

Promoting Teacher Reflection in Second Language Education: A Framework for TESOL Professionals

T. S. C. Farrell. New York: Routledge, 2015.

Farrell provides language educators with a well-structured but flexible approach to reflection. He acknowledges that in education, everyone appears to agree that reflection is an important and meaningful practice, but that many, particularly novice teachers, are unsure of how to begin. The author addresses this issue by delivering a framework to guide and empower educators in developing data-informed understandings and making meaningful changes in their own practice. The descriptive, rather than prescriptive, framework provided by Farrell provides educators with a guiding hand to determine areas of potential growth in their practice.

The five stages of the framework proposed by Farrell are as follows: (1) philosophy, or the roots of a teacher as a person; (2) principles, or the assumptions, beliefs, and concepts of teaching and learning held by a teacher; (3), theories, which are the choices about what is taught; (4) practice, meaning the observable actions in a classroom; and (5) beyond practice, including the sociocultural and critical aspects of education in society. The framework is explored as a whole in the beginning and end of the text, demonstrating cohesion. Farrell also considers each stage in depth in its own individual chapter, allowing the reader to pick the stage they would like to investigate first depending on individual need. While much time in teacher education is spent on practice, this framework explores other essential components of language education.

The framework provided is grounded in canonical texts regarding reflection, including Dewey (1933), Schön (1987), and

Korthagen (1985), as well as in more recent research on adaptive expertise (DeGuerrero & Villamil, 2000; Lin, Shein, & Yang, 2012). There is also the underlying understanding that this is but one framework of reflection. Farrell does not pretend that the insights given are the only method to effectively reflect, but rather argues that this is a guiding hand to support teachers as they embark on a journey of growth. This guiding hand is evident throughout the thoughtful discussions of each stage. Reflective questions (Figure 1) are meant to prompt thought based on the concepts discussed as well as on relevant research, encouraging the reader to pause to spend time on a particular area in order to discover if that might be a particular area of interest. The reflective moments have no right or wrong answer and no feedback; rather the reader is encouraged to use these moments to prompt thought within one's self or in collaboration with one's colleagues. Collaboration in the process of reflection is demonstrated as beneficial by Farrell, particularly within the "beyond practice" discussion, guiding educators with effective methods for collaborative reflection in order to get the most out of professional learning communities.

Reflective Moment:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What metaphor do you use for you as a teacher? Do you need to use more than one? If so, use as many as you like and try to explain the meaning of each. • Examine the teacher metaphors in Table 5.1 that have been the result of three different studies and are ordered in terms of their prevalence for answer the question: "A teacher is ___?" and discuss (a) their ranking and (b) if any apply to your teaching situation. 		
Alger (2008)	De Guerrero and Villamil (2000)	Lin, Shein, & Yang (2012)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tool Provider 2. Guide 3. Nurturer 4. Molder 5. Transmitter 6. Engager 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cooperative Leader; knowledge provider; challenger 2. Nurturer 3. Innovator 4. Too provider; artist; repairer; gym instructor 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nurturer 2. Cooperative leader 3. Knowledge provider 4. Artist 5. Innovator 6. Tool provider 7. Repairer

Figure 1. Reflective Moment within Chapter 5: Principles (Farrell, 2015, pp. 61–62)

While the text is very beneficial in providing a framework to prompt reflection by educators, overall it could have done more to address the current climate and issues in education, particularly in language education. While it does connect with data-informed practices and action research, areas of broad concern, such as changes in standards and standardized testing, could have been better addressed. Farrell could have also been more explicit in guiding educators to use available research as a guide and support when they determine gaps through the process of reflection. There is a plethora of research available to support educators, particularly in the TESOL field, and the author might have done more to emphasize to educators that this research is widely available to support them in their practice. Lastly, when providing the case studies in the final chapter of the text, Farrell could have expanded more so that educators, particularly novice teachers, could have seen the variety of ways reflection can occur.

Overall, Farrell provides a broad framework for reflection for language educators, supporting empowerment and growth by practitioners. This is not a text that is meant to be read once and forgotten, but rather a resource that should be returned to often as various areas of importance and need arise. It could easily be envisioned as a course reading with teacher candidates that is used during practicum to reflect on a topic of current importance to them in order to demonstrate the meaningful growth that can occur within the practice of reflection.

Reviewed by [Mary Caitlin Wight](#)

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