



COLLABORATIVE INQUIRIES INTO TEACHING ENGLISH PRACTICAL SKILLS VIA A CRITICAL FRIENDS GROUP: NOVICE TEACHERS' ATTITUDES AND CHALLENGES

Phan Quynh Nhu*, Nguyen Thi Thanh Loan

University of Foreign Languages, Hue University, 57 Nguyen Khoa Chiem St., Hue, Vietnam

Abstract. From a sociocultural perspective, professional learning sites for teachers need to go beyond the boundaries of one-off training course to the situation-specific, on-going and collaborative learning activities within their community. Critical friends groups (CFG) are one of the collaborative learning forms, which involve a small group of teachers within a shared teaching context and friendship to interact and develop professionally. However, limited empirical evidence was found about the learning process of those who are in their first years of teaching, known as novice teachers. This case study was carried out to investigate how five EFL novice teachers at a university in Vietnam made professional inquiries collaboratively in a CFG to learn to teach English language skills and their attitudes towards their CFG experience. The data were collected through non-participant observations of discussions on a Messenger chat room of the CFG for three months and semi-structured interviews with the five teachers. The results reveal that the novice teachers valued their collaborative inquiries into how to teach English language skills at the tertiary level via a CFG although limited intimacy and time constraints hindered the active engagement of the teachers. It is recommended that CFGs or other collaborative forms of professional development need to be encouraged among teachers, particularly those starting their teaching career and to prioritize developing the mutual trust among the participants.

Keywords: professional development, collaboration, critical friends group, novice teachers, English language teaching

1. Introduction

It has been discussed in literature that professional development (PD) is a vital part of teachers' teaching profession. From a sociocultural perspective, this is an on-going learning process, which is "built through experiences in multiple social contexts" [15, p.10]. Their learning needs to be sustained over time in communities of practice that the teachers belong to and focus on their job-embedded responsibilities [7]. In their learning process, teachers are active agencies deciding what and how they learn by socially interacting and reflecting on the experiences embedded in their specific teaching contexts. The learning sites thus need to

* *Corresponding:* pquynhnhu@hueuni.edu.vn

expand their boundaries to other social contexts in their schools and wider communities [4, 7]. Teachers learn not only through individual-based activities such as reflective teaching journals or self-monitoring, but through collaborative activities with their colleagues such as critical friendships, teacher support groups or communities of practice. These types of PD activities aim at engaging teachers as active, self-directed and reflective learners in collaboration with others, which still seek for more empirical evidence from different contexts to be contributed to the field of teacher PD.

Learning to teach could be more significant to novice teachers, who have completed their pre-service teacher training course and initiated their teaching profession in an educational institution with little prior teaching experience [8]. They are considered as learners in early developmental stages in the inducing years of teaching life, thus showing various problems [3] in both academic and social lives [2, 10]. However, there has been little research examining how novice teachers learn to teach and overcome the challenges in their PD process. Further confirmation on how novice teachers learn to teach English language through collaboration with their critical friends makes a significant contribution to the field of teacher training and development. The current study was carried out to seek answers to the following questions:

1. What are the novice teachers' attitudes towards learning to teach English skills through Critical Friends Group experience?
2. What are the problems that the novice teachers encountered when engaging in a Critical Friends Group?

2. Literature review

2.1 Conceptualization of professional development

Professional development (PD) is defined as a teacher's professional growth that a teacher achieves as a result of gaining experience and examining his or her teaching systematically [13], or as the combination between formal and informal learning experiences that a teacher has throughout his or her teaching career [12]. Referring to these definitions of PD, its opportunities are not limited to formal or direct teaching of short training courses, workshops or seminars, but to involve both formal and informal professional experiences that the teachers engage in throughout their profession. Teachers' PD is inquiry-oriented and teachers are considered as active agents in their on-going learning process to work towards expertise.

However, it has been argued that the attempt to develop teachers' professional expertise is challenging to be made alone; thus, PD needs to promote collegiality and collaborative exchanges [4, 7] as highlighted in the light of a sociocultural perspective on PD. Teachers

directly engage in social and professional interactions on a regular basis with their students, colleagues and other stakeholders in their specific context to actively construct their knowledge and skills of teaching. In other words, teacher PD needs to be embedded in teaching practice with a particular group of students in a particular context. Taken this premise, it is significant to provide more empirical evidence on how teachers in a specific context learn to teach a particular group of students. Taken from a sociocultural perspective, teachers' PD opportunities should be carried out at an individual level, one-to-one, group-based and institutional directive with a wide range of PD activities [4]. They put a marked emphasis on both self-directed learning and interactions and collaborations teachers regularly have within their professional communities.

With the advancement of technology, teachers have to be of a “net generation”, which highlights the potential value of internet-based modes of PD, including online courses, webcasts, virtual workshops or seminars, online forums, chat rooms, communities and networking [4]. This advantage would help ease interactions and collaboration among teachers.

An extensive amount of previous research examining online PD activities of different forms have been conducted in different contexts in the world. Wideman [26] conducted an extensive review of 75 previous studies on online teacher learning communities of various forms, of which a majority were implemented in the United States from 2005 to 2010. The findings indicated that although most of the teachers in the reviewed studies value their learning experience via online communities, it is a challenging task to create and sustain a strong teacher learning community as a merely online mode. It is suggested that some face-to-face meetings should be incorporated to develop the trust and sense of community among their members, which would be considered to be a prerequisite for reflective discussion and frank exchanges.

In the first two decades of the 21st century, further studies have been carried out to explore the practice of implementing online PD activities for teachers of different subjects in different parts of the world such as in the United States [17, 22, 27], in Asia [5, 24] or in Vietnam [19]. These studies suggested similar findings on the teachers' learning experience; that is, the teachers valued the effects of online PD on their pedagogical and social development although different barriers were reported. The studied teachers were concerned about their unnatural information sharing, low level of activating cognitive thinking or lack of self-regulated skills of managing and controlling their postings on online synchronous discussions [5], their low level of interactivity on webinars [19], their adapting and adopting shared knowledge and ideas from a nation-wide or international community to fit into their specific context [22] or simply their limited skills of navigating the site [17]. When students' learning, teachers' teaching and PD in many parts of the world have been switched to an online mode on a more regular basis due to

the Covid-19 pandemic or other reasons, further research on how web-based PD activities have been implemented and perceived by teachers in the Vietnamese context has been called for.

2.2 Critical Friend Groups as a collaborative professional development activity

Critical friend groups (CFG) are one form of collaborative PD activities to involve teachers in schools to work collaboratively in democratic and reflective communities [1]. Critical friends are defined as colleagues from the same educational institution work to help each other with no hierarchy of expertise [1]. They interact to establish a democratic, reflective, and collaborative community of learners, which need to be supported. Critical friendship among such critical friends motivates talking, questioning, confronting with mutual trust to examine their planning for teaching, implementation and its evaluation. Adopting those features of critical friends or critical friendship, Critical Friends Groups have been developed as a collaborative PD activity for teachers. A CFG is defined as “a practitioner-driven study group that reflects the growing trend for site-based professional development in which practitioners behave as managers of their own learning” [11, p. 260]. Similarly, a CFG is regarded as an ongoing practice where teachers continually learn about the content they teach as well as the instructional and assessment practice they use with that content. A CFG therefore focuses on the improvement of individual teacher practice as well as shared knowledge among colleagues [16] to be able to obtain changes in teaching practice at a specific site.

The optimal number of members engaging in a CFG suggested in literature varies from 4 to 12 teachers who come together voluntarily at least once a month to improve their practice through collaborative learning [1]. There are three types of CFG protocols:

- (a) The first type of CFG involves looking at student work where a teacher brings a sample and presents it along with a focusing question. Members of the group then take turns describing and hypothesizing about the work while the presenting teacher takes notes. After several rounds of comments, the presenting teacher shares what she finds useful in the conversation. Then, the group debriefs the entire process.
- (b) The second type of CFG protocol, used for peer observation, involves two teachers using a predetermined format and focus for observing each other’s teaching.
- (c) The last type, problem-solving protocols, opens with the presenter asking a question about a specific dilemma. Participants then ask probing questions and discuss the problem among themselves, while the presenter takes notes until the discussion is finished, at which point the presenter shares what he or she heard that was useful or important for his or her dilemma. [20, p. 261]

In either of its format, CFGs would benefit teachers in various ways distinctive from the other conventional PD activities for the following reasons: (1) it is continual, (2) it emphasizes

their own teaching and their own students' learning, (3) it occurs in a small learning community of supportive and trusted colleagues within their own institution, and (4) teachers take control of their professional learning needs [1, 13]. Therefore, teachers are more likely benefit from such a collaborative, supportive and friendly learning community.

A number of previous studies were carried out to examine the benefits and challenges of implementing CFGs as a PD activity for teachers in different contexts [9, 14, 18, 20, 23]. Farrell [9] reported that three teachers of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) from the National Institute of Education enjoyed and valued collaborating with their critical friends in their lonely journey of becoming a teacher despite their initial untrusted relationship and limited time for discussion. Similar positive feedback on their learning experience via CFGs was reported by teachers of elementary schools [14, 18] and middle school [20] in non-Asian context. There has still been a dearth of empirical evidence on the use of CFGs in the Vietnamese context. Vo and Nguyen [23] reported development of positive attitudes towards CFG experience of four Vietnamese EFL teachers who were the novice teachers starting teaching the same course of elementary English and using the same textbooks. With initial reluctance to professional exchanges, the teachers gradually built collegiality and intimacy in work relationships and a sense of professional community, which brings these beginning teachers closer together and reinforce their confidence in teaching as well as in professional development, and thus, some improvement in their teaching. Vo and Nguyen's study on CFG of Vietnamese EFL teachers reveal the possibility of implementing CFGs as a PD activity in the Vietnamese context. However, this contribution may fail to depict the whole picture of PD for language teachers in different teaching practices in Vietnam. Therefore, the current research was conducted in order to further explore the implementation of CFG as a collaborative PD activity specifically in the context of higher education in Vietnam with its social, cultural and political features.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research design

The aim of this study is to explore the novice teachers' attitudes towards the implementation of a Critical Friends Group (CFG) as a professional development activity in their learning process to teach English language skills at a university and the challenges they might have encountered. In order to achieve the aims, this study was designed as a qualitative case study to allow for in-depth and detailed understanding [9] of the implementation of CFG as a PD activity for five novice teachers and a close examination of a particular unit of the CFG within its real-life and distinctive setting [19] where the participant teachers naturally engaged in as learners of teaching.

3.2. Research participants

The research involved voluntary participation of five novice teachers who were the newly-recruited teachers at the Faculty of English in Thanh Long (pseudonym) university in Vietnam. They started their teaching profession as novice teachers under the mentorship of senior lecturers at the university for about one year by the time when the study started. In the first semester, the novice teachers were required to observe other senior lecturers' teachings, to read materials related to their expertise orientation (either linguistics, English teaching methods or translation) and to prepare for a number of lessons on English language skills to be delivered to English-majored students under the guidance of their mentor. In the second semester, they were assigned to directly teach three or four English language skills courses under the supervision of their mentor. These five teachers taught the same course - Speaking 2 to freshman students of English major using the same syllabus and the pre-determined textbook. They were required to design and deliver learning and assessment activities in accordance with pre-developed syllabus of the course.

To ensure the participants' confidentiality, pseudonyms were used to refer to these five teachers in the process of data analysis and research report. Their pseudonyms are Kim, Alice, Hanah, Rose, and Maria. These five teachers shared a number of aspects including their educational background, qualifications, working experience, English competence and job inquiry as described in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Participants' Information

Pseudo nym	Gender	Working experience at Faculty	Prior experience	English Competence	Date of recruitment	Qualification	Year of graduation
Kim	Female	< 1 year	0 year	C1 (CEFR)*	3/2019	BA (EL)**	2018
Hanah	Female	< 1 year	0 year	C1 (CEFR)	3/2019	BA (ELT)	2018
Alice	Female	< 1 year	1 year	C1 (CEFR)	3/2019	BA (ELT)	2017
Maria	Female	< 1 year	0 year	C1 (CEFR)	3/2019	BA (ELT)	2018
Rose	Female	< 1 year	0 year	C1 (CEFR)	3/2019	BA (EL)	2018

*C1 (CEFR): officially awarded, IELTS band equivalent to C1

** EL: English language major; ELT: English Language Teaching major

3.3. Critical Friends Group's setting

A critical friends group (CFG) was set up to involve the five novice teachers for their professional exchanges in their first year of teaching. Prior to official CFG's meetings, an orientation meeting was held to discuss the CFG's plan. As planned, the CFG would use a problem-solving CFG protocol [20], in which one presenter asks a question about a specific dilemma and other participants ask probing questions and discuss the problem among

themselves [11]. The CFG would have face-to-face meetings twice a month to share their experience and ideas for teaching English language skills to undergraduate students of English major. Unfortunately, the pandemic unexpectedly happened, which required both teachers and students to work from home and thus postponed the CFG's pre-planned meetings. Thereby, the participants initiated the idea of forming a chat group called "*E-learning*" via Messenger Group chat on Facebook instead of following the pre-planned and invited the researchers to join.

The five teachers were suggested taking turns acting as the presenter raising issues in their teaching to be discussed for each week, while other issues coming spontaneously were also welcomed. The CFG chats were observed by one researcher for three months, from the third week of the second semester in an academic year. As a non-participant observer, the researcher joining the CFG sometimes acted as a facilitator to remind the presenters of their roles. Being alumni of the same undergraduate course in one or two years difference, the observer seemed to have a caring relationship [36] with the CFG members, which might have not hindered the teachers from freely interacting with each other in the CFG's discussions.

3.4 Data collection instruments

Observations of group discussions and interviews were adopted as two major research instruments of collecting qualitative data of the teachers' attitudes towards the CFG and any challenges they had encountered. Unstructured observations allowed the researcher to observe the participants' verbal and non-verbal behavior of the participants' engagement in the natural setting of a CFG that other data collection tools might fail to [6]. The research's focuses guided the observations to target at participants' interaction frequency, topics to be discussed and willingness to participate. These sub-themes were subsumed under the level of engagement of CFG's members. After observing the online discussions for three months, semi-structured interviews were conducted in Vietnamese with each of the five teachers to obtain in-depth data [6] related to their attitudes towards the CFG and challenges that teachers might have had in the CFG. A set of 10 open-ended questions was used to obtain richer data related to the research focuses, including reasons for group chat formation, reflections on their engagement, lessons learned from peers and challenges faced in participating in a CFG.

3.5 Data analysis

After being collected, qualitative data from observations and interviews were transcribed, translated and analyzed under two major themes of the participants' attitudes towards a CFG, and challenges the participants encountered upon engaging in a CFG. The emerged sub-themes were developed along with the process of coding the collected data, including the participants' motivation, intimacy and trust, interaction frequency, discussed topics, willingness to participate, useful lessons, overall feedback, and constraints.

3.6 Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity are the two most important features contributing to the effectiveness research [5]. The data's reliability was ensured by a clear description of the data collection procedure and precise transcriptions and consideration of translation issues. The validity of the data was obtained by three ways, namely setting up a clear protocol the CFG, prolonging participants' engagement in the CFG without any interference of the researcher and obtaining a deep understanding the research context.

4. Findings and Discussion

The data from the two sources of qualitative data, including observations and interviews are analyzed under sub-categories related to the two focuses of the study, (1) the novice teacher's attitudes towards the use of a CFG as a collaborative PD activity, (2) the challenges the teachers encountered upon engaging in the CFG to learn to teach English language skills in the beginning years.

4.1. The novice teachers' attitudes towards CFG

The data from both the observations of the CFG's discussions and interviews with the five teachers revealed that the studied novice teachers valued their learning how to teach English skills through their CFG experience, but not all the five teachers had highly positive attitudes towards the CFG. Their attitudes were explored through their self-motivation, intimacy, engagement in the CFG and their perceptions of the CFG's benefits to their English language teaching.

Self-motivation for CFG

The data obtained from interviews indicated that the teachers' engagement in a CFG was derived from their real needs of learning collaboratively with their critical friends to learn to teach English language skills. It was reported that an unofficial CFG had been formed prior to the current study. The five teachers, who have a shared educational background, teaching experience and recruitment to a new working place (see Table 1) have turned to each other to informally exchange the issues and concerns related to their English language teaching. Their needs to learn from each other arose at a higher level since they were requested to deliver their teaching online due to the unexpected pandemic. They had an initiative to create a chat group on Facebook Messenger, named as "*E – Learning*", which was hosted by Hanah, one of the five teachers recruited. Hanah explained for the establishment of the group that:

"This is the first time we have taught students online, so it is deniable that online teaching emerges out a lot of difficulties that each of us could not find a good solution to. Therefore, I came

up with an idea to create a group where we can exchange information, knowledge and teaching experience". (Interview)

Being interviewed, the other four teachers also emphasized the necessity of learning to deal with their extensive challenges in manipulating online learning softwares such as Zoom and Learning Management System (LMS), selecting appropriate teaching materials and activities as well as managing online classes. They admitted that it is impossible for them to discuss with their peers in person as they used to, then a chat group would be an optimal place for them to chat professionally. This finding indicated that engaging in the chat group on Facebook Messenger was derived from the teachers' real needs of learning collaboratively in order to deal with their context-specific inquiries [4, 16]. Their self-established online discussion platform is accounted by the popularity of integrating technology as a means of interacting among professionals for their work for its convenience and accessibility in the context where they were not able to frequently meet in person.

Intimacy in CFG

It was found from the interview data that the discussion group was established and sustained on the basis of intimacy among the participants. The five participant teachers shared that they found it more comfortable to interact with the colleagues of the same age group and of intimate and harmonious relationship. Their intimacy may have developed from the fact that they were undergraduate graduates in one year before or after, recruited as lecturers at the university in the same year, and were taking the same postgraduate course. They felt to be able to support each other in a collaborative community of learners within a non-hierarchical relationship [1]. As such, they felt more comfortable to freely exchange the issues or concerns they had in their early years of teaching and significantly in the unexpected situation of switching to online teaching.

Engagement in CFG

The teachers' engagement was explored through the frequency of their interactions and the range of the topics to be shared and discussed in the CFG.-The observation data revealed that the CFG of a problem-solving protocol allowed the teachers to interact with each other by sharing their concerns or challenges in English language teaching with their critical friends and to discuss possible solutions to the problems shared. However, the rates of interactions were varied across the five teachers, in which Hannah and Kim had the highest number of interaction counts, standing at 87 and 68 respectively, and Alice, Maria and Rose experienced less frequency of interactions, at 26, 15 and 11 accordingly. They took turns in the discussion group to comment, exchange experience or suggest solutions to a specific concern shared.

As illustrated in the following extract, the turn counts of the five members (Kim, Hanah, Maria, Alice and Rose) were four, three, one, and zero respectively.

Kim: I'm not still sure of what assignments should be set up in my Speaking 2 class.

Hanah: I have 2 ideas: firstly, the teacher gives a speaking topic and asks individual students to record their speaking for about 3 minutes every week. Secondly, one group will have a presentation about a given topic and record their presentation to be uploaded to LMS. What do you think?

Kim: Every week, with an assignment seems to be difficult.

Hanah: Yes, of course

Kim: I think speaking will take longer time if we do like this. The workload of the teacher will be too much, to check one by one. Why don't we ask students to do a presentation on Zoom? Would it take a shorter time to check each group?

Maria: Then they'll submit their recording as evidence of their assignment?

Kim: Yes, if you want to mark in groups.

Hanah: Ok. Sounds good. Each week is for each group.

....

Alice: I think we need a workshop held by the Faculty so that more experienced teachers share their experience in teaching."

(Group discussion)

Hannah and Kim, who had the highest number of interaction counts, explained that they were very eager to raise questions or concerns as well as share experience in teaching English language skills, particularly in online teaching because they thought it is necessary to ask for help from their critical friends to solve their own problems and to help other members. The other three teachers explained for their low rate of interactions that they would prefer to privately interacting with her closer colleague, or they are shy or introvert.

The findings about the participants' interaction indicated that although the teachers viewed the CFG in the format of a group chat as a professional learning site, where they posted their concerns and ideas among their critical friends, their engagement was not always guided by their positive attitudes towards CFG experience. Their engagement was affected by the level of their learning demand, personality and relationship among the members.

In addition, the teachers' engagement was realized by various topics shared and discussed in this CFG. The topic of using technology in teaching English language skills online were extensively focused and discussed in the CFG. The other issues discussed were implementing assessment of students' work, selecting teaching techniques or materials, designing lesson plans and managing online classes. This finding indicated that the group's collective knowledge was valued in the process of individual teachers' professional

development [4,16]. They regarded the CFG as a collaborative learning site where they were able to make inquiries about and reflect on their practice of teaching English language skills, share the difficulties that they faced during the time of teaching and to help each other to figure out optimal solutions to their problems [9, 10].

Perceived benefits of CFG

The teachers' attitudes towards learning in a CFG were further confirmed by their perceptions on the CFG benefited their process of learning to teach English language in a tertiary setting. The findings obtained from the interviews indicated that the benefits of CFG were highly valued by all the five teachers despite their various rates of engagement in the CFG. All the five teachers agreed that the CFG's open discussions in either online or off-line chats helped them to be more skillful of using technology in teaching and to deliver better English language skills classes. They would also be able to "*pick up some interesting techniques and classroom management tips shared by the other members*" (Kim, Interview), or "*select the suitable solutions to apply in my classes later.....become a more confident teacher*" (Rosa, Interview). The findings on the CFG's positive benefits were in line with what were found in previous studies [10, 14, 18, 20, 23]. They specifically helped each other to enhance their knowledge and skill of using technology in teaching and to be more confident and efficient in their English lessons in order to promote students' English learning.

4.2. CFG's constraints

The data collected from the current study showed that the CFG's members encountered two major constraints in their CFG engagement, including time constraint and mutual trust. These were reported to be the main underlying reasons for the variations in teachers' interaction rate and their fading engagement towards the end of three-month period. Their time is "*very tight, with 'too many duties to do'*" (Kim, Alice, Maria) or they are always "*under time pressure*" dealing with "*millions of work*" (Hanah) related to teaching, students' activities and administration. Their time for online interaction in the chat group was thus limited. Then, they decided to quickly chat with their critical friends in the Faculty's office on the teaching days about any issues or concerns they had in teaching, which they thought to save their time. The issue of time constraint that the participant teachers in the CFG raised was congruent with what has been discussed in literature on novice teachers' experience in their first years of working as well as on teachers' collaborative PD [1, 9, 14, 18, 20, 23]. They are required to perform a wide range of duties, including teaching, counseling students, participating in PD activities as well as social activities.

Beside the time constraint, the mutual trust among the teachers in the CFG was also questioned. It was doubted that the novice teachers' limited expertise and experience prevented them from suggesting the best solutions to certain problems their peers encountered in teaching

(Rose). Another hindrance to their mutual trust in the CFG was the limited intimacy among these five teachers. It is interesting to uncover that it was their commonness and closeness that initially brought the five teachers together in professional interactions, but this does not mean that their intimacy equally developed among these teachers over the few months interacting in the CFG. The limited intimate relationship to some extent hindered them from interacting with each other extensively in the group chat. The constraint of initial intimacy was also reported in previous studies [9, 14, 18, 20] although the collegiality among the CFG's members in these previous studies developed along with the process of engaging in CFGs. Being claimed as a prerequisite for reflective discussion and frank exchanges in online teacher communities [38], the limited mutual trust among the five novice teachers seemed to be one of the major hindrances to the inactive participation in the CFG in this study.

5. Conclusions

Designed as a qualitative case study, this research examined how the novice teachers made collaborative inquiries into teaching English language skills in a CFG. The teachers appreciated the significance of learning through professional interactions about their teaching context-specific issues and concerns in an informal and friendly mode among critical friends. However, this positive attitude was not equally distributed across all the five members of a CFG due to the limited intimacy and trust among them. Their dearth of time allocated for professional exchanges was found to be another hindrance to their fading engagement in the group chat when their learning demand was not at a high level. In reference to the findings of the current study, it is suggested that self-directed inquires, intimacy and time allotment should be vital factors to the establishment, benefits and sustainability of collaborative PD activities, which could result in professional growth and teachers' confidence among teachers, especially novice teachers in their beginning years of their teaching profession.

This study contribute more empirical evidence to the field of language teacher education and PD on the possibility of stimulating more collaborative continuous professional development among Vietnamese novice teachers in higher education setting in a context-embedded, regular and informal mode. Further research involving classroom observations or teaching journals would produce deeper evidence on what transformations the teachers can make through collaborative inquires in a CFG or other communities of practice.

References

1. Andreu, R., Canos, L., Juana, S. d., Manresa, E., Rienda, L., & J., T. J. (2003). Critical friends: a tool for quality improvement in universities. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 11(1), 31-36.
2. Bao, K. (2013). *The socialisation of first-year EFL students in Vietnam*. (Doctor of Education), La Trobe University, Victoria, Australia.
3. Bradley, K. M. (2010). *Roles of school counselors in supporting novice teachers*. Texas: Texas A&M University.
4. Brown, H. D., & Lee, H. (2015). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy* (4 ed.). New York: Pearson Education.
5. Chen, Y., Chen, N.-S., & Tsai, C.-C. (2009). The use of online synchronous discussion for web-based professional development for teachers. *Computer and Education*, 53, 1155–1166.
6. Cresswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design. Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Los Angeles: SAGE.
7. Diaz-Maggioli, G. H. (2003). Professional development for language teachers. *ERIC Digest, August*, 03-03.
8. Farrell, T. S. C. (2009). The novice teacher experience. In A. Burns & J. C. Richards (Eds.), *The Cambridge guide to second language teacher education* (pp. 182-189). New York: Cambridge University Press.
9. Farrell, T. S. C. (2014). *Reflective practice in ESL teacher development groups: From practices to principles*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
10. Farrell, T. S. C. (2016). *From trainee to teacher: Reflective practice for novice teachers*. London: Equinox.
11. Franzak, J. K. (2002). Developing a teacher identity: the impact of critical friends practice on the student teacher. *English Education*, 34(4), 258-270.
12. Fullan, M., & Steigelbauer, S. (1991). *The new meaning of educational change* (2nd ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.
13. Glatthorn, A. (1995). Teacher development. In L. W. Anderson (Ed.), *International encyclopedia of teaching and teacher education* (pp. 41-46). New York: Elsevier Science Inc.
14. Harrington, D. C. (2009). *Critical friends group: Effects on teacher practice and collaboration*. (Master), University of North Carolina Wilmington.

15. Johnson, K. E. (2006). The sociocultural turn and its challenges for second language teacher education. *TESOL Quarterly*, 40(1), 235-257.
16. Johnson, K. E. (2009). *Second language teacher education: A sociocultural perspective*. New York: Routledge.
17. Khan, A. (2014). Teaching, learning, and professional development in the English Companion Ning (ECN): An online community for English teachers *International Journal of Arts and Sciences*, 07(03), 347-353.
18. Kuh, L. P. (2015). Teachers talking about teaching and school: Collaboration and reflective practice via Critical Friends Groups. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*. doi:10.1080/13540602.2015.1058589
19. Mai, T., & Ocricano, M. (2017). Investigating the influence of Webinar participation on professional development of English language teachers in rural Vietnam. *Language Education in Asia*, 8(1), 48-66.
20. Poehner, P. (2011). Teacher learning through critical friends groups. In K. E. Johnson & P. R. Golombek (Eds.), *Research on second language teacher education: a sociocultural perspective on professional development* (pp. 189-203). New York: Routledge.
21. Richards, J. C., & Farrell, T. S. (2011). *Practice teaching: A reflective approach*: Cambridge University Press.
22. Trust, T. (2016). New model of teacher learning in an online network. *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*, 48(4), 290-305.
23. Vo, L. T., & Nguyen, T. M. H. (2010). Critical friends group for EFL teacher professional development. *ELT Journal*, 64(2), 205-213. doi:10.1093/elt/ccp025
24. Waheed, H., Salami, A. B., Ali, D. O., & Dahlan, A. R. b. A. (2011). Collaborative web-based teacher professional development system: A new direction for teacher professional development in Malaysia. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 1(7), 208-216.
25. Webster, L., & Mertova, P. (2007). *Using narrative inquiry as a research method: An introduction to using critical event narrative analysis in research on learning and teaching*. London: Routledge.
26. Wideman, H. (2010). *Online teacher learning communities: A literature review*. Retrieved from York University.
27. Yurkofsky, M. M., Blum-Smith, S., & Brennan, K. (2019). *Expanding outcomes: Exploring varied conceptions of teacher learning in an online professional development experience*. Retrieved from <https://www.elsevier.com/open-access/userlicense/1.0/>