



## **Self-Directed Learning: Exploring the Continuous Professional Development of Native English-Speaking Teachers in South Korea**

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It has been argued that self-directed professional development is a necessary component of continuous, lifelong teacher learning. Research has predominantly focused on top-down, institution-mandated professional development, however, a paucity of data exists concerning self-directed teacher professional development. Therefore, the aim of this project was to explore the self-directed professional development that native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) in South Korea engaged in, as well as assess if these behaviors matched their stated beliefs about self-directed professional development. Employing a mixed-methods approach, data was collected from 56 teachers who completed online questionnaires, and 11 teachers who participated in follow-up interviews. Analysis revealed that in the 12 months prior to the study, only 35 teachers engaged in self-directed professional development. Findings indicated that the teachers who held education degrees and were interested in an EFL/ESL career were the most likely to engage in self-directed professional development. Of the participants that did not engage in self-directed professional development, the preeminent factors hindering involvement were a lack of ambition and/or ambivalence, lack of necessity, a shortage of career advancement prospects, and the COVID-19 pandemic. It could be concluded that most NESTs in the study did not engage in enough professional development to increase student learning outcomes.

**Keywords:** South Korea, EFL, NESTs, teacher professional development, continuous professional development

### **Introduction**

Various stakeholders (e.g., government educational bodies, professional associations) initiate teacher professional learning programs with the goal of increasing student outcomes (Grundy & Robison, 2004). In the education field, there is a general research consensus that participation in well-designed, implemented, and continuous professional development (CPD) programs can have a beneficial impact on teachers' instructional effectiveness (Borko, 2004; Knapp, 2003; Whitehead et al., 2019), lead to positive change in teachers' attitudes and/or beliefs (Borg, 2011; Li & Jones, 2019; Smith, 2017; Van Ha & Murray, 2021), and contribute to increased student learning outcomes (Elmore, 2002; Fullan, 2007; He et al., 2011). Furthermore, as research reveals that gaps often exist between what teachers believe they do in the classroom and what they actually do, CPD can assist in bridging the divide between teachers' beliefs and actual practices (Borg, 2015).



In a general education context, large-scale studies have examined the impact of institution-mandated, top-down professional teacher learning (Darling-Hammond, Wei, et al., 2009; Darling-Hammond, Hyler, et al., 2017). In the teaching English as a Foreign or Second Language (EFL, ESL) context, comparable research has investigated institution-administered teacher learning (Karimi, 2011; Novozhenina & Lopez-Pinzon, 2018; Ortaçtepe & Akyel, 2015). Few studies, however, have explored native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) involvement in forms of bottom-up professional development (e.g., self-directed learning), thus, it remains an area underrepresented in the research literature (Evans, 2019). Furthermore, as Cinnamon (2021) notes, much of the NEST-focused literature, especially in the Korean context, is based on the point of view of local teachers or learners and not the views of the NESTs themselves, resulting in a somewhat distorted portrayal of the average NEST as inexperienced and unqualified (Copland et al., 2019; Erling, 2017). By hearing directly from NESTs themselves, it was hoped that a more nuanced picture of NESTs working in Korea could be discerned. To this end, the authors of this study endeavored to expand upon the above findings by investigating NESTs working in varied educational contexts in South Korea by documenting their involvement in self-initiated forms of CPD.

Accordingly, the four aims of this project were: (1) to uncover the quantity of self-directed CPD that NESTs engaged in, as well as any variables that impacted the amount of CPD completed, (2) to examine the types of CPD that NESTs engaged in, (3) to uncover any barriers that NESTs may have faced when seeking out self-directed CPD, and (4) to determine if there was a discrepancy between the types of CPD the NESTs believed was effective, and the CPD that the NESTs reported doing in the last 12 months. To achieve these goals, the authors posed the following research questions (RQs):

- (RQ1) To what extent did the NESTs in the study engage in self-directed CPD, and which contributing variables impacted the amount of CPD undertaken?
- (RQ2) What self-directed CPD did the NESTs engage in?
- (RQ3) What factors hindered NESTs in the study from engaging in self-directed CPD?
- (RQ4) Was there a gap between what the NESTs in the study believed to be effective self-directed CPD and their stated practices?

## **Literature Review**

### **Continuous Professional Development of NESTs in South Korea**

In South Korea, it has been claimed that an extensive number of private education institutes (as well as several public schools and universities), not only prioritize specific nationalities over others (Hunt, 2017), but also prioritize the perceived language proficiency of NEST candidates over their teaching experience or education credentials (Jeon, 2009; Park, 2009; Wang & Lin, 2013). Combined, this results in low entry barriers to the Korean job market for prospective NESTs. A cursory search of a popular online Korean job board appears to corroborate this claim, yielding considerable advertised teaching positions targeting NESTs with limited/no teaching experience or qualifications (Dave's ESL Café, 2022). In fact, to obtain a visa to teach English in Korea one must merely hold a Bachelor's degree (in any subject), be a native English-speaking citizen of an 'Inner Circle' country (e.g., Australia) (for a discussion on the contentious notion of being a 'native speaker', see Davies, 2003), and pass a criminal background check; requisites which are stipulated by the Korean Immigration Service (2020).

Unfortunately, this practice of hiring unqualified and inexperienced NESTs within Korea, first documented in the early 1990s (Han, 2005), persists, not only due to the ease of entry for prospective NESTs into the domestic EFL job market, but also because of economic considerations (Ruecker & Ives, 2015), the mismatch between the supply and demand of qualified candidates (Jeon & Lee, 2006), and the pragmatic approach to instructor recruitment many schools utilize (i.e., it is easier to hire underqualified candidates within Korea than recruit qualified teachers from abroad). These factors, combined with the

fact that NESTs require neither teaching experience nor formal teaching certification (Howard, 2019), has resulted in a situation where private institutes (and several public institutions) routinely hire unqualified, inexperienced NESTs to meet parental demands (Park, 2009) and/or for marketing purposes (DeChamplain, 2017). Thus, due to lenient hiring requirements (especially in private institutes), many NESTs entering Korea lack a sufficient foundation in teaching knowledge; knowledge commonly accumulated in pre-service academic contexts (Scriber, 1999).

As Kim (2002) points out, a glaring problem exists in the English Language Teaching (ELT) profession - someone who has a degree unrelated to education can find employment as an English instructor - which, according to Wang and Lin (2013), has a detrimental impact on the professionalism of the ELT field, leading to ineffective teaching. The inadequacy of NESTs instructional strategies, classroom management, and limited curriculum understanding has been directly linked to their limited educational qualifications and lack of experience (Ahn et al., 1998; Ohtani, 2010), resulting in reduced student achievement (Lee & Chowdhury, 2018). In Han's (2003) study, adult Korean learners criticized the paucity of NESTs teaching qualifications, whereas Barnes and Lock (2013) found that Korean university freshman students placed a high importance on NESTs teaching qualifications.

Although one strategy to overcoming reported knowledge and skill inadequacies maintained by unqualified NESTs could consist of better planned and implemented CPD, Taylor (2017) found that the CPD of novice NESTs in a private English language institute in Korea was hindered by limited pedagogical knowledge, a shortage of training, and brief, one-year contracts, disincentivizing the NESTs from developing more research-informed and effective teaching practices. It was also revealed that despite sharing teaching materials, the NESTs struggled to create new classroom activities due to limited knowledge of lesson design; an area that could have been mitigated by access to external CPD.

## **History of Teacher Professional Development**

Traditional teacher learning programs have been characterized by a much-criticized transmission of knowledge model (Forde & McMahon, 2019; Wilson & Berne, 1999); it was theorized that if teachers received correct expert information, then modified and improved their flawed practices, student outcomes would increase (Korthagen, 2001; Smith, 2017). However, research has revealed the flaws in this simple information-transfer model (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992), as it fixates on technical teaching features, isolating teaching actions from contextual realities (Smith, 2017).

Many contemporary professional development (PD) programs take the form of sporadic administrative-mandated events (Forde & McMahon, 2019). Considerable research reveals that such programs have minimal effectiveness on teacher learning due to infrequency (e.g., Darling-Hammond, Wei, et al., 2009), lack of duration (e.g., Forde & McMahon, 2019), narrow content focus (e.g., Smith, 2017), and lack of connection to individual teaching contexts (e.g., Roblin & Margalef, 2013). In such overly expert-directed operations, teachers' needs and interests are outweighed by those of institutions, and can lead to demotivation (Richards, 2015; Wyatt & Ager, 2017). Likewise, Smith (2017) argues that excessive top-down CPD featuring tight administrative control over learning processes encourages dependent learning behaviours, limiting a teacher's ability to engage in deep learning, hindering confidence and stagnating development.

In the last two decades of PD research there has been a perspective shift (Farrell, 2013) from a transmission-learning model of teacher education to a contextualized-learning model (Crandall & Christison, 2016; Forde & McMahon, 2019), repositioning the focus of teacher learning from individuals to groups, where practitioners systematically reflect on their teaching practice, helping them better understand their own individualized domains of practice (Farrell, 2013; Kiely & Davis, 2010). Thus, prevailing PD trends have shifted away from episodic activities towards more holistic, experiential, and critical reflective practice embedded in teacher-initiated and designed activities (Birman et al., 2000; Cormany et al., 2005; Farrell, 2013).

## Current Professional Development Approaches

Contemporary research acknowledges that successful teacher learning must be continual (Forde & McMahon, 2019; Grundy & Robison, 2004). Continuous professional development (CPD) has been defined as a planned, lifelong process of teacher learning carried out via a range of programs (e.g., workshops, support groups) designed to enhance professional work (Darling-Hammond, Wei, et al., 2009; Day & Sachs, 2004) by increasing knowledge, skills, and practice through reshaping beliefs and actions (Bolam & McMahon, 2004; Kelchtermans, 2004). Thus, CPD is fundamental to the long-term success of teachers and schools (Hargreaves, 1994; Richards & Farrell, 2005; Talbert & McLaughlin, 1994).

Research also recognizes the complexity of teacher learning. As Creemers et al. (2013, p. 36) note, teacher learning cannot simply be “divided into a place and time to acquire knowledge and a place and time to apply the knowledge acquired.” Johnson and Golombek (2016, 2020) remind us of the ever-shifting and interconnected sociocultural factors that influence an educator’s learning-teaching environment (e.g., specific teaching context, institution role, teacher identity, values, assumptions), as well as the crucial role of the teacher educator in helping support optimal teacher development through Language Teaching Education (LTE) pedagogy (e.g., creating structured spaces for growth, setting intentional and goal-directed activities/interactions that promote reflection), which must both be taken into consideration in order to maximize the potential of endeavored CPD. Hence, it has been argued that teachers better respond to contextually-relevant (i.e., situated in their teaching area), job-embedded CPD customized to individual teaching needs and goals (Putnam & Borko, 2000) overseen and supported by “expert others” (e.g., teacher educators, peer teachers) (Johnson & Golombek, 2020, p. 123).

In comparison to traditional approaches, contemporary CPD shifts some responsibility for CPD from administrators to educators (Richards & Farrell, 2005) by involving educators more in decision-making processes that impact them and their students (Wyatt & Ager, 2017). Forde and McMahon (2019) note that this more grassroots-style, local CPD (i.e., bottom-up CPD) is more attractive to educators as it features more autonomy and offers more collaborative opportunities via local communities of practice, professional international organizations, and school- or internet-based professional learning communities. Thus, research has explored how such bottom-up, localized CPD can be blended with top-down educational processes and integrated into teachers’ everyday practices (Farrell, 2013; Grundy & Robison, 2004).

One vital component of bottom-up teacher learning is self-directed CPD, where educators actively plan and guide their own learning by voluntarily seeking out knowledge relating to their needs, interests, and motivations. In pursuing self-directed CPD, Smith (2017) argues that educators become better attuned to the personal values and beliefs inspiring their teaching practices. As Anderson (2018) warns, however, excessively bottom-up-fixated CPD is impractical, as only highly motivated teachers who hold themselves accountable for their own learning will benefit. Muijs et al. (2004: 291) point out that CPD should be a shared responsibility between employers and employees as it “serves the interests of both.” Similarly, Richards and Farrell (2005) assert that CPD should be focused on both the individual teacher’s goals and those of the institution. Although it seems paramount that schools facilitate long-term teacher career development, professional educators also have an obligation to their students (and themselves) to actively engage in self-directed CPD (Grundy & Robison, 2004).

## Benefits of CPD

Effective CPD has been defined as “structured professional learning that results in changes in teacher practices and improvements in student learning outcomes” (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, et al., 2017, p. v). Accordingly, research acknowledges four main reasons why educators should partake in CPD: to update skills and knowledge, increase student achievement gains, increase professionalism, and develop expert performance.

First, educators should participate in CPD to regularly update skills, improve teaching practices, and enhance knowledge of pedagogy, theory, and technology (Darling-Hammond, 1998; King & Newmann, 2000; Knapp, 2003), as the ever-evolving knowledge foundation of the ELT profession requires professionals to routinely update their skillsets (Richards & Farrell, 2005). Additionally, Lee & Chowdhury (2018) note that in the ELT domain, even qualified and experienced teachers should engage in CPD when entering new educational contexts.

Second, educators should engage in CPD as research has shown it enhances student learning achievement and outcomes (Desimone, 2009; Elmore, 2002; Fullan, 2007; Muijs et al., 2004). In a meta-analysis conducted by Yoon et al. (2007), it was found that teachers who participated in rigorous CPD (i.e., programs with a yearly average of 49 hours) moderately boosted student achievement scores. Conversely, statistically insignificant student gains were recorded for students of teachers participating in CPD programs with limited hours (i.e., ranging from 5-14 total hours) (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). Studies also show that using research-based teaching principles (Ellis, 2005; Long, 2015) positively impacts learner performance - principles better understood via CPD (Creemers et al., 2013).

Third, educators should take part in CPD to increase professionalism. Researchers overwhelmingly contend that CPD is fundamental to developing and advancing in a professional teaching career (Muijs et al., 2004; Pennington, 1990; Wang & Lin, 2013). Furthermore, Wong (2013) asserts that a professional career requires multiple components: theoretical knowledge, certifications, and a career path. Thus, CPD engagement helps facilitate professionalism.

Lastly, educators should engage in CPD as a means of developing expert performance. Updating knowledge and skills by replacing old knowledge with new knowledge leads to knowledge growth (Grundy & Robison, 2004) - a prerequisite to teaching expertise. Furthermore, CPD appears to facilitate the interaction between theoretical input and practical experience, potentially enabling the transition of theoretical knowledge into the teaching act (Tsui, 2003, 2009).

## Characteristics of Effective CPD

To develop professionally, educators should continuously engage in a range of research-informed (Guskey, 2003) formal and informal CPD activities (e.g., workshops, reading groups) (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Richter et al., 2014). In the relevant literature, a general consensus exists among researchers as to what constitutes effective CPD. Therefore, drawing on the works of Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), Forde and McMahon (2019), Richards and Farrell (2005), and Wong (2013), we have identified seven overlapping components of optimal CPD that will guide our analysis, accompanied by examples of CPD activities (see Table 1 below).

TABLE 1

### *Characteristics of Effective CPD: Components & Activities*

CPD Components	CPD Activities
1. Engage in critical reflection	self-monitor (audio/video record lessons), do peer observation
2. Acquire new knowledge	read scholarly journals, attend conferences
3. Gain and upgrade skills	attend workshops, enrol in online/distance education programs
4. Collaborate with other teachers	start teacher support groups, co-write/co-edit learning materials
5. Experiment and problem-solve	do action research, analyze classroom incidents
6. Receive expert coaching and feedback	arrange local one-on-one expert coaching, mentor other teachers
7. Advance one's career	present at conferences, engage in research, enrol in a higher degree program

*Note.* Adapted from: Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Forde & McMahon, 2019; Richards & Farrell, 2005; Wong, 2013.

As delineated in the table above, effective CPD requires educators to engage in a range of intentional and goal-directed strategies, discussed in more detail below.

First, effective CPD necessitates individual or collaborative critical reflection and feedback. Reflection has been defined as a process where educators systematically collect data on their teaching practices, and

examine/evaluate their own teaching to identify weaknesses and assumptions, pinpoint inconsistencies between beliefs and actual practices, and challenge common routines to make implicit knowledge more visible, reframe beliefs, increase professional knowledge, shape future planning and decisions, bridge theory and practice, and enable more nuanced understandings of teaching (Farrell, 2015; Richards & Farrell, 2005; Richards & Lockhart, 1994; Yin, 2018). However, as Yin (2018, p. 1009) points out, teachers must be guided through structured stages featuring reflection-inducing tasks (e.g., guiding questions) for this practice to yield benefits.

Second, effective CPD includes the acquisition and development of pedagogic teaching knowledge through engaging with research-based, peer-reviewed literature/resources from professional organizations (Knapp, 2003; Kwakman, 2003; Scribner, 1999), and knowledge gleaned from expert teacher educators or peer teachers (Johnson & Golombek, 2020).

Third, effective CPD should focus on upgrading teaching skills through intensive events (e.g., workshops) that provide expert input, practical classroom applications, and tangible, immediately usable information/teaching strategies targeting teachers' immediate needs, interests, and contexts (Richards & Farrell, 2005). Despite the much-stated drawbacks of short-term CPD events (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009), educators still value them. In the US high school context, Scribner (1999, p. 247) found that while attending workshops, teachers sought out appropriate "tricks of the trade" or "nuggets of knowledge" that they could immediately apply to their individual classroom contexts.

Fourth, effective CPD should comprise mutual professional knowledge/experience sharing through teacher collaboration, which can develop and improve good pedagogical practice (Scribner, 1999; Crandall & Christison, 2016), allowing teachers to escape from the remoteness of their own teaching context, giving them opportunities to examine and modify existing practices, deepen pedagogical understandings, and improve classroom outcomes (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, et al., 2017; Lieberman & Pointer-Mace, 2009). Dilemmas and conflicts encountered during collaboration may also push educators to examine and challenge existing beliefs/assumptions, assisting in the growth of more effective practice (Helsing, 2007; Roblin & Margalef, 2013).

Fifth, effective CPD should involve experimentation and application of pedagogical innovations (King & Newmann, 2000; Kwakman, 2003). For example, educators could apply knowledge gained from training sessions and attempt to solve a classroom issue/problem (e.g., coaxing learners into speaking more English), or experiment with task-based teaching (Edwards & Willis, 2005).

Sixth, practitioners should also receive expert coaching and feedback in their own local, individualized contexts of teaching (Johnson & Golombek, 2020). For example, Smith (2017) found that through engagement with reflective tasks (e.g., digital camera entries) facilitated by an expert coach, teachers showed increased awareness of how their professional knowledge and practice interconnected, helping them to deepen their understanding of the principles that guided their teaching practices.

Lastly, effective CPD should, where possible, be related to career advancement. Wong (2013) points out that achieving promotion, securing tenure/a raise, and finding new challenges underpins the motivations of many teachers who engage in CPD. Relatedly, Mok and Kwon (1999) found that educators who sought promotion opportunities were more likely to participate in CPD than those who did not pursue promotion. Although, for many NESTs in the Korean context, career advancement does not seem to be a primary consideration (see Collins, 2014).

## Method

To answer the research questions and assess the quantity of NEST participation in self-directed CPD, this project adopted a mixed-methods research design involving questionnaires and interviews as the main data collection instruments.

## Participants

The 56 participants in this study were NESTs teaching in 38 different EFL/ESL institutions in Korea: 6 universities, 4 adult academies, 5 general academies (for elementary and middle school-aged children), 1 test preparation centre, 4 international schools, 4 public and private high-schools, 5 public middle-schools, 5 public elementary-schools, 2 kindergartens, and 2 freelance teachers. The participants were initially recruited through personal connections, which led to a snowballing approach where teachers promoted the survey to educators in other teaching contexts.

The EFL/ESL teaching experience of the respondents varied considerably; 24 respondents (42%) had 8 or more years of experience, 16 respondents (28%) had 5-8 years of experience, 9 respondents (16%) had 3-5 years of experience, 6 respondents (10%) had 1-3 years of experience, and 1 respondent (1%) had less than one year of experience.

45 respondents (80%) were male, 9 were female (16%), and 2 respondents (3%) preferred not to disclose their sex. 9 respondents (16%) were above the age of 40, 39 respondents (69%) were between the ages of 31-40, and 8 respondents (14%) were between the ages of 26-30. All 56 respondents had completed an undergraduate degree, 27 respondents (48%) had completed a master's degree, and 1 respondent (1%) had completed a PhD. Furthermore, 22 respondents (39.29%) had completed a tertiary degree relating to Linguistics or Education, whereas 34 respondents (60.71%) majored in other subjects.

## Questionnaire

The questionnaire (see Appendix A) was compiled in relation to the authors' personal understanding of and twenty years of combined experience in the Korean EFL/ESL context, as well as relevant literature. In keeping with research essentials, a trial questionnaire was first developed and piloted to ensure a reliable, valid outcome. It was trialed by an educator with a master's degree in Education and six years of teaching experience in a related EFL context. Based on pilot feedback, an amended online questionnaire (made available through Typeform) was devised to gather demographic information (e.g., age, teaching experience) and information related to participants' self-directed CPD. Informed consent was obtained via a checkbox at the start of the survey, where the participants were reminded that the survey was anonymous and that no personal information, such as one's name or school name, would be collected.

## Interviews

Similar to the questionnaire, the interview questions (see Appendix B) were crafted in relation to the authors' personal understanding of and experience in the Korean EFL/ESL context, and pertinent literature (e.g., characteristics of effective CPD, CPD of EFL/ESL teachers in Korea). Confidential semi-structured interviews were held with 11 respondents who gave consent to participate in follow-up interviews. Conducted using Zoom/Skype, each interviewee was asked ten questions exploring teacher CPD, with each interview lasting approximately 40-60 minutes. Each respondent was asked the same questions, however, the semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed the authors a chance to explore additional CPD-related details that may have emerged during the interview. Interviews were then transcribed for further analysis. Confidentiality was maintained by de-identifying each quote within this article and assigning each participant a number (e.g., P1).

## Data Analysis

The questionnaire involved simple box-checking, Likert-scales, and short-answer responses. Questionnaire data was analyzed using IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The interviews were analyzed by first reading and reflecting upon the interview transcripts to get a general sense of the data. Each individual author then carried out their own thematic analysis to uncover and code

any recurring themes from the transcripts. This process was iterative and resulted in two key themes emerging: CPD barriers and a CPD beliefs and actions gap. The decision to code separately before comparing themes was chosen in order to enhance interpretive rigor (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010).

## Findings

### CPD Quantity

In relation to research question 1 (RQ1), results from the surveys revealed that a combined total of 69 CPD activities ( $M = 1.23$ ,  $SD = 1.307$ ) were completed in the previous 12 months by the teachers in the study, with three teachers being responsible for 20.29% (a combined total of 14 CPD activities) of the total CPD activities. Out of the 56 individual teachers, 21 (37.50%) failed to engage in any form of CPD within the previous 12 months, while 14 (25%) completed only one CPD activity. In terms of contributing variables, two independent-samples t-tests (Tables 2 and 4) and a one-way ANOVA (Table 3) were conducted. Relevant findings are outlined below.

TABLE 2

*A Relationship Between Educational Background and CPD*

Education Degree	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sum	Range
Yes ( $n = 22$ )	1.77	1.631	.348	39	6
No ( $n = 34$ )	.88	.913	.157	30	3
Total = 56	1.23	1.307	-	69	6

First, the amount of CPD completed by those participants with an education-related degree and by those without was compared (Table 2). Results show that there was a significant difference between the two groups, with education-related degree holders doing more CPD ( $M = 1.77$ ,  $SD = 1.631$ ) than non-education-related degree holders ( $M = .88$ ,  $SD .913$ ). These findings (Cohen's  $d = .675$ ,  $r = .320$ ) represent a small to moderate effect-size (Cohen, 1988). Education-related degree holders also had a higher percentage of teachers (68.18% compared to 58.82%) complete at least one form of CPD during the past 12 months.

TABLE 3

*The Impact of Pursuing a Long-Term Career in EFL Education on CPD*

Pursuing a Career	Sum CPD	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mode	Median	Range	Education Degree
Yes ( $n = 24$ )	36	1.50	1.216	2	2	4	14
No ( $n = 23$ )	19	.826	.887	0	1	3	5
Undecided ( $n = 9$ )	14	1.55	2.128	0	1	6	3

To explore any potential relationship between one's career aspirations and the amount of CPD completed, results from a Likert scale survey asking the teachers to indicate how intently they were pursuing a career as an EFL/ESL teacher were analyzed in relation to the amount of CPD undertaken. Results (Table 3) indicate that NESTs pursuing a long-term career ( $n = 24$ ) engaged in more CPD ( $M = 1.5$ ,  $SD = 1.216$ ) than NESTs ( $n = 23$ ) who are not ( $M = 0.826$ ,  $SD = 0.887$ ). Furthermore, additional analysis revealed that while 7 teachers (29.17%) pursuing a career as an EFL/ESL teacher neglected CPD during the previous 12 months, 10 teachers (43.49%) who indicated that they were not pursuing a career in the EFL field failed to engage in any form of CPD in the same period.



TABLE 4

*A Possible Relationship Between Teaching Experience and CPD*

Teaching Experience	Sum CPD	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mode	Median	Range
8+ (n = 24)	35	1.458	1.284	0	1	4
<8 = (n = 32)	34	1.062	1.318	0	1	6

To explore the relationship between teaching experience and CPD in more depth, the teachers were divided into two experience bands: NESTs with less than 8 years' experience, and NESTs with more than 8 years' experience (Table 4). This division revealed that not only do teachers with more than 8 years of teaching experience engage in slightly more CPD, but they also had fewer teachers neglect CPD during the previous year, with 7 teachers (29.17%) with 8+ years' experience and 14 teachers (43.75%) with less than 8 years' experience failing to engage in CPD.

### Types of CPD activities

To answer RQ2, our questionnaire invited the participants to indicate which CPD activities they had completed in the previous 12 months (e.g., attending/presenting at a conference, completing an accredited face-to-face/online course, attending language education classes). Further, respondents were asked to list any other CPD activities that they undertook in the previous 12 months. Responses included irrelevant CPD (e.g., pursuing an MBA), marginally relevant CPD (e.g., asking other teachers for game ideas), and relevant CPD (e.g., completing a post-graduate education certification). An overview of these activities is presented below.

TABLE 5

*Types and Frequency of CPD Activities*

CPD Activities	Frequency Number	Percentage of Total CPD Activities (%)
1. Watched videos related to ESL teaching (e.g., YouTube videos)	11	15.9
2. Read academic articles/teaching handbooks	9	13.0
3. Completed courses related to EFL/ESL teaching/education	7	10.1
4. Presented at an educational seminar/conference	6	8.7
5. Read general teaching articles	5	7.2
6. Sat a high-stakes English exam (e.g., IELTS)	5	7.2
7. Attended a KOTESOL meeting/seminar/convention	4	5.8
8. Attended an EFL education or English teaching seminar	4	5.8
9. Researched teaching strategies online	4	5.8
10. Completed/partially completed an education degree	4	5.8
11. Participated in a teaching course (e.g., Google Educator)	3	4.3
12. Enrolled in an online class (e.g., Coursera)	2	2.9
13. Engaged in peer observations or recorded classes (for feedback)	2	2.9
14. Consulted with experienced teachers for guidance	2	2.9
15. Joined a community of practice (e.g., TESOL group)	1	1.5
	Total: 69	Total: 100% (rounded)

### CPD Barriers

To answer RQ3, semi-structured interviews were analyzed, revealing four prominent factors that impeded the 11 participants from engaging in CPD during the previous 12-month period: a lack of ambition and/or ambivalence, a perceived lack of necessity, lack of career advancement prospects, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

First, 6 (55%) interviewees reported that either a lack of ambition and/or ambivalence prevented them (and other NESTs) from engaging in CPD, as illustrated below:

*I never needed to further it. I was comfortable with ... the way I'm teaching. I didn't feel like I need to develop in being a teacher ... (P7)*

Furthering the theme above, P7 explained that their immediate focus was completing a business degree to enable an EFL teaching exit, further specifying, "that was the focus [so] I never needed to further the educational aspect." This lack of drive to undertake CPD was also corroborated by P6, who commented that they had no long-term plans to stay in the EFL field. In both cases, lack of drive to engage in CPD relate to a projected teaching exit. Additionally, P7 and P11 further substantiated this theme. Below, P7 clarified their perceptions on why NESTs lack motivation to improve, while P11 questioned if any NESTs in Korea actually engage in CPD:

*... there's not necessarily drive in any teachers to develop themselves[,] ... they're just happy to come and do their job, do the thing and get out ... [s]o, they don't ... develop themselves further. (P7)*

*I didn't do anything. In Korea, does anyone do it? (P11)*

Second, 4 (36%) interviewees reported that a lack of necessity prevented them (and other NESTs) from engaging in CPD, as detailed below:

*The reason I don't do teacher training is because in Korea it's not needed to get a job and it's not expected to keep your job. (P11)*

*Nothing prevented me ... I just didn't feel it was necessary. To fulfill my responsibilities at this university, I have sufficient knowledge already. (P4)*

In addition to the above excerpts, two interviewees pointed out that short-term contracts/brief work sojourns could compel NESTs to disregard CPD or consider it irrelevant, as elucidated below:

*... a lot of people ... are only here for one or two years and they're not really serious about being a teacher ... (P3)*

*... if you just want to do it for two years and go back home, then getting more qualifications is ... not really applicable ... (P4)*

Third, 6 (55%) interviewees reported that a lack of career advancement prospects discouraged them from performing CPD, as noted below:

*... it doesn't take long until you hit the glass ceiling. (P4)*

*... the biggest thing is advancement opportunities [and] my university doesn't offer a tenure track. So ... I'm as high as I can go and so that can be frustrating sometimes. (P1)*

Lastly, 4 (36%) interviewees cited the COVID-19 pandemic as a reason they failed to engage in CPD, as evidenced below:

*... I haven't had to do it, just because of the Coronavirus ... (P4)*

*... this year has been quite strange [so] I haven't really been approaching my professional development with the same sort of gusto. Before I was a pretty active member of ... [a local] organization. (P10)*

Further, P10 added that the uncertainty of when face-to-face teaching would resume affected the effort they planned to invest into CPD. The interview excerpts above reveal that the COVID-19 pandemic had a tangible impact on the CPD of several study participants. However, one participant believed that the pandemic supplied NESTs with an opportune reason to neglect CPD:

*COVID gave people a convenient excuse to say that is why they didn't do personal development, [as] most people didn't do anything before COVID, so blaming COVID is an easy way out. (P11)*

### **CPD beliefs and actions gap**

To answer RQ4, interviewees' beliefs concerning effective CPD practices and one's self-reported CPD activities were explored. When interviewees were asked if CPD could help increase teaching skills and boost educational outcomes, all 11 participants agreed. Specifically, one participant mentioned shifting educational trends, student achievement gains, and a sense of professional obligation as reasons to do CPD, as evidenced below:

*... [teachers] need to stay up on the new evidence-based research because we owe it to our students. [Teachers'] number one goal should be to increase student achievement [and] we need to be using the best ... methodology to achieve that. (P9)*

The benefit of CPD on student achievement was confirmed by P3, who claimed that learning the phonetic alphabet in an Education program helped them instruct their students to better learn English sounds. Similar perceived CPD merits were corroborated by P8, who asserted that engaging in critical reflection could generally help improve student outcomes. Despite universal agreement on CPD's virtues, only 5 (45%) interviewees admitted to participating in CPD activities in the last 12 months, and 6 (55%) interviewees either engaged in learning activities unrelated to the EFL/ESL field, or did no CPD.

When interviewees were asked to recommend CPD activities that NESTs in Korea should engage in, three specific themes emerged: reflection, building teaching knowledge, and collaboration. The importance of the first motif to emerge, critical reflection, is detailed below:

*One thing [is] reflection[,] ... seeing what you're doing, and what's working, and how it relates to students. Are your students motivated? Are your students improving? Setting aside time to think about it and ... to ask yourself, what could go better? (P8)*

The importance of reflection was substantiated by P1, who declared that NESTs who consistently self-evaluated their classroom performances would most likely improve their teaching practices when compared to NESTs who neglected self-evaluation. However, when questioned about their personal self-reflective practices, P1 admitted that they did not usually engage in rigorous reflection, as noted below:

*... usually just mental notes, because it's something that I've done for so long ... (P1)*

The recurring theme of 'mental notes' was mentioned by six interviewees (P1, P2, P4, P5, P6, P8), revealing that physical note-jotting as a reflective activity (related to classroom events) was neglected. When asked if they systematically engaged in reflection (e.g., by journal writing) to bolster teaching practices, 2 (18%) interviewees confessed doing so, however, only one (P9) stated employing reflection to inform future pedagogical decisions:

*I do reflect on my student's data, when I complete a formative assignment or I see their summative assessments, and I use that to guide my next instruction ... (P9)*

The second CPD theme to emerge was building pedagogical teaching knowledge, as delineated below:

*... if I want to progress, it makes sense for me to update my knowledge ... of teaching methodology, and the research ... (P4)*

The above theme was reiterated by P3, who noted that gaps in one's grammatical knowledge could be uncovered and filled by researching websites or watching YouTube tutorials. This theme was further substantiated by P8, who explained that CPD needed to be well-planned, with weaknesses and precise improvements to make needing to be pinpointed. However, despite one participant indicating the merits of updating one's teaching knowledge, they failed to participate in this type of CPD in the 12 months prior, as detailed below:

*No, I haven't taken any courses. And yeah, no reading. (P4)*

The final CPD theme to emerge was collaboration, as reported below:

*... one of the best resources ... is other teachers. [T]hey should ... share best practices ... resources, share ideas, ... materials. I feel like that's the easiest way for people to increase their professional development. (P9)*

This theme was furthered by P10, who disclosed the belief that the easiest, most effective way to engage in collaboration was to join a CPD-dedicated organization. However, in the last 12 months, only 2 (18%) interviewees (P3, P6) participated in a form of such practice, reportedly consisting of brief informal discussions with other teachers about students' academic progress or classroom behaviour.

## Discussion

### CPD Quantity

As the findings above illustrate, a meager total of 69 CPD events were logged by the 56 study participants, with an average of 1.23 CPD activities performed in the 12 months prior to the study. Further, only 14 (25%) participants completed a single CPD activity, and 21 (37.50%) participants failed to complete even a single CPD activity. Conversely, three highly driven teachers accounted for 20.29% (a combined total of 14 CPD activities) of the total CPD activities in the study. As stated research shows, statistically insignificant achievement gains have been attributed to students of teachers who participated in CPD programs with limited hours, therefore, it appears that many NESTs in the study are not undertaking CPD in sufficient quantities to help students improve educational outcomes.

### Variables affecting CPD quantity

Investigating the three variables corresponding to the amount of CPD undertaken by the interviewees in more depth, data reveals that there is a statistically significant relationship between one's educational background and the amount of CPD performed (Table 2). Holders of Education degrees participated in approximately double the quantity of CPD activities compared to non-Education degree holders, and had a higher percentage of teachers complete at least one form of CPD when compared to their counterparts. This is unsurprising, as Education-degree holders have most likely invested considerable resources into

progressing in their chosen field, and as a result, were more likely to engage in CPD and less likely to neglect it.

Second, data shows that NESTs pursuing a long-term career in EFL/ESL (Table 3) engaged in almost double the CPD activities than those NESTs who were not pursuing an EFL/ESL career, and had a lower percentage of teachers neglect CPD when compared to their counterparts. These findings appear to indicate that one's career aspirations have a bearing on how much importance teachers place on the amount of CPD they carry out. Teachers planning on careers and long-term stays, unsurprisingly, are more likely to engage in CPD and less likely to neglect it.

Third, data analysis points to a possible link between years of teaching experience and CPD performed (Table 4), as teachers with eight or more years of experience engaged in slightly more CPD than teachers with less than eight years of experience, and were less likely to neglect CPD than their less experienced counterparts. These findings, although inconclusive, appear to indicate a relationship between teaching experience and CPD.

In sum, findings suggest that although those teachers who possess an Education-related degree and are pursuing a long-term career in EFL/ESL engage in more CPD overall, most NESTs in Korea arguably fail to engage in the quantity of CPD research suggests is required to bring about positive pedagogical changes and improved learning outcomes for students. Further, and as expected based on the authors' combined twenty years of experience in and knowledge of the Korean EFL/ESL context, coupled with the endemic hiring practices prevalent in the EFL/ESL industry, findings align with Kim & Davis' (2017) conjecture that NESTs in Korea are not engaging in sufficient amounts of CPD to help students improve.

### **CPD activities performed**

Pertaining to CPD, data shows that 15.9% of all accounted CPD activities were from internet sources, a trend that is likely to continue, as the COVID-19 pandemic has arguably accelerated the quality/quantity of CPD resources provided online. For instance, in response to the pandemic, English Australia took steps to make enhanced CPD online resources more readily available. At the time of writing, the pandemic is still disrupting face-to-face education in Korea, and that is likely to continue.

Further, of the 15 CPD activities noted (see Table 5), 13 CPD activities are consistent with effective CPD as per research literature (see Table 1), however, two CPD activities (number 1 and 9) feature sparsely in research on effective CPD. It is our contention that these activities (the most common and sixth most common activities respectively) have the potential to help educators stay abreast of teaching trends and research findings, especially if done in a reflective and ongoing manner (i.e., as part of a regular CPD timetable), and should not be overlooked as valuable forms of CPD (see Lee & Kim, 2016, for a model of a self-directed mobile-based CPD program featuring videos).

### **CPD barriers investigated**

Exploring the findings from the interviews in more detail, 6 (55%) interviewees asserted that a lack of ambition and/or ambivalence was a CPD-engagement barrier, consistent with other findings in the context. For instance, Han (2003) found that adult Korean learners reported that NESTs lacked effort and responsibility for their teaching practices. Several reported factors (e.g., short-term teaching plans leading to transiency) impact the CPD drive of NESTs (Ruecker & Ives, 2015). True to this study's findings, NESTs who indicated they were pursuing a long-term EFL/ESL career engaged in and neglected CPD less than NESTs who were not pursuing such a career.

Second, 4 (36%) interviewees said that short-term work contracts/work sojourns negatively impacted NESTs drive to engage in CPD, cohering with similar findings in the context. For instance, in a private academy setting, Taylor (2017) found that novice NESTs lacked necessity/desire to seek out CPD due to short contracts, curbing the effectiveness of their instructional practices.

Third, 6 (55%) interviewees noted that a paucity of career advancement prospects deterred CPD-engagement, mirroring similar contextual findings. Career ceilings (Howard, 2019) and a dearth of career-growth options in EFL/ESL contexts have been noted to impact NESTs lack of professional ambition (Collins, 2014; Yim & Ahn, 2018). True to this study's findings, in a meta-analysis of NEST-related literature from the Korean EFL/ESL context, Cinnamon (2021) found that poor career advancement options played a large role in de-incentivizing the development of more effective teaching practices, a sentiment similarly echoed by NESTs in other related EFL/ESL contexts such as Hong Kong and Japan (Geluso, 2013; Moorhouse, 2017).

Lastly, 4 (36%) interviewees cited the COVID-19 pandemic as a barrier to CPD-engagement, however, as one interviewee noted, the pandemic may have given teachers "a convenient excuse" to disregard CPD. This statement is partially corroborated by our findings, which showed that in the 6 pre-pandemic months encapsulated in this study, 26 (46.43%) teachers failed to engage in any form of CPD, while 13 (23.21%) teachers completed only one CPD activity. Further, despite the ongoing pandemic, numerous forms of online CPD were readily accessible (see Recommendations), as the authors of this paper and other educators can attest. Unlike the first three well-documented CPD barriers specified above by the interviewees, the COVID-19 pandemic as a barrier to CPD thus far is relatively underexplored, and warrants further research.

### **CPD beliefs and actions gap explored**

Exploring the findings from the interviews in more depth, the first avenue of CPD recommended by the interviewees was reflection. When interviewees were asked if they engaged in critical reflective practice, only 2 (18%) interviewees reported that they did so. 6 (55%) interviewees admitted that reflection consisted of simple "mental notes" (a common NEST practice that emerged). Thus, as per the stated research consensus on effective CPD, our data shows that several NESTs did not appear to detail engaging in enough reflection to strengthen teaching practices.

The second CPD recommendation from interviewees was building teaching knowledge. As previously stated, effective methods to build teaching knowledge involve engaging with resources from professional organizations, or by participating in educational courses. However, only 4 (36%) interviewees consulted or engaged with professional teaching-related sources. Therefore, it appears that several interviewees did not appear to report engaging in sufficient quantities of knowledge-building CPD to improve teaching practices.

The third CPD recommendation from interviewees was collaboration. Despite several interviewees asserting the merits of collaboration, only 2 (18%) participated in a form of such practice. As previously stated, there are numerous benefits to engaging in professional collaborative practice, however, the interviewees did not appear to note engaging in the quantity of collaborative CPD deemed necessary by research to enhance teaching practices.

Despite 10 (91%) interviewees in this study being able to articulate a range of effective, research-based CPD recommendations (see Table 1), several did not appear to report engaging in the quantity of systematic reflective practice, pedagogical knowledge building, and professional collaboration to positively impact future teaching. In sum, and in agreeance with Binnie (2018), Borg (2015), and Sato and Kleinsasser (2004), who found that teachers' reported beliefs often differed from their actual practices, findings similarly showed that NESTs self-reported recommendations for effective CPD activities did not directly translate into their stated behaviors.

### **Recommendations**

Drawing from the above findings, relevant research (e.g., Hunt, 2017; Reed & Chappell, 2021), their own in-depth experiences and knowledge of the EFL/ESL industry in Korea, and the frameworks of professional educational bodies in various locales, the authors of this article recommend tackling the CPD

of NESTs in Korea at three distinct levels: the individual level, the accreditation level, and the context level.

First, at the individual CPD level, it is vital that educators become “thoughtful and skilled consumers of research relevant to their interests” (Guskey, 2009, p. 227) and needs. As such, it is of paramount importance that educators learn how to access credible sources of education-related information when trying to expand their pedagogical knowledge and teaching skills. Resources such as the Educational Review Information Centre and Google Scholar are great starting points. Additionally, since much CPD is available at little or no cost (Wong, 2013), teachers might seek out free or affordable online sources of research-based CPD available on websites such as Coursera or edX, or attend workshops or seminars run by local TESOL organizations.

Second, at the accreditation level, educators can direct their learning towards structured CPD programs with established research-based frameworks from reputable organizations such as the British Council, or enrol in rigorous teacher-training programs such as the Cambridge Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (CELTA).

Lastly, at the local context level, the Ministry of Education in Korea should establish a CPD framework (which includes online opportunities) that sets out a range of effective, and professionally developed, CPD options educators and institutions could choose from to encourage CPD. This new framework should aim to raise the standards of EFL/ESL education in Korea by requiring educators to take a more professional approach to education. This new framework could benefit from benchmarking other regulated professional organizations possessing rigorous learning standards, such as English Australia, an organization which maintains a CPD framework guiding practitioners towards “a range of professional development opportunities which meet individuals’ goals, teaching contexts and interests as well as colleges’ teacher-training needs” (English Australia, 2022), and incorporating both self-directed and institution-mandated CPD, thus ensuring teachers maintain a sense of agency, while giving schools the option to also select which CPD activities their teachers should choose from to custom fit context, needs, and motivations.

As Smith (2017) argues, giving more CPD agency to teachers can encourage them to seek out more personalized, relevant learning activities related to their own needs, interests, and context, enhancing motivation. Although this may be true in many educational locales, giving educators excessive agency over their own CPD can undermine growth, as they may choose to engage in learning activities that are too familiar or simplistic (Kirschner & Hendrick, 2020), stagnating development. For instance, in a review of selected literature, Corcoran et al. (2001) and Guskey (2003, p. 749) point out that when CPD is primarily school-based (i.e., decentralized), with teachers possessing ample autonomy over their personal CPD, many educators pay “lip service” to the introduction of newer research-based CPD methods, and resort to their older, substandard practices. Further to this point, in a study involving a self-directed, mobile-based CPD program, Lee and Kim (2016) reported that despite participants’ strong initial uptake, the program quickly became unsustainable due to factors such as the incompatibility of the content with participants’ local school environments. Hence, in the Korean learning context, and in agreement with Choi and Lee (2007), we recommend implementing a balanced framework incorporating a blend of optimal bottom-up and top-down CPD guided by institution and teacher needs, delivered by expert teacher educators.

## **Limitations**

There were four limitations to this project. First, both researchers in this project are NESTs, thus conceivably impacting the way interviews were interpreted and coded. As such, care was taken to eliminate potential bias (e.g., each researcher interviewed non-acquaintances, coded separately before comparing findings). Second, retrospective sampling may have led to inaccurate recall of number and types of CPD done by participants. Third, a large sample of participants in the study work in the university context, a context which is not representative of the majority of NESTs teaching English in

Korea. Lastly, the dataset contained an overrepresentation of teachers holding Education-related degrees, potentially biasing our findings (i.e., indicating that teachers do more CPD than they actually do).

## Conclusion

Research consensus strongly contends that the higher the quality of CPD a teacher receives and is involved in, the more student outcomes improve. Thus, from the viewpoint of the institution and the teacher, CPD should be neither uncoordinated nor “left to chance” (Richards & Farrell, 2005, p. 17). As many NESTs enter Korea with inadequate pre-service teacher training due to low entry requirements (with an accompanying teaching knowledge gap), the provision of more enhanced in-service teacher training (Jeon & Lee, 2006) via more effective CPD programs may mitigate the teaching knowledge deficit of NESTs and upgrade learning outcomes for students. In agreement with Hunt, who strongly asserts that “there is an undeniable need for professional development rooted in heightening pedagogical competence” (2017, p.18), implementing mandatory CPD programs with more rigorous core standards, but that still supply teachers with CPD agency through defined activity choices, would serve as a tool to advance NEST practices in the Korean context. Such CPD should be locally situated and balanced between the institution and the individual practitioner. As our findings have shown, and in agreement with Anderson (2018), who warns that excessive bottom-up (i.e., deregulated) CPD is impractical for all but the most highly motivated and accountable teachers, if CPD is not at least partly institution-guided, teachers will generally engage in very limited self-directed CPD. Therefore, the authors argue for the provision of a more robust CPD framework with established core standards, balanced between top-down and bottom-up CPD, benchmarked against current effective programs in similar educational contexts. Further, teacher educators involved should strive to provide locally relevant and appropriate CPD “opportunities, practices, and resources that are socially, culturally, historically, and institutionally situated in and responsive to teachers’, students’, and community needs” (Johnson & Golombek, 2020, p. 120). Future research should explore the relationships between one’s motivation for becoming an EFL teacher in Korea (or other EFL context) and their commitment to CPD.

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## Appendix A

### Questionnaire

#### Section A: General Information

1. Age: 21-25 / 26-30 / 31-35 / 36-40 / 40+

2. Sex:  Male  Female  Other/prefer not to say

3. How many years have you been an EFL/ESL teacher:

in Korea: Less than 1 year / 1-3 years (12-36 months) / 3-5 years (36-60 months) / 5-8 years (60-96 months) / 8+

outside of Korea: Less than 1 year / 1-3 years (12-36 months) / 3-5 years (36-60 months) / 5-8 years (60-96 months) / 8+

4. What degree/s have you completed? Check the appropriate box and write your study major on the line provided.

Undergraduate Degree: Major \_\_\_\_\_

Master's Degree: Major \_\_\_\_\_

Doctor's Degree/PhD: Major \_\_\_\_\_

5. Are any of your degrees related to Education or Linguistics?

No

Yes (Please write which level of degree and major e.g., MA TESOL)

6. What is your current teaching situation? Please check the box that best defines your situation.

Hagwon (General English for children and/or teenagers)

Hagwon (for adults)

Hagwon (English for test preparation, e.g., TOEFL, IELTS, or Korean SAT)

Kindergarten

Elementary school

Middle school

High school

University

Other \_\_\_\_\_

7. How long have you been teaching at your current school/university/institution?

Less than 1 year

1-2 years

3 - 5 years

5 + years

**Section B: CPD Questions**

8. Have you completed any of the following courses or certifications in the past 12 months? Please check all that apply.

- CELTA (Cambridge Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages)
- DELTA (Cambridge Diploma in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages)
- 60-hour online/face-to-face TEFL/TESOL Certificate
- 120 (or more) hour online/face-to-face TEFL/TESOL Certificate
- None of the above

9. In relation to your own personal development as a teacher, have you done (either in person or online) any of the following in the past 12 months? (Check all that apply)

- Sat the Korean TOPIK test (or other Korean language exam)
- Sat the TOEIC, IELTS, TOELF, or other high-stakes test
- Presented at an educational seminar or convention (e.g., KOTESOL or JALT conference)
- None of the above

10. In relation to your own personal development as a teacher, have you done (either in person or online) any of the following in the past 6 months? (Check all that apply)

- Attended a seminar related to EFL education or teaching English
- Attended a KOTESOL meeting, seminar, or convention
- Completed an online course related to teaching or EFL/ESL education
- Attended any accredited (face-to-face or online) classes related to education or teaching English
- Other
- None of the above

11. Have you done any personal development (not indicated above) to enhance your skills or knowledge as an educator in the past year? If yes, please provide an overview of the formal or informal teacher training or personal development activities you have done to improve as an educator. (Open ended response where participants could write about the CPD they had completed)

**Section C: Opinions**

Please check one box for each statement below to indicate your level of agreement in accordance with the following scale.

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

12. I intend to pursue (or I am already pursuing) EFL/ESL teaching as a long-term career.



## Appendix B

### Interview Questions

1. Do you think personal professional development (i.e., voluntary and self-directed) is part of the job or role as a teacher, or is it something an individual should do only if they want to?
2. What are your thoughts on professional development? Is it important? Can it improve teaching skills or educational outcomes?
3. What specific personal development have you done in the last year (informal/formal)?  
What did you learn?  
Was it beneficial? (if no)  
What prevented you from doing PD?
4. How much reflection do you do after classes are over? Do you keep a journal, or make notes about what things worked/didn't work in the classroom? (As this is a form of PD.)  
Do you ever revise your lessons after teaching them? If so, what steps are involved in the revision process?
5. Have you done any educational courses related to teaching in the last 12 months? Which one/s? What did you learn? Was it beneficial?
6. Regarding personal reading or study related to teaching English, can you give me an honest overview of what you did and what topics or things you learned.
7. When it comes to Professional Development, can you suggest any ideas for effective PD or what PD you think EFL teachers should engage in?
8. Do you think your school encourages you to do PD? Why do you think that is?
9. How often do you think teachers should do some form of training or workshop related to teaching EFL (either Professional Development (i.e., run by the school or government) or Personal Professional Development (i.e., voluntary and self-directed)?
10. In your opinion, do you think there are any industry-specific constraints (e.g., language barriers, poor advancement prospects, visa rules) that prevent teachers in Korea as seeing EFL as a long-term career choice? Explain.