SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING: TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK FOR CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Robert J. Lowe

Introduction

Special educational needs (SEN) is an area which has received only a little attention from English language teachers, and many English Language Teaching contexts lack support structures for students with SEN or for their teachers. This stands in contrast to the mainstream education system of the UK, for example, which has structures in place to help teachers achieve inclusive classroom practice. Despite SEN issues having been an important part of educational research in the UK since the Warnock report in 1978 (Peer & Reid 2012), there is relatively little literature focusing on SEN in ELT. This may be because ELT is a field which operates largely within the private sector, and so is not usually subject to governmental oversight. In addition, ELT is often conducted with adult students, for whom SEN may not be as prominent an issue as with children. This lack of literature provided the inspiration for this study, which investigated the kinds of training and provisions available in UK mainstream education in order to create a framework for continuing professional development (CPD) in ELT with regards to SEN. My own experience of teaching a blind student for the first time led me to appreciate how useful it would be for language schools and ELT programs to have a clear framework to follow for teachers engaged in teaching students with SEN. In this paper I have sought to create a framework that can be adopted by language schools or ELT programs to help improve their instructors' abilities to meet the needs of students from a variety of SEN backgrounds.

Defining 'special educational needs' and 'special educational provisions'

'Special educational needs' is a broad term, and as Warnock (2012: xix) notes "one of the inadequacies of many official pronouncements about special educational needs is the habit of treating all special needs as much the same, as if students' problems were capable of being tackled in the same way". In Peer and Reid (2012) a number of conditions are considered under the umbrella term of SEN, including:

- Dyspraxia (characterized by poor physical co-ordination)
- Dyslexia (a disorder which affects the ability to spell and read)
- Dyscalculia (difficulty understanding numbers)
- Auditory processing disorder (difficulty recognizing and interpreting sounds)
- ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, characterized by difficulty in controlling behaviour)
- Autism spectrum disorders (developmental disorders leading to impaired social interaction)
- Visual impairment
- Hearing loss

SEN refers to physical, mental, or psychological conditions that may impede the learning of students. However, recognition of which conditions constitute SEN will vary from country to country. For example, the education systems of some countries may not consider disorders such as ADHD or dyslexia to require special provisions, and may not even consider these to be real conditions at all.

SEN covers a wide variety of issues, and listing them would be impossible as such a list would be under constant revision, and the inclusion of certain conditions would be subject to the varying judgment of local professionals. However, the UK *Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice* (Department for Education and Skills 2015) provides a general definition of SEN, formulated in the UK with reference to children. I have adapted and broadened the wording to create a definition for use in this paper with regards to global ELT.

Students have special educational needs if they have a *learning difficulty* which calls for *special educational provision* to be made for them.

- ➤ A *learning difficulty* includes students who have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of students at their level, or have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making

use of generally provided educational facilities.

➢ *Special educational provision* is defined as educational provision which is additional to, or different from, the educational provision made generally for students of the same level.

(adapted from the Department of Education & Skills 2015: 15-16)

This definition is broad enough, I believe, to cover students of all ages and with a variety of needs in any locality.

The effects of SEN on language learning and teaching

It will be instructive here to outline some examples of the difficulties caused by SEN for teachers and learners of foreign languages. I will provide just two examples, because to cover all of the different forms of SEN would be impossible, for the reasons outlined above.

One example is the case of students with hearing loss. These students may have poor pronunciation, as they are largely unable to hear their own voice or the voices of others. They may thus require more focused instruction on the mechanics of speech production (placement of the tongue and teeth, etc.) (Swisher 1989). In addition, Mayer (2009: 6) notes that "the deaf ESL learner lacks access to a primary form of the L1", arguing that as such "the design of typical ESL programs, with their initial emphasis on conversational English, is not appropriate". In addition, teachers need to be aware of the placement of hearing impaired students in their classroom, as these students may find it difficult to understand instructions or explanations if they cannot see the lips of their teacher moving. Teachers may need to reinforce spoken instructions or explanations with visual cues such as boardwork or pointing to relevant sections in their textbook. Additional research has shown that a focus on reading and writing for deaf students is both beneficial and attainable (Kontra, Csizer & Piniel 2014), and that the use of sign language can help deaf students in their foreign language learning (Kontra & Csizer 2013).

A second SEN issue that may affect the learning of languages is that of dyslexia. Dal (2008: 447; see also Palladino et al. 2016) notes that "dyslexic students often experience problems...linked to among other things phonological processing, inaccurate representation in the long term memory, sequencing, poor ability to differentiate between similar looking words, and

difficulty to discriminate between different sounds". This may require teachers to change the style of their materials, for example, by using larger font sizes and wider line spacing, and even printing materials on differently coloured paper (Schneider & Crombie 2003; Nijakowska 2015; Nijakowska & Kormas 2016). For further information on dyslexia in foreign language teaching see Dal (2008), Peer & Reid (2016), and Reid (2016).

These are just two examples of how SEN may affect language learning and teaching, but many of the other conditions outlined earlier will also affect language learning, and require specific classroom interventions and techniques. For example, Wire (2005) gives an overview of issues in language learning connected autism spectrum disorders, and provides general advice for effective learning strategies and teaching interventions. In addition, SEN issues may affect the ability for students to successfully take foreign language tests. For example, listening comprehension tests are usually not appropriate for deaf students, and students with dyslexia may find tests of reading and writing to be a challenge.

This is not to say that SEN always negatively affect language learners. For example, Nikolic (1986) argues that the increased aural sensitivity and memory training of students with visual impairments may actually contribute positively to language learning, while Sparks, Javorsky and Philips (2004; 2005), provide data to show that students with ADHD do not have any apparent difficulty with foreign language courses, which stands in contradiction to assumptions present in the literature.

In any case, knowledge of the complex effects of different forms of SEN on the language learning experience of students will contribute positively towards a teacher's ability to maximize the learning potential of the classroom. Additionally, such knowledge may make teachers more aware of the inadequacy of traditional communicative approaches for certain learners, such as those with hearing impairments who may benefit more from a focus on reading and writing in their language classes (Kontra, Csizer & Piniel 2014).

SEN in UK mainstream education

Research on SEN in UK mainstream education is voluminous, and has ranged from broad questions of how to inclusively teach students with SEN (see Friend & Bursuck 2002; Tilstone & Rose 2003; Lewis & Norwich 2005) through to focusing on particular educational issues for learners (Peer &

Reid 2012), culminating in the belief that UK schoolteachers should have a grounding in SEN as part of their teacher training. In 2002, standards were introduced which required trainee teachers to demonstrate:

- they understand their responsibilities under the SEN Code of Practice, and how to seek advice from specialists on SEN.

- they can differentiate their teaching to meet the needs of pupils including those with SEN.

- they are able to identify and support pupils who experience learning difficulties (adapted from Department for Education and Skills 2004).

While some criticize the amount of training available for UK teachers regarding SEN (Hodkinson 2009), there are at least systems in place during teacher training, which are supplemented by the presence of special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs) in UK schools.

Every school in the UK has a SENCO; a staff member with expertise in teaching students with SEN, who is responsible for organising the school's SEN provisions. SENCOs work with both teachers and parents to make sure that students receive any necessary assistance, and that teachers receive support and training (Farrel 1998; Cole 2005; Layton 2005). This is reflected in the education systems of other countries, such as the USA, where teachers receive some training in teaching students with SEN, and may choose to qualify as a special education teacher who plays the same role as a SENCO, creating individualised education plans (IEPs) for students, and liaising with students, teachers, parents and administrators (Spring 2016).

SEN in language teaching
The literature on SEN in language teaching is less comprehensive than in mainstream education. However there are several books and articles that focus on the teaching of students with SEN. For example, Swisher (1989) and Mayer (2009) discuss teaching English to hearing impaired learners, while Orsini-Jones et al. (2005), Enjelvin (2009) and Lowe (2015) write about teaching blind or partially-sighted students, and Schneider & Crombie (2003) go into detail about strategies for teaching foreign languages to dyslexic learners. In addition to these texts, there are a few books that more comprehensively address the needs of EFL/ESL learners with SEN (see Artilez & Ortiz 2002; Hamayan, Marler & Damico 2013;

Echevaria & Graves 2014). Unfortunately, these resources are largely unavailable to teachers without institutional access to academic literature or funds to buy specialist textbooks. This often leaves teachers who find themselves teaching students with SEN in difficulty, as unlike the mainstream education system, language teacher training courses do not cover issues of SEN in any great detail, if at all.

Initial certificate courses have few opportunities for trainee teachers to discuss SEN issues. The Cambridge CELTA offers a short period in which these issues may be discussed alongside other topics such as teaching young learners, while the Trinity College London CertTESOL does not yet cover these issues at all. The situation is similar for diploma-level qualifications. For teachers studying a postgraduate qualification such as a Master's degree in TESOL, there is a similar shortfall of opportunities to discuss these issues on most courses, as an examination of online syllabuses quickly reveals.

Considering the lack of initial SEN training opportunities in ELT, it is unsurprising that calls are being made for change. Morita (2015) calls for awareness-raising regarding students with SEN in global education, while Lowe (2016b) suggests that training for teachers regarding SEN should be included as a part of their continuing professional development (CPD).

Continuing professional development
CPD can be defined as "any professional development activities engaged in by teachers which enhance their knowledge and skills and enable them to consider their attitudes and approaches...with a view to improve the quality of the teaching and learning process" (Bolam 1993, cited in Bubb & Earley 2008: 3). Kennedy (2005) identifies nine models of in-service CPD. These are:

- *The training model* - training is provided by an outside expert.

- *The award-bearing model* - teachers complete assessed programs of study.

- *The deficit model* - the individual weaknesses of a teacher are addressed.

- *The cascade model* - individual teachers attend training events, and then disseminate information to other staff members.

- *The standards-based model* - CPD is conducted to raise teaching level to an imposed standard.

- *The coaching/mentoring model* - a one-to-one relationship between two teachers in which support can be given one-way or mutually.

- *The community of practice model* - group-based coaching/mentoring.

- *The action research model* - teachers conduct research within their own teaching setting.

- *The transformative model* - a nonspecific model designed to enable conditions required for transformative practice.

Teachers or schools may adopt any of these approaches to CPD, and there are levels of interrelationship between them. The model chosen in each situation will be based on the specific requirements and constraints of the teachers, staff, and students involved. In this study, several of these approaches were identified and used in the construction of the proposed framework. CPD in language teaching is often difficult to carry out, due to high workloads for teachers, and a lack of financial incentives for teachers to improve their skills. However, for motivated professionals and schools dedicated to improving the learning experience of their students, such CPD is an important part of their work, and something worth investing both time and money in.

Methodology
In order to develop a framework for CPD regarding SEN in ELT, I felt it was important to gain the perspectives of people who are involved in mentoring teachers regarding SEN, as these informants would be able to provide good insight into the issue (Hatch 2002). As a result, two SENCOs (referred to as Participant A and Participant B) currently or formerly working in British schools were contacted, and semi-structured interviews were conducted about how they support teachers in their development regarding the teaching of students with SEN. The interviewees were selected on the basis of their extensive experience as SENCOs, of more than ten years each. I knew participant A personally, while Participant B was contacted through a mutual acquaintance. Participant A was interviewed in real time over Skype, however the interview with Participant B took place over email, due to technical restrictions. The goal of the interviews was to ascertain:

- What model (or combination of models) of CPD is generally used regarding SEN.

- How CPD is facilitated for teachers.

- How this knowledge is disseminated through the school.

To investigate these topics I began each interview with some initial questions (see Appendix A), and then asked follow-up questions to explore the participant's answers - often resulting in the interviews taking a conversational turn. This was done so that the interviews would maintain a focus on the issues, but would also be open enough to explore points of interest; taking the form of an "ordered conversation" (Blommaert & Jie 2010: 44).

Participant A's data was transcribed (Participant B's answers were already written), and the data from the two interviews was coded based on relevant topics and points of similarity (Dörnyei 2007). The participant's statements were then cross-referenced with each other to identify consistent themes that could aid in the construction of a framework for CPD.

In order to personalise this account, at each stage of the analysis I will provide examples from my own experience of teaching a blind student for the first time to illustrate the points being made. While not quite being autoethnographic in nature (as it is not presented as a full narrative, nor analysed in sufficient depth [Denzin 2014]), I hope that by mapping my experiences onto the framework presented I will be able to "create a reciprocal relationship" with readers "in order to compel a response" (Denzin 2014: 20, citing Jones, Adams & Ellis 2013); in particular I wish to inspire consideration of how such a framework could benefit the lives of teachers by showing how elements of this framework either positively affected my own teaching experience, or could have prevented struggle or difficulty.

I will finally provide an example of how each step of the framework could be implemented in a non-governmental ELT setting, such as a private language school or an ELT program.

Study context and limitations
There are three main limitations to this study, and all depend upon context. Firstly, the interviews were carried out with reference to UK mainstream education, which necessarily limits the relevance of its findings to ELT. Mainstream education in other countries may have different ways of achieving inclusive practice for students with SEN, may not consider various forms of SEN to be in need of addressing, or may not consider inclusive practice to be a desirable goal. I do not intend to imply that the education system of the UK is superior to others, but merely to highlight

the provisions available under one system and explore their applicability to ELT.

The second issue concerns discussing ELT as one system, which may present a false picture of reality. ELT takes place in many different contexts around the world, including state schools, private language schools, and assorted ELT programs. The goal of this study was to create a framework that could be adopted by private language schools, by language centers, and in other ELT environments. In short, the framework is intended to be broad enough to be adaptable to any context in which a number of teachers are employed, and where there is no state-organised system of CPD already in place.

Finally, many ELT students are adults, and as such, less responsibility lies with the teacher than it does in primary or secondary schooling. However, many ELT classes contain young learners, and so many of the general principles will be applicable.

Despite these limitations, the CPD framework suggested here should be broad enough for teachers, administrators, and directors of studies in numerous ELT settings to be able to apply it to their own context.

Findings from the data

During the two interviews, the participants were asked how they would facilitate the CPD of teachers in terms of supporting students with SEN. From the data, five points were identified that both participants considered key to supporting students and encouraging teacher development. The first of these was centrality of the SENCO to the process, which forms my first underlying suggestion on which the rest of the framework will be based. Following this, four key 'steps' were identified which both participants described as important in supporting teachers and students, and which will form the CPD framework proposed in this paper. I will present the data in the context of the emergent framework in order to show how the CPD framework was constructed from the statements of the participants. Each of these four steps will be described below with reference to statements made during the interviews and my own experience, and they will then be drawn together to form a framework for CPD regarding SEN in ELT.

Primary suggestion: A SENCO-equivalent staff member

Underlying all of the responses from the participants was the centrality of the SENCO to the process of student support and teacher CPD. This was not stated outright by either of the

participants, but was rather an assumption upon which all of their statements were predicated. As such, the first point of the framework that I am proposing is perhaps the most challenging; in order to facilitate the CPD of staff, I suggest that it may be necessary for language schools or ELT programs to recruit or train a SENCO-equivalent staff member. This may require the training of a specific staff member, either through attending workshops, or undergoing specialist training. In any case, in order to facilitate the CPD framework proposed here, I suggest that it is the responsibility of the school or program to invest some time and money in training a staff member to be a specialist in SEN so as to best facilitate CPD for the rest of the staff (Lowe 2016a). For example, a private language school could find a member of staff with an interest in SEN, and then arrange for them to attend training courses or workshops in order to bring their knowledge and skills up to a level at which they are competent to supervise the CPD of their colleagues regarding SEN. This SENCO-equivalent staff member may also be able to sensitively broach the subject of a suspected but unrecognised SEN issue in a student, as either the parents of the student or the student themselves may be unaware of, or unwilling to accept, that they have a SEN in the first place.

With this primary point in place, I will now turn to the four steps that make up the CPD framework, with reference to interview data and my own experience.

Step 1: Student consultation

The first step in the process is what I am terming 'student consultation'. This refers to speaking to a student about their needs and difficulties, and discussing what the teacher or school can do to help facilitate their learning. Participant A makes this point forcefully:

> "...the person coming in with the special educational need is treated as the expert and so you go to them and say, what can I do that will help you learn? Tell me things I need to put in place to overcome your barriers to learning. It's a very key phrase...how will we overcome the barriers to learning?"

Both of the interviewees emphasized that the student is the primary authority, because they are the one who is an expert on their own needs. This is particularly true when teaching adults who will have spent much of their lives developing strategies to overcome their barriers to learning, and may also be true for children. As Participant A states, "we get the child in and ask them - what do

you find difficult about writing, or what do you find difficult about reading? You ask the child."

While a young student may be aware of their difficulties, they may be unable to articulate them to their teachers, and in this case teachers should consult with the parents. As Participant B explains: "dealing with parents, this is a large part of what we do...meeting with parents is an important responsibility for all teachers". Participant A expands on this, noting that "We meet with parents...and we talk to parents about progress....we've tried this, we've tried that...we feel we've made a little bit of progress here but we don't feel we've made sufficient progress, can we ask your advice?" Again, the people who have the most experience with the student in question are treated as the experts.

This first step agrees with my own experience of teaching an adult blind student for the first time. Before the first class of the course I met with my student and discussed what issues she might have. The student informed me that she would need some extra guidance in using her braille textbook as it was challenging for her to scan for and locate material, which was spread over a larger number of pages than in the regular textbook. We engaged in an ongoing dialogue throughout the course so that any new issues that arose could be effectively dealt with.

Consulting with students, or with parents, was a key theme from the interviews, and is a reasonable starting point for a CPD framework. For teachers encountering an SEN issue for the first time it is an opportunity both for the student to express their needs, and for the teacher to learn about a particular SEN from an expert; the student themself. In fact, with adults who have already developed strategies, this step may be all that is required. In other cases it may be necessary to move to step 2.

Step 2: Internal coaching and mentoring
In the second step, the role of the SENCO-equivalent staff member, as proposed earlier, plays a major role.

Participant B states "as a SENCO I am required to provide training where I can for staff. If I have been on a course I will aim to present the most relevant information at a staff meeting to keep everyone as up-to-date as possible." This highlights the importance of the SENCO in facilitating the CPD of teachers. While, as participant A notes, the SENCO is "not necessarily the expert on each and every aspect of special needs", they will be familiar with a number of more common issues such as dyslexia, and will

also be able to guide teachers through a process of reflection on their teaching.

Participant A notes that once a problem has been identified, the teacher, parents, and student will begin "working as a group with the SENCO to try and solve the problem", and that the SENCO will mentor the teacher in order to help them develop their skills. However, the SENCO may only have knowledge of a particular form of SEN if that difficulty is common, such as dyslexia. In other cases, for example students who have difficulties with phonics, reading, or writing, the SENCO would help the teacher to diagnose the particular issue, and the two of them would work to put together an action plan. As Participant A explains:

> "[I] would work with the teacher, the teacher would identify [the student] was falling behind in a particular area and when they met with you they would often say I need some help with this child, and then... I would ask questions to identify what the need was. Does he find it difficult to hold a pen? Is he finding it difficult to spell words, is that the issue? Is he spending a long time just not getting anything down because he can't spell words? Can he not think of the story that he wants to write? Is it physically tiring for him to write, so that his hand's worn out? What is the actual problem?"

The SENCO would then give advice, and negotiate a solution with the teacher. In this way, even when the SENCO is not an expert in a particular issue, they will still be able to help and mentor the teachers in their school for relatively mild forms of SEN.

In my own experience of teaching a blind student, mentoring from a SENCO-equivalent staff member would have been desirable, as several issues emerged which a more experienced colleague could have helped to identify. For example, I could not understand why my student was reluctant to join group discussions, despite being very talkative one-on-one, and when asked about this she could not give a reason. I later realised that this was likely due to her not being able to see the body language of her fellow students signaling appropriate points to join the discussion. This was eventually resolved through encouraging explicit turn-taking prompts, however the aid of a mentor could have helped identify and deal with this issue much sooner.

This second step will be useful for mild SEN issues or for SEN issues of which the SENCO-equivalent staff member already has knowledge, and could be easily carried out in a language school or other ELT environment. However for more severe or unfamiliar forms of SEN, it may be necessary to move on to step 3.

Step 3: Outside support and training

The next step identified in the interviews was the bringing in of expert support to help facilitate the development of teachers. Participant A notes that this should be done in tandem with the other points described above (student consultation, internal coaching and mentoring), noting that "you're doing all of that, all the above, but you've got some extra support from an outside agency", and giving the following example:

> "So for instance a child who came in with speech and language difficulty would have—we would bid to get some support from the speech therapist. They would come and give us a program of work, they would do an assessment, they would deliver a program of work which the teacher or teaching assistant would work through."

Participant B also notes that outside expertise on particular SEN issues is often indispensible, and describes opportunities for training that were made available in their school:

> "We may have a whole-school initiative such as attaining an external award like the Dyslexia Friendly Schools Status, or...training run by the county, or these days often by freelance consultants, is accessed according to need within the school - for example, Teaching Assistants from three separate classes were once sent to a Special School to attend a course in autistic spectrum disorder."

While such initiatives could be taken by teachers individually, participant B states that the SENCO is usually responsible for keeping track of such opportunities and arranging staff attendance, and is "also the point of contact for other professionals - psychologists, hearing/vision impairment support, speech and language therapists, diabetic nurses, autism advisory services, occupational therapists, etc." in relation to organising any training within the school.

In my case, it was very difficult to find appropriate outside support and training. Aside from browsing the lists of presentations taking place nearby hoping that one would be relevant, my only access to such outside training was through online videos and articles, which were often unhelpful or unsuitable. A SENCO-equivalent staff member in a private language school or ELT program could keep track of local events taking place, and pass this information on to teachers.

Again, here we see the importance of the SENCO in helping to organize outside support for teachers in terms of workshops, work plans, and consultations. In ELT, a SENCO-equivalent staff member could do the same. Both participants make the point that after consultations with the

students and individual mentoring, the next stage taken in mainstream education is to bring in outside support, and my own experience demonstrates how useful such support could be. This leads us onto the final step in the framework.

Step 4: Cascade training and recycling knowledge

Once teachers have received outside training, or experienced teaching a student with specific SEN, a final question is how schools/organisations can take advantage of this to help other teachers. Both participants in this study suggested that a cascade model (as referred to earlier) would be used. Participant B says:

> "Certainly if a member of staff has gained valuable knowledge/experience of a certain special educational need, a headteacher will aim to use this to best effect in the future. In our school this is very much a consideration when deploying teaching assistants - they may have particular expertise in leading intervention groups, or the disposition necessary to support one-to-one. In a school the size of ours...advice and help is sought from each other regularly and often quite informally."

Participant A gives an example of how this process could be carried out by teachers in a school:

> "One thing might be that if it the child changed classes during the year... the new teacher would go and observe in the classroom, but it's more likely that they'd just spend some time talking to one another after school and doing a mentoring system."

Participant A also states that students would be assigned with little regard for who was experienced in that particular form of SEN, noting that "very, very rarely would it be assigned to the teacher who'd already had experience", because this would limit the possibility for as many teachers as possible to gain that experience.

In other words, once a teacher has had the experience of a particular SEN, this knowledge will then be disseminated in-house to build the knowledge and skills of other teachers. This could easily be applied to private language schools or ELT programs in the form of faculty development sessions, mentoring, and internally distributed documents, which is the route taken in my case. During the course of teaching my blind student I kept notes on issues that arose, and how these were dealt with. These notes were both general (focusing on issues such as the use of braille materials), and specific (concerned with helping the student participate in particular activities). At the conclusion of the course these notes were used to create a rough guide for teaching blind students

in that particular program, which was later used by other teachers.

This example of a cascade approach to CPD shows how this final step in the framework can be accomplished, but other approaches could be used, such as in-house faculty development sessions or class observations.

Conclusion: A framework for CPD regarding SEN in ELT

In this article, I have noted that ELT generally lacks the training opportunities and support available in mainstream education regarding SEN. I have used interview data with two UK SENCOs, alongside accounts of my own experience, to construct a framework for CPD regarding students with SEN that can be applied to a wide variety of ELT contexts. I first suggested that there should be a SENCO-equivalent staff member in each language school or ELT program who has been trained in issues connected to SEN, and can facilitate the CPD of teachers. From the interviews I then identified the following four steps which make up my proposed framework for CPD:

- *Step 1: Student consultation* - Speak with the student (or their parents), and ask what can be done to help overcome the student's barriers to learning.

- *Step 2: Internal coaching and mentoring* - The SENCO-equivalent staff member works with a teacher to help resolve any difficulties faced by the student.

- *Step 3: Outside support and training* - The teacher is given the opportunity to attend workshops given by experts, or an expert is brought in to conduct training sessions.

- *Step 4: Cascade training and recycling knowledge* - The teacher shares their experiences with other members of staff through in-house workshops, mentoring, and observations.

If followed in sequence, I believe that these four steps should help to overcome any issues regarding the teaching and learning of students with SEN in ELT classrooms, alongside facilitating the CPD of teachers.

While it may be challenging for schools and ELT programs to organise this, I believe that adopting such a system, including the training required to establish a SENCO-equivalent staff member, would have long-term benefits such as supporting students and teachers in the classroom,

and helping to cultivate a group of instructors who are capable of building inclusive classrooms where the needs of diverse students can be met.

References
Artiles, A. & Ortiz, A. (2002). *English Language Learners with Special Educational Needs: Identification, assessment, and instruction.* Illinois: Delta Publishing.

Blommaert, J. & Jie. D. (2010). *Ethnographic Fieldwork: A Beginner's Guide.* Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Bolam, R. (1993). Recent developments and emerging issues. In Williams, M. & Bolam, R. (eds.) *The Continuing Professional Development of Teachers.* Papers presented for the General Teaching Council (pp. 17-41) London: Department for Education and Skills.

Bubb, S. & Earley, P. (2008). *Leading and Managing Continuing Professional Development.* London: Sage.

Cole, B. (2005). Mission impossible? Special educational needs, inclusion and the re- conceptualization of the role of the SENCO in England and Wales. *European Journal of Special Needs Education* 20/3, 287-307.

Dal, M. (2008). Dyslexia and foreign language learning. In Reid, G. Fawcett, A. Manis, F. & Siegel, L. (eds.) *The SAGE Handbook of Dyslexia* (pp. 439-454). London: SAGE.

Denzin, N. (2014). *Interpretive Autoethnography (2nd ed.).* London: Sage.

Department for Education and Skills. (2015). *Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice.* Available from: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151715/https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eorderingdownload/dfes%2005 81%20200mig2228.pdf. [accessed on 31/07/2015]. Nottingham: Department for Education and Skills.

Department for Education and Skills. (2004). *Removing Barriers to Achievement: The Government's Strategy for SEN.* Nottingham: Department for Education and Skills.

Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Echevarria, J. & Graves, A. (2014). *Sheltered Content Instruction: Teaching English Learners with Diverse Abilities (5th ed.).* London: Pearson.

Enjelvin, D.G. (2009). Teaching French to a non-sighted undergraduate: Adjusting practices to deliver inclusive education. *Journal of Further and Higher Education* 33/3, 265-279.

Farrel, M. (1998). The role of the special educational needs coordinator: Looking forward. *Support for Learning* 13/2, 82-86.

Friend, M. & Bursuck, W. (2002). *Including Students with Special Needs: A Practical Guide for Classroom Teachers.* Boston: Pearson.

Hamayan, E., Marler, B. & Damico, J. (2014). *Special Educational Considerations for English Language Learners: Delivering a Continuum of Services (2nd ed.).* New York: Carlson.

Hatch, J. (2002). *Doing Qualitative Research in Education Settings.* New York: SUNY.

Hodkinson, A. (2009). Pre-service teacher training and special educational needs in England 1970-2008: is government learning the lessons of the past or is it experiencing a groundhog day? *European Journal of Special Educational Needs* 24/3, 277-289.

Jones, S.H., Adams, T.E. & Ellis, C. (2013). Coming to know autoethnography as more than a method. In Jones, S.H., Adams, T.E. & Ellis, C. (eds.), *Handbook of Autoethnography.* Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

Kennedy, M. (2005). Models of continuing professional development: A framework for analysis. *Journal of In-service Education* 31/2, 235-250.

Kontra, E. & Csizer, K. (2013). An investigation into the relationship of foreign language learning motivation and sign language use among deaf and hard-of-hearing Hungarians. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching* 51/1, 1-22.

Kontra, E., Csizer, K. & Piniel, K. (2014). The challenge for deaf and hard-of-hearing students to learn foreign languages in special needs schools. *European Journal of Special Educational Needs* 30/2, 141-155.

Layton, L. (2005). Special educational needs coordinators and leadership: A role too far? *Support for Learning* 20/2, 53-60.

Lewis, A. & Norwich, B. (2005). *Special Teaching for Special Children? Pedagogies for Inclusion.* Berkshire: Open University Press.

Lowe, R. (2015). In the classroom: Integrating blind students. *English Teaching Professional* 99, 16-18.

Lowe, R. (2016a). Special educational needs coordinators in ELT: A necessary step? *Modern English Teacher* 25/2, 73-75.

Lowe, R. (2016b). Special needs training in ELT programs as a part of continuing professional development.' *OnCUE Journal* 9/1, 50-58.

Mayer, C. (2009). Issues in second language literacy education with learners who are deaf. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* 12/3, 1-11.

Morita, R. (2015). Raising awareness of learners with special needs as part of global education. *Global Issues in Language Education Newsletter* 96, 12-13.

Nijakowska, J. (2015). Development of EFL teacher training materials: Lessons from co-ordinating a multilateral project. In Piechurska-Kuciel, E. & Szyszka, M. (eds.) *The Ecosystem of the Foreign Language Learner* (pp. 135-151). New York: Springer.

Nijakowska, J. & Kormos, J. (2016). Foreign language teacher training on dyslexia: DysTEFL resources. In Peer, L. & Reid, G. (eds.) *Multilingualism, Literacy, and Dyslexia: Breaking Down Barriers for Educators (2nd ed.)* (pp. 104-114).Abingdon: Routledge.

Nikolic, T. (1986). Teaching a foreign language to visually impaired children in school. *Language Teaching* 19/3, 218-231.

Orsini-Jones, M., Courtney, K. & Dickinson, A. (2005). Supporting foreign language learning for a blind student: A case from Coventry University. *Support for Learning* 20/3, 146-152.

Palladino, P., Cismonda, D., Ferrari, M., Ballagamba, I. & Cornolidi, C. (2016). L2 spelling errors in Italian children with dyslexia. *Dyslexia* 22/2, 158-172. doi: 10.1002/dys.1522.

Peer, L. & Reid, G. (eds.). (2012). *Special Educational Needs: A guide for inclusive practice.* London: Sage.

Peer, L. & Reid, G. (eds.). (2016). *Multilingualism, Literacy, and Dyslexia: Breaking Down Barriers for Educators (2nd ed.).*Abingdon: Routledge.

Reid, G. (ed.). (2016). *Dyslexia: A Practitioner's Handbook (5th ed.).* Oxford: John Wiley & Sons.

Schneider, E. & Crombie, M. (2003). *Dyslexia and Foreign Language Learning.* Oxford: David Fulton Publishing.

Sparks, R., Javorsky, J. & Philips, L. (2004). College Students Classified with ADHD and the Foreign Language Requirement. *Journal of Learning Disabilities* 38/2, 169-178.

Sparks, R., Javorsky, J. & Philips, L. (2005). Comparison of the Performance of College Students Classified as ADHD, LD and LD/ADHD in Foreign Language Courses. *Language Learning: A Journal of Research in Language Studies* 55/1, 151-177.

Spring, J. (2016). *American Education (17th ed.).* New York: Routledge.

Swisher, M.V. (1989). The language learning situation of deaf students. *TESOL Quarterly* 23/2: 239-258.

Tilstone, C. & Rose, R. (2003). *Strategies to Promote Inclusive Practice.* London: Routledge Falmer.

Warnock, M. (2012). Foreword. In Peer, L. & Reid, G. (eds.) *Special Educational Needs: A Guide for Inclusive Practice* (pp. xix-xx). London: Sage.

Wire, V. (2005). Autistic spectrum disorders and learning foreign languages. *Support for Learning* 20/3: 123-128.

Appendix A: Initial interview questions

1. What do most teachers receive regarding SEN as part of their initial teacher training?
2. What is required of someone to become a SENCO?
3. How much knowledge of particular special educational needs does a SENCO usually have?
4. What process is generally followed regarding supporting students with SEN in schools?
5. How does the SENCO support teachers regarding their teaching of students with SEN? (i.e. mentoring, organising workshop attendance, bringing in outside assistance, etc.)
6. Once a teacher has had some experience of teaching students with a particular special educational need, is this knowledge taken advantage of in the future? For example, if one teacher gains experience of teaching a student with a particular form of SEN, would they then play a part in mentoring or helping other teachers who were assigned a student with similar needs?
7. In my own field of English language teaching, many students come to the classroom as adults, and will likely already have developed systems for living with whatever special educational needs they have. What differences do you think there would be in organising provisions for students with SEN in general education, and in the context of teaching adults?