

### **A reflective practice partnership in the field**

Reflective practice (RP) has been prominent in the teacher education literature since the 1980s. It is used in both pre-service and in-service programs for teachers across many fields of education, including ESL. This presentation is a case study of two ESL teachers who have developed a partnership based largely on RP principles. The teachers' backgrounds are vastly different, and yet the partnership is dynamic and highly valued by them both. One of the teachers completed her Graduate Certificate in ESL two years ago. In her previous career, she worked in publicity and community education. She has recently started teaching a class of adult beginner ESL students, with spoken language as the priority. It is this experience that is the focus of the reflective practice partnership. The other teacher came into ESL teaching from Speech Pathology, and has been working in ESL and related areas of Applied Linguistics since 1983. For the first teacher, the themes that have emerged include some related to student learning and others related to the ongoing professional development of teacher awareness and skills. For the second teacher, the theme which resonates most strongly is the importance of meaningful repetition for acquiring vocabulary and pronunciation competence. These themes, while different in perspective, are intertwined in the sharing of reflective practice and its application in the classroom. The aim of this case study is to show the value of a partnership in reflective practice and to argue for its inclusion in professional development programs.

#### **Author Bios**

Ruth Leaming spent the majority of her working life in publicity and community education before retraining as an ESL teacher. One of the highlights of her career was working with the Country Fire Authority of Victoria on better community fire safety programs, including the development of an award-winning fire safety kit for primary schools. While taking some time off from work, she began volunteer English tutoring to migrants through AMEP and this led to her recent career change. Teaching ESL to adults has allowed for a new focus for Ruth's interest in language and communication.

Meg Rosse is a pronunciation specialist. Since the mid-1980s she has taught pronunciation and presentation skills to students and staff in universities, and to a wide range of clients in her private practice. She also runs professional development programs for ESL teachers, and is convener of the Melbourne-based *Forum on Accent* (a series of occasional seminars about pronunciation). In her other life, she is coordinator for the Academic Language & Learning unit in the Faculty of Science, Technology & Engineering at La Trobe University.