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A STUDY ON THE FACTORS AFFECTING THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEVELS OF ESL FILIPINO TEACHERS ACCORDING TO THE CAMBRIDGE ENGLISH TEACHING FRAMEWORK

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Abstract

Key stakeholders such as the government and the academe observed that despite the Philippines' fine performance in terms of English competency, concerns regarding the state of its competitive advantage were raised. Stakeholders agreed that the country needs to step up its efforts in enhancing the quality of its English teaching and learning as a vital skill of its workforce. This initiative can strengthen the Philippines' distinct advantage in this part of the world. This study was conducted at an ESL school in Cebu City, Philippines where voluntary teachers participated in answering the Cambridge English's online development tracker tool. Results were tabulated and categorized according to the four stages of the Cambridge English Teaching Framework: Foundation, Developing, Proficient, and Expert for each of the framework's five categories: Learning & the Learner; Teaching, Knowledge, & assessment; Language Ability ; Language Knowledge & Awareness ; and Professional Development & Values. Follow-up interviews were then conducted in order to explain their results as a means of validating the data provided. The findings revealed that the professional development of ESL Filipino teachers are influenced by a variety of factors namely their educational background and the successful application of their learnings and skills into their teaching practice or lack thereof, learning from the materials that have been provided by the school as well as taking some initiative to utilize external resources, collaboration and learning/feedback from other teachers, doing their own reflection, upholding their personal beliefs of what it means to be a teacher, and the years of teaching experience they have managed to accumulate including the skills and experiences some teachers have also managed to accumulate through their respective assigned job responsibilities in addition to their teaching practices. It was concluded that a comprehensive and systematic continuous professional development (CPD) program could be devised so as to ensure that ESL Filipino teachers are to be thoroughly and continuously guided to maximize the enhancement and sustainability of their professional development levels.

Keywords: Cambridge English Teaching Framework**,** English Language Teaching and Learning, English as a Second Language (ESL), professional development, teacher training

Introduction

The global role of English has prompted various educational governmental policies all around the world to enhance the outcomes in English language learning. An increasing number of learners have now begun learning English at primary school. This has been attributed partly to the national or regional policies and partly by parental ambition. Galaczi et al (2017) pointed out

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that modern global socio-economic trends have placed an emphasis on the increasing demand for English language learning, since one's ability to use English at an operational level supports advancements in the areas of education, work, and personal advancement. They have also emphasized other notable international trends. Firstly, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), which involves the integration of language into the broad curriculum and is based on the teaching and learning of content subjects (e.g. history or biology) through the use of a non-native language as medium of instruction, is being implemented under the belief that it can offer students better life preparation as well as international mobility in terms of education and employment. Likewise, another current trend in teaching and learning is the development of digital literacy within mainstream educational programs so that learners acquire the capabilities needed to succeed in a digital world, especially considering global communication and cooperation are being more commonly conducted in digital environments, making digital literacy an essential life skill. These trends highlight the importance of ensuring that teachers are suitably equipped to meet these demands. Furthermore, ongoing support provided by governments and educational institutions through high-impact professional development should likewise be encouraged and realized (Galaczi et al, 2017).

It has been reported that the Philippines is internationally recognized as having one of the largest English-speaking populations around the world with a majority possessing at least some degree of English fluency. English has always been recognized as one of its official languages as it is spoken by more than 14 million Filipinos. It functions as the language of commerce and law, and also serves as the primary medium of instruction in education. The English proficiency of the Filipino people is considered to be one of the country's strengths that has helped drive the economy and even enabled the Philippines to be the top voice outsourcing destination in the world, surpassing India in 2012. The influx of foreign learners of English is also on the rise due to the relatively more affordable but quality English as a Second Language (ESL) programs offered here (Cabigon, 2015).

However, a recent roundtable discussion organized by the British Council has brought up issues from key stakeholders such as the government and the academe. Despite the Philippines' fine performance in terms of English competency, concerns regarding the state of its competitive advantage were raised. The stakeholders agreed that the country needs to step up its efforts in enhancing the quality of its English teaching and learning, developing it as a vital skill of its workforce. This is an initiative that could potentially strengthen the Philippines' distinct advantage in this part of the world, particularly with the upcoming ASEAN economic integration (Cabigon, 2015). This issue has prompted the researchers to look into the factors that affect the Filipino teachers' professional development based on the Cambridge English's online development tracker tool to determine their competency level.

Professional development refers to the skills, knowledge and ongoing learning opportunities undertaken to enhance an individual's ability carry out their jobs and achieve professional growth. In the modern and ever changing work place, professional development can be viewed as the key to career longevity. Professional development is primarily concerned about keeping one's skills career fresh and on top of the game. Additionally, professional development also takes into account the skills and knowledge employees acquire to optimize their personal development and job growth. This involves a variety of learning opportunities such as obtaining

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college degrees and undergoing coursework, or attending conferences or training sessions. This development is an extensive and collaborative process; upon completion, an evaluation of progress is usually performed. Many different professionals partake in such learning opportunities, including teachers, lawyers, healthcare professionals, and engineers. These individuals often possess a desire for career longevity and personal growth, and are therefore willing to undergo the necessary training to fulfill such goals (Alfaki, 2014). In addition, Davidson et al (2012) describe continuous professional development (CPD) as being part of an organization that helps teachers build professional relationships by sharing and learning from each other, and one which enables management to strive to get the best out of their teachers. Likewise, CPD is seen as occurring throughout all the stages of a teacher's career. Each stage is characterized by a set of challenges which are to be met through obtaining specific needs needed to progress further but still allows room for teachers to achieve more personal objectives.

Keith Harding (in Modern English Teacher Volume 18 Number 3, July 2009) suggests that Continuing Professional Development (CPD) possess certain characteristics. Firstly, it is a continuous process in which professionals are expected to be constantly seeking ways to handle new challenges and enhance their performances. It also involves the teachers being responsible in identifying individual needs as well as ways to meet such needs. Davidson et al (2012) have summarized the various types of CPD activities that could aid teachers throughout all their career stages. Such activities can be selected depending on the teachers' interests and availability. They can also be encapsulated in four main areas: developing a reflective approach to one's work expanding one's skills and knowledge through the use of resources, sharing and learning with fellow teachers and engaging in training workshops and courses.

Hismanoglu (2010) examined how the components of effective professional development have been approached from different perspectives. To illustrate, he cited Day (1999) who reported seven common ingredients of successful professional development, which are inspiration (sharing visions), exposition, discussion, opportunities for cross reference of standards, training in new skills, opportunities to experiment, and coaching. On the other hand, he cited Adey (2004) who proposed 14 factors necessary for effective professional development grouped into four categories: the innovation (having an adequate theory base, introduces methods for which there is evidence of effectiveness, being supported with appropriate high quality materials), the PD program (being of sufficient length and intensity, uses methods which reflect the teaching methods being introduced, includes provision for in-school coaching), senior management in the school(s) (being committed to the innovation, share their vision with the implementing department leaders, institute necessary structural change to ensure maintenance), and the teachers (work in a group to share experiences, communicate effectively amongst themselves about the innovation, being given an opportunity to develop a sense of ownership of the innovation, being supported in questioning their beliefs about teaching and learning, having plenty of opportunity for practice and reflection).

The Cambridge English Teaching Framework

The Cambridge English Teaching Framework has been designed to encapsulate the key knowledge and skills needed for effective teaching at a variety of levels and in different contexts.

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It aims to help teachers to identify their respective positions in their professional career, help teachers and their employers determine which direction they wish to pursue and identify development activities to get there. The framework describes teacher competencies across four stages, and five aspects of teacher knowledge and skill (categories), and serves as a 'profiling grid' rather than a performance assessment tool (North, 2009). It is intended to show stages of a teacher's development at any one point in time, rather than provide a description of 'a good teacher'. This approach recognizes that teachers' development over time is not predictable or defined by years of experience only, and that most teachers' development will be 'jagged' (Rossner, 2009), in that, across the categories, teachers will be at different stages at any one time. As their professional needs change, the profile will help them to identify their development priorities. The framework is underpinned by evidence from the extensive written records of teacher assessments from around the world to which Cambridge English Language Assessment has access. These include assessors' reports of lesson observations on pre-service (*CELTA*) and in-service (*ICELT* and *Delta*) courses, as well as detailed background documents in the form of assignments (*CELTA* and *ICELT*) and portfolios of work (*ICELT* and *Delta*) which demonstrate the processes that teachers go through when planning and reflecting on their teaching. This unique resource has provided us with detailed descriptions of classroom practice at different stages of teachers' careers. Equally importantly, these assessment reports reflect the realities of teaching and learning in many different contexts, which are in turn reflected in the design of the framework. The development of the framework has also been informed by theory, in particular a wide-ranging review of current teacher education literature, as well as input by external consultants. This research-based approach has been complemented by the parallel development of an edited volume on assessment in teacher education *Assessing language teachers' professional skills and knowledge* in the series 'Studies in Language Testing' (Wilson and Poulter, 2015). The levels and categories of the framework have also been informed by a review of the *CELTA*, *ICELT* and *Delta* syllabuses, which are themselves supported by a substantial body of information about their application in practice from the statistical analysis of both candidate information and examination results, and the detailed annual reports by the Chief Assessors and Chief Moderators for each qualification (Cambridge English, 2014e).

The Five Categories of the Framework. The framework has five main categories, with each of these categories broken down further, making a total of 36 framework components. The framework is also organized according to four stages / professional development levels of teacher competency: *Foundation*, *Developing*, *Proficient*, and *Expert*. Evidence from the assessment reports and candidate feedback to which Cambridge English Language Assessment has access shows that, despite the lack of agreement as to what constitutes the knowledge base for language teaching (see e.g., Ellis, 2009; Freeman & Johnson. 1998; Graves, 2009; Johnson, 2009), teachers themselves, along with their employers, understand the importance of enhancing their professional knowledge and skills in the following areas (Cambridge English, 2014d): *Learning and the Learner* emphasizes the importance of knowledge of the principles of second language acquisition (SLA) and general theories of learning and of application of this knowledge to the teaching context according to Ellis (2009) and Graves (2009) (see also Popko, 2005). *Teaching, Learning and Assessment* includes a series of sub-skills including: planning language learning (lesson planning and the need for teachers to understand principles of curriculum, syllabus and course planning), using language learning materials and resources (the importance of evaluating, selecting, adapting and using learning materials), managing language learning

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(classroom management including 'creating and maintaining a constructive learning environment', 'using differentiation strategies', 'setting up and managing classroom activities' and 'correcting learner language'), teaching language systems, teaching language skills, and assessing language learning (including 'assessment literacy'). In regards to *Language Ability*, it is acknowledged that a certain level of language ability is required in order to teach language effectively, as well as to communicate with other professionals as appropriate; however, any minimum language level required of the teacher is likely to vary depending on the teaching context and language levels of the group of learners being taught. A teacher's linguistic competence and their language awareness are separate constructs (Andrews, 2007) and one does not necessarily presuppose or predict the other; such that a teacher with high-level linguistic proficiency may have basic language awareness, and vice versa. *Language Knowledge and Awareness* refers to the knowledge about how language is used as vital to effective language teaching besides linguistic competence according to Freeman, Orzulak and Morrisey (2009). Andrews (2007) and Bartels (2009) also emphasize the importance of knowledge about language (KAL), an important aspect of which has been shown to be teachers' knowledge of terminology for describing language (Andrews, 1997; Andrews & McNeil, 2005; Borg, 1999). *Professional Development and Values* is widely viewed as creating a platform for teacher learning (Harmer, 2007), and it is generally accepted that reflective skills are key in enabling teachers to evaluate their teaching and identify areas for improvement (Korthagen, 2001; Richards & Farrell, 2005; Russell, 2005). Recent work on teacher cognition (Borg, 2006) also suggests that conscious and guided reflection on teacher beliefs is an essential tool for promoting teacher learning (Richards, Gallo & Renandya, 2001). 'Practitioner knowledge' (Hiebert, Gallimore & Stigler, 2002; Johnson, 2009) has been legitimized by the following: reflective teaching (Wallace, 1991; Farrell, 2007), action research (Burns, 2009), experimental teaching (Allwright & Hanks, 2009) and teacher research (Freeman, 1998) – and is now seen as a key element of the knowledge base of teacher education (Borg, 2006; Barduhn & Johnson, 2009). A range of these different research activities has also been shown to be valuable in promoting teacher learning (Borg, 2013; Wallace, 1996). The role of a teacher in the 21st century is increasingly seen as involving the ability to work in a team and collaborate with colleagues and also to work within an institution taking on different roles and responsibilities where necessary (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Freeman et al, 2009; Leung, 2009).

Professional development levels in the framework. The following stage / professional level descriptions are intended to be representative of a specific range of abilities under each category. As such, they are intended to be relative rather than absolute. It is expected that each teacher will progress through the levels in their own individual and unique ways, at their own varying paces. It should also be recognized, however, that the goal for teachers in certain contexts may be to achieve adequate competence at a certain level, such as those strive to become a good 'foundation' teacher. While factors such as specific qualifications obtained, training undertaken or number of hours/years of formal teaching experience are all essential, they may not necessarily have any direct relationships with specific levels and are, therefore, not specified in the framework as such. On a related note, in terms of language ability, it is acknowledged that a certain level of a teacher's ability to use the language is required in order to teach language effectively. However, any minimum language level required of the teacher would likely vary depending on the teaching context and language levels of the specific group of learners involved.

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The competency statements that have been established for the framework are intended to capture the notion that gradual development of teachers' expertise over time involves growing understanding of teaching and learning, growing awareness of their own strengths, weaknesses and potential as a teacher, increasing sophistication in their planning, decision-making, teaching skills and reflection, as well as the ability to respond to a more complex range of classroom situations. The fundamental competencies according to the five categories of the Cambridge English Teaching Framework ('Learning and the Learner'; 'Teaching, Learning and Assessment'; 'Language Ability'; 'Language Knowledge and Awareness'; 'Professional Development and Values') are summarized according to each level as follows (Cambridge English, 2014b): Firstly, teachers in the Foundation level are expected to have a basic understanding of some language-learning concepts and key principles of teaching, learning, and assessment. They are also expected to provide accurate examples of language points taught at A1 and A2 levels, possess some awareness of some key terms for describing language, and reflect on a lesson with guidance and learn from feedback. Secondly, teachers in the Developing level are expected to have a reasonable understanding of many language–learning concepts and demonstrate some of this understanding when planning and teaching as well as of many key principles of teaching, learning and assessment. They are also expected to provide accurate examples of language points taught at A1, A2 and B1 levels, have reasonable knowledge of many key terms for describing language, and be able to reflect on a lesson without guidance and respond positively to feedback.

Thirdly, teachers in the Proficient level are expected to have a good understanding of many language–learning concepts and frequently demonstrate this understanding when planning and teaching as well as key principles of teaching, learning and assessment. They are also expected to provide accurate examples of language points taught at A1, A2, B1 and B2 levels and use classroom language which is consistently accurate throughout the lesson, have good knowledge of key terms for describing language and can answer most learner questions with minimal use of reference materials, and be capable of reflecting critically and actively seek feedback and can identify own strengths and weaknesses as a teacher, and can support other teachers. Finally, teachers in the Expert level are expected to have a sophisticated understanding of language–learning concepts and consistently demonstrate this understanding when planning and teaching as well as key principles of teaching, learning and assessment. They are also expected to provide accurate examples of language points taught at A1–C2 levels and use a wide range of classroom language which is consistently accurate throughout the lesson, have sophisticated knowledge of key terms for describing language and can answer most learner questions in detail with minimal use of reference materials, and consistently reflect critically, observe other colleagues and are highly committed to professional development. They are also highly aware of their own strengths and weaknesses, and actively support the development of other teachers.

Placement of Teachers in the Framework. There are possibilities for teachers to demonstrate aspects of two adjacent levels at the same time, and that it may not always be possible to place them neatly within one distinct stage. In other words, a teacher could possibly be an expert level teacher for Language Ability, but may obtain proficient levels for Teaching Knowledge, and Assessment as well as Language Knowledge and Awareness and even obtain a developing level for Professional Development & Values and a foundation level for Learning & the Learner. With these results, it would be difficult to place this teacher in a specific overall level. The key point of the Tracker is not to make overall evaluations of a teacher’s competence

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but to assist in the identification of development priorities. Likewise, it should be noted that each of the four levels have their respective varying degrees which fall within an established range. As such, while a teacher may have proficient levels in all five categories, these five proficient levels may not be exactly equal but are considered 'proficient' due to having reached what may be considered the 'proficient-level range'. These varying degrees within a specific level are attributed to the varying levels teachers have achieved for the various sub-components under each category. As a result, a teacher's proficient level for Language Ability may be higher than his proficient level for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment but since both levels fall under the 'proficient' range, they are still both considered as 'proficient'. What should also be taken into account as factors that determine the particular levels a teacher reaches for each category are the levels that each teacher manages to reach for each individual component for each of the five categories of the framework.

Cambridge English Teaching Framework

	Foundation	Developing	Proficient	Expert
Learning and the Learner	• Has a basic understanding of some language–learning concepts. • Demonstrates a little of this understanding when planning and teaching.	• Has a reasonable understanding of many language–learning concepts. • Demonstrates some of this understanding when planning and teaching.	• Has a good understanding of many language–learning concepts. • Frequently demonstrates this understanding when planning and teaching.	• Has a sophisticated understanding of language–learning concepts. • Consistently demonstrates this understanding when planning and teaching.
Teaching, Learning, and Assessment	• Has a basic understanding of some key principles of teaching, learning and assessment. • Can plan and deliver simple lessons with a basic awareness of learners' needs, using core teaching techniques.	• Has a reasonable understanding of many key principles of teaching, learning and assessment. • Can plan and deliver lessons with some awareness of learners' needs, using a number of different teaching	• Has a good understanding of key principles of teaching, learning and assessment. • Can plan and deliver detailed lessons with good awareness of learners' needs, using a wide range of teaching techniques. • Can design	• Has a sophisticated understanding of key principles of teaching, learning and assessment. • Can plan and deliver detailed and sophisticated lessons with a thorough understanding of learners' needs, using a comprehensive range of teaching

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	• Can use available tests and basic assessment procedures to support and promote learning.	techniques. • Can design simple tests and use some Assessment procedures to support and promote learning.	effective tests and use a range of assessment procedures to support and promote learning.	techniques. • Can design a range of effective tests and use individualized assessment procedures consistently to support and promote learning.
Language Ability	• Provides accurate examples of language points taught at A1 and A2 levels. • Uses basic classroom language which is mostly accurate.	• Provides accurate examples of language points taught at A1, A2 and B1 levels. • Uses classroom language which is mostly accurate.	• Provides accurate examples of language points taught at A1, A2, B1 and B2 levels. • Uses classroom language which is consistently accurate throughout the lesson.	• Provides accurate examples of language points taught at A1–C2 levels. • Uses a wide range of classroom language which is consistently accurate throughout the lesson.
Language Knowledge and Awareness	• Is aware of some key terms for describing language. • Can answer simple learner questions with the help of reference materials.	• Has reasonable knowledge of many key terms for describing language. • Can answer most learner questions with the help of reference materials.	• Has good knowledge of key terms for describing language. • Can answer most learner questions with minimal use of reference materials.	• Has sophisticated knowledge of key terms for describing language. • Can answer most learner questions in detail with minimal use of reference materials.
Professional Development and Values	• Can reflect on a lesson with guidance and learn from feedback. • Requires guidance in self-assessing own needs.	• Can reflect on a lesson without guidance and respond positively to feedback. • Can self-assess own needs and identify some areas for improvement.	• Can reflect critically and actively seeks feedback. • Can identify own strengths and weaknesses as a teacher, and can support other teachers.	• Consistently reflects critically, observes other colleagues and is highly committed to professional development. • Is highly aware of own strengths and weaknesses, and actively supports the

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				development of other teachers.

Figure 1. Cambridge English Teaching Framework

There is no support in the literature on teacher expertise for a *definite* number of stages or levels of teacher development; indeed, it is widely accepted that learning to teach is ongoing and there is no 'terminal competence' (Graves, 2009). However, the framework's four levels map a 'discernible developmental trajectory' (Graves, 2009) and reflect the career development of many teachers as well as their self-assessments of their own competence. Despite the lack of consensus on what defines different levels of teacher development (Katz & Snow, 2009; Murray, 2001), research into 'teacher expertise' suggests noticeable differences between 'novice' and 'expert' teachers: with 'novice' being more control-oriented, while 'experts' have more developed routines (Tsui, 2003 & 2009). Studies of 'novice' and 'expert' teachers suggest that teacher expertise involves the development of schemata/routines based on extensive experience of classrooms and learners, which 'expert' teachers rely on unconsciously for much of their instructional decisions (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993; Tsui, 2003).

A central point to emerge from recent teacher cognition research is that teachers' thinking and behavior are guided by a set of personal, practical, systematic, dynamic and often unconscious beliefs (Borg, 2006). This suggests that 'the process of learning to teach is not a linear accrual of various aspects of teaching, but rather a gradual process of proceduralizing aspects of formal and experiential knowledge gained from teacher education and classroom experience mediated by beliefs and contextual constraints (Phipps, 2010). In this framework, the four levels represent bands of increasing competence characterized by a gradual increase in understanding, applied with more and more sophistication, using a wider range of techniques across a more complex range of situations and contexts.

Alfaki (2014) further noted that teachers in the field of language education in North Sudan have to be updated with research on the innovations on the best ways for students to learn. Teachers are thus expected to acquire the knowledge as well as various curricular technology and resources needed for the classroom especially in contemporary education. The implications of being a professionally developed teacher indicate the need for continuous inspiration and motivation for self-improvement and self-contemplation with regards to his teaching practice. The study found out that teachers have their own role to play in their professional development along with the role to be played by the government. So, both teachers themselves and the government have complementary parts to be carried out in teacher professional development. In a study conducted by Hismanoglu (2010), English language teachers' perceptions about what professional development strategies they prefer using were investigated. It was found out that collaborative activities are generally neglected by language teachers with the exception of mentoring. It was also seen that they do not want to be involved in peer coaching, which can

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supposedly be detrimental both to teacher confidence and to a supportive environment. Furthermore, he noted that the lack of communication, interaction and collaboration influence the preferences of English language teachers' professional development strategies, and argued that more attention and importance should be allocated for more effective professional development.

Zhang (2015) also made some proposals such as the improvement of professional knowledge, comprehensive language skills, and competent research ability in a specialized field, etc. for teachers' professional development. He cited the conversion of teachers' roles as also being essential in improving teachers' ability as well as establishing learner autonomy. Furthermore, development of comprehensive language skills and application of advanced teaching facilities such as multimedia were likewise indicated as the necessary conditions conducive for the enhancement of a teacher's ability which is viewed as playing an important role in the process of English teaching. Asmari's (2016) research focused on the attitudes and perceptions of English language teachers toward professional development as well as activities and obstacles which may hinder change or growth. The data collected reflected that the teachers recognized professional development an indispensable need to their academic and management skills. Majority of the teachers have indicated that they have established their goals to improve professionally and reflect upon their teaching, and that they believed in teamwork and collaboration as well. Findings of the study revealed that the CPD was essentially perceived as a learning activity, a challenge to think creatively and critically as a learner and as a teacher, and learning with and from their colleagues. Moreover, the participants' feedback reiterated upgrading their professional and leadership skills realizing the importance of CPD in developing their teaching skills. They acknowledged that CPD provided them with a challenging change in their knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs.

Materials and Methods

The study was conducted at an ESL school located in Cebu, Philippines. 23 teachers participated and were asked to create Cambridge English Teacher accounts online. Upon creating their personal accounts, they were instructed to answer Cambridge English's online development tracker tool. The online development tracker tool utilizes a multiple choice format with each question having four choices representing each of the four levels. Ultimately, a teacher's level would depend primarily on the particular choices he chooses and is computed by the site's algorithms. The study employs a combination of both qualitative and quantitative approaches in its analysis of the different sets of data gathered. Firstly, these results were tabulated and categorized according to the four stages of the Cambridge English Teaching Framework (Foundation, Developing, Proficient, and Expert) for each of the framework's five categories (Learning & the Learner; Teaching, Knowledge, & assessment ; Language Ability ; Language Knowledge & Awareness ; and Professional Development & Values) along with their corresponding frequencies. Afterwards, each of the key informants were then approached individually for follow-up interviews in order to have them explain their results as a means of validating the data provided. Upon gathering all the teachers' supplementary interview data, the commonly cited factors which contributed to the 'proficient' and 'expert' levels were identified by analyzing the common themes that were present across the inputs provided. Likewise, the repeatedly cited factors which were attributed for the teachers' developing and foundation levels

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were also pointed out. The Thematic Analysis method which is a widely used method of analysis in qualitative research was employed in identifying these factors. It has been defined by Braun, Clarke, and Terry (2014) as a method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set and allows the researcher to see and make sense of collective or shared meanings and experiences. The themes were identified and coded using the method's six-phase framework in doing thematic analysis. Subsequently, the factors were clustered based on the themes.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows a collective summary of the frequencies of teachers having reached each of the four levels across all five categories. The frequencies and percentages have been arranged according to the four levels of development for each of the five categories of the Cambridge English Teaching Framework.

Table 1 Professional Development Levels

Categories	Professional Levels of Development							
	Foundation		Developing		Proficient		Expert	
	F	Percentage (%)	F	Percentage (%)	F	Percentage (%)	F	Percentage (%)
Learning and the Learner	1	4.35%	7	30.43%	14	60.87%	1	4.35%
Teaching, Learning, and Assessment	0	0%	9	39.13%	13	56.52%	1	4.35%
Language Ability	0	0%	8	34.78%	11	47.83	4	17.39%
Language Knowledge & Awareness	0	0%	5	21.74%	15	65.22%	3	13.04%
Professional Development & Values	0	0%	5	21.74%	14	60.87%	4	17.39%

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In all five categories, it seems that a majority of teachers are in the proficient stage and is consistently followed by the developing stages which appear to comprise the second majority. Only a few teachers have managed to reach the expert stages with both Language Ability and Professional Development & Values equally having the most with 4 teachers each. While most categories do not have any teachers at the Foundation level, there is one teacher at this level for the Learning and the Learner category.

Proficient and Expert level factors

For the higher levels achieved such as 'proficient' and 'expert' levels across all categories, a number of teachers have cited reasons such as their educational background and the successful application of their learnings into their teaching practice, learning from the materials that have been provided by the school as well as external resources, collaboration and learning/feedback from other teachers, doing their own reflection, upholding their personal beliefs of what it means to be a teacher, and the years of teaching experience they have managed to accumulate including the skills and experiences some teachers have also managed to acquire through their respective assigned job responsibilities in addition to their teaching practices:

a. Educational background and applied learnings

> *"Surprisingly, my language knowledge and teaching abilities have reached proficient and expert levels. Probably, it is because of my educational background which is in line with the teaching profession and I am able to practice the pedagogies in my class every day." (Teacher 10)*

> *"Since I hold a degree in education and my current job here in QQ English is in line to my chosen field, I'd say that I have been exposed to teaching English for many years. I have been able to retain the content knowledge I learnt at school and every day, I adopt them to improvise ways of teaching and assessing my student's learning." (Teacher 21)*

> *"My major taught me how to deal with people which boosted my confidence." (Teacher 22)*

Firstly, a number of informants have indicated the influence their education has had on their teaching, most especially with the opportunities they were fortunate enough to have them apply what they have learned in their practices. As Phipps (2010) pointed out, the process of learning to teach is a gradual process of proceduralizing aspects of formal and experiential knowledge gained from teacher education Likewise, Davidson et al (2012) have also emphasized the need of concentrating on one's field of specialization while Asmari (2016) stressed the necessity of considering the reciprocal relationship between theory and practice and their positive impact on teachers and their teaching.

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b. Materials provided by the school

"I have managed to learn more about the English language through the available materials." (Teacher 19)

"I am more concentrated on books and resources available/provided by the school." (Teacher 7)

"I consider the resources at my disposal to be limited and seek to be creative by using other resources for my classes, especially when dealing with kids." (Teacher 10)

"I always track my language ability by completing some grammar tests online and listening to both American and British podcasts which shows how determined and motivated I am to become a better educator." (Teacher 21)

"I still read books in order to inquire info about the English language and while I may know some general information, I still try to look into specific details." (Teacher 8)

"I obtain information from watching English classroom videos on YouTube and other educational sites." (Teacher 20)

Secondly, the key informants have also recognized the value of the materials that are provided at their disposal. This is supported by Davidson et al (2012) who have suggested expanding one's skills and knowledge through the use of resources such as subscribing to magazines or journals, trying out new teaching materials, and looking into publishers' resources as a key measure in attaining professional development.

c. Collaboration and learning/feedback from other teachers

"I engage in collaboration with my fellow teachers and discuss their different ways of handling students as well as their different kinds of attitudes." (Teacher 19)

"I participate in an ongoing learning process by attending training and workshops and have continuous collaboration with other educators." (Teacher 20)

"I don't have a fixed approach on how to adjust to my diverse learners including their attitudes and the best ways to handle their respective lessons but try to collaborate with other teachers on how to teach students or deal with specific types of situations as well as ask for some suggestions for resources." (Teacher 23)

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"I learn more about my weaknesses from feedback and try to apply them for my own improvement/betterment." (Teacher 3)

A number of informants have also expressed their reliance on collaboration and feedback from their peers. This seems to support Davidson et al's (2012) definition of continuous professional development as belonging to an organization which lends support to teachers to build professional relationships by sharing and learning from each other, and one which enables management to strive to get the best out of their teachers. Furthermore, they have suggested measures such as participating in group networks, applying for memberships in professional associations, seeking guidance & support from mentors and mentoring less experienced peers, seeking observations and feedback from trusted colleagues.

This notion is further supported by Alfaki (2014) who posits the view that sharing experiences and ideas gives teachers a feeling of community and belonging which in turn dispels any notions of isolation and highlights the point of commonality in the challenges they face due to the nature of the school environment. Teacher burnout and stagnation are also cited as potential risks that would come about in the lack of regular feedback and supervision. Hismanoglu (2010) has also argued that more attention and importance should be allocated to communication, interaction, and collaboration for more effective professional development since the lack thereof could lead to teachers opting different strategies of professional development.

d. Reflection

"I do reflection on my teaching and concentrate on my values." (Teacher 19)

"I would do reflection of my own teaching due to a past experience when students kept having me replaced by other teachers. This prompted me to reflect on my attitude and ways of teaching." (Teacher 23)

A few informants have cited the influence of reflection. Davidson et al (2012) have cited developing a reflective approach to work (such as doing constant reflection on one's own practice) as one of the four main areas that encapsulate CPD activities. Adey (2004), Alfaki (2014), and Asmari (2016) also point out the need of opportunities for reflection, along with teaching practice or experience.

e. Teachers' beliefs

"I make sure I understand them (her students) because they have different backgrounds and personalities and that it is my obligation to understand because of my role as a teacher." (Teacher 11)

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"I believe we must take a hold of the value of patience, humility and perseverance. Knowledge and skills cannot be obtained overnight nor in a couple of months. One must really study and work hard for years to have a better teaching foundation." (Teacher 20)

"My language knowledge and my awareness to it should be developed as it will help me better impart my understanding with the language to the students. Teaching shouldn't only limit to language learning but also to developing student's core values, and as a teacher, I should be one of their role models in molding it. I believe that these components mentioned are just some of those I am proficient at. But I shouldn't limit myself to this level. Instead, I should strive for more." (Teacher 17)

Teachers' beliefs and their capacities to uphold them have also been observed as an influential factor. Borg (2006) indicated that teachers' thinking and behavior are guided by a set of personal, practical, systematic, dynamic and often unconscious beliefs. As such, there may be a need to support teachers in identifying and facilitating such beliefs (Adey 2014 ; Asmari, 2016).

f. Job experience

"I believe that there some categories that I have mastered through my long years of teaching English. However, I am well aware that there is no perfect teacher and that there is always a room for improvement. Therefore, a few of the skills I possess need to be enhanced further." (Teacher 10)

"I think I have managed to develop my Language Ability after having been teaching for 3 years… I also think I am able to develop my understanding of learners due to having varieties of students, both kids & adults alike." (Teacher 11)

"My 5 years of teaching English has helped me easily detect the needs of my students." (Teacher 8)

"I acquired confidence through experience and practice, having taught English for about 6-7 years already. As such, I learned how to deal with students and also developed my knowledge and profession as an English teacher." (Teacher 22)

"I have been teaching English for almost 6 years now and handled different English subject matters and though I'm not a teacher by profession, I managed to collate my own teaching principles." (Teacher 20)

"Owing to the fact that I've been teaching second language learners and been conducting trainings to ESL teachers for three years or so, it's my nature to

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reflect critically and seek feedback actively especially when talking about professional development and values." (Teacher 6)

"As per professional development and values, probably I have learnt through my own experience and I had my exposure through teaching the language to my non-native students." (Teacher 12)

Finally, a number of key informants have attributed their levels to the experiences they have accumulated over their tenures as teachers. This can be supported by Goe's (2007) teacher quality framework in which one if its strands, that of "teacher qualifications" includes sub-components including teachers' experiences as having some influence on a teacher's overall quality. Bereiter & Scardamalia (1993) as well as Tsui (2003) also pointed out how 'expert' teachers unconsciously rely on the development of schemata/routines based on extensive experience with classrooms and learners. Meanwhile, Phipps (2010) and Alfaki (2014) have also indicated the role of experiences in teachers' professional development with the former suggesting that classroom experience is one primary source of formal and experiential knowledge necessary in learning how to teach.

Developing and Foundation level factors

In contrast, the lower levels of teachers in regards to 'developing' and 'foundation' levels across all categories have also been attributed to a certain number of common factors. Such factors include the lack of a relevant educational background, the lack of opportunities to apply learnings in their teaching practice, and some perceived limits in their knowledge and skills.

a. Lack of relevant educational background

"I may have already developed a handful of teaching skills here and there but am still in the process of learning and familiarizing the teaching environment that I am in, given the fact that I am not an Education major." (Teacher 16)

"I am more interested and passionate about my own major, Mathematics, and don't consider myself as a real English teacher." (Teacher 3)

"I wasn't a graduate of English language expertise, the reason why I don't have so much knowledge and confidence. For that reason, I can say that I am still in the process of learning." (Teacher 12)

"I only have basic knowledge about all the level components since I don't have proper knowledge and training about teaching principles… Education isn't my major and I know nothing about teaching theories and strategies. The teaching strategies I'm using are acquired from experience and observing my primary to tertiary teachers." (Teacher 5)

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b. Lack of opportunities to apply learnings in their teaching practice

> "*My major is said to have a different approach to what is being practiced in the institution and while I was able to learn theories, I lacked any application of them plus I also couldn't compare the institution's set-up to the classroom set-up." (Teacher 8)*

> "*Attempted to learn more about language such as grammar but had trouble with reinforcement due to lack of application." (Teacher 7)*

> "*I learned some theories and principles in college but have had only minimal practice but still rely on available books/materials." (Teacher 3)*

> "*This may be due to the lack of mastery and concentration on the methods for language teaching and the theories applied in a real classroom situation. Teaching 1 student online leads to lack of exposure to the real classroom setting." (Teacher 15)*

The lack of a relevant educational background in the field as well as the lack of opportunities for application and their negative impacts on the teachers' professional development levels appear to reinforce Asmari's (2016) views regarding the reciprocal relationship between theory and practice and their impact on teachers and their teaching. Any form of deficiency or imbalance in both elements would lead to possible lack of effectiveness in their performances and overall professional development.

c. Perceived limits / lack of confidence in their knowledge and skills

> "*Whatever knowledge I have right now is not enough, so I need to continue studying to further enhance my capabilities. (Teacher 6)*

> "*I am not confident in my English ability since I believe there are still a lot of grammar rules and vocab I am unaware of but I would learn new things such as vocab and grammar simultaneously with the students as I teach them." (Teacher 23)*

> "*Teaching, Learning and Assessment, and Language Ability are the components I am a little low at. I wouldn't say that I am neither bad nor good at it. I would say that I still have a lot of room for language growth and personal development when it comes to teaching. This field is not that easy to be with, and I must say that together with my students, I also learn. I am always open to new learnings, be it through a person superior than me or from my students." (Teacher 17)*

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> *"In my results, most of them are in the Developing level components. I believe that as a teacher, there are a lot of things that I need to learn and I am doing a good progress on it." (Teacher 4)*

The teachers' beliefs and lack of confidence in their knowledge and skills also appear to hinder the teachers' levels. This may perhaps reinforce Zhang's (2015) proposals to improve teachers' professional knowledge and comprehensive language skills for further professional development. Additionally, this may also add more credence on Borg's (2006) views on teachers' thinking and behavior being guided by their beliefs therefore reinforcing the need to facilitate such beliefs.

Conclusion

The professional development of ESL Filipino teachers can be influenced by a variety of factors namely: their educational background and the successful application of their learnings and skills into their teaching practice or lack thereof, learning from the materials that have been provided by the school as well as taking some initiative to utilize external resources, collaboration and learning/feedback from other teachers, doing their own reflection, upholding their personal beliefs of what it means to be a teacher, and the years of teaching experience they have managed to accumulate including the skills and experiences some teachers have also managed to accumulate through their respective assigned job responsibilities in addition to their teaching practices. A comprehensive and systematic continuous professional development (CPD) program encompassing a variety of measures which address and facilitate these factors could then be devised so as to ensure that ESL Filipino teachers are to be thoroughly and continuously guided to maximize the enhancement and sustainability of their professional development.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it seems that the most commonly cited factors which contribute to proficient and expert levels of professional development include the teachers' educational background and applied learnings, the materials provided by the school, taking some initiative to utilize other resources, collaboration and learning as well as feedback from other teachers, doing own reflection, upholding their personal views of what it means to be a teacher, years of teaching experience, and fulfilling appointed job responsibilities. Likewise certain factors such as the lack of a relevant educational background, the lack of opportunities to apply learnings in their teaching practice, and the perceived limits of their knowledge and skills have been attributed to the developing and foundation levels of professional development. It is therefore recommended that the factors conducive to the enhancement of their professional development levels be used as a foundation in designing a continuous professional development training schema or matrix conducive to their professional development needs. Such a schema or matrix could also be designed to ensure that the contrasting set of factors which appear to have a negative impact on the teachers' levels be mitigated through specific measures. As such, the proposed training schema or matrix may include measures such as the conduct of sessions that can enable the teachers to acquire the relevant knowledge and skills and put them into actual practice for more effective retention, especially for teachers who do not hold an educational degree in the field. Additional measures may include the provision and proper circulation of

materials and resources, opportunities for teachers to collaborate and brainstorm on teaching styles or practices, opportunities for teachers to do continuous reflection on their teaching practices, opportunities for lending support in the facilitation of teachers' beliefs in regards to what they know and what they need to know for their teaching practice, and opportunities to propagate their teaching experiences in and out of the classroom. Objective forms of assessment may also be carried out to serve as a basis for teachers to track their progress and seek further interventions whenever necessary.

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