



Language Teaching Research Quarterly

2023, Vol. 33, 68–79



Working with Jack – An Influential Quarter Century Experience

Anne Burns

Curtin University and University of New South Wales, Australia

Received 16 October 2022

Accepted 02 February 2023

Abstract

Professor Jack C. Richards has been an enduring and highly influential contributor to the field of applied linguistics and English language teaching for the best part of 60 years. He has touched the professional lives of many people working in these fields all over the world – researchers and academic colleagues, materials writers, undergraduate, graduate and doctoral students, teacher educators and teachers, and language learners, and publishers. His publication output is legendary and it continues to guide and inspire the ELT profession. To provide an example of how Professor Richards influences, supports and mentors those he works with, in this paper I trace my own personal history and experiences of my encounters with his publications, and my collaborations with him as an author. My intention is to tease out, at least in part, the scope of his many professional interests and the way in which they have affected my own work. These works include a focus on the teaching of speaking and listening, second language teacher education, language teaching, pedagogy and curriculum development, and language learning. The account is necessarily and unavoidably selective, as it is derived from my personal experiences of working with him for the last quarter century. However, my overall intention is to pay tribute to his remarkable career.

Keywords: *Jack C. Richards, English Language Teaching, Language Teaching Publications, Language Teacher Education, Language Teaching Career*

Introduction

One of the greatest pleasures of my career in the field of English language teaching (ELT), spanning the best part of forty years, has been the many opportunities I've had to work with Professor Jack Richards in the last quarter century. Jack (if I may refer to him this way in this paper) is a giant in the field and his standing and contributions are unquestionably immense and wide-ranging. In the course of my various collaborations with him, I have come to understand

why. My aim in this paper is to pay tribute to his work, but mostly from the particular perspective of the professional contacts we have had and the publications I have undertaken with him. In doing so, I hope to show how our joint contributions came about and to explicate the great importance of his work to me personally and professionally.

Early Influences

As for many other language teachers and educators, some of my first encounters with Jack were through using his publications. However, unlike many other teachers, my language teaching experiences did not require working with a textbook and therefore I never had an opportunity to follow one of the numerous excellent language teaching series Jack has produced. While these have undoubtedly influenced millions of teachers worldwide and have introduced them to innovative communicative ways of teaching English, my focus is on his academic and teacher professional development publications.

My graduate TESOL studies in the early 1980s introduced me to some of his initial very influential works, such as *Error analysis: Perspectives on second language acquisition*. Longman. (1974), and *Focus on the learner* (1974, with John Oller). These two volumes reflected the heightened interest in ELT in the 1970s on gaining greater understanding of learner factors and how these factors influence language production, giving rise to a significant body of empirical research on error production and analysis and galvanising the field that eventually became known as second language acquisition (SLA) studies. Jack's work at this time and since (and this has not always been the case in SLA research) also clearly perceived that generating theoretical insights from empirical studies should have implications for the teaching of language. This perspective was clearly represented in other volumes that influenced me during that period, such as *The context of language teaching* (1985), a collection of his influential papers on a variety of topics pertinent in applied linguistics at the time, and *Approaches and methods in language teaching* (1986, with Theodore Rogers – and now published in a third edition), a comprehensive survey and analysis of the range of ELT teaching methods used around the world, which has become a standard work for teachers and teacher educators.

As I continued to work as a language teacher and later, teacher educator, during the 1980s, some of Jack's more practical publications were also of immense value in my classroom, particularly his work on spoken language (speaking and listening) which fed into my own growing interest in and research on the teaching of speaking (e.g. Burns & Joyce, 1997) and also, later, listening. A significant contribution to my thinking in this area was his *TESOL Quarterly* article, *Listening comprehension: Approach, design, procedure* (1983) which highlighted features of spoken discourse in terms of the contributions made by listening skills and strategies. In it he also synthesised three dimensions of listening: *approach*, the nature of spoken discourse; *design*, listening needs and the macro-skills and objectives required to achieve them; and *procedure*, or classroom activities and exercise types. Ever mindful of the implications for practice and how the findings of research could reach into the classroom, in this seminal paper Jack united theoretical underpinnings with applicable teaching techniques; this foundational work is still widely cited today in publications on listening skills and the teaching of listening.

Then in 1990, when I was moving more into research and teacher education, Jack co-edited, with David Nunan, a significant publication, *Second language teacher education*, which I devoured with great enthusiasm, as I learned about facilitating teacher development initiatives in Australia and elsewhere. In its coverage of contemporary thinking, this volume offered a state-of-the-art account. It contained 19 chapters written by teacher educator specialists from a range of countries and offered insights into current debates and approaches, investigations of teachers and learners, the practicum, supervision, self-observation and case studies. As a source book of ideas for designers of language teacher education programs, it was one of the first volumes to offer such a collective overview. Drawing from relevant current educational research, it advocated transformative views of teacher education, based on classroom data, reflection and observation, rather than externally derived prescriptions for practice, which had largely characterised previous approaches. Although many of these practices have since become commonplace in teacher education, at the time some were still novel and served to motivate rapid developments in this field.

Mid-Career Encounters

In 1994, I finally met Jack in person briefly at a TESOL International conference in the USA. I was introduced to him by my PhD supervisor, and we spoke for a short time about my doctoral research, which focused on teacher beliefs/cognition, then a barely researched focus of study in ELT. Jack was generous enough to show keen interest in my topic and, of course, like many novice researchers, I was starry-eyed at having the opportunity to meet such a big name in the field personally. Then in 1995, not long after I'd finished my studies, I was traveling to a conference through Hong Kong, where Jack was currently Professor of TESOL at the City University. I got in touch with him and he invited me to come to his office at the university to meet him.

Apprehensively, after navigating the Hong Kong metro system and wondering what it would be like to meet him again on my own (would he be really intimidating? would I be able to come up to scratch?), I knocked on Jack's office door. He was there waiting for me, and in his typical energetic way immediately said he had to leave me for half an hour for a meeting, but would be back. In the meantime, he invited me to browse his bookshelf (a wonder in itself in my eyes) and make myself comfortable. Soon afterwards he came bustling back and said he was taking me to a coffee shop he liked, and we could talk along the way. He also pointed out a favourite jewellery store, and said I could "look around and buy something" while he went on an errand nearby. Not wanting to disappoint an eminent professor, I ended up purchasing a lovely ring and to this day whenever I wear it I think of Jack. We did eventually reach the coffee shop and he asked me lots of penetrating and insightful questions about my PhD research (which I think I was able to answer at least somewhat comprehensibly?).

Not long after our Hong Kong encounter, I received an email from Jack inviting me to contribute a chapter to a book he was editing with Donald Freeman (another internationally known figure in our field who has greatly influenced my work and has become over the years a very close colleague). *Teacher learning in language teaching* (1996) was to be published by Cambridge University Press, with whom Jack has had a very long and productive association. The book

introduced a new field of study on teacher learning, a concept which was little recognised or researched at the time. The book followed up, but greatly expanded, some of the themes of his earlier volume with David Nunan on teacher education (1990). Up until that time, language teacher education had focused on knowledge and skills needed for language teaching, but little on the thinking and learning of teachers as they became familiar with how to teach. It highlighted the role of previous educational experiences, cultural and social context and opportunities and affordances for teacher education and became a catalyst for further studies in the areas of teacher expertise, cognition, affect, agency and identity. My chapter (Burns, 1996) was among my first international publications, and I was excited and greatly encouraged to be part of this significant international collection.

During the second half of the 1990s, I continued to meet Jack at various conferences, especially at TESOL International in the USA, the RELC Conferences in Singapore and various regional conferences elsewhere. I also had other contacts with him, such as for his journal article, 'Addressing the grammar gap in task work' (Richards, 1999), which he published in *Prospect: A Journal of Australian TESOL*, of which I was the editor at that time. Jack's many publications in the *RELC Journal* from the early 1990s and up to the present time and his other contributions to journals such as *Prospect*, *RELC Journal*, *TESOL Journal*, and *TESOL Quarterly* were always thought-provoking for teachers, as they drew knowledgeably on current theory and trends in language teaching, but also illustrated the implications for classroom practice. In this sense, Jack's work has regularly contributed significantly to bridging the infamous theory-practice gap in language teaching (Clarke, 1994), helping teachers perceive the implications and applications of theoretical ideas.

Through such publications, I continued to be greatly influenced by his work in relation to language curriculum, and language skills teaching, but other of Jack's publications also shaped my thinking at this time. Of particular note for my work as a language teacher educator, and in the light of my growing research interest in teacher beliefs and teacher action research, were his further publications on teacher education, such as *Beyond training* (1998a), and *Teaching in action: Case studies from second language classrooms* (1998b).

Publishing Collaborations

By the early 2000s I was heavily involved in the supervision of Masters and PhD candidates both in on-campus and distance mode programs, and was also working as a Dean at my university in Sydney. Since Jack had left Hong Kong and was now spending part of the year residing in Sydney, my colleagues and I approached him to become an Honorary Professor for the Applied Linguistics program. He generously accepted, offering several guest lectures and attending meetings with our graduate students.

At the time, there was a growing interest in Australia, and particularly at my university, in a less traditional form of PhD study, known as a Professional Doctorate. The university approved the components of this program, centred on Applied Linguistics, which consisted of a third of the degree undertaken through course work, and two thirds through original research, which could focus on topics dealing with local or situated issues, relevant to the doctoral candidates in the

program. To meet the coursework requirements, my colleagues and I became greatly occupied in transferring content and resources used for on-campus teaching into distance materials, partnering at the time with The Open University in the UK to publish volumes of readings to accompany coursework programs (e.g., Burns & Coffin, 2000). As a result of this work, we produced course packages and readings which could be distributed to distance doctoral candidates. Rather quaintly, in light now of the enormous technological developments since that time, the packages were usually delivered by ‘snail mail’ to our doctoral candidates working in many different countries worldwide.

Around the mid-2000s we received a request from a university in Mexico for them to host a version of this program for applied linguistics and TESOL lecturers (henceforth students) resident in that country who wanted to acquire a doctorate. We initiated a program for in-country delivery which meant that twice a year academics from my university would travel to Mexico to teach the coursework, and we would also invite outstanding international academics to teach as guest professors for the various course options that were part of this program. Thirteen students, some working at the host university and others at different universities in Mexico enrolled in the program. One of the courses for which I had responsibility was *Second Language Teacher Education and Professional Development* and Jack was invited to teach this course with me each morning over a ten-day period in Mexico. He readily accepted the invitation, and we met several times in Sydney before we left for Mexico to begin planning the course and putting together core readings for the various sessions.

How the First Volume Came about

On arrival in Mexico, we travelled together each day to the university in a taxi cab. Between our hotel and the university, we discussed current research and other initiatives in the field of language teacher education, the content we would cover, and the literature we would focus on. Jack’s book on second language teacher education (SLTE) that I referred to earlier had been published in 1990, and while it was obviously innovative at the time, the field had moved on and there were numerous new theories and debates. One morning, we bemoaned the fact that, even though we’d searched widely for the course readings, it was impossible to find an up-to-date compilation on second language teacher education. In a light-bulb moment, we realised that a new publication was well overdue and that was when what eventually became the volume, *The Cambridge Guide to Second Language Teacher Education* (Burns & Richards, 2009), emerged. Later, Jack and I liked to joke that this book was ‘conceived in the back of a taxi’!

Once our trip to Mexico was concluded, Jack got in touch with one of the editors at Cambridge University Press, with whom he had a well-established publishing relationship, and put this idea to her. It was warmly welcomed, and Jack and I began meeting regularly in Sydney to shape our book proposal and the contributions that came in over the next year. It was here that Jack’s extensive contacts and insights into what was current and forward-looking in the field of SLTE came to the fore. Since, each year he travelled regularly to many countries, often as a plenary speaker for national TESOL conferences, he very much had his finger on the pulse of what ELT teacher education professionals were interested in and who was doing innovative research in this area.

We contacted 30 potential authors whose work we considered to be cutting-edge and following our editors' introduction of the overall themes, organised the book into seven sections, each with an overview drawing out key messages for research and practice: i) the landscape of SLTE (discussion of the broad issues); ii) professionalism and the language teaching profession (issues in training and educating language teachers); iii) pedagogical knowledge in SLTE (the essential knowledge areas language teachers require); iv) identity, cognition and experience in teacher learning (the beliefs and experiences affecting identity formation as teachers); v) contexts for SLTE (where and through which media education occurs); vi) SLTE through collaboration (collaboration, supervision and mentoring); and vii) SLTE through research and practice (teacher research). The book was positively received as a very valuable and timely state-of-the-art compilation and has been widely reviewed and cited since its publication. Of course, the field of SLTE has developed further since that time, with other significant volumes (e.g., Johnson, 2009; Freeman, 2016; Walsh & Mann, 2019) adding new perspectives on theoretical debates and practice.

Continuing the Collaboration

Jack and I had found it very congenial to work together on our first volume and decided we would look for other opportunities. Shortly after our Cambridge publication, Jack received a request from the well-known ELT author, H. Douglas Brown, to contribute a book to his new series, *Tips for Teaching*, which as the name implies covered various classroom topics. The series was aimed at teachers and was intended to offer 'soundly conceived practical approaches to classroom instruction, firmly grounded in current pedagogical research' (publisher's description). Since both Jack and I had a history of publishing books and journal articles for teachers, that were grounded in theory but aimed at implications for practice, we were enthusiastic about contributing.

We decided that we would focus on tips for listening. By this time, Jack was spending more time at his beautiful summer home in New Zealand overlooking the sea and once our proposal had been accepted, he kindly invited me to visit him there so that we could begin putting the book together. It was a stunning environment in which to create the publication. We spent an exhilarating ten days compiling and improving chapter drafts we'd already begun writing separately before we met, doing most of the thinking and writing in the morning when we felt refreshed and then enjoying some time locally, visiting a part of New Zealand I was not familiar with. Whenever I revisit *Tips for teaching listening* (Richards & Burns, 2011), it reminds me not only of producing the book but of the very congenial surroundings where the writing took place.

The book followed an accessible series structure that was designed to be appealing and practical for teachers and teacher trainers and covered areas such as the listening process, skills, text types, academic listening, course planning and assessment. Its design had a number of interesting features, including: chapter vignettes illustrating authentic learning and teaching experiences; sections entitled *What the teacher should know* (theoretical concepts) and *What the teacher can do* (how to apply these concepts in teaching); concrete tips with practical suggestions for planning, teaching, and assessing; activities in each chapter, and an appendix for implementing each tip. The book also contained photocopiable handouts, some from popular listening texts, that teachers could use as well as accompanying audio files. The final publication is very much a volume focused on

making the teaching of listening accessible and Jack's extensive knowledge and experience in this area of language skills development obviously made it a strong contribution to the series.

Producing Another Guide

Jack and I continued to keep in touch after this book was published, especially when he was in Sydney for various periods of time. He was still traveling and publishing extensively and on occasion I'd continue to meet him at conferences, including the Regional English Language Centre conferences in Singapore or the AsiaTEFL conferences in various parts of Asia. He was also a regular contributor to the TESOL Research Network annual colloquium at the University of Sydney, where he was now an Honorary Professor in the School of Education. During one of our conversations, we noted that the *Guide* series, published by Cambridge was continuing to expand and we decided to plan another edited volume to propose to the editor. This time we aimed to focus on what underlying theoretical insights had shaped developments in language teaching pedagogy and how they could be applied to practice. We wanted to consider a broad expanse of concepts in pedagogical theory, both from psychological/cognitive and social/cultural perspectives and to illustrate how these theoretical insights could influence and lead to sound and well-founded classroom practice. We believed that the volume, entitled *The Cambridge guide to pedagogy and practice in second language education* (Burns & Richards, 2012), would differ from others, which may have focused on theory or practice but rarely both, through its meshing of key concepts and practical applications.

As with our previous volume on SLTE, we asked the 30 authors we invited to keep chapters relatively short to cover the main theories and the practical implications that could be drawn from them. We saw the book as a compilation of overviews from which a teacher enrolled in an undergraduate or master's course or a teacher educator could build a basic grounding on each topic and then go on to investigate through further study and reading. We grouped the chapters in the book into five sections, that we thought were pertinent to current debates on pedagogy and practice, each with an introduction we wrote to overview the contents: i) rethinking our understanding of teaching; ii) learner diversity and classroom learning; iii) pedagogical approaches and practices; iv) components of the curriculum; and v) media and materials. We asked the various authors to think about current trends and knowledge both conceptually and practically as well as what future directions they could envisage for each topic.

As before, working with Jack was both stimulating and a delight. He had extensive insights into current trends in the ELT field as well as good contacts with established and emerging scholars. We discussed at length the topics we should include and combined our knowledge of those in the field who would make excellent contributions. It has been gratifying to see, since its publication, that the volume has been very positively reviewed and has been widely used as a course book or recommended reading in many TESOL accredited preparation or in-service programs internationally. Reviewers have commented that they find the interaction of theory and practice to be a valuable dimension, lacking in many other volumes. Also, the section introductions have been viewed as a supportive way for readers to gain overviews of the chapters and their key issues, so that they can choose their own pathways through the book.

Other Opportunities to Work with Jack

As the volume on pedagogy and practice was being prepared, I was also working with Christine Goh (Goh & Burns, 2012) on a book about teaching speaking in the Cambridge Language Education series for which Jack was the series editor. Christine had done extensive research and publishing on teaching both speaking and listening and, because of her expertise as a researcher and teacher educator in this area, was the lead author. I was invited to join her as a second author, in particular to provide a discourse and genre orientation for the book, which had emerged from my previous interest in spoken discourse analysis and action research with teachers (e.g., Burns et al., 1996). As always Jack was immensely encouraging, providing insightful feedback and commentary on our plans for the book and welcoming our joint authorship of the volume. In his series editor's preface, he pointed out how rapidly the field of teaching speaking had complexified in recent years with new branches of research in English as an international language discourse analysis, intercultural communication and authentic spoken language data overturning many previous traditional approaches. He credited our volume with reflecting the 'breadth and depth' of some of these debates and offering new and holistic perspectives on teaching spoken skills. His comments characterised the generosity and supportiveness he had shown us throughout the writing of the volume.

Not long after this book was published, I received another invitation to contribute a chapter to a book he was co-editing. The volume with Rodney Jones (Jones & Richards, 2015) aimed to capture perspectives on a new area of research interest in language teaching on what constituted creativity and how it could be manifested in classroom practice (see also Maley & Kiss, 2018). At the time I had recently been supervising a doctoral candidate, Susan Ollerhead, who had recently graduated. Sue had conducted very interesting research in which she had observed and documented classroom practices in adult immigrant literacy classrooms, where teachers had to work within highly prescribed and restrictive curricula.

I discussed the invitation with Sue and asked her if she would be interested in co-authoring, although we were both aware that on the surface her research had not necessarily suggested that the teachers she observed had opportunities to be creative. As we talked, we began to develop the idea that teachers could enact creativity by being resisters or subverters of a narrowly defined curriculum, and could still greatly assist their learners by introducing activities that met specified outcomes but responded agentively to their interests and needs. Our chapter, entitled *Creativity as resistance* (Ollerhead & Burns, 2015) illustrated our argument by describing two classrooms, one where a teacher failed to be innovative by taking a traditional, cautious and instrumental approach, and another where a teacher carried out subtle forms of resistance by introducing activities closely aligned to her learners' lives and aspirations.

The various chapters in the book, including the introductory one by Jack and Rodney provided an expansive theoretical perspective on creativity, and also suggested conceptual tools that teachers could use to apply notions of creativity and innovation in their teaching. It drew on but went beyond the more established psychological concepts of creativity to consider its relevance to language learning, and explore its linguistic, cognitive, sociocultural and pedagogical dimensions. The four sections of the book offered constructive insights for ELT through chapters on theoretical

perspectives, creativity in the classroom, creativity in the curriculum, and creativity in teacher development (which included our contribution). Each chapter also provided questions to promote discussion at the end, as well as suggestions for further research. As usual, Jack's intuition and sensitivity to what was upcoming and novel in the field of ELT meant that he and Rodney produced a resource that was cutting-edge. Following in the trend of his other publications the chapters in the book were also accessible, enabling teachers and teacher educators to read about recent research but also to acquire ideas from these studies for classroom application.

On to Another Guide

I have already frequently mentioned Jack's finely tuned antennae for noticing which topics are 'hot' and where gaps exist in the literature in our field, and this was how our next publishing collaboration came about. We had very much enjoyed working together on the first two Cambridge guides, and before long began contemplating whether another was needed that, like the others, could be used as a set of core readings or a course book. Jack observed that the various excellent academic publications in second language acquisition (SLA) that had served the field well often covered similar theoretical or research ground, but did not necessarily extrapolate from these discussions into how theory could be applied in practice. As we did not want to replicate publications on SLA per se, we decided to adopt the related concept of language learning, a term which would potentially hold more appeal for practising teachers and teacher educators. In that sense, we hoped to illuminate both psychological and social theories of learning in such a way that teachers could envisage their application into their teaching practices.

We invited 36 contributions to this volume, *The Cambridge guide to learning English as a second language* (Burns & Richards, 2018). This represented an increase on the number of chapters in the previous guides, which we felt was justified given the breadth and complexity of the topic. When contacting each author, we indicated that they were free to use their own preferred theoretical perspectives on language learning. Consequently, the final publication contained multiple theoretical perspectives, including incidental learning, scaffolded learning autonomous and self-directed learning, and identity negotiation in learning, among others. We believed that this wide-ranging conceptual lens would enable readers to explore and select current theoretical concepts and practices that would mesh with their particular teaching contexts. Also, following suggestions from one of the reviewers of our book proposal, we asked authors to focus on the learning of English, since attempting to cover a wide range of languages could potentially make the content too diffuse. However, we still believed that many of the ideas it contained could also be valuable to those teaching other languages. We asked the authors to cover theoretical ideas, but also to draw out the key messages for learning and indicate the implications for teaching and assessment.

Again, we divided the book into sections, each of which we prefaced with an overview. We saw these short introductions as a way to help readers navigate the volume according to their personal needs and interests. In all, there were nine sections: i) learners and learning English; ii) individual, social and affective dimensions; iii) contexts of learning; iv) learning for particular purposes; (v) learning the 'systems'; vi) learning the four skills; vii) learning the social uses; viii) approaches to learning; ix) technology and learning. Each chapter concluded with discussion

questions to draw readers into reflecting on the ideas presented, and key readings so that they could follow up on further ideas.

This was the third guide that Jack and I had edited together and once again the process had proved stimulating and productive. In each case, we were excited by the idea that our guides could differ from many other volumes on offer. We believed they provided short and expertly written insights for teachers and teacher educators around the world who were unlikely to read academic treatises of in-depth research. We hoped they could gain sound theoretical knowledge accompanied by explorations of how such concepts could be put into practice. I believe that collaborating on these publications suited us both, theoretically and philosophically. While we both valued the theories and research that had built a solid academic basis for the language teaching field, we also worked and conversed extensively with teachers internationally at practitioner-oriented conferences, seminars and workshops and had learned much about their practical concerns. It has been professionally rewarding for both of us to know, from various reviews and on-the-ground feedback, that these guides appear to have served the purpose for which they were written.

Professional and Personal Legacies

As I noted at the beginning of this paper, my aim is to celebrate Jack's achievements from the perspective of my own collaborations with him over the years. Several themes run through my experiences of working with Jack which I hope are highlighted in the discussion above. First, Jack is a born counsellor, a non-intrusive listener, responder, and encourager who excels at showing interest in those who approach him, even after a long day. For junior scholars (as I was myself) wanting to meet and interact with the expert scholars whose work they have read, this kind of attention is a gift indeed. He is also a mentor, alert to emerging talents and abilities, and offering generous opportunities for newcomers to contribute to his forthcoming publications. There are many scholars around the world, some now very eminent, who owe their early publishing achievements to Jack's encouragement, as I did myself. Publishing under the auspices and guidance of an internationally known author is a huge career boost for beginning professionals.

The terms pioneer and sage also come to mind when thinking about Jack. Not only is he finely attuned to new trends and currents in the field, but he has extensive professional networks that keep him informed about who is doing cutting-edge work and on what topics. Thus, across the years he has constantly (co)written and edited innovative outputs that lead his readers along new pathways of knowledge. Producing the three Cambridge guides with Jack opened my eyes to his impressive talent for identifying what was innovative and significant. A leader in the field, Jack is also undoubtedly a collaborator. While he has produced copious individual works, he has an expansive record of partnering with other authors, both novice and more advanced. I know from experience that his style of collaboration is empathetic and nurturing, encouraging of ideas and suggestions, but also insightful and incisive in terms of keeping the outcomes of the work in focus. Co-authoring with Jack means to grow as a writer and published author, secure in the knowledge that the final product will make its mark in the field.

Throughout his career, Jack has been a giver, giving back constantly to his chosen profession. By taking the angle I have adopted in this paper, I have, of course, inevitably glossed over many of his immeasurable contributions to the field (see his website <https://www.professorjackrichards.com>). They range across a huge landscape, from his numerous widely recognised and used textbook series (*Interchange* immediately comes to mind and will be familiar to many readers), his resource books for teacher training and education, his many innovative academic monographs, to countless book chapters and journal articles. This is not to mention the conference and workshop presentations, professional videos, interviews, media contributions, and Q&As where he offers thoughtful answers to teachers' questions and provides tips on further professional learning. Thus, over the years I have worked with him, Jack has been a role model, not only because of his personal style, but also because of his intimate knowledge of the field of ELT, and the kind of writing and publishing that his potential readers are looking for.

Finally, Jack has also become a friend, hospitable, welcoming, and open - and with a wicked sense of humour! As well as benefitting from our professional collaboration, I've observed and admired his philanthropic pursuits, his endowments for up-and-coming young scholars, his patronage of talented emerging musicians, his hosting of exhibitions of his exquisite art and fabric collections, his donations and sponsorship of various worthy cultural organisations internationally and in his home country of New Zealand. I have been warmly welcomed into his stunning homes in Australia and New Zealand, have spent time with his close and loving family, and have attended some of the excellent concerts held at his summer house, Tiromoana. Jack is truly a renaissance man with whom it has been a privilege to be associated.

Conclusion

Professor Jack Richards has forged a stellar career spanning six decades. As I hope to have shown in this paper, his contribution to the field of ELT has been immeasurable and far-reaching. As a pioneering scholar, an outstanding furnisher of essential resource and teaching materials, an empathetic educator of novice and experienced teachers and researchers, and a record-breaking author, there are few who have matched his stature or who can claim to have achieved as much as he has. Knowing Jack as I do, I can only conclude by suggesting that, to the great benefit of ELT worldwide, there will be still more to come.

References

- Burns, A. (1996). Starting all over again: from teaching adults to teaching beginners. In D. Freeman & J. C. Richards (Eds.), *Teacher learning in language teaching* (pp. 122-135). Cambridge University Press.
- Burns, A., Joyce, H., & Gollin, S. (1996). *"I see what you mean": Using spoken discourse in the classroom: A handbook for teachers*. National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research. Downloadable from http://www.ameprc.mq.edu.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0020/241472/I_see_what_U_mean.pdf
- Burns, A., & Joyce, H. (1997). *Focus on speaking*. National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research.
- Burns, A., & Coffin, C. (2000). *Analysing English in a global context*. Routledge.
- Burns, A., & Richards, J. C. (Eds.). (2009). *The Cambridge guide to second language teacher education*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amy047>
- Burns, A., & Richards, J. C. (Eds.). (2012). *The Cambridge guide to pedagogy and practice in second language teacher education*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009024778>

- Burns, A., & Richards, J. C. (Eds.). (2018). *The Cambridge guide to learning English as a second language*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009024761>
- Clarke, M. A. (1994). The dysfunctions of the theory/practice discourse. *TESOL Quarterly*, 28(1), 9-26. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3587196>
- Freeman, D. (2016). *Educating second language teachers*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccy019>
- Goh, C. M. M., & Burns, A. (2012). *Teaching speaking: A holistic approach*. Cambridge University Press.
- Johnson, K. (2009). *Second language teacher education: A sociocultural perspective*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203878033>
- Jones, R. H., & Richards, J. C. (Eds.). (2015). *Creativity in language teaching: Perspectives from research and practice*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315730936>
- Maley, A., & Kiss, T. (2018). *Creativity and English language teaching: From inspiration to implementation*. Springer Link. <https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-46729-4>
- Ollerhead, S., & Burns, A. (2015). Creativity as resistance: Implications for language teaching and teacher education. In R. H. Jones & J. C. Richards (Eds.), *Creativity in language teaching: Perspectives from research and practice* (pp. 227-240). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315730936>
- Richards, J. C. (Ed.). (1974). *Error analysis: Perspectives on second language acquisition*. Longman. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315836003>
- Richards, J. C. (1985). *The context of language teaching*. Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C. (1998a). *Beyond training*. Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C. (1998b). *Teaching in action: Case studies from second language classrooms*. TESOL International.
- Richards, J. C. (1999). Addressing the grammar gap in task work. *Prospect*, 14(1), 4-19. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511667190.022>
- Richards, J. C. (1983) Listening comprehension: Approach, design, procedure. *TESOL Quarterly*, 17(2), 219-240. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3586651>
- Richards, J. C., & Oller, J. (Eds.). (1974). *Focus on the learner*. Newbury House.
- Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. (1986). *Approaches and methods in language teaching*. Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C., & Nunan, D. C. (Eds.) (1990). *Second language teacher education*. Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C., & Freeman, D. (1996). *Teacher learning in language teaching*. Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C., & Burns, A. (2011). *Tips for teaching listening: A practical approach*. Pearson.
- Walsh, S., & Mann, S. (2019). *The Routledge handbook of English language teacher education*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315659824>

Acknowledgements

Not applicable.

Funding

Not applicable.

Ethics Declarations

Competing Interests

No, there are no conflicting interests.

Rights and Permissions

Open Access

This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons licence, and indicate if changes were made. You may view a copy of Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License here: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.