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## **EDITORIAL**

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**Dear *JALDA* reader**

The quote below attributed to Alvin Toffler is available all over the Internet accompanied with several interpretations and explanations by its readers. “The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.” One is rather amazed by the attention this quote receives on the Net and is disturbed, on the other hand, by what goes on in our English language and literature departments, where we are still following the rather traditional concept of ‘literacy’ and what we have received as the decontextualized mainstream trends in the fields belonging to the past. One reason for this might be that we are not concerned very much with debates, arguments and philosophical discussions of the activities we are involved in. We seem to be solely the consumers of what we have regarded as impeccable scientific products, without learning of which one cannot be allowed into the realm of the discipline. It should be noted that the philosophy of science and knowledge has changed in the direction of turning to the ‘real world’ instead of working under abstractionism and idealization. And Widdowson, in his 2020 paper “Linguistics, language teaching objectives and the language learning process,” justifiably problematizes issues from mainstream TEFL. One of the issues is that successful learning of English is achieving the level of conformity to the native speaker competence through different stages of interlanguage. This view of learning implies that it has an end product. So knowledge and literacy are package-like entities that have beginnings, middles and ends. English language teaching and learning should then be realized in the learner competency in reading and writing, an outdated understanding of literacy if one takes side with Toffler! Widdowson does not think of English language learning as a package-like entity because he relies on the concept of ‘unlearning’ to state that learning is a “developmental process which will always involve some kind of unlearning as knowledge and behavior are revised and adapted to accommodate new experience” (p. 37). And it can be argued that it is also through the concept of

‘unlearning’ that Widdowson carries TEFL to the 21st century and relates it to the learner (rather than teachee) standing in the context of the ‘real world’! Where are we standing in relation to the significance attributed to the learner being in the real world?

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### **Reference**

Widdowson, H. (2020). Linguistics, language teaching objectives and the language learning process *Pedagogical Linguistics*, 1(1), 34–43.  
<https://doi.org/10.1075/pl.19014.wid>