

Siam Technology College
Bangkok, Thailand
Reflective Journal Template

Name: **Aren Tyr**

Course Title: **Learning Skills For Success 905-102**

Day: **Tuesday 17th (Day 1 of 4)**

<p>1. Areas of learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflective journal process 	<p>Evidence:</p> <p>A reflective journal used for academic assessment is something new to me. I have had to give some consideration as to the actual process of completing a reflective journal itself, especially in the context of recording my own personal learning/development during this module.</p> <p>An article “Reflective writing: a basic introduction” from the University of Portsmouth suggested a three step model of i) description, ii) interpretation, and iii) outcome, together with an “exploration and explanation of events”, and include both strengths and weaknesses. This seems like a salient and useful method so I will try to broadly follow this process. The University of Birmingham’s “A Short Guide to Reflective Writing” goes on to detail Gibb’s ‘Reflective Cycle’ (1988), which moves on from a description to an analysis, a conclusion, then a future action plan. Adopting this model in practice means that the conclusions I draw from this reflective journal should inform my future decisions and thinking in the areas of learning and personal skills development, as well as clarifying some of the knowledge and beliefs I may already hold about certain things.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Possibility of the Impossible” 	<p>Our group discussion on impossibility vs. possibility (“the possibility of the impossible”) centred on how critical <i>belief</i> is in determining whether something is <i>perceived</i> to be possible (or conversely, impossible). Our group concluded it is</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial presentation Job opportunities with a BA TESOL/ESL degree 	<p>important to differentiate between something that is merely <i>unrealistic</i> versus something that is actually impossible; your beliefs largely condition your potential for success.</p> <p>Furthermore, whether something is possible or impossible is also often largely a matter of resources, which governs your opportunities and available choices. Determination itself is also significantly influenced by belief; in order to be determined you must first hold some belief that success is hypothetically possible with hard work.</p> <p>In short then, belief is central to all learning and development, personal or professional. In terms of the group work itself, out of our group of five, four of us were quite proactive in contributing, with one silent member. Reflecting on this, I wonder if there was anything we could have done to get some input from this group member too? Perhaps, in hindsight, we should have made an explicit effort to try to draw them into the discussion and gain their insight, as we effectively lost one persons input.</p> <p>One member of our group then informally presented a brief summary of our group discussion on possibility vs. impossibility to the class. It highlighted the difficulty in succinctly orally presenting material with limited planning; the objective is not simply to read out a list of notes verbatim, but to present the ideas cogently whilst speaking to the audience. This is far from straightforward, as was apparent to everyone; however it became clear that development of personal presentation skills would become one of the main focuses of this module.</p> <p>The activity where we looked at a selection of potential career options for a TESOL degree (other than the obvious possibility of becoming an ESL teacher) was heartening and encouraging. Although one normally associates all degrees with possessing a large number of transferable skills (or 'soft skills', as we later covered in the day), nevertheless, I had not explicitly considered these various avenues as being a direct employment opportunity. Journalism, writing, copy editing and</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aptitude • ‘Hard Skills vs. Soft Skills’ 	<p>editorial assistant are all potentially interesting to me. At this stage I am still unclear precisely what my long term career goals are, so this is important for me to address, particularly later on in the degree program. I have a couple of years to refine my thinking on this issue. I have always had a strong interest and have done quite a lot of reading in Philosophy, and the TESOL degree may prove perfectly useful for potentially developing this academic avenue. Most of the central problems of Philosophy often revolve around, or are critically dependent upon, our use of language. Language is the tool through which we communicate our conceptual knowledge and ideas; reflection upon language itself is therefore key if we wish to have clarity over any of our fundamental concepts.</p> <p>Our group looked at “Digital Copywriter” – see Appendix 1 below.</p> <p>We touched upon the subject of the level of competition in the workplace and job market, and the need for a wide portfolio of skills. The need for diligence and perseverance was clear; the BA TESOL (when completed) may provide the ‘Hard Skill’ or qualification, but will not in itself be enough to enable one to be successful in the real world. <i>How</i> one applies oneself during the study is the difference between merely having a paper qualification and actually having competence and the ability to teach, together with developing a whole array of ‘soft skills’.</p> <p>The activities and topics for discussion so far had introduced the notion of hard and soft skills. A number of hard skills are teachable in the process of completing this degree, but the slides highlighted to me how the soft skills are equally important (if not even more so, in practice) to acquire. A large number of these soft skills are only acquirable in the job industry that you are interested in, which is why experience is always demanded, particularly from more senior job positions. The prevalence of ‘transferable’ soft skills does enable us to at least make use of skills we have acquired elsewhere when changing career direction.</p>
<p>2. Your previous understanding and new understanding:</p>	<p>Evidence:</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of the BA TESOL degree for fields other than teaching: digital copywriter activity. 	<p>I had not explicitly considered the TESOL degree as being specifically valuable for progressing into the field of a digital copywriter, but it is clear from analysing the skill set that a large amount of transferable skills from the degree will be valuable.</p> <p>To be highly successful in this field requires a large number of different skills, above and beyond simply writing well. For me, I feel most confident with the actual writing component. The areas where I feel I am weaker and would need significant practice on involve the use of developing the project brief, accurately scoping the work that will be required, and the interpersonal skills involved in successfully pitching, negotiating, and following up on potential copywriting leads. Although I feel I do possess relatively good interpersonal skills, the better these can be developed the more likely you are to sustain a continual income stream.</p> <p>Depending on the nature of the company, or whether you follow more of a self-employed route, how proactive you need to be in these areas will likely vary significantly. These are critical but external skills that are required in order to successfully work as a copywriter.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gardner's theory of "Multiple Intelligences" 	<p>I have encountered Gardner's theory of "Multiple Intelligences" before, so the slides and subsequent lecture acted as a refresher. I would say that even today the range of educational methodologies offered in <i>practice</i> is still somewhat limited, with a large preponderance towards linguistic intelligence with a large amount of "teacher talk time". Most people who become teachers have a natural inclination or comfort within the educational setting, so the question is, are we always perpetuating a cognitive or learning style bias if we then become teachers and replicate that which we are most comfortable with? Specifically, to clarify, teachers often have a natural aptitude for linguistic intelligence, but if we do not make our lessons amenable to a wide range of different intelligence types, by offering activities that tap into these different "intelligences", are we effectively being intellectually prejudicial to all those people who are linguistically weaker? Information technology perhaps offers a wider range of possible options than ever before (think how much actual learning now occurs via YouTube!), but the challenge is to incorporate these new methodologies without allowing our critical</p>

	<p>language faculties (specifically written language) to diminish. Many critics of modernity already consider there to be a steep decline in overall proficiency of both written language and the attention span necessary to sustain long-format reading (i.e. entire books and novels, etc.) among native-language citizens.</p> <p>For me, I feel that musical and interpersonal intelligences are my weakest areas. I never learnt to play any musical instrument, and my ability with tones is probably not brilliant, which is perhaps hindering my own learning of the Thai language. Interpersonal weakness reflects in my very limited professional network and my natural proclivity to work alone. This a major area of potential improvement for me, as it is networking and connections with people that is arguably the single most important area for jobs and career development, potentially more so even than your skills, knowledge, or abilities in any given area.</p>
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<p>3. What challenged you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of factors involved in both career and personal development 	<p>Evidence:</p> <p>We covered a huge number of topics all of which are important both for your own personal career development, but also which need careful scrutiny in terms of your approach to teaching, if your intention is to be a proficient and effective teacher.</p> <p>I have made a rather limited effort so far in my life in terms of this kind of meta-analysis. I have a large range of skills (both Hard & Soft), a decent amount of relevant work experience or pertinent experience of “on-job” skills, but the reality is I have avoided – either due to a lack of confidence, diligence, or both – doing a personal skills analysis to investigate precisely what career options are available to me. I have ended up rather drifting in my career so far, rather than having any goal directed intention.</p> <p>The “Employability Skills – Part of ESL Curriculum” details a large number of English language based skills that are considered critical or highly desirable by potential</p>
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	<p>employers. I believe I would score quite well on a large number of these (difficulty of accurately quantifying them notwithstanding), so the question is why I have not so far reflected upon this more diligently and considered my options rather better than I have.</p> <p>In terms of teaching, then, this is pleasing, as it underlies the potential value to individuals that command of English language holds. As a native English language speaker it is easy to take this proficiency for granted. Even in the UK, the level of English proficiency (particularly in terms of cogent oral communication and high-level writing) is often lacking, leading to suboptimal 'communication' skills.</p> <p>Finally, it has made me reflect explicitly that in my own formal education, many of these skills have been poorly addressed; instead I have had to work on them as best I can through my own independent learning, in particular my extensive reading on all manner of subjects. I do not recall any particular teaching or explicit consideration of most of these 'learning skills'.</p>
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<p>4. What have you learnt?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compiling, ordering, notating and presenting large amounts of information 	<p>Evidence:</p> <p>The learning process today was not simply of a linear nature, or on one isolated topic. Even though each topic was presented in turn, in all cases, there was an organic approach to the learning with shared concepts linked and developed in other areas of learning.</p> <p>I realised my initial note taking was not good enough (by about halfway through the day!), and I was too reliant on attempting to simply memorise the information.</p>
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- The teacher's responsibility towards students

This was inadequate for compiling this reflective journal, since this necessitates gathering up all the thoughts and learning for the day and putting it into some type of order. This is one of the 'soft skills' and corresponds to slide 13 of the "Hard and Soft Skills for Journal" document. Like most students, it is easy to become over-reliant on simply having a very defined context or concrete set of instructions for completing a task; one of the most useful skills is being able to assemble diverse information into a coherent form. Fortunately, some of the other students had been a bit more diligent with their note-taking so I was able to recapitulate the day's work with them.

By the evening of the first day (Tuesday) I decided to alter my strategy and realised I already possessed the necessary skills/knowledge for better note-taking, I just needed to *apply* them. As a result I made the decision I was going to extensively mind map each day's work/learning so I could see the broader picture and see how everything interrelates. Mind maps excel over the written word for this type of information capture, as their non-linear graphical nature is ideal for gathering a diverse array of information and presenting it in an integrated way. My mind map for today – Tuesday 17th – is attached below (**Appendix 2**). I have also included the file as a separate image file that is zoom-able so you can easily see all the detail. I consider myself a highly visual-spatial person even though I would not say that I have especially strong visual artistic skills, per se.

A good teacher should ideally personify and embody all of the soft skills, together with pertinent hard skills, in order to impart as many of these skills to the students. Reflecting on this has emphasised to me the multi-factorial nature of teaching, particularly if you are to become a really good teacher. It represents a huge potential skill-set. Of critical importance is to "kindle the spirit of inquiry" (Employability Skills paper) among students, as ultimately it is their own motivation that will enable them to learn. The logical corollary of this is that as a teacher you should always try to ensure your own ongoing development, above and beyond simply reading books in your favoured subject area; a wide range of topics, together with the other 'intelligences' are all equally important to develop too!

<p>5. Scope for your current profession or for a new profession:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information retention, presentation and organisation skills 	<p>Evidence:</p> <p>Developing the ability to note, retain, organise, learn, and present information is hugely valuable for any cognitively demanding career or job option. In terms of teaching and personal development, the actual act of gathering this information and presenting it in a coherent form is excellent practice for teaching, as I would expect to have to process a large amount of information almost daily, and spend a great deal of time designing initial lesson plans. This overhead will hopefully be repaid for future syllabuses and lessons, as rather than create everything from scratch I will have a ready stockpile. Obviously the internet provides a huge resource, but in any case, you would always at the very least have to adapt the information to your own needs.</p>
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<p>6. Summary:</p> <p>Much more work is required in terms of analysing my skill-set and seeing how and where to apply myself in order to develop both personally and, specifically, professionally. This is very important if I want to avoid simply drifting from job to job. This is not a dry or dull area, however, and approached with the right mindset this type of personal development and growth can be an enjoyable process, despite its inherent difficulty. I have a proclivity towards intrapersonal introspection, but ordinarily I would apply this to abstract concepts of whatever nature that interests me. Applying it in a reflective format to myself is something I find rather difficult, but one can deduce that the fact it is difficult presumably means it has value, since I obviously can become more proficient and comfortable at doing so.</p> <p>Our assessment of ‘possible’ vs. ‘impossible’ underlined the critical importance of belief, in all areas, coupled with the rigorous development of as many soft-skills as possible, lest these be neglected whilst simply attaining your ‘hard skill’ of whichever qualification you are currently working towards. Perhaps we could say that though the ‘hard skill’ might qualify a teacher, it is the ‘soft skills’ that maketh the teacher?</p>

<p>7. Conclusion</p>

Producing the mind-map for today brought everything into a coherent picture in my mind. I particularly enjoyed the wide-ranging, often philosophical nature of the topics, precisely because it requires a large amount of personal interpretation and careful thought in order to develop the material into a useful whole. As a result I feel it has emphasised the importance of accurate and complete note taking, and the benefits of this reflective process in terms of consolidating understanding. The BA TESOL degree should provide a huge number of potential job opportunities outside of teaching for alternative career paths; within the scope of teaching there is huge potential for satisfying personal development as your own proficiencies can directly impact on your own teaching performance or techniques for teaching. If the teacher is to be in some sense a model for students, not only in terms of imparting knowledge but in terms of personal skills and qualities, then it follows that one should attempt to always develop oneself to be the best that one can be. This, then, benefits not only yourself but all your potential students, meaning you are contributing something positive to the world.

Appendix 1: Job Opportunities related to a BA TESOL Degree. (Group A).

Group A: Digital Copywriter

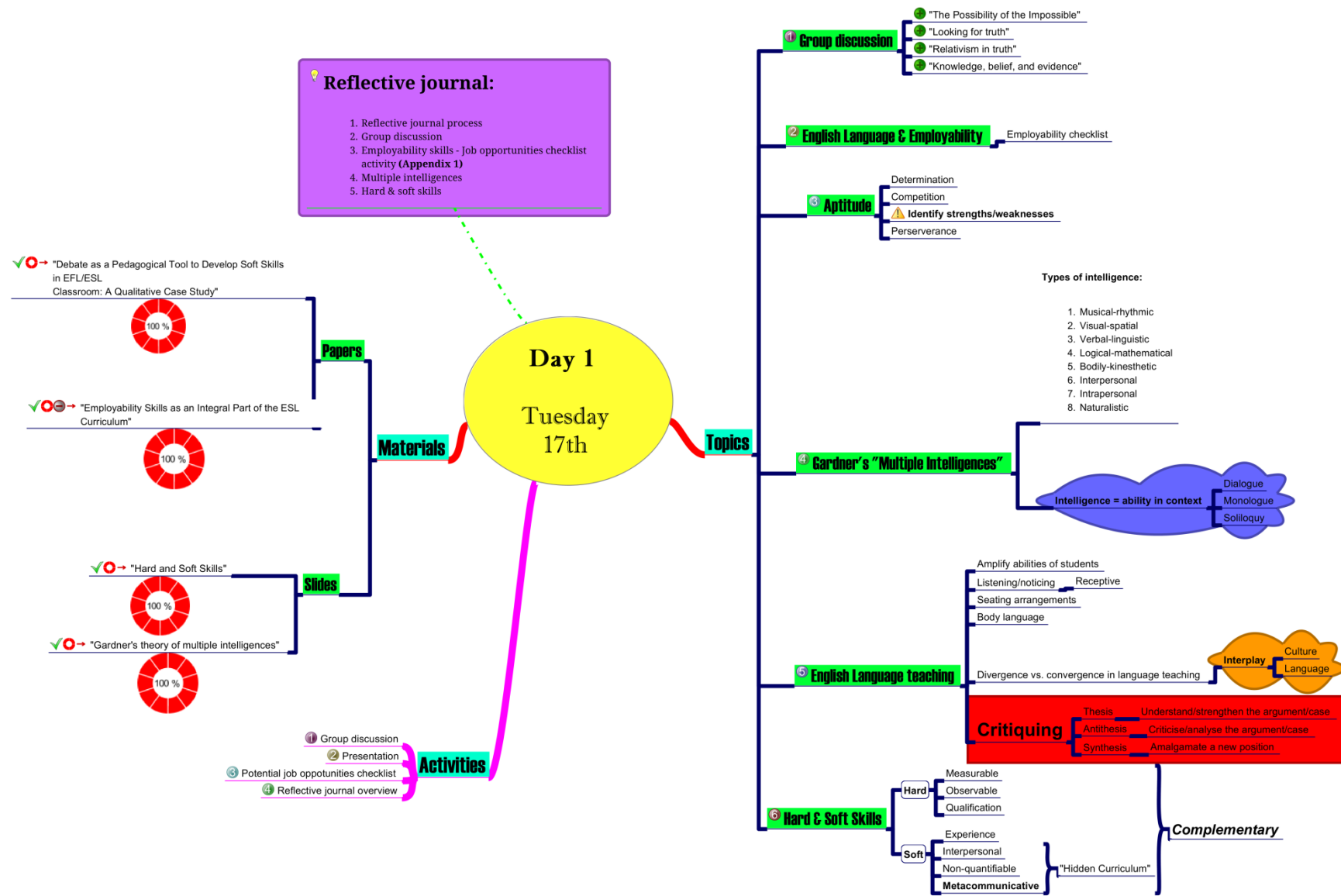
Responsibilities	Not at all	Mode-rately	Highly	Excellent	How do you want to develop your skills?
• liaise with clients - from set-up to completion; checking in with the client regularly, by phone, email or face-to-face				x	Practice and work on interpersonal and communication skills (both digital and face to face). Familiarise yourself with the local culture and language, social norms and etiquette, and business practices.
• carry out project scoping and create a clear brief, in order to ensure you understand what the client wants				x	Increase your subject specific knowledge together with real-world experience of similar projects to have familiarity with the full remit and typical scope (time, tasks, skills, resources) required for particular projects in order to create an accurate brief. Communication with the client is critical to create the necessary input to ensure that your brief is accurate, in order to ensure the completed project fulfils the client's expectations. Learning how to use project management software or certain planning methods may be highly useful for this.
• tailor the content and style of individual writing assignments according to their purpose - whether they are intended to sell or inform			x		Develop your knowledge of specific styles of writing, in conjunction with market specific knowledge – ensure you have carefully identified your target audience and the specific brief agreed with your client, so that your writing is customised to the intended requirements.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand your target audience - you're not writing for the client but for their readers, so you'll need to know what interests them 				x	<p>Since the writing is fundamentally for the readers rather than the client themselves, unless your writing engages them the writing is ultimately wasted, as it will not lead to favourable responses from your readers. Therefore it is critical to get into the mindset of your readers, and understand what interests, draws an emotional response, and motivates them in your subject matter. So to become a better writer for a particular subject, you need to become a reader of that subject first.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify key messages - understand the main thing that you want the reader to feel and do and how to communicate this powerfully 			x		<p>Since copywriting is often emotive, identifying this key emotion and communicating it is extremely valuable. Often in marketing feelings can be quite abstract, so there may not necessarily be one concrete message you are trying to convey, so much as a more generalised, overall feeling.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> work with creative teams to ensure that the visual elements of the webpage complement the words 		x			<p>Depending on your work environment, you may be involved in some of the desktop publishing and digital layout production, but typically as a copywriter you are primarily concerned with the raw content (words), so the visual layout is usually handled by someone else. Nevertheless, the better your overall graphic design/DTP skills, the more advantageous that is likely to be in terms of future job prospects.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> research your client's industry and their audience 				x	<p>Identifying the target audience is absolutely critical, as above all copywriting is writing for a purpose (usually, though not always, for selling something). Therefore industry specific knowledge and the exact audience you are writing for is vital. Immersion in the industry, doing as much research as possible to prepare, and conducting market research are all useful tools to develop your skills in this area.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify fresh and interesting angles for your articles 				x	<p>Copywriting necessitates writing up to date content for a specific purpose here and now, and writing and material changes over time (sometimes quite rapidly, depending on the industry), so in order to prevent your material becoming staid and old you need to stay abreast of the latest trends and developments. Exposure to your target industry, together with general wide reading of other modern content is critical to keeping your writing fresh and relevant.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> write for web pages, blogs and potentially for social media, e-books, slogans, and video script 				x	<p>A copywriter presumably will often write for many different channels and mediums, typically many different digital platforms, so it would be beneficial to practice writing to all of these different styles to give yourself the widest possible opportunity for future work.</p>

• edit your own and others' writing				x	Accuracy, pertinence and interest are all key to copywriting, so you will need to be proficient at editing yours and other's materials to take it from a first draft to final product. It is to be expected you may also have to modify or rewrite others work, or revise your own at a later date, so practice with these skills will make you more productive and able to produce it more quickly.
• provide other digital content, such as images and video, if required		x			Though this may be potentially required, this is heading more into the realms of photojournalism, so is probably less of a key area for a copywriter. It is obviously advantageous to be able to produce this material as well, since it means you could create all content from scratch for a client as required.
• input your content to the client's content management software (CMS), if required				x	Major corporations and large companies that produce large amounts of media will all typically use some type of digital content management software or system, so it will be critical to be comfortable using this if you want your work to be correctly submitted so you are paid! It may be advantageous to take a particular course, or courses, if there are certain industry standard systems that you are likely to be frequently using.
• work with your team to review the impact of your work				x	Writing doesn't exist statically, especially in the digital realm, so once your material has been delivered, it will need to be periodically reviewed, revised, rewritten, or adapted depending on future circumstances. Seeking input and constructive criticism from your team will be useful. Seeking feedback, where possible, from readers may also be highly beneficial.
• assist with business pitches to win new clients or projects.			x		As a copywriter you may potentially produce scripts of materials used in pitches or presentations, though one would expect that normally the bulk of the pitch would be handled by one of the PR or marketing staff members, certainly in larger businesses. If you are working on more of a self-employed basis, this skill will become considerably more vital as it will determine whether you get given the job/work or not. Attending some business marketing and personal presentation skills classes may be useful to develop this area and assist you with income generation.

Appendix 2: Tuesday mind-map.

(Full resolution versions of all mind-maps are included in the zip file which you can actually zoom in on).



Siam Technology College

Bangkok, Thailand

Reflective Journal Template

Name: **Aren Tyr**

Course Title: Learning **Skills For Success 905-102**

Day: **Wednesday 18th (Day 2 of 4)**

<p>1. Areas of learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Job opportunities through TESOL “Success stories through English”	<p>Evidence:</p> <p>Reading this document helped to reinforce my understanding of the importance of English in the global context. As a native English speaker from Britain, I was perhaps in the fortunate position of being able to take English for granted, a language which is effectively the lingua franca, certainly in the commercial world, of the 21st century. It’s predominant position does not look like changing in either the near or medium term, especially given America’s export of English language through its extensive media and global influence as a world power.</p> <p>Our group analysed the first article in this document, which details a TEFL student who graduated from Leeds University and who then went on to teach English in Spain for three years, before spending a further year in Australia. The key points we took home were the range of experiences and teaching situations he found himself in, and the fact that for him it was as much about the lifestyle as the actual work itself. His English language proficiency was in effect his global passport to this enriching set of experiences he encountered in the foreign countries he worked and lived in. ‘Passport’ is a word colloquially used throughout the document, and it is a good one, for in essence a high level of English proficiency, particularly when combined with a demonstrable ‘hard skill’ – i.e. a TEFL certificate, or even better a BA TESOL degree – effectively opens up a huge global market of potential job</p>
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- Learning skills

opportunities for intrepid individuals willing to travel abroad and seize these opportunities. It was with this mindset that I decided to sign up for the BA TESOL program at STC and move to Thailand; though my end-goal is as of yet unclear, I feel pleased by the fact that I am progressing in a positive manner, and I now have a great opportunity to develop a wide range of skills. These skills are not just restricted to the more formal, academic skills I will encounter on my degree course; I have never *lived* outside of the UK before, so living here in Thailand offers numerous other possible avenues for development and a range of experiences that will be beneficial and hopefully useful to include on future CVs.

I stated 'perhaps' when describing myself as fortunate to be born in a native English language country. I qualified this statement because it carries a downside too: like most British people, because English is so widespread it tends to make you lazy or discourage your active acquisition of any other foreign language. To address this, I am making an effort to learn Thai, though for the moment my progress is slow. I hope this process will inform my ability to teach English, as I will have a better insight into the challenges of actually learning a second language.

We next conducted a brief survey of our own learning skills (**Appendix 3**, see below), which we then subsequently compared in pairs. Our responses were broadly similar, though the survey indicated that perhaps my learning skills were more explicitly 'used'. Some of the answers were 'depends', of course, so in reality the difference between us was quite small.

Reflecting on this process, it highlighted to me that my fundamental learning skills are actually well developed. *However*, I am sometimes complacent in applying them; I have tendency to sometimes rely on memory rather than explicitly note-take. There is of course a balance to be had. One conclusion we both drew (I was working with Matthew) was that to some degree what notes and materials you gather is dependent on the lecturing and teaching style of the tutor. Sometimes taking notes can be counterproductive if you're replicating material that will later be given out as a more refined handout. So the key feature is to ensure that your notes *add* something of value to the learning experience, by forming connections

	<p>or relating information in a new configuration that is the product of your own creative intelligence. It was on this principle I started mind-mapping. Having not done this on Tuesday, and realising my notes were not as good as they should be, I was able to retrieve the missing material and I instituted a regime of daily mind-mapping to ensure I did not miss vital or useful links between material. It may have been that this 'learning skills' survey acted as a prompt, since I had responded that I do rewrite my notes and try to organise them into a meaningful method. So it was time to actually apply this skill. The use of mind-mapping seemed intuitive to me, as it is a study skill I had developed some time ago in the context of my previous studies in Politics, Philosophy and Economics, and also for idea generation for when I was self-employed as a Personal Trainer. So I made an effort to be more diligent applying it from the get-go for my studies on this degree, starting with this module.</p> <p>It also made me consider the fact that 'learning skills' are still rarely taught in many educational institutions, or in school; it is often just assumed that students know how to take notes on a book, organise them in a salient manner, and then use them to refine or reinforce their learning. Linear notes, however, have a large number of limitations, and the old adage of 'a picture is worth a thousand words' exists precisely because it is a well known fact that diagrams and appropriate visual aids are hugely beneficial for presenting and retaining information, and act as a tremendous adjunct to writing. Many academic papers often contain diagrams pertaining to certain key concepts or complex thoughts, in order to present the information in a supplementary manner. In Gardner's 'Multiple Intelligences' framework, this is making use of our 'visual-spatial' intelligence. Modern computers make it easy to quickly create a rich variety of diagrams without too much work.</p> <p>I decided to actually create a mind-map for this learning skills assessment sheet as a way of neatly summarising the information contained within it (Appendix 4 below).</p>
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- Presentation skills

The value of presenting had already been mentioned in the “Success stories through English” document, and it would prove to be a dominant theme throughout this course. Introducing it today, it was clear that a very wide range of skills need to be integrated together in order to present – or, for that matter, to teach – well. Confidence and practice, like with so many things, are key. Being tentative or being overtly nervous is a guaranteed method to perform poorly; the secret is practice, and if confidence is still lacking, to nevertheless behave if you are in full command and are always speaking with authority. It was striking that 41% of people list public speaking as a top fear; this must mean, by necessity, that many people who are ordinarily confident amongst people, must still have a great fear when it occurs in a formal context. In this regard public speaking is rather different from ordinary speech in a public setting, as there are expectations in terms of your cogency, succinctness, clarity, and interest, etc. Your topic should be interesting and give something new to your audience; this does not necessarily mean a new theory or some radical development (a rather high intellectual bar), but simply that at the very least you should attempt to find your own unique angle or perspective on something. No two people can see something in precisely the same way; this is one of the tremendous merits of the human intellect.

Control over your content (selection of material for your presentation) is one thing, but it becomes considerably more demanding when that must now be blended with your control over speech, body language, and an ability to engage with the audience (eye contact, rhetorical questions, and actual questions in some cases).

- Professional presentations in the academic world

The importance of a catchy title for your paper or presentation was emphasised. The lecture on the realities of presentations at academic conferences highlighted the fact that having great ideas is insufficient if you are not able to obtain a platform for presenting them, and one of the requirements for this is to find a suitable ‘hook’ to engage the interest of your potential audience. This feature strikes me as of overwhelming importance in our modern era, where there are literally millions of papers now available to download electronically on every conceivable specialised topic. How do you select what to read? How do you know which presentations to attend? Undoubtedly you will have certain specific

	<p>research interests, and can use this to compile a potential shortlist. Even then, though, you will often be forced into making an intuitive or instinctual decision. As a corollary, it also served to remind me of the importance of the Abstract; some YouTube videos I have watched on the process of writing papers suggests that this is singularly the most difficult part of the paper, and should be left last, since it requires you to summarise your entire paper in one short, engaging paragraph to stimulate the interest of your readers (and hopefully get your paper published in a relevant journal).</p>
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<p>2. Your previous understanding and new understanding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher as an exemplar 	<p>Evidence:</p> <p>Historically, teachers have always enjoyed an esteemed position, but arguably this position has eroded in recent years. There is some doubt as to whether teachers are valued by societies at large to the same extent as before, which is a concerning trend as the argument would surely be that with the manifest difficult problems the world faces today teacher's occupy and even more critical position, and the development and provision of high quality teachers could be part of the solution as they are seen to inculcate the types of qualities that are desirable into their students who then go on to affect and change the world – hopefully in a positive manner.</p> <p>Nevertheless, I had not previously considered teaching through the specific axis and language of human rights and values. These terms undoubtedly have been an integral part of various global institutions like the UN and a whole host of NGOs. Six words, arranged on pair-wise axes: i) Dignity/Justice, ii) Neutrality/Impartiality, and iii) Willingness/Competence. My inclination would be to enclose these three pairs under the following three terms respectively: i) Equanimity, ii) Fairness, and iii) Ability. To what extent are these values inculcated in modern educational establishments among the students? More specifically, to what extent are the skills <i>necessary to fulfil</i> these values taught? Having values is not enough. You have to proactively apply them; the application of values surely is dependent on your knowledge and skills. Otherwise they remain abstractions divorced from the real world. These sorts of 'soft skills' are often at the behest of the 'hidden curriculum',</p>
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	<p>and as such, makes the role and quality of the teacher even more critical, as they provide a critical model for – hopefully! – exemplifying them.</p> <p>I am currently reading Parker J. Palmer’s “The Courage To Teach”, and one of the most basic insights, and one that strikes me as entirely true (based on my own professional experience) is that it is impossible to divorce your personal ‘inner world’ and your professional practice in the manner that is often assumed in the modern industrialised world. His key argument is that good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher themselves. This seems undoubtedly true, as we are adept at detecting whenever something feels inauthentic, or delivered as if by rote repetition of some set script rather than based on actual experience and lived values.</p> <p>So personal development itself becomes not a selfish affair, but in fact mandatory and essential in order to become a good teacher (or practitioner in any number of fields), since you need epitomise the qualities you hope to develop in your students.</p>
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<p>3. What challenged you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation skills 	<p>Evidence:</p> <p>The wide range of skills that need to come together to present well are demanding. Preparedness is part of the key; if you know your material extremely well, and you have already developed well laid out notes, you have solved half of the battle.</p> <p>But highly skilled presenters and public speakers are able to generate and produce this material on the fly, often without much in the way presentation. I feel that a large part of this is relaxation and confidence. When you nervous, the natural inclination is to speak as quickly as possible, and deliver your information in a rapid-fire manner before you bore your audience.</p>
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- Hidden curriculum summary

Yet this is the opposite of what you should do, and a poor strategy. Relaxation, pausing, speaking slowly and clearly, and really emphasises a few critical points is what you are after. You cannot hope to accomplish the same level of detail as an extensive written text, nor would this make much sense; instead the challenge is to utilise the strength of presentation to directly engage with the audience and bring material alive. Use your body language. Through careful selection of material you can *distil* what is most essential, and present that. Reading a 300 page book may well provide far more information, but it will take any number of hours, depending on its difficulty and how well written it is. A presentation of 10 minutes could get the key message across and spark intellectual interest in the area you are covering. It therefore offers a type of window.

I have much more practice at formal writing than presenting, so trying to absorb all of these ideas relating to presentation skills, in order to actually utilise them, was one of my main challenges for today.

Producing a summary – approximately 25% of the length -- of Mei Peng's "Hidden Curriculum" paper was a difficult but enjoyable process. The process of deconstructing the elements of this paper in order to present the key arguments in a condensed manner was an effective method for gaining a deep understanding of the paper's contents. The biggest challenge is to make an appropriate choice of what points to retain, without distorting the central argument the author is making.

Nevertheless, I felt reasonably comfortable doing this, despite the relative difficulty, as I had more practice at this sort of academic activity than, for example, writing a reflective journal such as this one.

Once again, my de facto method was to break the paper down using a mind-map in order to assess its overall structure, then use that as the basis for writing an analysis. My personal methodology and approach is therefore fairly analytical. I try to decide in advance how long each component should roughly be, then write on this basis. I find this works very well for me, and much better than my old

	<p>method, and the one more commonly used and promoted, which involves writing many drafts. I find that this approach ends up causing one to grossly overshoot in the first draft, then invest a huge amount of time editing down; often you'll end up having to discard a large amount of irrelevant material. Whilst some editing is of course necessary to reach a tight final version, I find that by investing a greater proportion of effort in analysing and planning via a mind-map, your first draft ends up being far closer to the finished product, thus saving you time overall. I have included both my Hidden Curriculum Summary (Appendix 5) and my initial mind-map showing my analysis of the paper and prospective design of my written summary (Appendix 6).</p>
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<p>4. What have you learnt?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The value of accurate information capture & note taking • The wide varieties of job opportunities and critical career skills that English proficiency enables • That teaching as a profession needs to be nurtured. The Hidden Curriculum. • The importance of presentation skills 	<p>Evidence:</p> <p>The better your initial information capture and note taking, the easier all the consequent academic tasks related to that material will be! This is a fairly obvious point, but just because it is obvious does not always mean it is easy or straightforward; every day we are exposed to a huge number of diverse ideas.</p> <p>As an native English language speaker it is easy to be complacent towards just how crucial English language proficiency is. Yet the various case studies emphasised how command of English language had actually transformed their lives.</p> <p>Teachers are more critical than ever. We need to find a way to ensure that future generations receive the best possible tuition, and often teaching will have to be delivered despite a whole host of problems or hindrances obstructing you (including, and often, the strictures and content of the 'official curriculum'). Teacher's own 'hidden curriculum' is actually a vital component of this. This provides the gap to fill in everything missing in the official curriculum.</p> <p>Whether in the academic world or business world, presentations are key. How well can you talk publically before an audience? The answer to this will determine, to a</p>
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	large degree, your potential success in a whole host of fields, and will, for example, often dictate whether you are successful during a job interview for that all-critical job.
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5. Scope for your current profession or for a new profession: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice at presenting • Learning skills 	Evidence: <p>Further development and practicing presenting will not only make me a better teacher, it will also facilitate many other career options and my likely success in them all.</p> <p>Learning skills are completely transferable, since in all walks of life we should be continually learning. The world is not static so it is highly likely that having a static skill-set will be sufficient to remain competitive in the global job market. Ergo, the better you can learn, the better you can adapt and be successful in whichever field you choose to apply yourself.</p>
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6. Summary: <p>We covered a wide range of topics, thematically linking the necessity for effective presenting skills with various qualities that a good teacher should hopefully espouse. The existence and prevalence of the 'hidden curriculum' highlights how the teacher is often the key person that brings this hidden curriculum to students to fill in the skills/knowledge gap between the official curriculum and the actual demands of the real world. An explicit awareness of this fact is valuable as it allows you to reflectively interrogate yourself to see which areas you need to improve. How can you develop? What can you do better? What are your areas of weakness? This kind of meta-analysis is a useful skill to develop.</p>
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The interrelated nature of all these themes became more apparent as I built my mind-map. None of these areas exist in isolation. Meanwhile your presentation/public speaking is how it all comes together in a human package that actually produces *what* you know to your audience. Poor presentation skills therefore mean you are doing yourself a disservice as much as your audience, by denying them the opportunity to gain the insights that you might have discovered independently.

7. Conclusion

I will look to see how I can develop myself – both personally and professionally – and in particular pay attention to how I can improve my presentation skills and oral speaking skills. I am probably still stronger with words than body language, so this is one particular area I can work on.

The good news is the variety of possible professional avenues is wider than ever before with the emergence of English as a global language. Do not settle for merely a ‘job’. Look for something that challenges you personally, brings out your best, and allows you to use your talents to contribute something positive.

My mind-map for the day is below (**Appendix 7**).

Appendix 3: Study skills questionnaire

Reading Text Books	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
1. I browse the headings, pictures, chapter questions and summaries before I start reading a chapter.			x
2. I make questions from a chapter before, during, and after reading it.		x	
3. I try to get the meaning of new words as I see them for the first time.			x
4. I look for familiar concepts as well as ideas that spark my interest as I read.			x
5. I look for the main ideas as I read.		x	
Total (Me):	40		
Total (Matthew):	40		

Taking Notes	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
6. I take notes as I read my text books.		x	
7. I take notes during class lectures.		x	
8. I rewrite or type up my notes.			x
9. I compare my notes with a classmate.		x	
10. I try to organize main ideas and details into a meaningful method.			x
Total (Me):	35		
Total (Matthew):	30		

Studying	Rarely	Sometimes	Often

11. I study where it is quiet and has few distractions.			x
12. I study for a length of time then take a short break before returning to studying.			x
13. I have all my supplies handy when I study, such as pens, paper, calculator, etc.			x
14. I set study goals, such as the number of problems I will do or pages I will read.			x
15. I study at least two hours for every hour I am in class each week.		x	
Total (Me):	45		
Total (Matthew):	35		

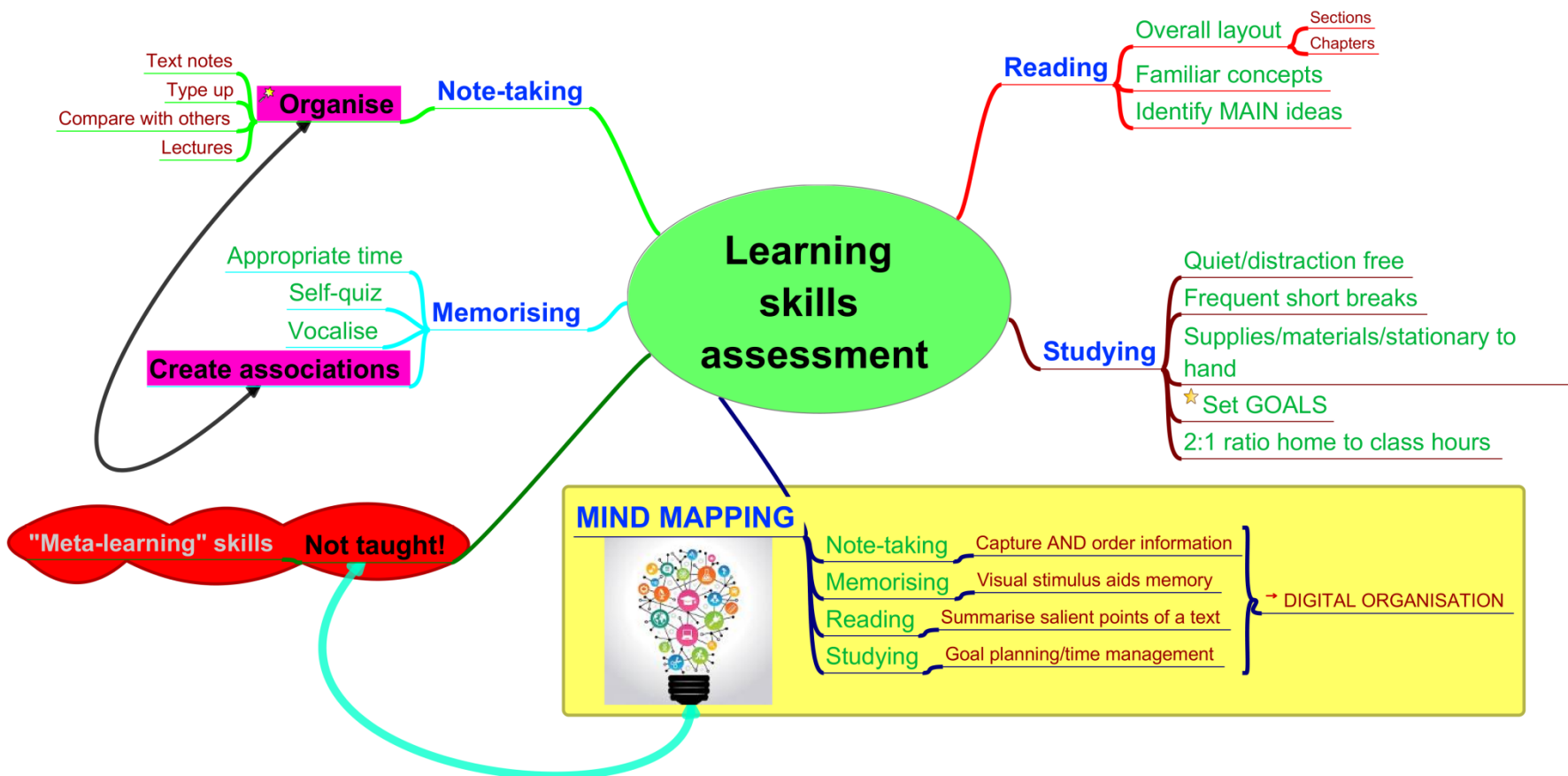
Memorizing	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
16. I try to study during my personal peak time of energy to increase my concentration level.			x
17. I quiz myself over material that could appear on future exams and quizzes.			x
18. I say difficult concepts out loud in order to understand them better.	x		
19. I change my notes into my own words, for better understanding.			x
20. I try to create associations between new material I am trying to learn and information I already know.			x
Total (Me):	40		
Total (Matthew):	30		
Preparing for Tests	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
21. I study with a classmate or group.		x	
22. When I don't understand something, I get help from tutors, classmates, and my instructors.			x
23. I do all homework assignments and turn them in on time.			x

24. I can easily identify what I have learned and what I have not yet learned before I take a test.			x
25. I anticipate what possible questions may be asked on my tests and make sure I know the answers.			x
Total (Me):	45		
Total (Matthew):	35		

Managing Your Time	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
26. I use a calendar book to write down upcoming academic and personal activities.			x
27. I use a “to do” list to keep track of completing my academic and personal activities.			x
28. I start studying for quizzes and tests at least several days before I take them.			x
29. I start papers and projects as soon as they are assigned.		x	
30. I have enough time for school and fun.		x	
Total (Me):	40		
Total (Matthew):	15		

Appendix 4: Learning Skills mind-map

(Full resolution version included in zip file which you can zoom in on).



Appendix 5: Hidden Curriculum summary

A summary of PENG Mei's "The Hidden Curriculum in Language Lessons"

by Aren Tyr

This summary of Peng's article will mirror her general outline; first a brief overview of the notion of a 'hidden curriculum', next how it emerges and affects both teachers and learners, and finally her suggestions as to how the negative effects of this phenomenon can be somewhat mitigated.

Peng states that the definition of 'hidden curriculum' is very broad, and encompasses so many aspects that she instead defines it in an inverted manner: it includes all aspects of teaching and learning that are not constituted by the 'official curriculum'. She specifically focuses on hidden curriculum in the context of language learning and ESL, though the conceptual notion of the 'hidden' curriculum is of course more widely applicable to the delivery and reception of education across all subjects and arenas.

The hidden curriculum, then, is essentially 'covert'; it is referred to as 'hidden' precisely to indicate that it involves a process that typically occurs intrinsically within an educational establishment, concerning implicit rather than necessarily consciously explicit factors, for both teachers and pupils.

Peng delimits the various means in which this hidden curriculum 'manifests'. The word manifest here is critical, because it emphasises the emergent and often spontaneous nature by which this alternative curriculum actually comes into existence. Both teachers and learners may frequently have no conscious awareness of it; instead it occurs as an assumed or habituated response, or adopted social norm. Peng subdivides and conducts her analysis of this conspicuously broad, almost nebulous concept into two main aspects: i) a teaching perspective; ii) a learning perspective.

The effect of the emergence of this 'hidden' curriculum is extensive. Teachers may well, almost unavoidably, frequently bring their own pedagogical agenda or unofficial objectives, with their unconscious biases often manifesting as tuition of a

submerged, unendorsed, non-explicit curriculum. They may often deviate from the official curriculum, often unintentionally, whilst attempting to accommodate social mores, by making tacit adaptations to the more general social or cultural context. An excessive preponderance towards teaching focussed purely on examination proficiency is also a common trait, perhaps understandably given that student examinations are seen as a key performance metric for overall teaching performance as much as student performances. Peng identifies a frequent insistence or preference for the grammar translation method rather than the communicative approach; perhaps reflecting its historical pre-eminence, together with a desire to capitulate to students whose predetermined notions of what constitutes an effective methodology for second language learning may tend to automatically gravitate towards this method.

Learners, therefore, bring their own learning agenda. Equally, and quite commonly, they may be completely unaware of their own preconceptions. If their perception regarding learning expectations differs from what they actually receive, they may end following their own independent learning strategy, both in terms of content and methodology. They may simply 'give up' or study something else, particularly if the language proficiency gap, between what is expected, and what they are capable of, is seen to be unbridgeable. Finally, learners may simply have different priorities; a failure to account for this often leads to an unworkable official curriculum. The net result is the same in all cases; the biases, conscious and unconscious, lead to deviations from the official curriculum, intended or not.

Innately connected with all of this is an avoidance of problematical areas or areas in the curriculum that typically demand a higher skill requirement; Peng identifies that more difficult material, such as English literature for use in ESL tuition, is a prototypical example of this.

In all such cases, 'social expectations' may end up trumping the official curriculum, thus ensuring that instead a 'hidden' curriculum is what actually gets delivered.

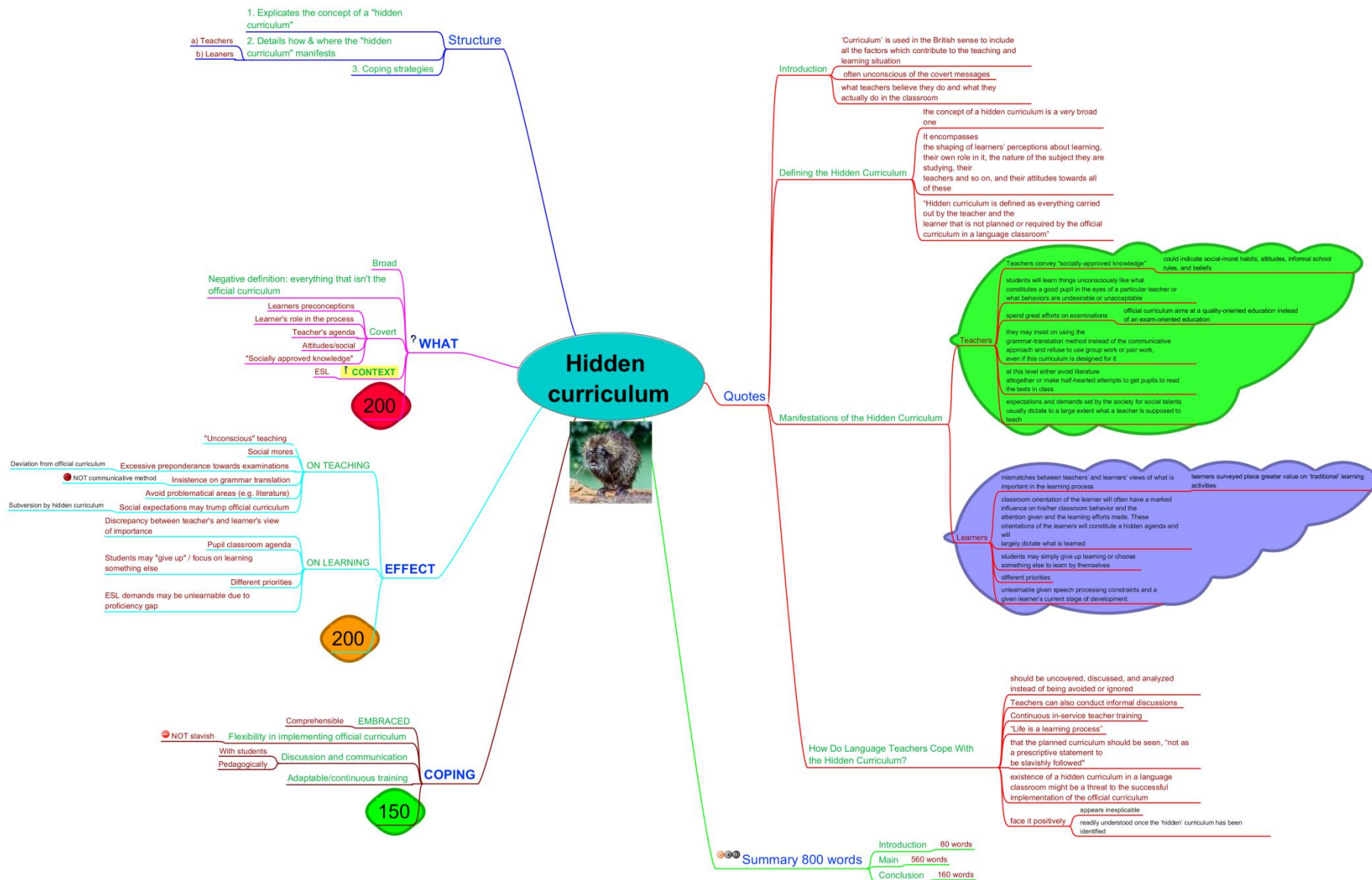
In order to mitigate against the negative effects of the hidden curriculum, Peng therefore suggests an alternative mindset. Through an openness and willingness to embrace the unavoidable reality of a 'hidden' curriculum, by seeking to make it more comprehensible through systematic analysis and reflection, one can to a large degree 'uncover' it, rendering it more explicit. Peng suggests three main strategies for combating and effectively dealing with this discrepancy between the official and actual hidden curriculum.

First, an ongoing and permanent process of teacher training. Nothing should be ‘set in stone’. All education itself should always be receptive to improvement, alteration, and change: “life is a learning process”. Second, teachers should attempt to engage with learner’s ‘hidden’ agendas. Peng quotes Nunan that they should be as “explicit as possible about the goals and objectives of their course”; engage in dialog with students through informal discussions; and otherwise situate their curriculum via appropriate consultation. The planned curriculum, therefore, should not be something just ‘slavishly’ or blindly followed. Third and finally, all actors in the curriculum ‘process’ (i.e. teachers, students, all other human resources) should be subject to continuous evaluation.

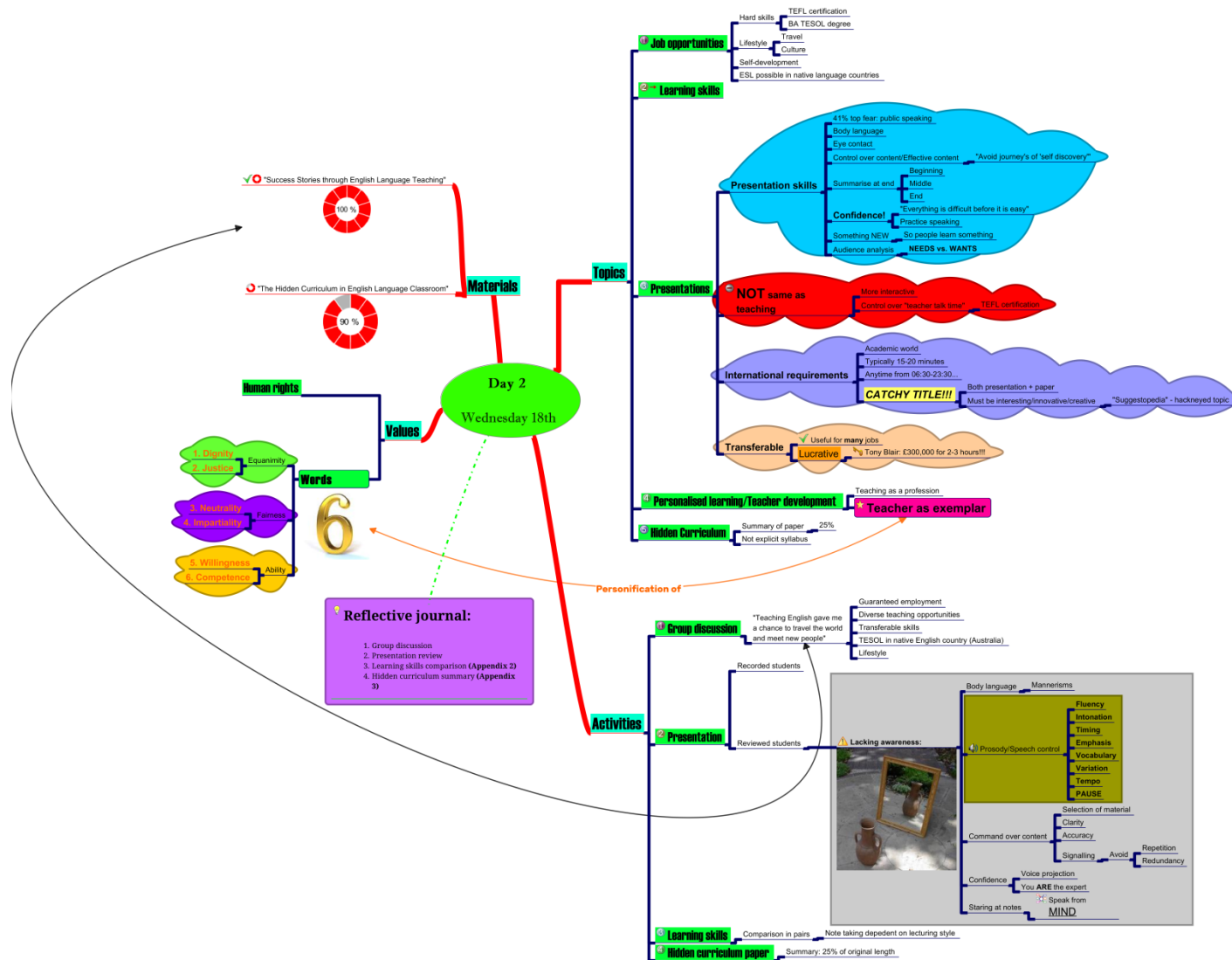
To conclude, using a sales analogy, how can the ‘product’ of education be better delivered and received? In short, mirroring her analysis, the actual curriculum itself should perhaps always be seen to be to some degree ‘tentative’ rather than a ‘finished product’; it should be subject to continuous revision in order to serve both the needs of teachers and learners. Since Peng states that a failure to address the “existence of a hidden curriculum in a language classroom might be a threat to the successful implementation of the official curriculum”, appropriate palliating strategies and further methodological reflection on this matter would be beneficial in the education field as a whole.

Appendix 6: Hidden Curriculum mind-map

(Full resolution version included in zip file which you can zoom in on).



Appendix 7: Wednesday mind-map (Full resolution version included in zip file which you can zoom in on).



Siam Technology College
Bangkok, Thailand
Reflective Journal Template

Name: **Aren Tyr**

Course Title: **Learning Skills For Success 905-102**

Day: **Thursday 19th (Day 3 of 4)**

<p>1. Areas of learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hidden curriculum presentation • 10 life skills/personal aptitudes	<p>Evidence:</p> <p>The day started with a few presentations on our summary of the “Hidden Curriculum” paper by Mei Peng. I felt well prepared for this activity, as the process of analysing and then producing a written summary of the paper had really familiarized me with the contents of the paper; speaking on it was then a relatively straightforward task. The take home point, then, is that your preparedness directly affects your proficiency at speaking on a topic (unless you the topic is one you are already intimately familiar with from extensive previous work, training or experience).</p> <p>The video on 10 life skills recapitulated a lot of the topics we had encountered earlier but brought them into focus. My personal belief is that the single most important ‘skill’ or life habit is the one most commonly or easily dismissed: sleep. With a million things to do, it is easy to dismiss the loss of an hour or two of sleep. Yet are you trading off quantity for quality? If you are cognitively impaired due to lack of sleep, every single cognitively demanding task becomes far more difficult and you perform it far more efficiently. Of what use is it having two more hours in the day, if all you end up doing is staring at the screen blankly for two hours, unable to type the next line of your thesis, or find yourself reading and re-reading the same few sentences in the book because you’re struggling to focus due to tiredness. I was immediately drawn to this one out of the 10 skills particularly</p>
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because I read “Why We Sleep” by Matthew Walker recently, and it was an eye opener, to use a pun. I know from my own experience that I can notice a significant effect from even 6 or 7 hours sleep versus 8, and this book reinforced that this is supported by modern scientific research. Most people need at least 7 hours to perform optimally, and the most interesting result was the fact that *most people who are cognitively impaired due to insufficient sleep are unaware that they are cognitively impaired*. Yet time and again the scientists who have conducted studies have been able to verify that individuals’ demonstrated far superior results in a range of tests when subjected to an enforced sleeping regime rather than their ordinary sleep deprived state.

The difficulty then becomes applying this in practice. If I stay up too late studying or doing academic work on my computer, I end up having great difficulty getting to sleep, even allowing for some ‘wind down’ time. The sensible strategy would be to not work after 9PM, so that I have at least two hours to relax into an appropriate restful state. Yet sometimes I will work till 11PM or midnight, conscious of that deadline... Rational consideration shows this is a poor strategy though. I would be better of investing that time in sleep, as the following day my performance and ability is noticeably worse, so I end up ‘losing’ far more than two hours as a result. So it becomes an issue of time management. Of course, if you have a vital assignment and the content of the next day is not vital, or you have an opportunity to catch up on sleep... So it is about becoming more self-aware as to planning your sleep as a vital part of your day. One should never get less than 8 hours unless it is absolutely unavoidable.

I will not comment significantly on the other 9 skills except to state that they are all fairly uncontroversial in terms of their importance. I have written some more about them in both the ‘Video on Life Skills’ (**Appendix 8**) and the ‘Life Skills Thinkers’ (**Appendix 9**) sheet. What links them all is that they form a coherent group of self-development skills, in that they can all be systematically addressed and worked upon. ‘Being the last to speak’ is perhaps one of the most deceptively difficult skills, as a key listening strategy, but one of the most valuable strategies to adopt. Our natural tendency, as we grow in confidence, knowledge, and ability, is to listen less. We tend to assume we already know most of what there is to know

	<p>about something after we have studied it extensively. This is just an innate and normal human flaw. How could a brand new student or someone with no specialist knowledge on something deliver something revelatory? Yet this is precisely what can and sometimes does happen. With a completely fresh and unsullied perspective, they may immediately see something that has never even occurred to us. We need to be attentive and listen carefully, because those 'eureka' moments could occur at any time, sometimes in the most unexpected of contexts. If we verbally trample over the person before they have a chance to explicate their thought, both the student and teacher may end up losing a tremendous insight into something.</p>
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<p>2. Your previous understanding and new understanding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On the topic of memory retention 	<p>Evidence:</p> <p>The slides on presentation techniques included a rather startling statistic on memory retention. Whilst I knew that the human brain is rather efficient at neurological 'pruning', I most certainly did not realise that memory was quite as dramatically <i>bad</i> as the statistics highlighted. Retention of only 10-20% of the material after three days when only 'showing' or 'telling'! This highlights the importance of grounding your material or learning experience in some sort of personalised context. Unless you take 'ownership' of the content, you are likely to forget as much as 90% of it. Which then raises the question, why bother having invested the initial time learning if all that effort then is subsequently wasted? So this highlights to me, in a dramatic way, the importance of personal review and finding a way to make the material useful and applicable to you. Otherwise you will not retain the information, and therefore it will be lost... Conversely, from the perspective of the presenter or teacher, unless you make full use of as many aids as possible – in terms of your language, your body language, supplementary materials, and any other cue either visual, verbal or aural – you will not be successfully imparting any new knowledge or generating any material in your</p>
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	<p>student's long-term memory for their ongoing critical thinking and development.</p> <p>It makes me also wonder whether I should invest a small amount of time creating notes – say 30 minutes – after reading any particularly interesting book, on any topic, for my own personal interest. After all, why bother reading a book on a non-fiction topic if you forget it all? You might well enjoy the process, but it would be rather disappointing to invest a lot of intellectual effort into reading, say, a book on the development of the modern political state in relation to key political philosophers, if you then end up not being able to recall any of it a year later. It would probably not take much time to briefly capture some notes about it, yet the actual reading of the book may well have taken you anywhere between 5-50 hours depending on its length and difficulty. So this is something I will now consider doing for any book or material I find particularly interesting, regardless of whether it has any direct relation to my academic or professional studies.</p> <p>I am keen on the idea of maintain my own personal daily journal, yet thus far I have never been able to establish a habit, I never seem to have enough time in the day...!</p>
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<p>3. What challenged you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The presentation 	<p>Evidence:</p> <p>I delivered my four minute presentation in the afternoon. Despite having a solid grounding in the content of my presentation, I nevertheless found it quite a challenge to deliver it in the manner I wanted to within the tight time limit. Four minutes is a very short length of time, so it requires that you are very efficient at working through your material, and allocate the correct length of time to each component – not to mention that you need to have made appropriate judgements</p>
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	<p>as to the correct total amount of information to attempt to present, and marshal it into a coherent and meaningful form.</p> <p>I would have liked a little more time to go over my conclusions and consolidate my key points. Therefore, in hindsight, if I was doing it again, I would either take less time on the initial slides, or reduce the material further in order to just elaborate in more detail on just a couple of key points.</p> <p>Presenting well is as much a matter of practice as practical theory, so I feel I did reasonably well, but know there is always room for improvement. Some of the speakers on popular websites like Ted offer exceptional models for the type of quality that can be attained once you have achieved mastery at public speaking.</p>
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<p>4. What have you learnt?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher quality and the hidden curriculum 	<p>Evidence:</p> <p>We discussed how there were two ‘types’ of teacher. Following on from the paper and discussion of the ‘hidden curriculum’, it was interesting to learn that this ‘hidden curriculum’ is in fact a vital component of what makes a good teacher. Anna delivered an interesting lecture on the ‘null’ curriculum, another concept I was at the time totally unfamiliar with, so it highlighted the requirement for us as teachers to be always looking to ‘fill in the gaps’ in our students. The null curriculum reflects whatever is left out due to the particular biases, prejudices, or simply selection of material that is deemed appropriate for the particular needs and necessary compromises of the course. The syllabus will never be enough for any given subject; we must look to see how we can ‘complete’ it as best we can</p>
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	<p>with our own knowledge and time constraints. The teacher must be a complement and guide to the set materials. Otherwise the students gain nothing extra from our presence, in which case they would do just as well to study alone... So we need to always look to add value to their learning experience. So we teach the subject <i>and</i> the student. We address their personal learning needs as best as we are able.</p> <p>Can we identify and relate to our own 'null' curriculum? What are we not teaching that might be useful? What are we not learning that perhaps we should learn about? These should be two permanent questions we always ask ourselves as individuals.</p>
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<p>5. Scope for your current profession or for a new profession:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal development. Identifying weaknesses. 	<p>Evidence:</p> <p>There is tremendous scope for developing all of the life skills identified in the video. Just because you are naturally poor at something does not mean you cannot eventually become highly proficient with practice. Some people naturally exude self-confidence, perhaps as a result of the environment they grew up in, yet even if you are debilitated with an almost complete lack does not mean you cannot eventually develop and find a great deal of personal strength. It is a matter of systematically working on it. These skills tend to operate in virtuous cycles; as you work to improve it, you gain in positive experiences that then offer new input for further development.</p> <p>Identifying your own weaknesses is an opportunity for development. Identifying weaknesses in a curriculum is also an opportunity. This is where you as a teacher bring your true value. If teaching was simply a matter of textbook information, why bother with the teacher? One would simply educate everyone online at home, individually through their own self-study. Yet this is not the case. A textbook is</p>
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	<p>'static' and as a teacher you can bring it alive, and also address all of the areas where it is weak or missing vital points. You can omit extraneous and unnecessary material that is not pertinent to the needs of your students. Focus on what is essential for them to learn. This selection process is part of what makes someone a proficient teacher.</p>
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6. Summary:

'Paradigm shifts' are part of the dynamic of the modern world. Skills and knowledge are not static entities. The world we live in is in a process of ceaseless change; by the same logic so must we. We each need to continually grow and adapt.

Yet though the 'form' may change, the 'essence' of teaching does not: the interpersonal inculcation of learning development among our students, and within ourselves. So a central pillar of this is our own learning and development, coupled with our ability to present ourselves and deliver our knowledge and insights to students (and the world). Memory retention is a prerequisite for this development, so an awareness of how poor our natural unadjusted faculty is, helps us to formulate new strategies – whether as a teacher or learner. All of this then helps to develop our own 'hidden curriculum' that we carry as individuals and bring to our teaching – our teaching 'identity' to paraphrase Parker J. Palmer.

7. Conclusion

As teachers or as professional individuals in whichever career path we choose, we should always look to expand our 'horizon of expectation' in line with our own development. If the horizon does not move further away as we grow, how can we continue to grow? We either move forward or we stagnate (I have learnt this the hard way, from my own personal experiences in life; you cannot simply 'settle' for a job and pay packet without ultimately paying a big price in other ways; after all, you spend 8-10 hours at work, so if it does not stimulate you, that is time forever lost when you could be doing so much more!).

It was interesting to learn or reflect on the fact that often the best students never become teachers due to poor pay and working conditions. This is unfavourable towards a positive outcome for the world as a whole, so perhaps we should take on the challenge and responsibility to see if we can make a difference, even if it means personal sacrifices. It is at least something worth considering.

I hope as I continue to develop that my own 'hidden curriculum' concomitantly develops, I become a better presenter, a better listener, and therefore

able to bring more to everything that I end up doing in my future life.

My mind-map for the day is below (**Appendix 10**).

Appendix 8: Video on Life Skills

Life Skills	Your Understanding	Components useful to you	Why are these components useful to your personal life and professional career?
Life Skill 1	Speaking up. Public speaking.	Public presentation/delivery of ideas.	Delivering lectures, teaching, business meetings, sales pitches, communications with potential clients, etc.
Life Skill 2	Being honest. Self-analysis.	Introspective analysis. Identifying weaknesses/errors/areas for development.	Improvement of skills is dependent on identifying what and how to work on them.
Life Skill 3	Having confidence. "Fire"/"interior bravery".	Self-belief.	Self-belief is a prerequisite for success at just about anything, personally or professionally. In teaching, confidence is key in order to teach effectively, by speaking and communicating with authority.
Life Skill 4	Listening. Last to speak. Understanding of where they are coming from.	Holding back on opinions/ideas until everyone has offered their suggestions.	Allowing others freedom to communicate will not only enrich your ideas, it will also develop good interpersonal relations.
Life Skill 5	Time management. Trade off effectiveness for busyness.	Focus on what is vital. Do not take on too many projects.	I tend to what to try to do, accomplish, or be interested in too many things all at the same time.
Life Skill 6	Stop whining. No complaining or criticising.	Criticism of circumstances does not change them.	Focus on what you can control. Find solutions to change problems rather than merely complain about them.
Life Skill 7	Present in the moment. Mindset. Have your thoughts "be" in this moment. Happiness.	Freedom for worry or anxiousness.	Concentrate my energy on my current moment and situation to make the most of my current situation, here and now.
Life Skill 8	Consistency. Persistence. Journey.	Persistence and consistency through boredom, or if I feel demotivated.	Results occur by completing projects or tasks, these require dedication to push through inevitable barriers of whatever type
Life Skill 9	Sleep.	Always try to get 8 hours+ of sleep.	Sleep is the foundation of EVERYTHING else. Insufficient sleep incapacitates you and makes you inefficient, with poor quality in everything you do.
Life Skill 10	Empathy. Ability to relate to others. "What civilises us".	Greater empathy leads to greater understanding of others.	Whether in teaching, or any other profession, or personal relationships, empathy is critical in order to connect with others, and form genuine meaningful relationships in all aspects of life.

Watch the video and complete the following table.

Write briefly to what extent these life skills are transferable to the students.

All of these skills are highly transferable, in theory, though to the extent to which they are actually transferable will be dependent on the student's circumstances. Most of them fall under the remit of cognitive behavioural therapy strategies, or through making students aware of the particular choices that students make; the priorities that students adopt. Confidence is an emergent 'skill' that results from a combination of many different skills and qualities all coming together. "Success breeds confidence, and confidence breeds success". As a teacher it is about trying to establish a virtuous circle whereby the students systematically build on all of these aspects and through greater self-knowledge become better at self-management and self-improvement.

Appendix 9: Life Skills Thinkers

PLATO c.427– c. 347 BCE	What life skills did a 4th-century Greek need?	What life skills do you need?	What life skills will your students need?
<p>Citizenship - All free men wanted to be good citizens. This included learning to read and write, understand maths and science, and value the arts (play a musical instrument and understand poetry).</p> <p>Networking was another key to gaining influence through both being supported in discussion and increasing one's social</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizenship: Adapt to the demands placed by modern states, and global civic responsibility. Even with the rise of modern welfare states, a large onus is placed on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizenship: Will be the future or ongoing citizens across the world, so their learning will influence their qualities. Education, and in

<p>standing.</p> <p>Critical thinking - We think of Ancient Greece as one state, but there wasn't one single Greek government; each city decided its own matters of law, some being ruled by a King, some with groups of citizens (free men) forming a senate. Being able to discuss and debate was seen as essential skills since debate was the main way of governing.</p>		<p>individuals to fulfil the expectations required in order to comply as citizens.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking: Vital for forming professional connections, especially critical in the modern world. 	<p>particular literacy, has been identified a key global need. Lack of literacy has been identified as a key driver of inequality and poverty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical thinking: Equally vital for students. The modern world is changing at an accelerating effect primarily due to the effect on a social scale of technology, so the ability to critically think is vital in order to adapt your skills in order to meet the current demands.
<p>WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE 1564–1616</p>	<p>What life skills did an Elizabethan need?</p>	<p>individuals to fulfil the expectations required in order to comply as citizens.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking: Vital for forming professional connections, especially critical in the modern world. • Critical thinking: Absolutely vital in all aspects of life, and arguably in great shortage throughout the world. We need innovative and creative solutions to address the wide variety of distinctly new 21st century problems that occur. Technology is both an aid and a curse, in that it provides incredible solutions but also produces its own unique problems of great severity (e.g. a car is a highly useful form of personal transport, but also causes severe problems in terms of congestion and pollution). Teaching always exists in a dynamic changeable context, so no one method will solve all the problems you will encounter day to day. 	<p>particular literacy, has been identified a key global need. Lack of literacy has been identified as a key driver of inequality and poverty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical thinking: Equally vital for students. The modern world is changing at an accelerating effect primarily due to the effect on a social scale of technology, so the ability to critically think is vital in order to adapt your skills in order to meet the current demands. • Respect <p>In an increasingly globalised world, respect and tolerance are not-optional if we wish to survive and prosper. Teaching students to be global citizens with respect for differences is</p>
<p>Respect - Shakespeare was sometimes commanded to perform plays for the Queen. Queen Elizabeth I was generally well liked and very popular and the English economy was doing well, with exploration bringing in new foods, wealth and territories.</p> <p>Creativity – At this time there were many theatres in London and so there was a constant demand for new plays (often a play would only 'run' for a week). With so many people writing so many plays, Shakespeare had to constantly think creatively to bring into life characters and plots that would keep the audience happy.</p> <p>People management – At this time, London was the largest city in England and one of the largest in Europe, so this brought many people into the city and with it many social</p>			

<p>problems. There were areas where the crime rate was extremely high, there was no sanitation, disease often killed large sections of the population and life expectancy was low. The people who came to see Shakespeare's plays were from all social class and if they didn't like the play would be very vocal about saying so.</p> <p>England had a clear class system with nobility at the top and the very poor at the bottom.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect <p>Still an essential requirement, as much due to the fact that it goes hand-in-hand with networking. If you are not respected your theories and ideas will likely not meet a receptive audience, irrespective of their intrinsic quality.</p> Creativity <p>The problems that Shakespeare faced in terms of an original output are if anything infinitely magnified today. The creative commons that is the Internet and the rise of self-publishing (ebooks, music, visual art, all forms of media) means that everyone can in effect release their works to a global audience. This level of intense competition makes creativity even more of a vital commodity. Teaching is no less vulnerable in this respect, as there are now countless e-</p> 	<p>therefore essential. The effect of technology (i.e. thermonuclear weapons) has now made war a global existential threat to the entire human species, not merely a localised conflict.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creativity <p>Like critical thinking, arguably one of the most vital skills, and similarly, also comparatively neglected. As a general trend, Arts funding in Education across the world is under threat with more investment being directed towards the subjects associated with 'Hard' skills like IT, Maths, and Science. Yet to devalue the Arts is to devalue these vital complementary cognitive skills, not to mention the philosophical argument that removing Arts is</p>
ALBERT EINSTEIN 1879–1955	What life skills did Einstein need?		
<p>Self-confidence - Einstein lived in several different countries, sometimes with his family, sometimes alone, until 1933 he left Europe altogether due the rise of Hitler.</p> <p>Study skills - He worked on theories that gave him academic success and allowed him to travel and become famous across large parts of the world.</p> <p>Respecting Others – much of the work Einstein did was not in isolation. He worked with many famous mathematicians and scientists of his day and many were happy to recommend him for promotion or places at Universities, he was friends with Charlie Chaplin and Robert Oppenheimer.</p>			

MAYA ANGELOU 1928–2014	What life skills did Maya need?	<p>learning platforms, websites, and YouTube channels devoted to all manner of academic subjects. This means you have to offer something above and beyond what a student can get simply from their laptop screen.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• People management <p>One of the potential negative effects of the Internet is that we all now leave a permanent ‘digital footprint’. This fact, coupled with the fact of the fluidity of career trajectories and global labour market means that ‘people management’, or interpersonal skills have also actually increased in importance. Can you lead an isolated professional life? Although it is theoretically possible, working from home, self-employed, the reality is it is very difficult, and unless you are a prize winning novelist, you will likely have to spend a great deal of your time marketing and self-promoting.</p>	<p>effectively to remove the subjects that help give life meaning and enrichment beyond our merely pragmatic needs. Creativity thus needs to be integrated into all subjects through intelligent teaching and lesson planning, so students can develop rounded cognitive skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• People management <p>The same factors apply to students. All future students now are ‘digital children’ (unless they live in a third world country without even mobile smartphones). In any case, students should adopt the mindset of being ‘global citizens’.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-confidence <p>Inspiring of helping students to develop their self-confidence should</p>
<p>Self-confidence – Maya challenged what many people thought could be done. Her first job as a cable car conductor was a stepping stone; she believed that hard work was worthwhile and was still working (on an album of songs) when she died aged 86.</p> <p>Creativity – Maya’s list of works is extensive: she didn’t just settle for being a poet, but worked in many areas of the arts including film, theatre, television, music, the spoken word and novels</p>			

	<p>So interpersonal skills and management/communication with many people is crucial. Teachers, meanwhile, will have potentially hundreds of interactions every day, with students, fellow teachers, parents, and all members of the academic institute.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-confidence <p>Is lack of self-confidence the single biggest limiting factor for any individual? Lack of confidence is crippling, as it is usually inseparable from belief. It therefore translates into lack of self-belief. When someone believes they <i>can</i> their confidence improves; the two are therefore intimately tied into either a virtuous circle of self-improvement, or a debilitating circle of self-destruction. Confidence is normally a product of belief combined with positive experience.</p> 	<p>surely be a primary teaching goal. It is as vital as any knowledge you impart. They will not be successful in any venture in their life if they do not have self-confidence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study skills <p>The issue of study skills is most commonly addressed at students but is essentially identical to the requirements of the teacher. The teacher is also just a student, in essence, particularly if they are to be a good teacher. We should all see ourselves as lifelong students, always learning, hence always having a crucial demand for the most effective study skills available to us.</p> Empathy
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study skills <p>Superior study skills translate into a more efficient platform for learning. This then translates into becoming a better teacher. Particularly in the modern world, there is a huge demand for superior cognitive strategies. Material and ideas are in abundance, but processing and making use of all of that material is a tremendous challenge. The sheer brilliance of the great thinkers listed on the left hand panel cannot be denied, but even Einstein lived in a somewhat simpler and slower paced world than we live in now. Electronic communication and the rise of computers means that ideas are being captured and transferred at an accelerated rate. So it follows we need to make use of these same technologies to develop superior strategies and methods for sifting through all this material to find what is best, most effective, and most</p> 	<p>We want to develop responsible global citizens for the future. Empathy is absolutely essential, particularly if we are to attempt to slow and eventually stop the ceaseless cycle of wars between nation states, all of which end up being terribly destructive to human life. If people become more empathetic, they are more willing and able to engage in dialog, meaning problems can be resolved through communication and the use of language, rather than guns and warheads.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confidence <p>If students have no confidence in us as a teacher, none of what we teach is likely to be received productively by them. Therefore we</p>
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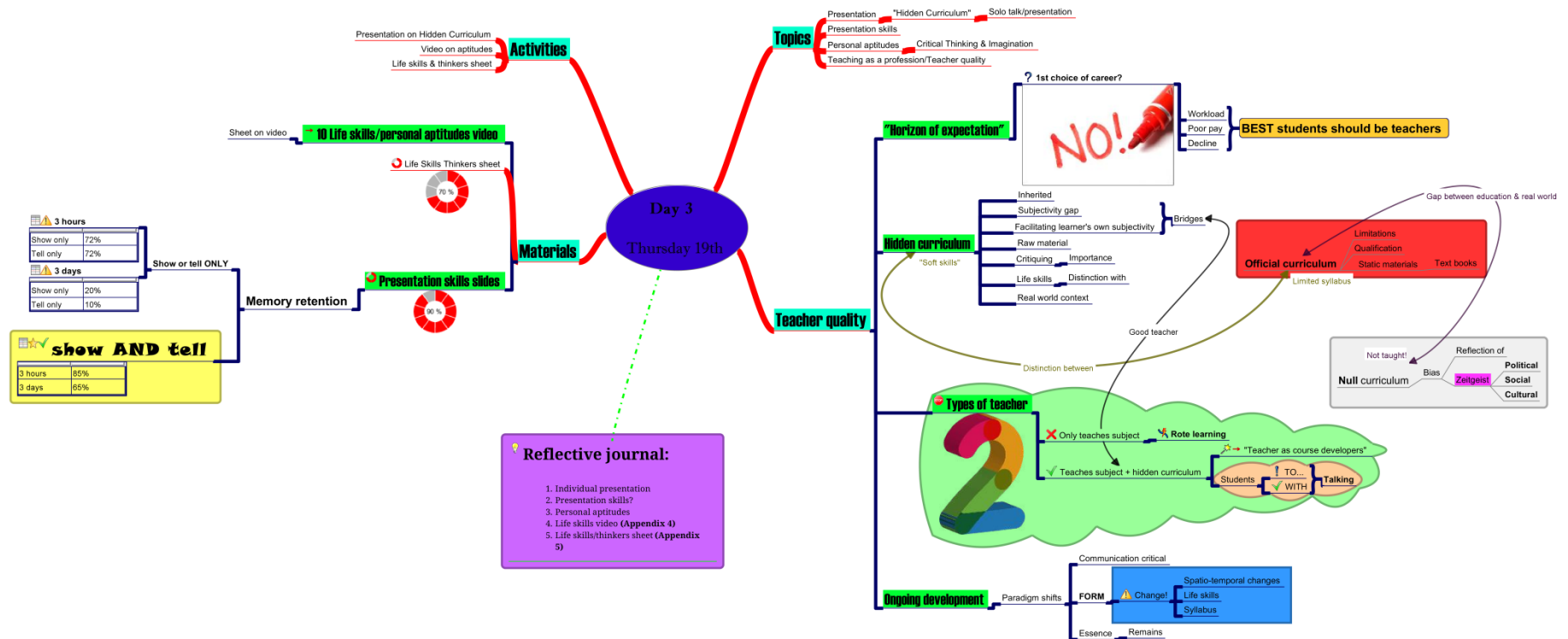
	<p>salient for our purposes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empathy <p>Empathy remains undiminished in importance. Despite our technological improvements, fundamentally we are still restricted to our language in order to communicate and therefore understand each other. Only by engaging in dialogue can we hope to come to some understanding, and hence empathise with others, particularly if their experiences are radically different to anything we have encountered in our own lives.</p> Confidence <p>Is confidence the single most important attribute for success in any venture? This is debateable, but it is incontestable that confidence is, at the very least, absolutely vital. No confidence</p> 	<p>need to think carefully as to how we present ourselves to them, and always be willing to listen and modify our practices as necessary based on the feedback they give. Likewise, we need to be able to communicate <i>why</i> we are doing something the way we are doing it. If they understand the rationale behind whatever it is we are doing, they will feel more confident in our ability to competently teach them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IT literacy <p>A student that is not IT literate is arguably an illiterate individual in today's world. Whilst we do not all need to be IT experts, our responsibility as teachers towards our students is to ensure we can direct them towards at least a</p>
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	<p>undermines your belief, which undermines your ability to pursue anything with determination. Meanwhile, unless you inspire confidence in those around you, you will not gain their trust. A lack of trust is crippling for both personal and professional relationships.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT literacy <p>Literacy is commonly framed in terms of reading and writing (often in English), and basic arithmetic and mathematics skills, but arguably the use of IT systems is now a third pillar into this equation. If someone cannot operate a the main functions of a smartphone, use an internet web browser or a word processor to a basic level, can we consider them 'literate' in a modern sense? The onus is on teachers to ensure that our IT skills, regardless of our chosen subject, are of sufficiently competent basic standard to meet the needs and requirements necessary to</p>	<p>minimum solid grounding in the fundamentals of IT literacy. No student should leave our tuition unable to use the basic office applications, internet browsers, and at least know the fundamentals of working with modern Operating Systems (i.e. Windows or MacOS) in terms of opening files, backing their work up, e-mailing, etc. These aspects are not difficult. On more advanced topics, if we are not confident in that area, we should refer them to other individuals who are, or provide them with the necessary skills to be able to look for and find solutions to their problems themselves. Problem solving will be a permanent feature of their life, as it is with all of us. As long as know</p>
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	effectively deliver our teaching to prospective students across whichever platform and means is appropriate or necessary to our situation. If better tools are available to us, we should find a way to use them!	<i>how</i> and <i>where</i> to look for solutions, we can begin to solve them.
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Appendix 10: Thursday mind-map

(Full resolution version included in zip file which you can zoom in on).



Siam Technology College

Bangkok, Thailand

Reflective Journal Template

Name: **Aren Tyr**

Course Title: **Learning Skills For Success 905-102**

Day: **Friday 20th (Day 4 of 4)**

<p>1. Areas of learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career planning • Listening and speaking: thesis, antithesis, synthesis 	<p>Evidence:</p> <p>The topic was on career planning and professional development. The phrase ‘horizon of expectations’ stuck in my mind – it captures the notion that one of the biggest enemies we face is our own tendency to self-limit, rather than visualizing possibilities, then striving to turn them into reality. Time management was cited as being one of the critical elements in this equation: there is a tremendous ‘leakage’ or wastage of time. I believe you mentioned this in the context of a study of teacher’s in Nepal; despite the training, large proportions of the day were wasted in an unproductive manner. Our distinctive uniqueness is one of our primary assets; no one can be who we are, no one can bring our particular perspective on the world. This provides a foundation for advancing one’s career, or for the reaching one’s potential as a teacher.</p> <p>It was Hegel that first formulised the tripartite division of thesis, antithesis and synthesis in his dialectical philosophy (or so I believe!). This dialectical method was certainly present in his <i>Phenomenology of Spirit</i> which I have read in English translation. One particular argument was advanced; its contrary presented; from this comparison a new, more advanced argument was develop that took both opposing points of view and synthesised a result. In our context, or indeed in any academic or professional context, careful listening of a viewpoint supplies our</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedagogy as personal philosophy 	<p>thesis; if we disagree we can present our antithesis. A synthesis that goes <i>beyond</i> both viewpoints is then desirable; this is how new knowledge is created or discovered. I believe Nils delivered a very interesting 'antithetical' lecture on the Hidden Curriculum, displeased as he was with the contents of Peng's paper. Considering which 'life skills' are, or should be, or should not be, part of the 'hidden curriculum' was a useful question to consider. We cannot teach everything. So we must be selective. This selection process itself will reflect our own personal values and bias towards what is actually important. Due consideration on this point would lead us to a potential synthesis 'beyond' the concepts of official, hidden, and null curriculums. I do not here propose to undertake such a venture in this journal! It would certainly be an interesting research topic though.</p> <p>Building on this, pedagogy in our teaching practice is in effect personal philosophy. There is no one 'right' way; if there was, everyone would be doing it, and education would be far more efficient than it currently is. Instead this reflects that there are an almost infinite number of possible variations on teaching strategies and methodologies, all of which reflect on your own qualities and approach as an individual. Good teaching practice therefore consists of transferring both knowledge <i>and</i> skills. These skills are drawn from the deep pool of your own personal identity; your own resources as an individual in synthesising the various manifest experiences of your life in combination with your theoretical learned knowledge in order to distil it all down into teachable material. Critical thinking skill was identified earlier on in the week as a vitally important area. Really, if we teach anything at all, it should be this above all else. Someone who possesses strong critical thinking skills by definition possesses strong self-learning skills. These two factors are not independent, but rather buttress each other. Teach someone to think well and you give them the capability to learn well for the remainder of their life; specific knowledge is limited to one particular topic. Thinking skills can be applied to any and all topics.</p>
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<p>2. Your previous understanding and new understanding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical thinking and pedagogy as ongoing concern 	<p>Evidence:</p> <p>I was pleased to discover that ‘critical thinking’ and the issue of appropriate pedagogical strategies to deploy is in fact an ongoing concern and strong focus among academic research in teaching in general (not just ESL). The reason I say this is I was concerned that this area has rather stagnated; such ‘critical thinking’ is often vaunted as a key education goal amongst virtually all institutions and government syllabus, but it is extremely debateable to what degree it is actually taught.</p> <p>One persistent thought through my mind has been the relationship, or indeed conflict, between testing versus teaching. One strong correlation that I believe exists is that the more economically developed a country becomes, and the more this development is applied to its formal education system, the more it becomes dominated by a ‘testing culture’, one based on continually gathering quantitative data on students in order to deliver and ‘improve’ on various performance metrics. But you must be careful of both <i>what</i> and <i>how</i> you measure performance.</p> <p>I am reminded of Ken Burn’s brilliant documentary on the Vietnam war. One of the points it raised was that the senior generals and politicians in America’s war effort became increasingly concerned with developing various ‘hard’ measures by which they could gauge their success and the belief this would lead to their eventual guaranteed victory. They fixated, in the end, on one single grim statistic. Their determination was that the sheer quantity of body count would be sufficient to gauge success, i.e. American troop deaths versus Vietcong troop deaths. So the pressure was on to continually deliver impressive statistics for enemy combatants killed. What actually happened was that the law of unintended consequences came into effect. Generals controlling each platoon were under pressure to deliver ‘results’. This fact, combined with the sheer brutality of the conflicts, which often left battlefields strewn with unidentifiable corpses, often as strewn body-parts, meant that the reality was the figures were frequently fabricated. Another unintended effect, that was not only morally unjustifiable but also counterproductive to their overall war effort since it bolstered new recruits to the Vietcong in outrage, was the deliberate slaughter of civilian casualties, including</p>
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- My personality 'type'

women and children, all to bolster the statistics of 'enemy combatants killed'. Despite the statistical trend-line showing increasing enemy deaths, the fact is the numbers were largely erroneous, and this obsession with this *one* metric to all other factors was disastrous as a military strategy in the long run. The ranks of Vietcong fighters swelled. The indiscriminate killing of non-combatants by the Americans unified many Vietnamese into a war that was suddenly existential in nature, rather than merely one that was politically motivated. My overall point here is that an obsession with quantitative metrics, the endless quest for 'hard' evidence, and the various ways of obtaining or testing for it, can actually be extremely damaging towards your primary goal if you are not careful. Instead of winning the war, the American's were focussed on generating an enemy 'body count'. Instead of teaching people, instead of educating them, increasingly we seem to be *testing* people. Students are learning how to pass exams and the various testing methods they are subjected to, rather than necessarily learning *how* to think in a broad and unified manner, and rather than learning *actual* real world knowledge. The two phenomena are not identical. One can be expert at passing examinations on a subject without having expertise *in* the actual subject. We need to think carefully as to what we want education to actually deliver.

This point also came across in the context of a teacher and their qualification. One can pass a course and gain a qualification; but it is not the qualification itself that determines your capability or proficiency as a teacher, whether you can actually *teach*. That is something else, and something more than your mere qualification.

The document 'Handling Criticism with Honesty and Grace' detailed a personality test in the context of managing potential conflicts with other individuals, with the notion that greater self-awareness of your personality characteristics gives you greater self-control. I found it interesting to discover I correspond to INTP, a classification I think does broadly reflect my personality, particularly my predilection towards analytical introversion coupled with an apparently conflicting tendency towards spontaneity based on intuitive decisions motivated as much by emotion as pure rationalism or logic. My decision to come to Thailand for the BA TESOL was primarily intuitive more so than deeply considered in one sense; though I feel increasingly confident I have made the correct decision and am happy with

	how things have developed so far!
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<p>3. What challenged you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflective methodology • The demands of teaching • Succinctly summarising key points of the Thai sustainable 	<p>Evidence:</p> <p>This reflective process has been interesting and valuable. Like most modern students, one's expertise tends to be orientated towards fulfilling very definite and narrow criteria: you must do x, and you must write y, of such and such a format. This week has been far more open, with the result that thematically linking all the various topics in order to tease out connections that tie it all together in a meaningful way has been a key part of the process – and one that I have enjoyed. I have found myself becoming more comfortable with this reflective process as part of formal academic learning, which is itself a useful skill. This has led to me considering everything in a broader and wider manner than I believe I would have done if I had simply, for example, had to answer a series of set questions on specific topics each day. The onus to sift through the material and formulate it into a body of meaningful work is in actuality a key soft skill transferable to almost any cognitively demanding job.</p> <p>All of the factors that need to come together to be a good teacher are quite intimidating if considered in a purely abstract manner. Like most things, it will be a case of learning by doing. I have yet to actually teach anyone, in an academic context, as such, though I did work for four years as a personal trainer, so I would work one-to-one with people with a large focus on the kinaesthetic body intelligence skills as well as a whole host of other factors such as motivational psychology and to some lesser degree counselling. Finding your 'best practice' whilst also accommodating the pragmatic demands on your teaching situation and the requirements of the official curriculum will be the big challenge.</p> <p>The number of factors identified and discussed in the document on Thai</p>
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development context versus global context	educational reform is extensive. Even a brief comparison with the document detailing various global goals is very difficult, as there are so many possible methods of analysis and various avenues of investigation. So I decided to focus on what I believed were a few key observations of mine and chose to elaborate on these. The Thai document is primarily interesting from a philosophical perspective, as it essentially goes to the root of what their vision for education reform in the future is. Attempting to identify how well this vision fits into a global context would be a worthy research of thesis topic in its own right. My commentary is attached below (Appendix 11).
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4. What have you learnt? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The future of teaching 	Evidence: <p>The challenges facing education to improve in the future are many and manifest. One of the essential problems is that improving education is not something simply restricted to the school or the teachers themselves. A whole network of factors all need to be addressed as part of a development package. Unless these are also addressed, education standards are not liable to improve. This includes such fundamental factors as food, basic health care, footwear and clothing, transport and energy infrastructure, and a whole host of other factors.</p>
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5. Scope for your current profession or for a new profession: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The week as a whole 	Evidence: <p>Reflecting on this week as a whole, I realise how my own lack of confidence has badly limited myself, and how I have applied my own 'horizon of expectation' in a negative manner on myself. I possess a good range of 'soft skills' and believe I can critically think in a productive manner, yet I have been remiss in applying that to</p>
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	myself particularly from a career perspective. Assessing all the various topics we have covered this week has made me appreciate just how many potential job avenues are available on this numerous lines of inquiry, it is just a matter of creatively exploring the various vocational options and seeing how one's skillset can be applied to the options. How you promote and market yourself to potential employers.
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6. Summary:

There is a great deal to consider from the perspective of personal development, from the development of professional standards, to the development of teaching quality, to our notions about what is pedagogically appropriate. It is interesting to consider that the increasing availability of video resources for learning (either via YouTube or online educational sites) has once again increased the relative importance of listening and speaking in an academic context; whilst written papers and written academic work is likely to remain the fundamental mainstay, it is an undoubted certainty that 'blended learning' that incorporates a whole host of material is only going to increase. The article on the core skills of listening and speaking deliberated on some of these issues. Therefore, at some point, we will be involved in producing such material if we go on to develop in either an academic or professional context.

The whole topic of "21st century skills" is a fascinating one in its own right. It can be interpreted from a wide number of possible avenues of investigation. Teachers also need to consider themselves within the global context. This means we need to carefully consider precisely what values we most cherish, as no matter how 'objective' we are, teaching draws upon your resources as an individual which ultimately is reflected in what set of values you wish to project.

7. Conclusion

It has been extremely challenging, but interesting, attempting to compile all of these manifest issues and resources into a somewhat coherent journal. I have enjoyed the fact that the open structure of the journal invites a more free flowing reflection on topics. The word 'topic', is in one real sense a misnomer, or an illusion. It implies a sense of separation, when in actuality factors that pertain to one thing flow into other factors in a highly organic and dynamic way. Any particular segregation unavoidably reflects the particular intellectual prejudices of the thinker, as much as it may also reflect an apposite logical framework for analysis. This is not necessarily a negative thing; it just implies a greater need for self-awareness, a recognition that our

own viewpoint is always incomplete yet unique, and therefore is coloured by our own particular perception about things.

My mind-map for the day is attached below (**Appendix 12**).

Appendix 11: A Short Commentary on Thailand's Sustainable Development Goals as Related to the Global Sustainable Development Goals

A Short Commentary on Thailand's Sustainable Development Goals as Related to the Global Sustainable Development Goals

Aren Tyr

The Thai sustainable development goals in terms of basic access and provision of education are in conformity with the global objectives. The statistics indicate that Thailand has made significant strides with a claimed 90% in primary education and 80% enrolled in secondary education. Over 75% had access to preschool education. If these metrics are correct, Thailand has addressed the first significant requirement, namely the provision of a universal education system for all children and young adults.

The document also identifies that measures are being made to address systemic inequalities that affect this access to education, such as homelessness and those living in remote rural areas. There is also an ongoing attempt to mitigate against the manifest negative impact of poverty, though there is an explicit acknowledgement that this need has not been fully addressed.

The set of goals listed in the framework are highly optimistic. Essentially they are trying to create what I would summarise as a 'culture of excellence'. More unusually, when analysed from the basis of Western liberalism (I should note I am from the UK, so acknowledge my potential cultural bias), there is also an emphasis to 'enhance [the] ethics and morals of the people and help them to be immune to changes'. This sentence is particularly philosophically interesting, and it would be unlikely to appear in Government whitepapers concerning educational objectives in the UK, for example. Immunity to

change seems a curious objective given the frangible and fissiparous nature of the modern world; it suggests something contrary to adaptability, and almost a resistance to change. It also seems in conflict with the objective of competitiveness, since competition by definition implies a willingness to change and adapt: this is a particularly strong feature of all market based global political economy. So change will come, irrespective of your desire; whether we consider that from the perspective of an individual or nation as a whole. One might assume it was written with a desire to preserve (or manufacture...? I leave this as an open question...) a sense of cultural identity.

A strong sense of the desire for the preservation and development of moral virtue also underpins their listed characteristics of the SEP guided schools, almost Confucian in nature. Various other metrics pertaining to highly desirable or vital 'soft skills' such as critical thinking and the ability to synthesise ideas are coupled with mission statements regarding the development of educational infrastructure and establishments that will allow the development of these skills.

In short, the goals are manifest in type and hugely ambitious. Some challenges related to 'hard' metrics are then explicitly acknowledged toward the end of the article. A poor PISA ranking, coupled with poor university rankings, suggest that the general development of tertiary education across the country has great scope for improvement.

The document is long on idealised and extremely difficult objectives but comparatively limited on evidence or specific plans as to precisely how all these difficulties will be addressed. Given that is already 2018, achieving all of these objectives in twelve years by 2030 seems unrealistic to me, since the development of the necessary infrastructure itself is likely to take far longer than that. Additionally Thailand has a highly polarised division between urbanised areas (such as Bangkok) and extremely rural and remote regions, far more so than in 'First World' countries with perhaps less challenging geographical challenges (such as the UK). So attempting to significantly normalise between the urban and rural division is likely to be unachievable in twelve years, even assuming it had the consent of the population as a whole (again, this is likely to be a politically contentious topic).

Of more interest is whether all of the Thai goals are actually fully in conformity with the global goals listed. There is likely to be a strong tension between those that wish to preserve a notion of Thai cultural identity and a specific moral framework that is by Western standards relatively conservative and nationalistic in character, versus the more liberal notions of global citizenship and cultural diversity. This is not to suggest the two value systems cannot be brought into rapport, but simply to highlight that this will undoubtedly be a complex issue to be negotiated. I should note that such difficulties are a prevalent

feature of all countries, and this tension tends to emerge in various new contexts. In the UK, the issue of Brexit has proved highly divisive, and has served to create a fault-line down British society due to two fundamentally differing value systems as to how we see the country developing – even before we consider the infinite complexities of the various political narratives that interplay through this conceptual landscape. However, notwithstanding this, the comparatively unequivocal discourse running through the document pertaining to ethical and moral values suggests a strong desire to harmonise Thai national identity with a specific sense of civic responsibility, and I see this leading to a tension that will have to be negotiated in the framework of the more ‘globalised’ and ‘liberal’ individualistic values promoted by countries such as the US and Germany that are highly active players on the international scene through bodies such as the UN.

Appendix 12: Friday mind-map

(Full resolution version included in zip file which you can zoom in on).

