Teacherpreneurship:

Promoting ELT as a Sustainable Profession in the 3rd Millennium and Beyond

# By Jacquelinda Sandra Sembel

(Email: sandra.sembel@uph.edu)

**Abstract**

With the faster-than-the-speed-of-light development in the era of information and communication technology, it is crucial for ELT teachers embrace teacherpreneurship to prepare themselves for teaching and living in the 21st century. To do this, it is not enough for teachers to just lead their lives in regular ELT world with academic competencies. Today’s ELT teachers need to be multi-faceted teachers with multiple roles. They need to optimally exercise their creativity, develop inter-profession collaboration, see beyond the present to the future of the students to make their ELT endeavors result in teaching and learning that fit the needs of their learners and their own professional development. In this presentation, the presenter will mainly discuss what teacherpreneurship is, some local teacherpreneurs who have become change makers, and issues and challenges of teacherpreneurships in ELT in Indonesia. Finally, she will explore recommended best -practices of ELT from teacherpreneurship standpoints, especially when devising strategies to make ELT sustainable in the third millennium and beyond.

Keywords: teacherprenuership, sustainable teaching profession, ELT in 21st century

**BACKGROUND**

With the faster-than-the-speed-of-light development in the era of information and communication technology, some jobs gradually disappear and new jobs are created. Thus, the demand to sustain a profession is high. This also applies in ELT, which is undergoing rapid changes. Sustainability of ELT professions in the third millennium and beyond is at risk if ELT professionals do not embrace new skills needed in the 21st century, which require today’s ELT teachers to extend their roles beyond teaching in classrooms. (Jiang, 2017). They also need to expand their education scope of responsibilities to embrace the spirit of entrepreneurship to go beyond their current boundaries of school responsibilities.

Today’s ELT teachers need to be multi-faceted teachers with multiple roles (Muhammadi,et. Al. 2007). It requires teachers to be learners, researchers, instructional designers, and cooperators. They need to optimally exercise their creativity, develop inter-profession collaboration, see beyond the present to the future of the students to make their ELT endeavors result in teaching and learning that fit the needs of their learners and their own professional development. In this presentation, the presenter will mainly discuss what teacherpreneurship is, some local teacherpreneurs who have become change makers, and issues and challenges of teacherpreneurships in ELT in Indonesia. Finally, she will explore recommended best -practices of ELT from teacherpreneurship standpoints, especially when devising strategies to make ELT sustainable in the third millennium and beyond.

## WHAT IS THE BIG IDEA?

This big idea of teacherpreneurs and teacherpreneurship is not easy to define as it has just been introduced. However, we can look at some definitions below.

According to Barnet Berry, et al, (2013), a teacherpreneur is a classroom expert who still teaches while still finding time, space, and (ideally) much-deserved reward for spreading both sound pedagogical practices and policy ideas.

Heather Wolpert-Gawron, (2015) describes a teacherpreneur as an imaginative teacher who sees the pathways to lead change within the educational system by transferring the successes in his or her own classroom to the educational environment elsewhere (outside the boundaries of their own classrooms and schools).

On the practice side, Levin (2014), describes her journey from classroom teacher to full-time teacherpreneurs with the help of digital technologies. From this experience, she defines teacherpreneur as a teacher who uses online technologies to start small education ventures in virtual markets while maintaining or assuming his or her roles as educators.

Such teachers have similar characteristics as described in “How Teacherpreneurs Spread Good Ideas” by Suzie Boss (2015).

* Take learning **beyond the classroom** while leading change from within the education system.
* Are always in **‘Beta’ state** of improving the quality teaching and learning – they are always eager to learn about ‘new wave’ and teaching and learning, so this brings them to ‘beta’ state of trying out new ideas.
* Engage students to make learning **meaningful** (problem solving) – get students in the driver’s seat of learning.
* **Touch lives and make a wider impact** – not just touch the mind and impacting their own classrooms!

So, basically, a teacherpreneur is someone who connect real world and classroom learning and make time and effort to share good ideas in useful activities and projects to improve the quality of teaching and learning and human resources to the people around him or her.

A teacherpreneur has multiple roles: a teacher, a researcher, a project manager, a social worker, a motivator, a religious leader, a community leader, and many more noble roles.

In conclusion, a teacherprenuer is a teacher (has one foot in education system) who **teaches beyond teaching** (positively connecting teaching to the real world).

## WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE A TEACHERPRENEURS?

Teacherpreneurs need a number of skills to embark on their teacherpreneurial initiatives. But, if I can choose the most important ones, I list down the following points:

1. **Creative thinking:** First and foremost important is creative thinking skill. A teacherpreneur needs to be able to identify needs within the education system and creatively take it beyond the system. A problem or a need has to be identified, then with creative thinking process, this problem or need is addressed.

A teacher who teaches in a school in high-crime neighborhood invented a system to involve the police, parents, senior citizens who are still active and volunteers in the routes taken by the children when going to and coming from school. They are connected with an electronic network to monitor and maintain safety of the school children.

Amazingly, the children don’t just feel safe and secure, there is also a report that indicates decrease in crime rate in the neighborhood.

1. **Communication:** Another important skill needed is communication. When we want to launch a project or initiative, the only way we can get it started the ground is by communicating the big idea to the relevant people. Lobbying, sharing concerns, inviting participations… they all need effective communication with a humble heart and good intentions.
2. **Collaboration:** United we stand, divided we fall, says a proverb. This is true when conducting a teacherpreneurial work. Collaboration is key to any teacherpreneurial initiative. Get students involve. Get the school involve. Get the community involve. Get organizations or corporations to take part in the intitiaves. In this case, the proverb “the more the merrier” applies.

## Caring and Sharing Heart: Last but not least, one thing that makes teacherpreneurship a bit different from other similar endeavors is ‘Caring and sharing heart’. All teacherpreneurs that I know have a big heart and big passion for whatever they take their focus on. With such heart and passion, they take their initiatives beyond expectation and reaching out to many people to benefit their programs.

## HOW TO GET THE RESOURCES TO BACK UP OUR TEACHERPRENEURIAL PROJECTS?

The noble initiatives for a sustainable professional development and improvement in the quality of education requires funding. Where do teacherpreneurs get the funding to support their teachepreneurial activities?

1. **Self-support:** Some initiatives are probably self-supporting. Projects that we do within the classroom don’t really need special funding: Wall-bulletin initiative, English Club activities, Public lectures from special Guest speakers. For such initiatives, we can just use our own resources or resources available at school.
2. **School’s funding:** Other initiatives can be supported by the school or education institution we are working for, for example: sharing session with our colleagues at work or any class- projects that we do with teachers and students at school or campus: tree- planting initiatives, or green school projects.
3. **Collaborative funding:** Sometimes, some teachers can collaborate to support a teachepreneurial initiative. Such projects may include: Collaborative book writing, study trips to interesting places in the neighborhood – strawberry farms, factory visits.
4. **Sponsorship:** We can also get sponsorships for programs like financial education (get a bank to give or fund presentations about managing and saving money), health education (involve a hospital, a pharmaceutical company or a medical school to support such initiative).
5. **Third party funding:** If we have great ideas, we can write and send in proposals to an organization or company to fund our initiatives. Study the vision and mission of the Target Company or organization, if their vision and mission matches our initiative, then, there’s big opportunity to get their involvement in the initiative.

## The key is to search within our network of friends and acquaintances. Share our big ideas, get them interested in the big ideas, and finally get their participation in the big ideas.

## SHARING TEACHERPRENEURIAL INITIATIVES

As for writer, teacherpreneurship is not an easy journey, but traveling through this bumpy road has taught the writers many valuable lessons. Here are some teacherpreneurial initiatives conducted internally (inside the school system) and externally (beyond classroom boundaries).

## Internal initiatives

The idea is to make learning more down- to-earth, which means, connecting EFL learning to the real life.

## Making plans and doing community service

After students learned to use the expressions of making plans, they were given the opportunity to use the newly- acquired expressions to discuss a project that they would do together. The class is divided into two groups. One group decided that they wanted to visit a nursing home on weekends, and conduct interesting activities with the elderly there – singing English songs with the elderly and sharing some goodies. Another group decided to collect funding to buy free lunch for the homeless. They all had wonderful time and they remembered the lesson well.

## Learning and performing Folktales

Each of the group was given a folktale to learn. But, instead of asking them to read, the teacher asked them to perform and video tape the folktale in groups. So, the students ended up having a memorable folktale performance. Everybody enjoyed the lesson and remembered the stories. In the end, when they had to answer comprehension and discussion questions about folktales. They could answer the questions well and be involved in a lively discussion.

## Learning about persuasive language

Another interesting initiative is when the students were taught persuasive language. After learning the needed expressions, the students had to use them in creating posters about health care education. They had to use the poster to give health care education related to the idea presented in the poster. Finally, after getting feedback to improve their posters, they revised the posters and were asked to share their posters to the local community health centers to be put on the walls for the community in the neighboring areas to learn from.

## Initiatives beyond the classroom

Initiatives beyond the classroom include some of the following activities.

**Curriculum development.** Collaborating with subject matter experts in primary education and also in banking, the writer developed curriculum and syllabi for primary schools, and banking industry.

**Digital learning initiatives**. E-learning modules for Banking and Telecommunication companies – collaborating with IT specialists and graphic designers, the writer developed e-learning modules for banking and telecommunication companies.

**Teacher Training initiatives**. Collaborating with teacher trainers in a number of universities, the writer developed and conducted Teacher Training Initiatives in many cities throughout Indonesia (e.g. Menado, Makassar, Bojonegoro, Malang, Mataram, Jayapura).

**Youth Character Building and Leadership Camp**. Collaborating with a number of English language schools and education consultants, the writer got the opportunity to design and conduct youth character building and leadership camps in many cities in Indonesia. These initiatives were funded by a multi-national company.

**Book Publishing**. Another interesting teacherpreneurial initiative is a collaboration to publish two EFL textbooks. The publication of these books was the result of a series of teacher training programs focusing on materials writing. This book publishing initiative was also funded by a multi-national company and involved teachers in Jakarta, Bojonegoro and Tuban.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, teachepreneurial initiatives are critically needed to sustain ELT profession in the 3rd millennium and beyond and to make learning alive, meaningful, beneficial and out-reaching. To embrace these initiatives, ELT professionals need to adopt teaching heart and spirit combined with creative skills and innovative spirit of entrepreneurs.

## REFERENCES

Berry, Barnet, Ann Byrd, Alan Wieder, (2013), Teacher Preneur: Innovative Teachers who Lead but don’t Leave, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

Berry, Barnet, (2010) TEACHING 2030: What We Must Do for Our Students and Our Public Schools Now and in the Future, Teachers College Press, Amsterdam, retrieved from: [https://www.teachingquality.org/about/te](https://www.teachingquality.org/about/teaching-2030) [aching-2030](https://www.teachingquality.org/about/teaching-2030).

Berry, B. in Wolpert-Gawron, H. (2015). The Era of the Teacherpreneur. Retrieved from

http://www.edutopia.org/blog/era-of-teacherpreneur-heather-wolpertgawron Bett Futures http://www.bettshow.com <http://www.bettshow.com/Seminar/The-RiseOf->

Boholano, Helen B, Smart Social Networking: 21st Century Teaching and Learning Skills, Research in Pedagoy, Vol. 7, Issue 1 (2017), pp. 21-29, Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1149146>

Buckley, Anthony Paul and Kisito Futonge Nzembayie, Teacherpreneurs: From Vocation to Innovation, Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Kisito_Futonge_Nzembayie/publication/308084321_Teacherpreneurs_From_Vocation_to_Innovation/links/57d96caf08ae5f03b49a0661/Teacherpreneurs-From-Vocation-to-Innovation.pdf?origin=publication_detail>

Candler, L. (2015). The-Teacherpreneur-Innovative-Learning-Tools-Need-Innovative-Teachers, Retrieved from <http://www.lauracandler.com/filecabinet/teacherpreneurs.php>.

Edupreneurs – Creating a New Wave of Disruption in Education. Retrieved from <http://www.wiziq.com/teachblog/edupreneurs-creating-a-newwave-of-disruption-in-education>

Jiang, Y (2017), A study on professional development of teachers of English as a foreign language in institutions of higher education in Western China. Germany: Springer.

Levy, L. (2015). Rise of the Teacherprener. Retrieved from <http://www.edudemic.com/why-we-need-edupreneurs/>

Muhammadi, Muhammad, and Khaled Moradi, Exploring Change in EFL Teachers’ Perceptions of Professional Development, Journal of Teacher Education for Sustainability, Vo 19, no. 1, pp. 22-42, 2017.

Teacher to teacherpreneur-- 10 Tips to Transitions from Teacher to Teacherpreneur, Patrice Palmer, M.Ed, MA., Retrieved from <https://www.teacherpreneur.ca/>

The Coming Age of the Teacherpreneur Retrieved from

[http://www.edweek.org/tsb/articles/2010/](http://www.edweek.org/tsb/articles/2010/10/12/01teacherpreneur.h04.html) [10/12/01teacherpreneur.h04.html](http://www.edweek.org/tsb/articles/2010/10/12/01teacherpreneur.h04.html), accessed on: March 31, 2017, 10: 00

**Teachers of the Future: Using New Skills to Prepare Students,** Stacey Donaldson, [http://www.advanc-](http://www.advanc-ed.org/source/teachers-future-using-new-skills-prepare-students) [ed.org/source/teachers-future-using-new-](http://www.advanc-ed.org/source/teachers-future-using-new-skills-prepare-students) [skills-prepare-students](http://www.advanc-ed.org/source/teachers-future-using-new-skills-prepare-students), accessed: March 31, 2017, 10:29

**Teacherpreneur Start Up Guide: Teacherprenuer Digital Business Blueprint,** Miriam Jumalon**,** [**http://miriamjumalon.com/wp-**](http://miriamjumalon.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/teachepreneur_start_up_guide.pdf)[**content/uploads/2016/07/teachepre**](http://miriamjumalon.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/teachepreneur_start_up_guide.pdf)[**neur\_start\_up\_guide.pdf,**](http://miriamjumalon.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/teachepreneur_start_up_guide.pdf) accessed: March 31, 2017, 11:00

**What is a Teacherpreneur? Ask Sarah Henchey,** C. Steven Bingham, Associate Professor of Education, Gardner-Webb University, [http://gardner-](http://gardner-webb.edu/Assets/gardnerwebb/academics/cild/teacherpreneruship-notes1.pdf) [webb.edu/Assets/gardnerwebb/academics](http://gardner-webb.edu/Assets/gardnerwebb/academics/cild/teacherpreneruship-notes1.pdf)

[/cild/teacherpreneruship-notes1.pdf](http://gardner-webb.edu/Assets/gardnerwebb/academics/cild/teacherpreneruship-notes1.pdf), accessed March 31, 2017, 11.30

Boss, Suzie**, How Teacherpreneurs Spread Good Ideas,** Retrieved from [https://www.edutopia.org/blog/how-](https://www.edutopia.org/blog/how-teacherpreneurs-spread-good-ideas-suzie-boss) [teacherpreneurs-spread-good-ideas-](https://www.edutopia.org/blog/how-teacherpreneurs-spread-good-ideas-suzie-boss) [suzie-boss](https://www.edutopia.org/blog/how-teacherpreneurs-spread-good-ideas-suzie-boss), retrieved March 30, 2017, 10.00.