A slightly revised version, in which the references and bibliography (omitted in this volume) have been restored, is available from:

ERIC:
http://eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2/content_storage_01/0000000b/80/22/33/37.pdf

and

The Teacher Trainers and Educators ITEFL Special Interest Group website:
http://www.dudeney.com/iatefl/ttedsig/resources/articles/31.doc

4.3 The shape of the language teacher
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Introduction
There are two broad views on what makes a language teacher effective. One focuses on teachers' language and methodological knowledge/skills, the other on teachers' personality. Here I present a framework which:

• reconciles these views, giving equal weight to all elements
• proposes a way to visualise their interrelations
• takes into account research findings indicating that teachers' practices are mostly influenced by their interpretation of methodologies.
Elements
I have expanded Julian Edge's term 'person-who-teaches' into 'person-who-teaches-language'. Each word points towards an indispensable element in a language teacher's profile (Fig. 1).

![Elements Diagram](image)

The following tables show the key aspects of each element.

### Personality
- Self-awareness
- Interpersonal skills
- Ability to observe, think critically, use experience
- Sensitivity to context
- Attitude towards change, development, diversity, quality, cooperation, authority
- Perception of learning, teacher/learner roles, development

### Methodology
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Views on methodology</td>
<td>Seeing implications of theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Available materials</td>
<td>Planning and teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own views on learning/teaching</td>
<td>Balancing support and challenge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Action research</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Language
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Views on language</td>
<td>Own language use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of own views on</td>
<td>Ability to see the implications of language analysis,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>language</td>
<td>draw conclusions from own contact with language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sensitivity to learners' language level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is some overlap between the elements. For example, teachers' perception/knowledge of language will influence their teaching; their general level of self-awareness will affect their awareness of their beliefs about language/learning.

### Methodology

#### Interrelations
This framework depicts a teacher's effectiveness as the area of a triangle, with each side representing the degree of development of an element (Fig. 2). The larger the area, the higher the effectiveness.

![Interrelations Diagram](image)

Apart from comparing different triangles, it is also helpful to compare the sides of individual triangles, that is, examine the relative degree of development of each element.

1. **All elements are equally developed.** They are utilised to their full capacity and combined to maximum effect (Fig. 2).
2. **One element is far less developed.** The less developed element limits the effect of the others (Fig. 3). This representation can also explain why teachers using different methodologies show comparable success: combinations of different levels of development can produce equal triangles.
3. **One element is far more developed.** The more developed element cannot be fully utilised (Fig. 4).
Some observations
An equilateral triangle will have the largest area of any triangle of the same perimeter. This can be seen as a metaphor for the benefits of well-balanced development.

It is essential that all three elements are above a ‘threshold of acceptability’. True, such cut-off points are arbitrary, but such thresholds are already used in education and in determining entrance to professions.

Limited/faulty language knowledge will communicate inaccuracies. Inappropriate methodology will make learning too time-consuming and may discourage learners. An uninterested or offensive teacher will offer little support and few opportunities, and may demotivate learners.

Reservations
The triangle framework is a crude representation of the complex interrelations that make up the profile of a language teacher. It is proposed as a point of departure, a way to visualise the interaction of the basic elements contributing to a language teacher’s effectiveness.

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