

OLD AND NEW CLOTHES IN ELT: ARE WE LOOKING LIKE SILLY EMPERORS IN FABLES?

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English as Foreign Language (EFL) seem to like new approaches and new materials and this is also partly due to the enthusiasm that researchers and materials developers have in pursuing innovation and profiting from it. When the practitioner seeks new things in teaching, change is the inevitable result. A survey of developments in the teaching of writing, for instance, reveals that in less than three decades, paradigm shifts in approaches to teaching, resulted in the movement from the focus on form, to the focus on the writer, then to content and eventually to the reader. But is this desire for change justified, or is it the result of an inert desire to have something new because of fashion and novelty value? In this paper, the presenter will attempt a listing of changes and the resulting confusion which would have probably moved ELT backwards and made teachers look as silly as the emperor in the fable *The Emperor's New Clothes*. The presenter will also trace and examine the thinking that leads to the desire for change and suggest ways in which reckless desire can perhaps be managed.