



Designing an Interactive CV as Professional Reflection

by [Laura Baecher](#)

When was the last time you took a really careful look at your résumé or CV? Why bother with this writing or editing exercise if you're not actively job-hunting? There are actually a lot of great reasons to use the process of examining, reexamining, and reconceptualizing your résumé/CV even if you are not currently looking for a new position.

In this article, I use the term *CV* throughout, although *CV* usually refers to a lengthier document that details most or all of one's professional accomplishments, while a résumé is usually only one to two pages in length and has the main highlights (see more on those differences [here](#)). As will be discussed, however, since these documents are becoming increasingly interactive, even a one-page résumé could really be considered a CV because it hyperlinks out to multiple other artifacts.

The Latin term *curriculum vita* (*CV*) literally means the “course of one's life”; indeed, our CVs do not just have to be viewed as a formulaic, required document, but as a window into the roadmap of our careers. Though we might take a moment sporadically to update our CVs, it is valuable—even essential—at certain points to stop and review it in its entirety as a form of reflection on who we are in our work, what we have achieved, and where we want to go next. By framing the CV revision process as professional development, it can serve more than just an editing and revising function and become a launching off point for our future career trajectories.

Five Reasons to Regularly Update Your CV

1. Adding items to your CV as they occur ensures you don't forget all about them.
2. Reviewing what you've done helps you feel a sense of accomplishment as you recall activities you had forgotten about.
3. Considering sections that are a bit thin gives you an idea of new activities to amplify your profile.
4. Reformatting gives you the opportunity to visually display that you are staying current in the field.
5. When you see an opportunity arise, you are always ready to apply!

With all the changes we have experienced through the pandemic, and the time we have spent supporting the learning of others, likely using many new forms of technology, this might be the

time to focus inward and invest time in our growth. Using a “Pre-While-Post” structure works well because it’s a familiar process from the teaching of writing, and retooling a CV is fundamentally a writing task. Linking it to connected artifacts just makes it a multimedia writing task!

Pre-CV Review

Before jumping into some of the design approaches and strategies that can modernize our CVs, it’s important to step back and reflect:

Equally important to the resume-writing process is an in-depth reflection on the characteristics and skills that are most relevant to the job you are hoping to land. It is this intersection between your experience and skills repertoire and what is demanded in your targeted role that should be heavily featured in your career portfolio. Identifying this overlap requires calm, thoughtful, and careful reflection. (Hardy, n.d.)

Writing a teaching vision or a professional vision statement can be a way to begin thinking about and prioritizing your goals (Drew, 2020). Reflective questions like the ones in Table 1 can be explored as a personal diary response and can also be fruitful to discuss with a trusted colleague, with a mentor, or in a supportive community of practice.

Table 1. Eight Questions to Prompt Career Reflection

<p>Remembering Where You Have Been</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What did you want to be as a child? What parts of those dreams are still part of your life now? 2. Where have you worked in the past that really gave you joy? What was it about that job or workplace that you would love to bring into your life again?
<p>Taking Stock of Where You Are Now</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Name three aspects of your work life now that you would <u>not</u> want to give up. 4. Name three aspects of your work life now that you <u>really</u> want to give up! 5. What kinds of tasks do you engage in currently that you would like to take a step further? 6. Which parts of your work now really fill you with a sense of joy, pride, fulfillment, and accomplishment?
<p>Imagining Where You Want to Be</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. What activities, jobs, or experiences would you like to have in the next 5 years? 8. No matter what your other responsibilities are right now, what could you do that will advance you professionally to take you in the direction you want to go?

While-CV Review

When you have a mindset and vision of where you want to steer your career, set aside several hours for a deep-dive into the substance of your CV. You might want to create some time in your calendar to return to this task regularly over a series of weeks because it is very intense and detailed work.

There are many helpful resources online to guide you in looking at your CV, but it can be hard to find ones specific to the field of TESOL. Valentina Gonzalez lists a number of [ESL-specific interview questions](#), and these can also be used as jumping off points when auditing your CV. Following are a few TESOL-specific questions to consider for your CV:

- What type of English language teaching curricula are you experienced with? Did you create your own syllabus and/or teaching materials?
- Did you teach a specialized group of students (engineer majors, students with disabilities, dual language learners)?
- How did you support English learners/their families in accessing any learning management systems used to build your courses? Were your courses in person, online, or hybrid?
- Did you take on any leadership duties within your department? Were you on a committee within your ESL/EFL department? What did you accomplish?
- What kinds of TESOL methods are you particularly skilled at? Do you have student work samples to show?
- How have you collaborated with colleagues to support English learners? Do you have examples of coplanning or coteaching?
- In what ways have you engaged in self-reflection on your TESOL practice? Have you carried out action research projects, video analysis of teaching, or examined student outcomes?

The next activity could be carried out as relevant to your professional profile—not all of the categories are needed! Using the rating tool shown in Table 2 (and ignoring any of the items that don't pertain to your position), your CV can be subjected to a sort of methodical review, and the process of considering these categories can be helpful in identifying your strengths and recognizing your achievements, as well as pointing to possible gaps or future directions.

Table 2. CV Survey Items to Review

Rate the following categories on your CV, as relevant to your line of work!			
1-No or very little evidence	2-Some evidence	3-Very strong evidence	
	1	2	3
Books (edited, authored)			
Peer-reviewed publications (book chapters, peer-reviewed journal articles, articles presented at conferences, forthcoming publications, reports)			
Presentations (local, national, international)			
Invited talks			
Keynote/plenary addresses			
Workshops			
Honors or awards			
Grants or fellowships			
Magazine or newsletter publications			
Leadership or administration			
Professional associations			
Teaching			
Curriculum development			
Engagement in the public domain (Podcasts, Twitter chats, interviews, blogs)			
Certifications and licensure			
Mentoring/advising			
Consulting			
Volunteer/community activism			
Creative work			
Other skills (languages spoken, technology)			

After this exhaustive review, what strengths do you see? Where do you see gaps? What steps can you take to move yourself forward (courses, credentials, volunteering, leadership roles, publishing)? Consider your career goals to determine which aspects of your professional profile need to be further developed.

We can't excel in every area! It's really a matter of selectively prioritizing. Are there certain roles you aspire to move into that require skills you don't yet have? Imagine the interview you would like to have for your next job and "organize your CV to make that outcome more, not less, likely" (Cassuto, 2019).

Post-CV Review

After adding in the content language you want to include, take a comprehensive look at your CV and evaluate your organization, formatting, and word choice. Give it to a friend for 60 seconds, one who is not that familiar with your job history, and ask them what jumped out for them. What did they pick up on in that time? What didn't stand out? Did they identify the achievements you most want the selection committee to notice? Consider:

Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it well-organized and easy to find sections? • Is it consistent in terms of parallel language and in fonts? • Is it understandable by anyone—no local terminologies or acronyms?
Formatting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the appearance seem modern? • Are the sections easy to skim through?
Word Choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you focus on duties fulfilled or on accomplishments? • Do you hedge or diminish your impact?

This is where many of us will stop—and this is already plenty of self-directed and valuable professional development! If you are inclined to take things a step further, consider linking multimedia artifacts to a number of items on your CV to make it interactive for the viewer.

Interactive CVs

Postpandemic, the expectation that TESOL educators will have high technological literacy is much greater than previously. Although paper printouts will continue to be needed and utilized, CVs today are almost always going to be sent, shared, and reviewed on a computer screen connected to the internet. Therefore, to indirectly display your tech-savvy, you can harness the power of digital media to stay relevant in the job market now and in the immediate future. As you complete your CV survey, this might be a formatting adventure you decide to embark on—creating an interactive CV.

Essentially, making your interactive CV is like crafting a very personal and ambitious multimedia presentation and "visualizing" your skillsets, according to L. Michelle Salvant,

ThingLink educator and learning and media consultant, in an [interview with Koivula](#) (2020). Savant says:

A traditional CV is typically text based, and designed for print only. An interactive résumé on the other hand is a digital based presentation of skills that allows employers to go beyond traditional print to experience a deeper more immersive level of exposure to a person’s skills/qualifications. These types of résumés allow...people to express their qualifications in a more demonstrative way, through videos, audio, dynamic graphics, etc.

Many tools, like [Thinglink](#), can be used to create an interactive CV, but everyday tools like Microsoft Word or Google Docs and slide presentation tools like PowerPoint or Google Slides can work just as well. Often, the facade of the interactive CV, if visually appealing, can stand in front of a very simple hyperlinked document. [Piktochart](#) and [Canva](#) are free and offer lots of attractive templates. To get inspiration, simply view ones that are available online by searching under “interactive CV/résumé”, as highlighted in [this overview](#) (Brown, 2018).

I recently had a chance to view a friend and colleague [Yumiko Bendlin’s updated interactive CV](#), created in Google Slides. She has very generously agreed to share it with us. In it, you can see how the traditional CV format has been retained, while also bursting through the boundaries of a word-document only presentation.



“[Sample Interactive CV](#)” by Yumiko Bendlin is licensed under [CC by 4.0](#)

The best part? She used this new, interactive CV on a recent job search and landed her dream job! Time invested in your CV is time invested in your professional success. Good luck with the process!

References

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