



## Teachers' Views of Research in English Language Teaching

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### Task 1: What counts as research?

Read each of the following descriptions and in each case say to what extent you feel the activity described is research.

1. A teacher noticed that an activity she used in class did not work well. She thought about this after the lesson and made some notes in her diary. She tried something different in her next lesson. This time the activity was more successful.

Definitely not  
research ☐

Probably not  
research ☐

Probably  
research ☐

Definitely  
research ☐

2. A university lecturer gave a questionnaire about the use of computers in language teaching to 500 teachers. Statistics were used to analyse the questionnaires. The lecturer wrote an article about the work in an academic journal.

Definitely not  
research ☐

Probably not  
research ☐

Probably  
research ☐

Definitely  
research ☐

3. Mid-way through a course, a teacher gave a class of 30 students a feedback form. The next day, five students handed in their completed forms. The teacher read these and used the information to decide what to do in the second part of the course.

Definitely not  
research ☐

Probably not  
research ☐

Probably  
research ☐

Definitely  
research ☐

4. Two teachers were both interested in discipline. They observed each other's lessons once a week for three months and made notes about how they controlled their classes. They discussed their notes and wrote a short article about what they learned for the newsletter of the national language teachers' association.

Definitely not  
research ☐

Probably not  
research ☐

Probably  
research ☐

Definitely  
research ☐

**Task 2: How do you recognize good quality research?**

1. Here are some characteristics which research may have. To what extent to you feel each is necessary in order for a piece of research to be 'good'?

	Not essential	Unsure	Essential
a. a large number of people are studied			
b. hypotheses are tested			
c. information is analysed statistically			
d. questionnaires are used			
e. the researcher is objective			
f. the results apply to many ELT contexts			
g. the results are made public			
h. the results give teachers ideas they can use			
i. variables are controlled			

2. What other characteristics of research influence your decisions about how 'good' it is?

**Task 3: Doing and Reading Research**

1. Here are some reasons teachers gave for doing research. Which do you think was the most common?

- as part of a course I am studying on
- I enjoy it
- it is good for my professional development
- it will help me get a promotion
- my employer expects me to
- other teachers can learn from the findings of my work
- to contribute to the improvement of the school generally
- to find better ways of teaching
- to solve problems in my teaching

2. Here are some reasons teachers gave for not doing research. Which do you think was the most common?

- I do not know enough about research methods.
- my job is to teach not to do research.
- I do not have time to do research.
- my employer discourages it.
- I am not interested in doing research.
- I need someone to advise me but no one is available.
- most of my colleagues do not do research.
- I do not have access to the books and journals I need.
- the learners would not co-operate if I did research in class.
- other teachers would not co-operate if I asked for their help.

**Task 4: Research Cultures**

1. An institution with a strong research culture supports teachers' efforts to engage in research; a weak research culture is one that discourages teacher research engagement. Tick a box for each statement below to give your opinion about the research culture in your institution.

	Disagree Strongly	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree	Agree Strongly
Teachers do research themselves.					
The management encourages teachers to do research.					
Teachers feel that doing research is an important part of their job.					
Teachers have access to research books and journals.					
Teachers have opportunities to learn about current research.					
Teachers talk about research.					
Teachers are given support to attend ELT conferences.					
Time for doing research is built into teachers' workloads.					
Teachers read published research.					

2. Which of these factors (or possibly others) do you feel have most impact on the extent to which teachers in your institution can engage in research?

**Further Reading**

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[www.eltresearch.co.uk](http://www.eltresearch.co.uk) is the project website for a current study of the views about research held by managers of recognized ELT schools in the UK. Results of the survey used in this study can be viewed here together with an overview of the project.