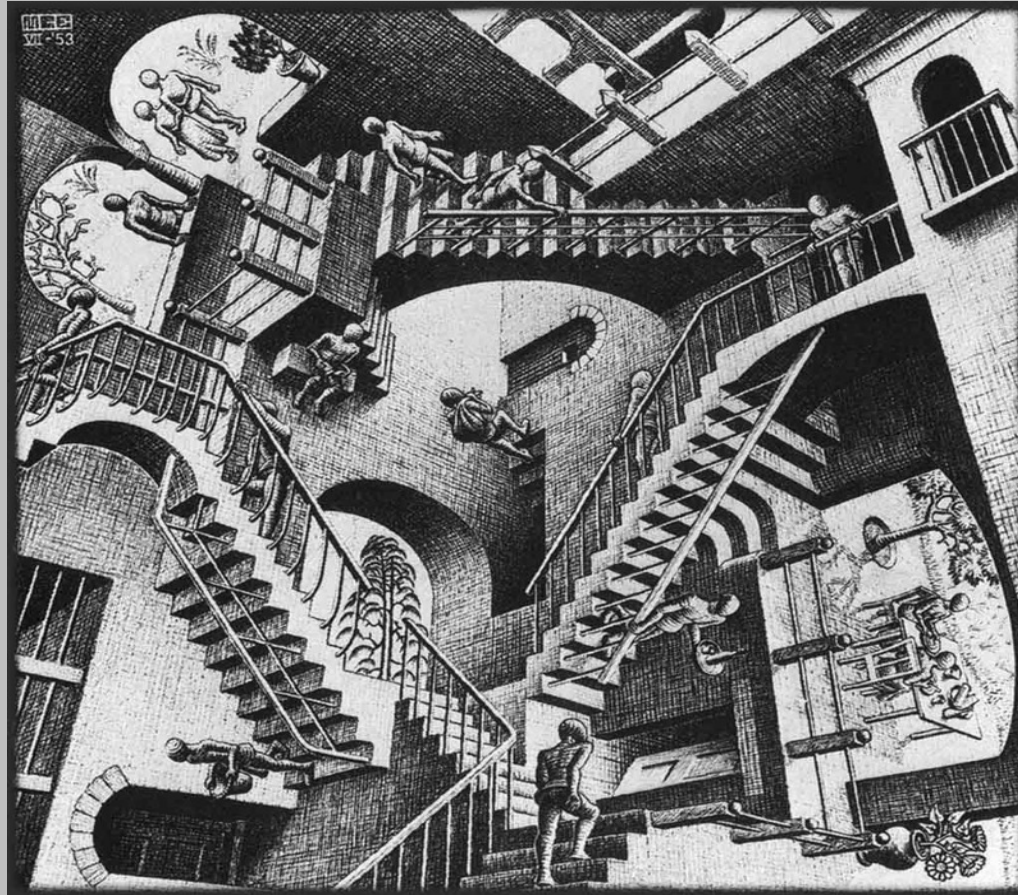
The myth of **'proficiency' as the goal**

- Unpacking the distinction helps to 'thaw' our thinking.

Myth #1: 'Direct' causality



The 'relational' work of teaching and learning



Myth #2: 'Sole' responsibility



Distributed opportunity



Myth #3: 'Proficiency' as the goal

A 'usefully wrong' idea?

Appealing ...

“Proficiency, simply put, refers to the ability to perform real world tasks with a specified degree of skill.”

Nunan, 1987.

“The ghost in the machine,”

... but problematic

“the construct of *general language proficiency* has not been empirically derived.

[It] has been assumed to exist because the concept is intuitively appealing.”

Nunan, 1987.

“The ghost in the machine,”



Rethinking proficiency as

- Plural– ‘**proficiencies**’
- **Always situated** in particular contexts
- And **therefore bounded** by a particular social practice

‘Bit.fall’

‘ an aquatic visualization’

By Julius Popp

MONA, Hobart, Australia



‘Bit.fall-ing’ classroom English proficiency



English-for-Teaching

The essential English language skills
to **prepare and enact the lesson**
in a **standardized curriculum** *in English.*

Teacher Classroom Tasks

Taking attendance

Collecting student work

Making announcements

Getting students' attention

Disciplining students

Motivating students

Understanding instructions

Understanding audio recordings

Understanding reading texts

Understanding lesson goals

Communicating lesson goals

Explaining English grammar

Explaining vocabulary

Giving examples

Giving activity instructions

Organizing students into groups

Checking students'

understanding

Identifying students' spoken &

written errors

Correcting spoken & written

errors

Giving feedback to students

'Bit-falling': From task to language

Functional area	Classroom routine	Language exemplars
Managing the classroom	Organizing students to start an activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Please go to your seat• Copy the words from the board• Use the words to write a summary of the story
Understanding and communicating lesson content	Giving instructions and explanations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with a partner• Match the questions and answers• Take turns to read the paragraph. Then underline the words you don't know.
Assessing students and providing feedback	Responding to student oral output during a role play activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• That's right• Nice work• Look at the example in the chart again• Those are great ideas

The teacher enacts by...

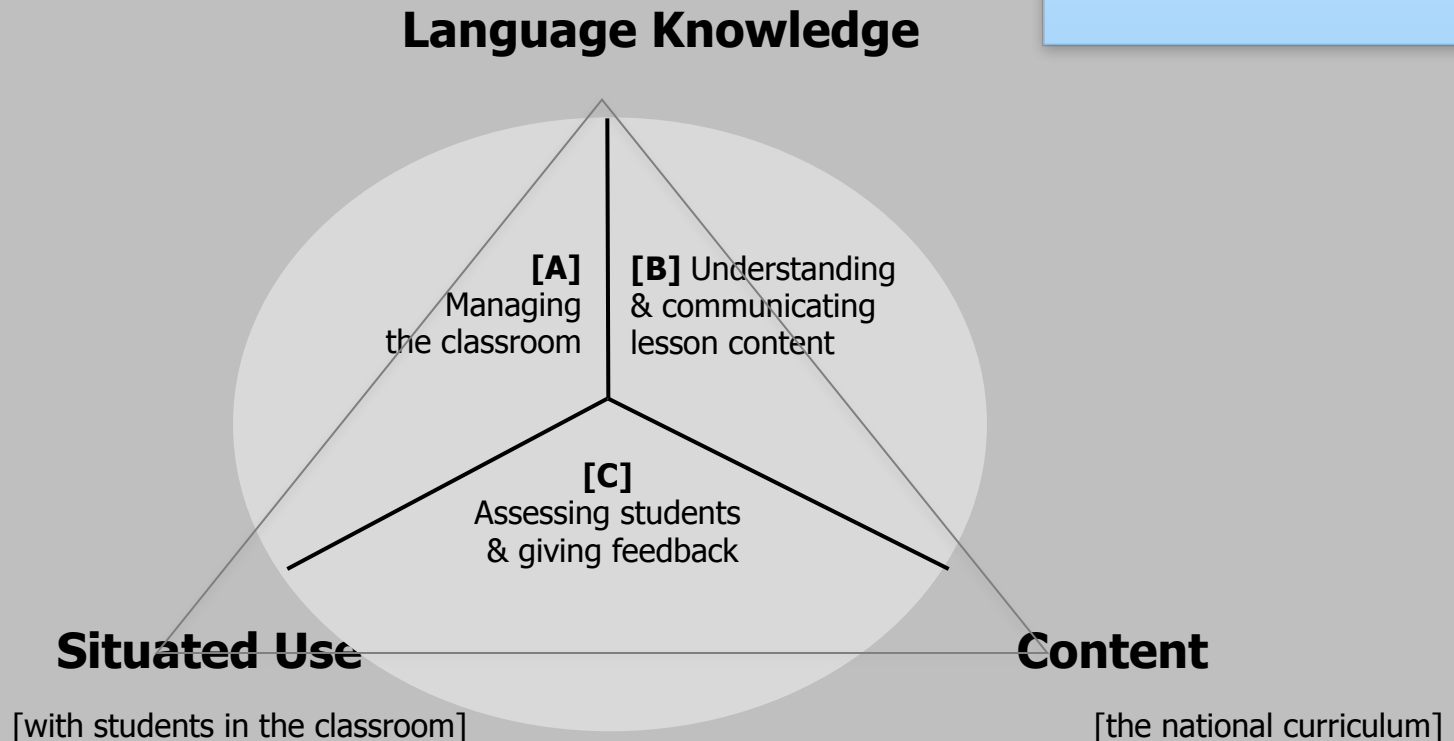
Using language like...

(Freeman, Katz, Garcia Gomez, and Burns, 2015)

English-for-Teaching

Functional areas of classroom language

I would delete this slide for this presentation. It's more detail than needed. It's perfect for the TESOL colloquim but not here



(Freeman, Katz, Garcia Gomez, and Burns, 2015)



Skateboarding





Elements of skate-boarding

- There are **opportunities to learn--**
You select what you do
- You **direct your own practice--**
when, where, as much as you want
- You **monitor your own progress--**
against a recognized standard of
performance

'Skate-boarding' in Vietnam

500 public-sector
ELT teachers
throughout
Vietnam

Learning opportunity >
Assessment
(both on-line)

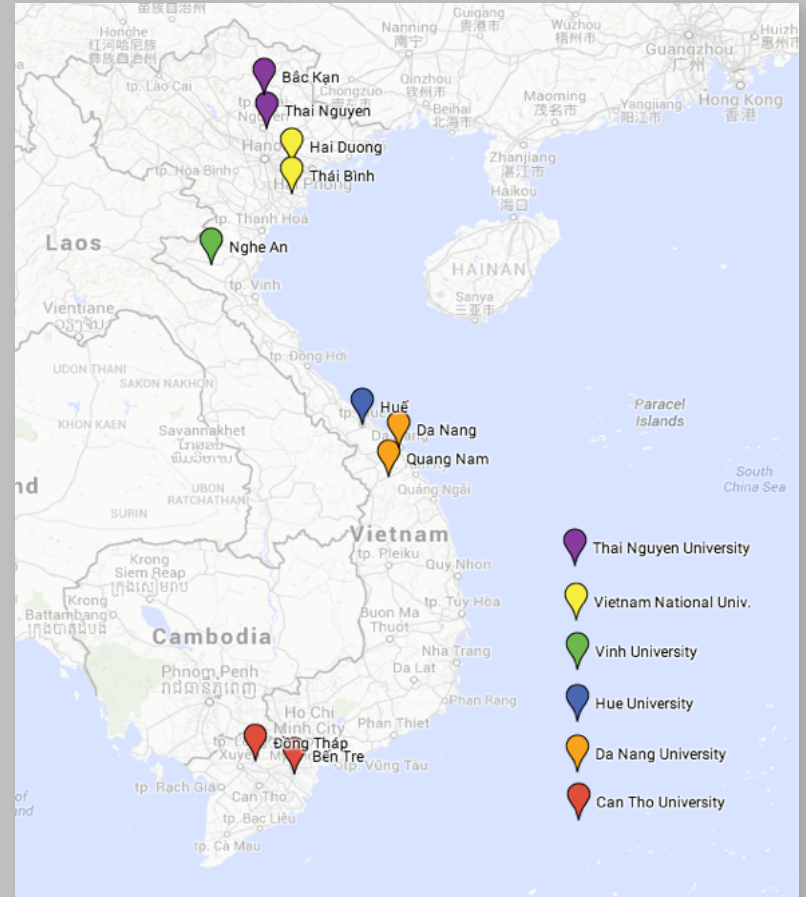
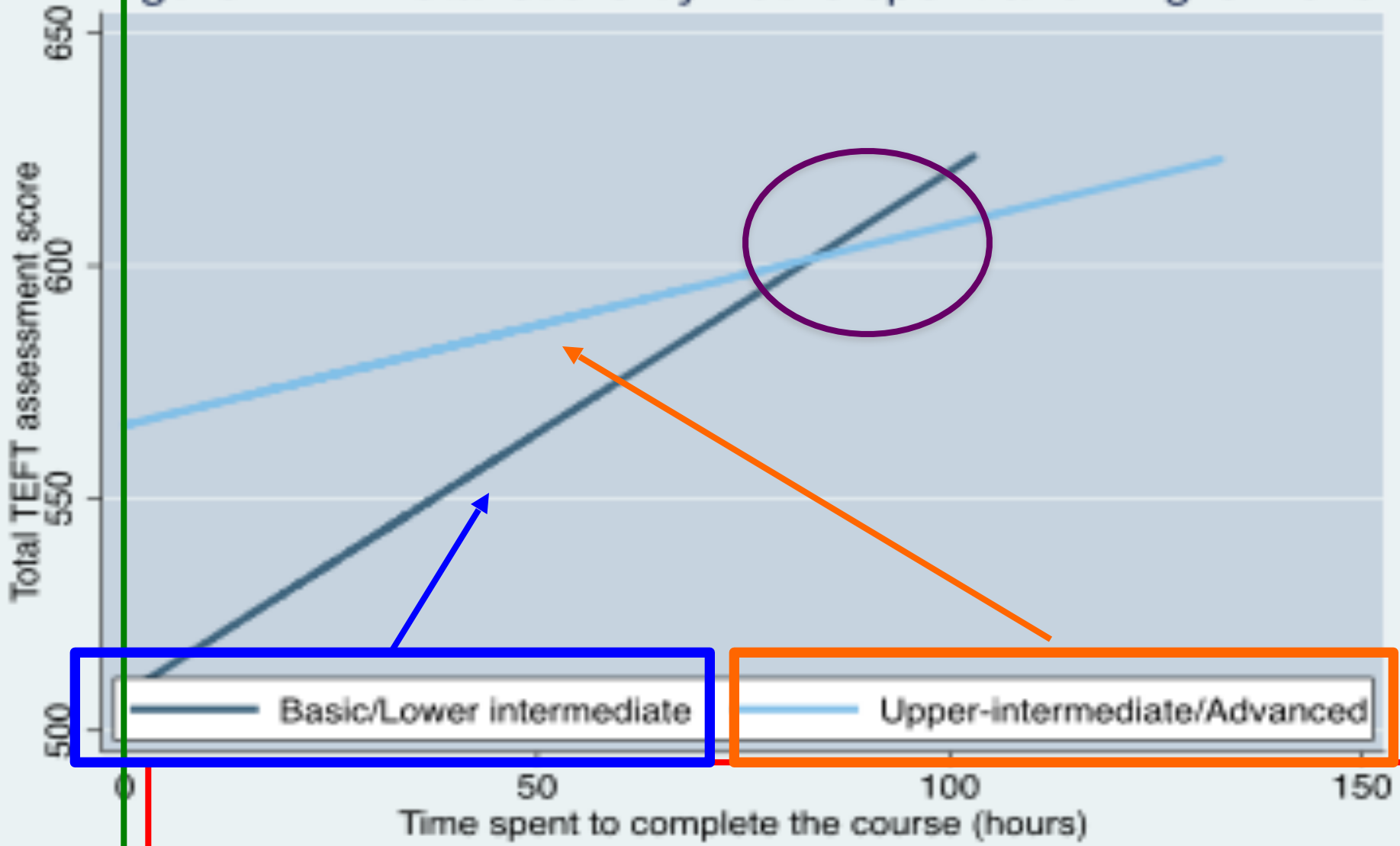


Figure #14: Total score by hours spent and English level



Two Closing Thoughts

- Myths and ‘preconceptions’
“you can be *lived* by your
preconceptions,
- ‘Not knowing’ is a good reason
which will make you a bad teacher”

-- Caleb Gattegno

‘Knowing the right answer’

“It occurred to me, then, that of all the virtues related to intellectual functioning, the most passive is the virtue of knowing the right answer.”

‘The virtues of *not* knowing’

“What you do about what you don’t know is, in the final analysis, what determines what you will ultimately know.”

-- Eleanor Duckworth (1987)

The Having of Wonderful Ideas