

# CLASSIC-TPACK PDP for Teaching Composition: A Suggested Professional Developmental Program for Teaching L2 Writers

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Received: October 13, 2024 Accepted: November 14, 2024 Published: November 15, 2024

doi:10.5296/jet.v12i1.22317

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5296/jet.v12i1.22317>

## Abstract

This study explores Saudi foundation-year students' instructional challenges in developing academic writing skills. Many students enter university with limited experience in writing, often relying on memorization rather than original expression, which leads to increased writing anxiety, hinders critical thinking, and places undue focus on error correction over fluency. To address these issues, the current paper introduces the CLASSIC-TPACK Professional Development Program (PDP) designed to enhance English instructors' teaching methods. Rooted in The Critical Approach and Reid's Teacher Training Quadrants, this flexible and inclusive framework supports varied learner needs. The program uses the Cooperative/Collegial Development Model to foster a collaborative environment where educators engage in reflective practice and action research, incorporating technology to enrich their teaching. This initiative aims to support the growth of skilled L2 writers and highlights the importance of ongoing professional development to strengthen academic writing within Saudi education.

**Keywords:** Writing anxiety, Professional Development Program (PDP), CLASSIC-TPACK, Critical Approach, Reid's Quadrants, Cooperative/Collegial Development Model, reflective practices

## 1. Introduction

In contrast to reading, listening, and speaking skills, writing is a productive skill that takes plenty of time to develop since it has circular and overlapping stages, i.e., planning and brainstorming, sentence formation, revising and editing, and communicating it to confident readers. In addition, writing and its various genres are integrated with other language skills in most Saudi university's curricula in students' course books, and this supports Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) (Lo & Jeong, 2018, p. 36). However, according to

Hipkiss and Varga (2018), English instructors need to develop their students' writing skills more intensively for two main reasons. The former reason is that teaching writing in stages is overwhelming before and after writing tasks since each student requires individual corrective feedback. The latter is the reality of the vast number of students in a Saudi EFL classroom, as it is about thirty to forty-five students. One teacher might need more than one teacher to teach and reasonably assess writing.

Concerning students' needs, Saudi L2 learners need to learn how to write academically; they memorize and write their drafts as they do in their exams. Are TESOL educators satisfied with the level of writing in Saudi universities? TESOL educators strive for high standards to create a generation that is fluent enough in writing. Each group of students needs writing tutors in addition to their primary teachers to be able to make one-on-one beneficial meetings throughout the semester. Therefore, this paper suggests a professional development design to facilitate teaching writing for teachers, allowing them to practice new pedagogies that satisfy learners' preferences and get them to produce their own L2 texts without hesitation and memorization. Thus, this paper proposes an evidence-based professional development program to be piloted and applied in Saudi universities to overcome writing anxiety among preparatory year students.

## **2. Literature Review**

### *2.1 Recent Studies in Writing Anxiety in Saudi Universities' L2 Learners*

Most L2 learners who study in Saudi universities have graduated from high schools that have yet to teach them how to produce their texts; they instead give them ready-made writing tasks, so students tend to memorize them and rewrite them again in their exams. Did they learn how to write academically? The answer is no, even though they did not learn to write a specific genre in their mother tongue. The Saudi context plays a paramount role in creating this problem due to various factors, namely writing anxiety, discouragement of critical thinking, teachers' focus on errors, and limiting thinking to accuracy rather than fluency. The focus context in this paper is foundation-year students, whom we may diagnose as novice academic writers.

With regards to writing, anxiety is seen as one of the most common problems in first-year English primary Saudi students due to many factors, as it happens occasionally while performing writing tasks. A study conducted at Taiba University on ESL learners showed that factors affecting writing anxiety are a lack of proficiency and strategic knowledge about academic writing (Alfarwan, 2022). According to Alfarwan (2022), EFL learners of Saudi universities experience writing anxiety because of many factors, namely, receiving negative feedback, corrections, and low grades. Hence, they need more confidence, less confusion, and more practical knowledge in writing skills. Another study by Alzahrani and Alshaikhi (2023) conducted on 200 first-year Saudi learners specialized in Science, Medicine, Community, and Information Technology majors showed that the majority of learners experienced high levels of writing anxiety due to a lack of linguistic skills and writing strategies, fear of negative comments, and lack of confidence. In any Saudi university, first-year learners face anxiety while performing their writing assignments, tasks, and quizzes (Alfarwan, 2022; Alzahrani &

Alshaikhi, 2023). Therefore, writing anxiety among first-year Saudi learners is a dilemma worthy of investigation and overcoming by implementing a professional development program that fits both teachers' and students' needs in a Saudi university context.

### *2.2 What Teachers Should Do to Reduce Writing Anxiety in Saudi Universities L2 Learners*

To overcome the problem of writing anxiety, a vast number of studies in TESOL indicated that constructive feedback, increasing confidence, and integrating creative strategies are vital. Teachers should coach the students while writing their tasks through assistance and guidance. They also should integrate novel and effective teaching writing strategies, such as open discussions and intensive writing workshops, as they should vary the techniques of teaching writing depending on the level of students in the class and on students' needs (Alamri et al., 2021; Waked et al., 2024). In addition, teachers must discuss the problem of writing anxiety with the students to create awareness that prevents them from being anxious during writing (Alamri et al., 2021).

The course teacher should have a background of reasons and factors behind writing anxiety among Saudi learners. According to Alzahrani and Alshaikhi (2023), the majority of L2 university learners experienced high levels of writing anxiety due to a lack of linguistic skills and writing strategies, fear of negative comments, and lack of confidence. In addition, another study in a Saudi university emphasized that most errors in writing are detected in grammar and vocabulary, which are strongly connected to writing anxiety (Almalki, 2020). The leading cause of writing difficulties among Saudi learners is the effect of L1 interference and untrained instructors, so instructors need to integrate effective strategies that enhance writing, e.g., writing to learn instead of learning to write (Alshammari, 2020). Therefore, language teachers should rebuild their writing teaching strategies to fit Saudi learners' needs.

### *2.3 Reflective Practice in TESOL and Teacher Development*

Teacher identity is a crucial element in reflective practices in any educational context. While the teacher records his beliefs and preferred pedagogical methodologies, the identity will be sculptured with time and experience. A study conducted in a Vietnamese university on an EFL English lecturer who was writing reflections about personal teaching practices and identity as a teacher in a multicultural context displayed challenges faced by the teacher, namely balancing traditional and student-centered classrooms, navigating between English as a global language and the cultural dominance (Thao & Thuy, 2024). As far as reflective practice is concerned, it is paramount to highlight the importance of reflective practice in the teaching journey of every language teacher.

Reflective practice is an act that assists TESOL educators on both personal and professional levels. On a personal level, the EFL teacher who reflects on teaching will have that critical self-awareness of identity and philosophy. On the professional level, the EFL teacher will apply teaching methodologies depending on students' needs. Also, the teacher will be aware of SLA theories used in practice in the classroom. A study in Canada conducted by Farrell and Macapinlac (2021) was based on the reflective practice of two novice EFL teachers to reflect on their teaching practices. According to Farrell and Macapinlac (2021), the primary

themes included in the study were teacher philosophy, principles, theory-into-practice, and critical reflection.

In contrast, the two mutual elements in the process were acknowledging teacher roles and the importance of students' success. Throughout the reflections, the two teachers were aware of the teaching practices and the expectations beyond these practices (Farrell & Macapinlac, 2021). Consequently, relying on frameworks that are dependent on reflective practices is a vital step for every TESOL educator in the Saudi context in order to understand oneself as a professional teacher on the one hand and as an into-practice applicant on the other. Therefore, this paper emphasizes a teacher professional development program model that includes reflective practice and TPACK knowledge and suggests implementing the Model in Saudi university contexts.

### **3. Method**

#### *3.1 Adoption of Bottom-Up Planning for a Professional Development Program (PDP) of Writing Community*

Throughout this paper, bottom-up planning will be tailored to develop a novel, innovative professional development program to address the dilemma of not being able to create a generation of L2 writers. Moreover, an approach should be selected wisely by looking at the imaginary pyramid base of professional development. Indeed, the current professional development program's base approach is critical and considered the most flexible approach for students and teachers.

The next stage of designing the current professional development program is selecting a suitable framework for the PDP. The present PDP mainly uses Reid's Quadrants of teacher training, which has four faces of training: planned/incidental, formal/informal (Fraser et al., 2007, p. 12). Thus, TESOL educators must remember that Reid's Quadrants ideology belongs to the Critical Approach to professional development.

The following stage is narrower: TESOL educators must select a suitable professional development model for the current PDP. After intensive reading in the field of professional development in TESOL, Villegas-Reimers (2003) mentioned the Cooperative/Collegial Development Model as suitable for the context of Saudi universities (p. 99). According to Villegas-Reimers (2003), the Model is characterized by its narrow, intensive focus on small-scale teachers and a more successful methodology for making teachers benefit more from PDP.

In short, this adopted bottom-up plan that includes the previous three stages is paramount to developing the current PDP "CLASSIC-TPACK." Throughout the paper, there will be discussions about these stages and the current PDP "CLASSIC-TPACK" in detail. In addition, along with designing the current PDP, the present study provides a parallel learning outcomes design, the manner of using the Cooperative/Collegial Development Model, the outline of the vision and challenges of this Model, and points of strength of this Model. Thus, the current study will go over designing the current PDP from a comprehensive picture to a narrower one, i.e., from the PD approach to the current PDP model called "CLASSIC-TPACK."

### *3.2 Stage 1: The Critical Approach of Professional Development*

Before designing the current PDP, TESOL educators will commence planning using the critical approach of professional development under the umbrella of TESOL. This approach advocates equity; they call for finding equilibrium between students and teachers so the educational institution would be under agreed-upon ongoing professional development. The current dilemma is that foundation-year Saudi students need help producing their written texts in a university context as they tend to memorize sentences and essays to pass their level. Consequently, the critical point of view of professional development might be an initial solution to help teachers teach composition and student writers in L2. Moreover, Students' needs are considered in this approach; Saudi university students are culturally different, and we can diagnose Saudi EFL classrooms as diverse. The diverse students in Saudi universities might be a mixture of local students and immigrants, e.g., Yemeni and Syrian.

As a result, each individual in this context has unique needs that teachers have to diagnose. The Critical Approach of professional development highlights diversity and aims at helping them to learn equally (Henze, 2005, p. 245). Based on Henze's analysis (2005), she suggested that the critical approach is beneficial in fulfilling leaders' awareness of communicative competence with their students (p. 243). Therefore, the first stage of the current PDP is adopting and adapting to The Critical Approach and running needs analysis for student writers.

The scenario for stage 1 can be visualized when the language teacher starts teaching; a survey of students' needs in writing should be done so the teacher can diagnose the students' weaknesses in writing. In addition, the teacher can give the students a timed writing task in the class without the support of books or any technological tool. As a result, the teacher will have detailed data on students' needs from the surveys and the writing tasks; the teacher analyzes the data collected and diagnoses students' levels in writing. Thus, the teacher can solve the weaknesses in writing through reading and joining TESOL communities.

### *3.3 Stage 2: Professional Development Framework: Reid's Quadrants of Teacher Training*

After selecting the professional development approach, TESOL educators narrow the picture to pick Reid's Quadrants of teacher training (Fraser et al., 2007, p. 12). This framework is selected because of its flexibility; it opens four doors for teachers to be trained as TESOL educators: formal/informal, planned/incidental, and the four quadrants might overlap (Fraser et al., 2007, p. 12). In the light of these four quadrants of Fraser et al. (2007), English instructors can take in-school courses about how to teach composition to Arab university students (formal/planned), exchange their experiences and new knowledge with their colleagues (formal/incidental), join a TESOL community in a technological platform, i.e., LinkedIn in this case (informal/planned), and discuss teaching practices and alternatives in private WhatsApp conversation at any time (informal/incidental) (p. 12).

In such cases, a teaching scenario can be when the language teacher is trained as a part of professional development, such as institutional in-house training sessions. In other words, the teacher can learn formally through planned formal workshops related to teaching writing

conducted in the institutions, learn informally through planned reading of recent articles, or consult experienced teachers incidentally about teaching writing strategies. Also, the teacher can join a technological platform, such as LinkedIn, to connect with TESOL educators and exchange the latest ideas in teaching writing to university students, whether in planned meetings or in incident post readings of teachers who post ideas on LinkedIn.

### *3.4 Stage 3: Professional Development Model: The Cooperative/Collegial Development Model*

After deciding which framework TESOL educators rely on to design the current PDP, they narrowed the selection of a suitable model. Specifically, the Cooperative/Collegial Development Model is the best to be adopted for its more flexible requirements: a small group of teachers (from four to six) work as a group of collaborative teachers (Villegas-Reimers, 2003, p. 99). According to Villegas-Reimers (2003), the curriculum should be customized by a group of teachers according to the student's needs, i.e., modifications of units in the course book (p. 99). In this Model, Villegas-Reimers (2003) emphasizes the importance of coaching rather than mentoring (p. 99). Coaching is "unlocking a teacher's motivation to a higher teaching competence level (Whitmore, 1995)" (Li & Chan, 2007, p. 342). Moreover, coaching is a cooperative professional developmental tool that focuses intensively on students' learning and takes place in teachers' everyday work life; it happens by building a repertoire with other TESOL communities to share models and thought collectives (TCs) or meta-knowledge they have developed to make others implement the change (Ramanathan, 2002), and considers confidentiality (Li & Chan, 2007; Villegas-Reimers, 2003).

The curriculum is a vital part of the Cooperative Development Model, as the teacher can customize units that include writing tasks as writing-to-learn activities that stimulate high-order thinking in students; this movement is called the Writing-Across-The-Curriculum Approach, as they can use digital platforms in order to integrate writing to real-life situations (Craig, 2013, pp. 114-119). In addition, action research is paramount in the Cooperative Model and encourages teachers to be teacher-researchers simultaneously (Craig, 2013; Darling-Hammond, 1998; Villegas-Reimers, 2003). Thus, teachers need to be trained in a Cooperative/Collegial Development Model, i.e., institutions must coordinate with trainers as an initial action plan.

In such a scenario, a teacher might coordinate with three other teachers working in the same institution and teaching the same English course. The group of teachers all meet weekly to discuss students' writing needs and customize teaching methodologies based on the students' needs analysis. Therefore, the four teachers will be more motivated and competent enough to try different teaching techniques in writing.

### *3.5 Stage 4: The Final Touches on the Model: The CLASSIC-TPACK Model*

After selecting the Cooperative/Collegial Development Model, TESOL educators adopt and narrow the focus on one of the derived models from this main one. Regarding the CLASSIC Model, CLASSIC is an acronym for (Critically reflective, Life-long Advocacy for Second



language learners, Site-specific Innovation, and Cross-cultural competence) (Penner-Williams et al., 2017, p. 218). The Model can be visualized circularly in a never-ending process in (Figure 1) below; it has the course and its accessories of methods, assessment, linguistics, and culture, then individual critical reflection that must be shared via online TESOL community (Pierson & Borthwick, 2010), followed by action research and coaching to formulate a theory into practice, make it in actual classroom implementation, and make a reflection about it and so on (Penner-Williams et al., 2017, p. 219).

In the stage of actual class implementation, the current study adds another model that deals with the type of knowledge that every language teacher should have. Adopting the TPACK Model, formulated by Koehler and Mishra (2006), is essential to coincide with the CLASSIC Model in the "mediated instruction" field. Most importantly, it is vital to integrate the learning process by creating an equilibrium of content, pedagogy, and technology (Koehler & Mishra, 2006). For content, the teacher would bring materials other than the textbook to manifest knowledge and widen the students' gaze. Also, the teacher must apply new teaching methods for pedagogy and be open to more than one theory. For technology, the teacher would facilitate and balance the teaching-learning process with software-processed programs, e.g., PowerPoint and Padlet.

Consequently, the current PD model is called the "CLASSIC-TPACK" Model (Penner-Williams et al., 2017; Koehler & Mishra, 2006). Every language teacher involved in this novel innovation PDP has to take a survey of TPACK to see her strengths and weaknesses in each knowledge type and develop them (Sahin, 2011, p. 105). Thus, seeking equilibrium in technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge is crucial.

A teaching scenario to reflect on Stage 4 is when the course teacher implements critical reflection using data collected from students' needs and teaching methodologies used to teach writing. The teacher teaches the course and reshapes it to balance three types of knowledge: content, pedagogy, and technology. The content knowledge is the abstract contents of the course, such as process paragraphs. In contrast, pedagogical knowledge is the teaching methodology the teacher uses in the teaching scenario, such as writing to learn. Technological knowledge is the tool the teacher uses, like Padlet, to make students write and post, so teachers and students can see the paragraphs. Then, the teacher posts the highlights of the critical reflection on LinkedIn and conducts action research based on students' needs analysis and personal reflections. Therefore, the teacher is a lifelong advocate for second language learners by critically reflecting on site-specific innovation and reshaping content and pedagogical and technological knowledge to gain the cross-cultural competence needed to teach writing to the students.

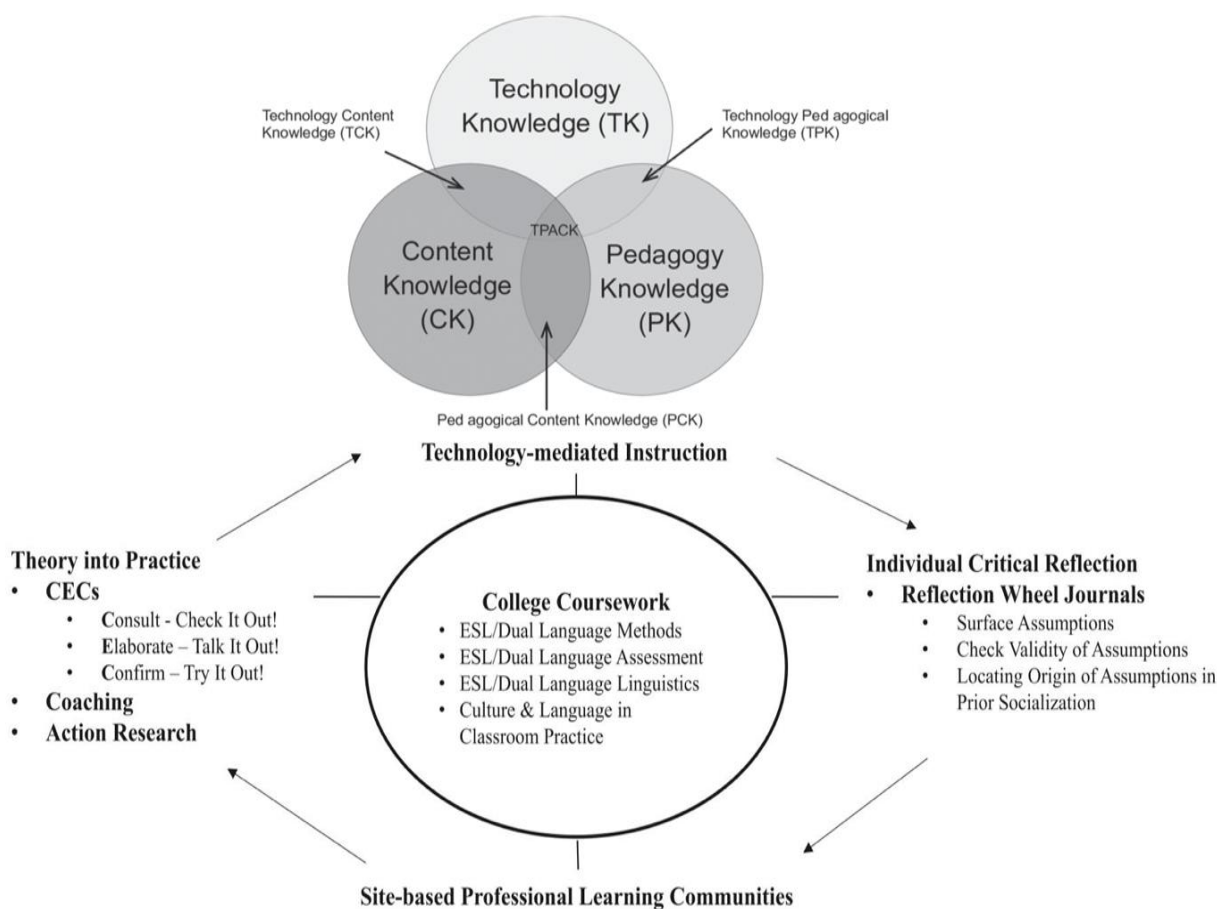


Figure 1. CLASSIC-TPACK Model (Penner-Williams, et al., 2017; Koehler & Mishra, 2006)

Figure 1. is a holistic guide starting from the Model's center. While both TPACK and Reid's Quadrants emphasize continuous teacher learning, TPACK focuses on creating a balance between technology, content, and pedagogy, whereas Reid's Quadrants Framework highlights teacher training, whether incidental or planned. The Model presents that the teacher conducts action research and coaches the learner by integrating technology with balancing content knowledge and pedagogy knowledge in classrooms. After teaching, the teacher is encouraged to reflect on the learning process using personal reflective logs or thought collectives (TCs). During the reflection process, the teacher checks whether or not the learning process is successful and valid.

Regarding continuous learning, teachers build new teaching strategies depending on previous incidents recorded in reflective practices. The teacher repeats the steps from action research to reflection every academic year. Thus, the Model illustrates that language teachers conduct action research that includes coaching, TPACK knowledge, and reflective practice, depending on valid data that is valuable for the next academic year. The process is lifelong, continuous, and ongoing year after year.



### *3.6 Challenges of Using the CLASSIC-TPACK Model*

Despite the various professional developmental tools involved in the designed PDP, namely the TPACK survey, reflective practice, joining the TESOL community, coaching, and action research, some challenges might threaten some items of the current Model. The challenges of using the CLASSIC-TPACK Model might be predicted and outlined in the following points:

- Lack of knowledge of how to make reflective practice: To manage this challenge, the institution should give focused workshops about making reflection to overcome this obstacle
- Lack of knowledge of how to conduct action research: Teachers should have tutorials on action research by attending workshops that are related to teacher development and action research
- The inability to conduct action research might result from many factors: Attitudes, motivation, culture, and lack of time, so teachers should organize timings and build an annual action research
- Coaching relationships: This might result from the cultural discouragement of being authorized by outsiders, so the administration should encourage it and illustrate how confidential and beneficial it is
- Lack of appreciation: To overcome this challenge, the administration should give prizes to teachers who conducted action research and published their work in Academic journals
- Lack of time: To overcome this challenge, the administration should give a reasonable teaching load to the teachers
- Lack of training: To overcome this challenge, the administration should give teachers training programs that do not contradict their teaching hours
- Teacher burnout: To overcome this challenge, the administration should encourage teachers by giving them flexible working hours so that they can have time for professional development, conduct action research, and reflect on their teaching practices

### **4. Results: Learning Outcomes of the CLASSIC-TPACK Model**

Four learning outcomes should be observed when teachers apply the CLASSIC-TPACK model above. When following the current PDP Model, teachers will be able to be:

- Curriculum developers, as they will create and customize tasks with consideration of students' culture along with the linguistic knowledge they have
- Reflective practitioners, as they will analyze and reflect upon every lesson they give in documented reflective logs
- TESOL community members, as they will share and apply experiences of theories they practiced and approaches they followed in online TESOL communities, as well as try out other teachers' theories and approaches
- Social trainers, as they will meet new outsider TESOL educators (coaches) to learn from

them with total professionalism and confidentiality

- Teacher-researchers, as they will conduct action research that includes all the data (reflective practice and students' feedback) of their practices throughout the year/semester
- TPACK-aware teachers, as they will link technology wisely to their content and pedagogical knowledge

### **5. Conclusion: Is the CLASSIC-TPACK Model Applicable?**

While the CLASSIC-TPACK model offers a promising pathway for teacher professional development, further empirical research is needed to validate its effectiveness through piloting. Although it is hard work to implement the current PDP, it will be beneficial from three angles: personal, institutional, and global. From a personal level, teachers will be researchers and reflective practitioners. From the institutional level, the institution will be developed through its teacher researchers and the efforts they give in order to have an excellent professional reputation. From the global level, teachers' efforts will be documented online through TESOL communities and journals. Therefore, all these prizes will reflect on English language learners' performance and satisfaction.

### **6. Limitations & Recommendations**

While offering great expectations and insights into the current study, many limitations should be outlined. First, many teachers in Saudi universities suffer from burnout due to the teaching load of about 18 hours to 24 hours a week, which is overwhelming when doing action research or even writing critical reflections. The second limitation is the resource constraints, such as the in-house training sessions that might not be available in the institution. Indeed, educational institutions should focus more on teacher professional development. The stakeholders should provide better resources for the sake of the student's learning process on the one hand, and the teacher's professional development on the other hand. Given the limitations above, there is a strong need for further research through pilot studies or collecting teacher feedback to evaluate the current PDP Model.

Finally, the goal of teacher professional development is to improve students' writing using the CLASSIC and TPACK Model. Future research could benefit from the current PDP Model, which includes plenty of well-structured frameworks, such as the Critical Approach, Reid's Quadrants, the CLASSIC Model, and the TPACK Model. Any TESOL educator could select the elements from all the mentioned models depending on the student's needs and the context variables. The CLASSIC-TPACK Model is hoped to be piloted and implemented in Saudi education. It will be interesting to investigate the Model and its components empirically in Saudi universities and modify them according to teachers' and students' needs.

### **Acknowledgments**

Not applicable.

### **Authors contributions**

Not applicable.

### **Funding**

Not applicable.

**Competing interests**

Not applicable.

**Informed consent**

Obtained.

**Ethics approval**

The Publication Ethics Committee of the Macrothink Institute.

The journal's policies adhere to the Core Practices established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

**Provenance and peer review**

Not commissioned; externally double-blind peer reviewed.

**Data availability statement**

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

**Data sharing statement**

No additional data are available.

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**Appendix A**
**Items of TPACK Survey**


TOJET: The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology – January 2011, volume 10 Issue 1

**APPENDIX A. ITEMS OF TPACK SURVEY**

Subscale	Items (I have knowledge in ...)
Technology Knowledge (TK)	Solving a technical problem with the computer
	Knowing about basic computer hardware (ex., CD-Rom, mother-board, RAM) and their functions
	Knowing about basic computer software (ex., Windows, Media Player) and their functions
	Following recent computer technologies
	Using a word-processor program (ex., MS Word)
	Using an electronic spreadsheet program (ex., MS Excel)
	Communicating through Internet tools (ex., e-mail, MSN Messenger)
	Using a picture editing program (ex., Paint)
	Using a presentation program (ex., MS Powerpoint)
	Saving data into a digital medium (ex., Flash Card, CD, DVD)
	Using area-specific software
	Using printer
	Using projector
Using scanner	
Using digital camera	
Pedagogy Knowledge (PK)	Assessing student performance
	Eliminating individual differences
	Using different evaluation methods and techniques
	Applying different learning theories and approaches (ex, Constructivist Learning, Multiple Intelligence Theory, Project-based Teaching)
	Being aware of possible student learning difficulties and misconceptions
Managing class	
Content Knowledge (CK)	Knowing about key subjects in my area
	Developing class activities and projects
	Following recent developments and applications in my content area
	Recognizing leaders in my content area
	Following up-to-date resources (ex, books, journals) in my content area
Following conferences and activities in my content area	
Technological Pedagogical Knowledge (TPK)	Choosing technologies appropriate for my teaching/learning approaches and strategies
	Using computer applications supporting student learning
	Being able to select technologies useful for my teaching career
Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK)	Evaluating appropriateness of a new technology for teaching and learning
	Selecting appropriate and effective teaching strategies for my content area
	Developing evaluation tests and surveys in my content area
	Preparing a lesson plan including class/school-wide activities
	Meeting objectives described in my lesson plan
	Making connections among related subjects in my content area
Making connections between my content area and other related courses	
Supporting subjects in my content area with outside (out-of-school) activities	
Technological Content Knowledge (TCK)	Using area-specific computer applications
	Using technologies helping to reach course objectives easily in my lesson plan
	Preparing a lesson plan requiring use of instructional technologies
	Developing class activities and projects involving use of instructional technologies
Technological Pedagogical and Content Knowledge (TPACK)	Integrating appropriate instructional methods and technologies into my content area
	Selecting contemporary strategies and technologies helping to teach my content effectively
	Teaching successfully by combining my content, pedagogy, and technology knowledge
	Taking a leadership role among my colleagues in the integration of content, pedagogy, and technology knowledge
	Teaching a subject with different instructional strategies and computer applications