

موسسه آموزش عالی آزاد خلاقان جوان

Language Academy

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Stages in the Development of Professional Language Teachers



Ebrahim Tahasoni



**One good indicator that a field of endeavor
has matured enough to take itself seriously
as a full-fledged profession
is when the talk within that field
turns purposely introspective
with regard to the matter of professionalism.**

Frank Farmer

Architect, English teacher, ELT researcher and lecturer

Why do you teach?

★ Money

★ Respect

★ Fame

★ Social Status

★ Majored in ELT

★ Interest / Passion

★ Socializing

★ Work Experience
(for CV)

When do you consider yourself a pro?

In such an uncertain world, I teach so well the outcome of my work is confidently predictable. That or your money back!

**Accountable
Professionalism**

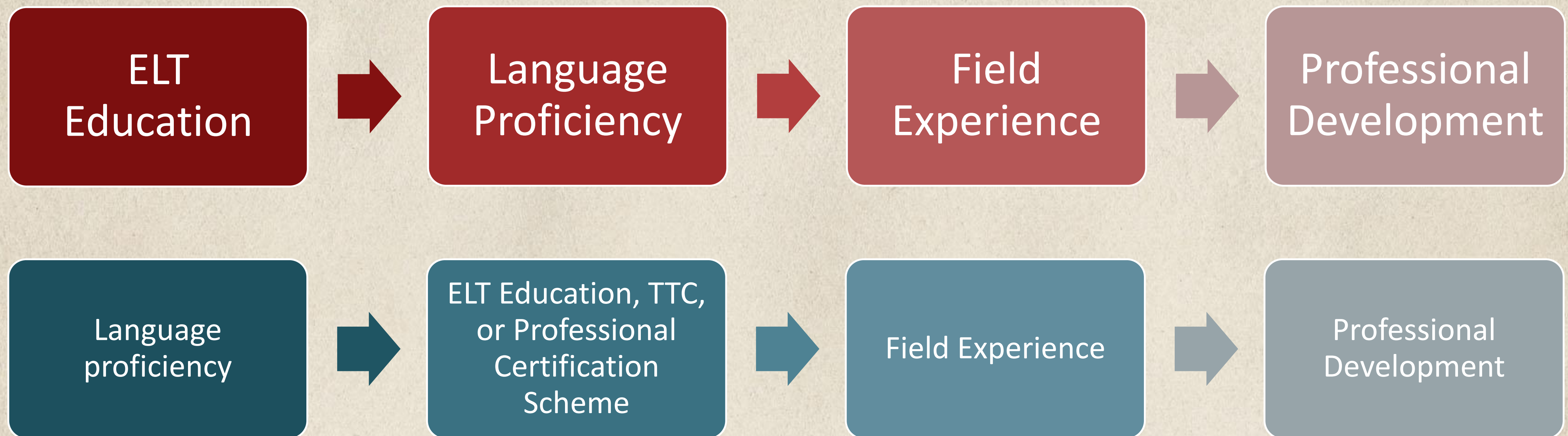
People pay to see me in action and enjoy.

Artistic Professionalism

I'm respected for my knowledge and ethical behavior.

Moral Professionalism

Becoming a Teacher: Typical Paths



Stage 1

Survival



Survival: first full year of teaching

- ★ *Surviving* the daily challenges of teaching
- ★ Getting used to tasks
- ★ Fine-tuning your English
- ★ Being accepted by other teachers
- ★ Anticipated successes $\neq$ classroom realities
 - Feelings of inadequacy and unpreparedness
 - and/or** Trial and error

Survival: young learners vs. adults

Teaching Children

- ★ Carrying responsibility for a whole group of young children and their growth, development, and learning
- ★ Handling immature yet vigorous children
 - anxiety, anger management
- ★ Adjusting to classroom and interaction language
- ★ Adjusting to and learning to handle encounters with parents

Teaching Adults

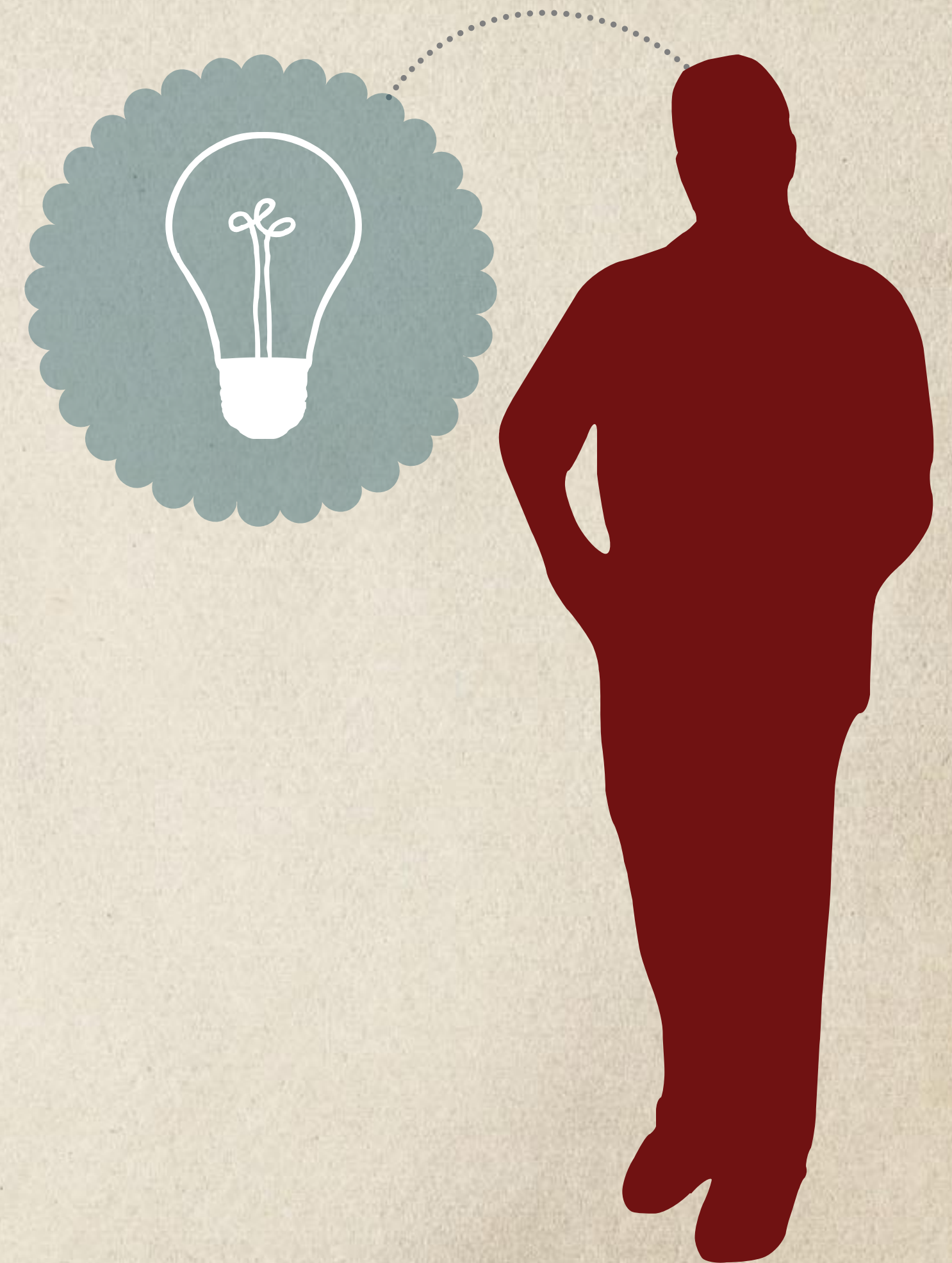
- ★ Adjusting to comments and demands, characters and sensitivities

Needs: Stage 1

- **On-site Mentor or trainers**

- Principals
- Senior staff members
- Directors
- Advisors/consultants
- Other specialized and experienced staff

- support
- understanding
- encouragement
- reassurance
- comfort
- guidance



Survival: Outcome

**What certain groups
of students are like**

**General classroom
expectation**

Stage 2

Consolidation



Consolidation: years 2-3

- ★ Consolidate overall gains from stage 1
- ★ Differentiate specific tasks and skills to be mastered next
- ★ Identify individual students whose behavior departs from typical patterns

Consolidation: New Aim

Keeping the whole class running smoothly (stage 1)

➔ Ensure overall steady progress via focus on individual students and problem situations

- ★ How can I help a particular student who does not seem to be learning?
- ★ How can I help a clinging child?
- ★ How can I handle an unresponsive student?
- ★ How should I treat that student who likes to take over?

Needs: Stage 2

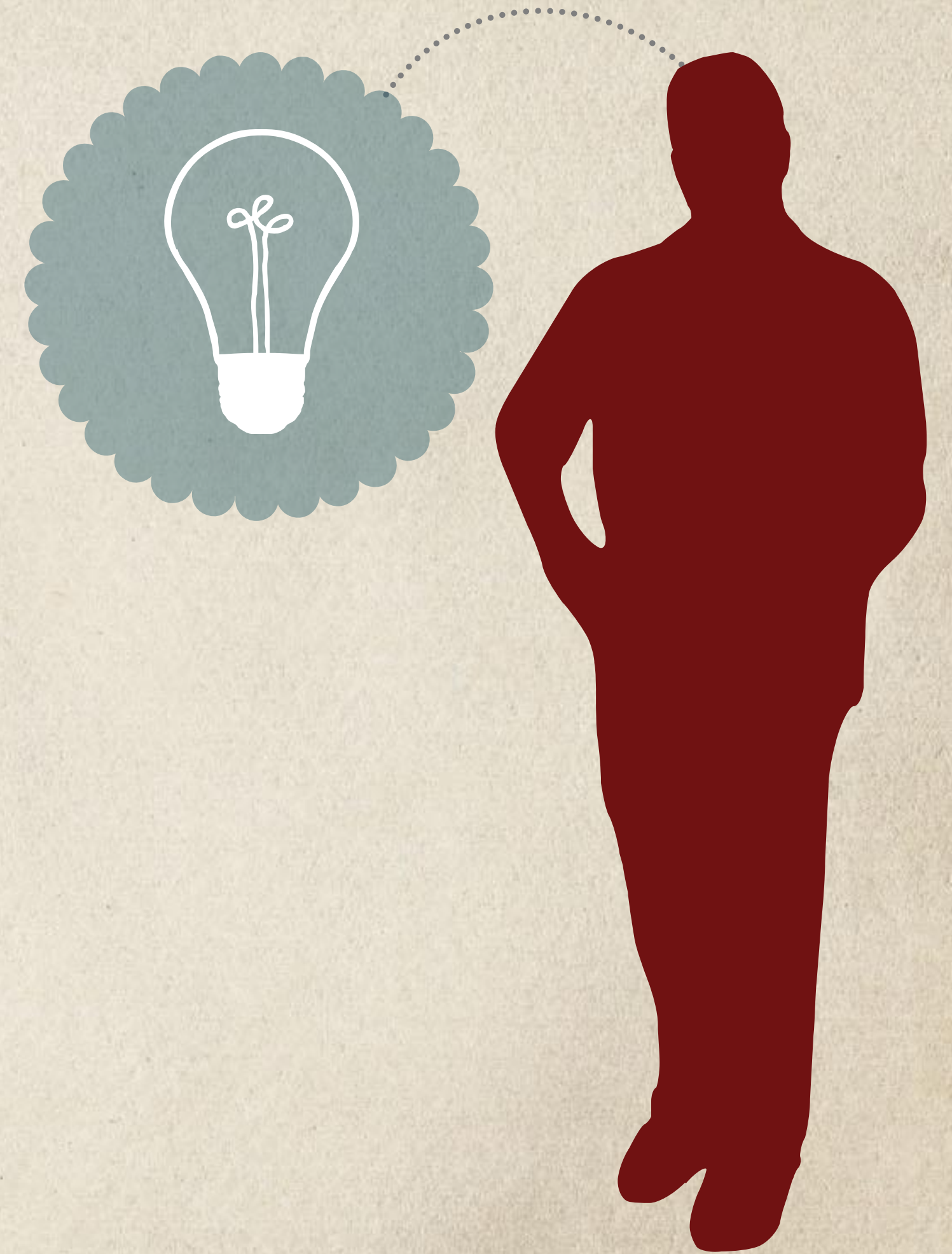
Mentor/trainers/Colleagues:

Joint exploration of an individual problem case

- ★ In situ observations

- ★ Extended give-and-take conversations

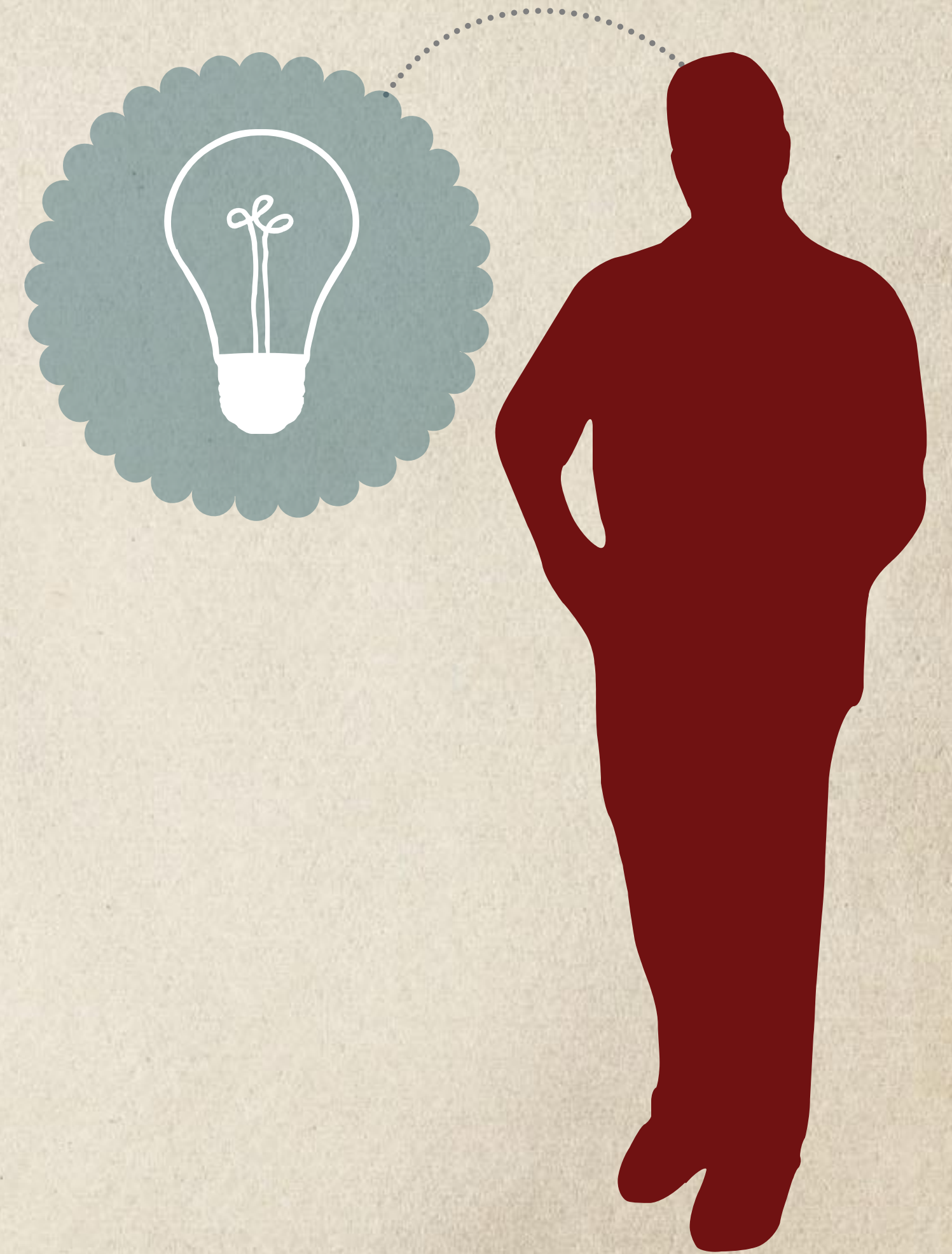
- ▶ Strategies tried so far → student's reactions
- ▶ Example experiences



Needs: Stage 2

Talk and share feelings with other teachers in the same stage of development

→ Decline sense of personal inadequacy and frustration



Consolidation: Outcome

**Anticipate
sudden
issues**

**Prepare
more
effectively**

**Tackle
individual
students'
issues**

**Feel more
sure and
less
anxious**

Stage 3

Renewal



**Unless you try to do something beyond
what you have already mastered, you will
never grow.**

Ronald E. Osborn
Lawyer, Diplomat

Renewal: years 3-4

YOU ARE TIRED!

- ★ **Tired** of doing the same things
- ★ **Tired** of offering the same activities
- ★ **Tired** of using the same resources

Renewal: Curiosity Begins

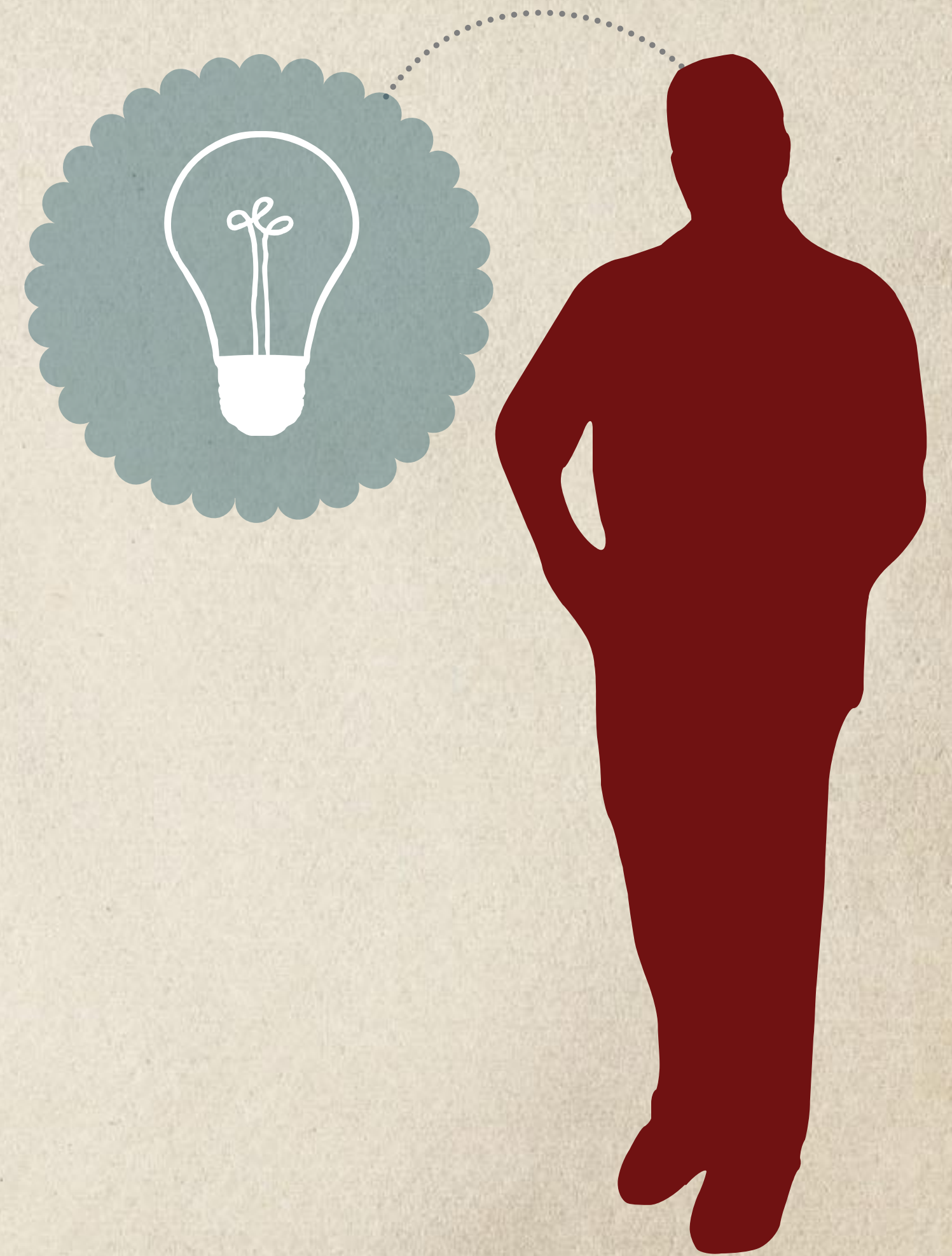
Teachers wonder what's happening in the world of ELT:

- ★ What are some new approaches to helping children's language development?
- ★ What are some of the new materials, techniques, approaches, and ideas being developed these days?
- ★ What new resources are available?
- ★ What other activities might work?

Needs: Stage 3

Meet colleagues from other schools/programmes

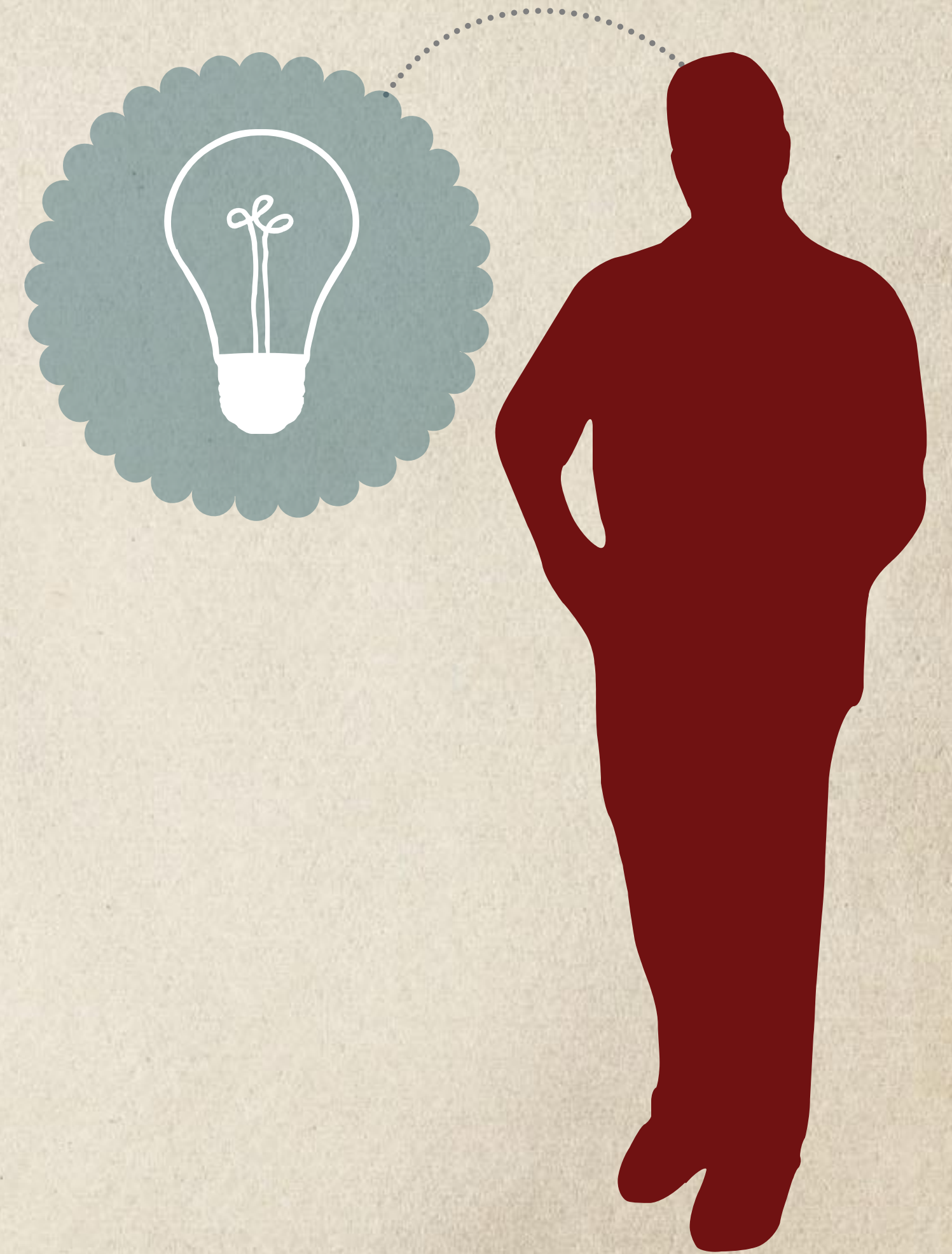
- ▶ Formal occasions:
 - Seminars & conferences
 - Workshops
 - Professional certification schemes
- ▶ Informal occasions



Needs: Stage 3

Widening the scope and looking for Sources of fresh ideas

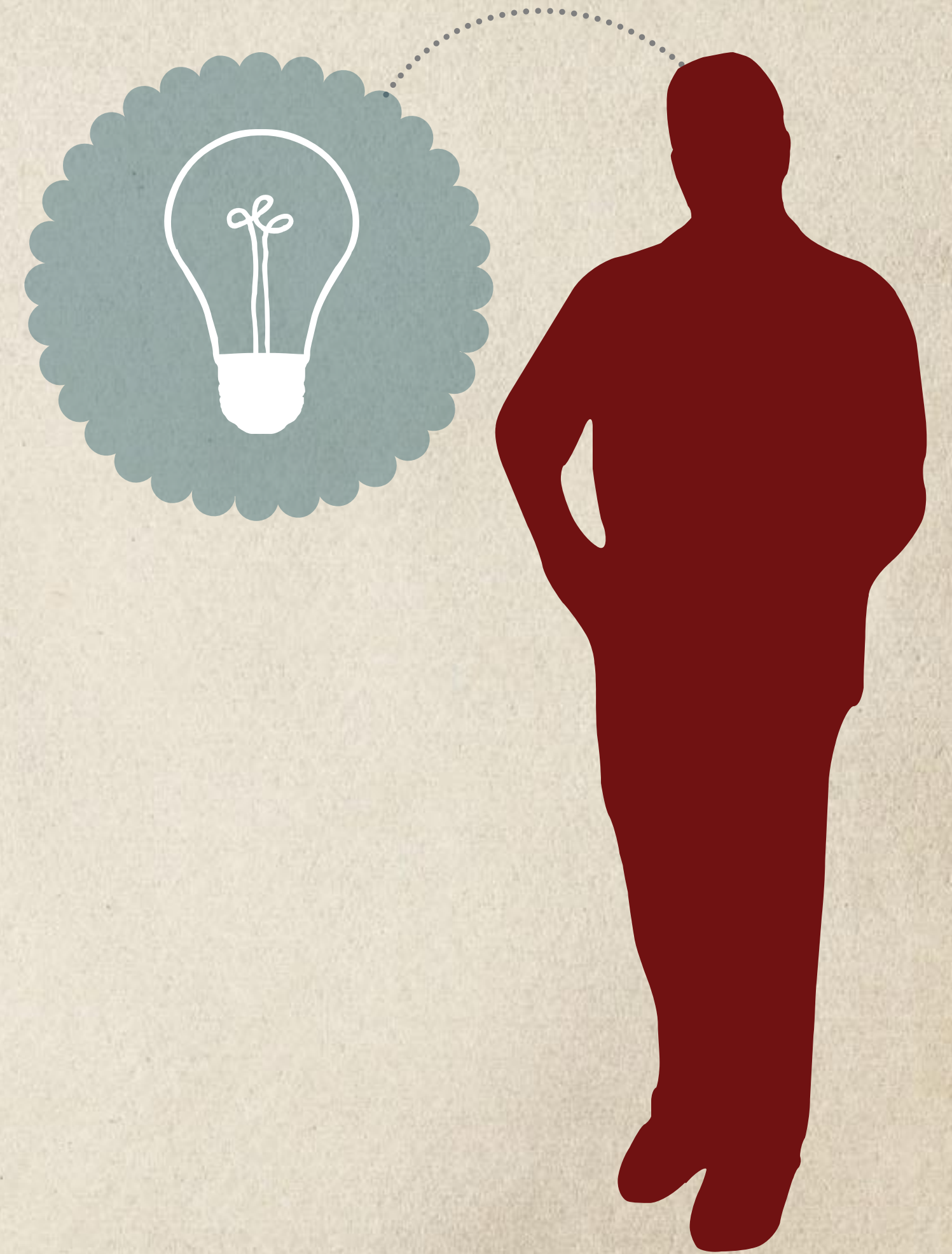
- ★ Magazines and journals
- ★ Films and CDs/DVDs
- ★ Internet



Needs: Stage 3

Reviewing your own teaching

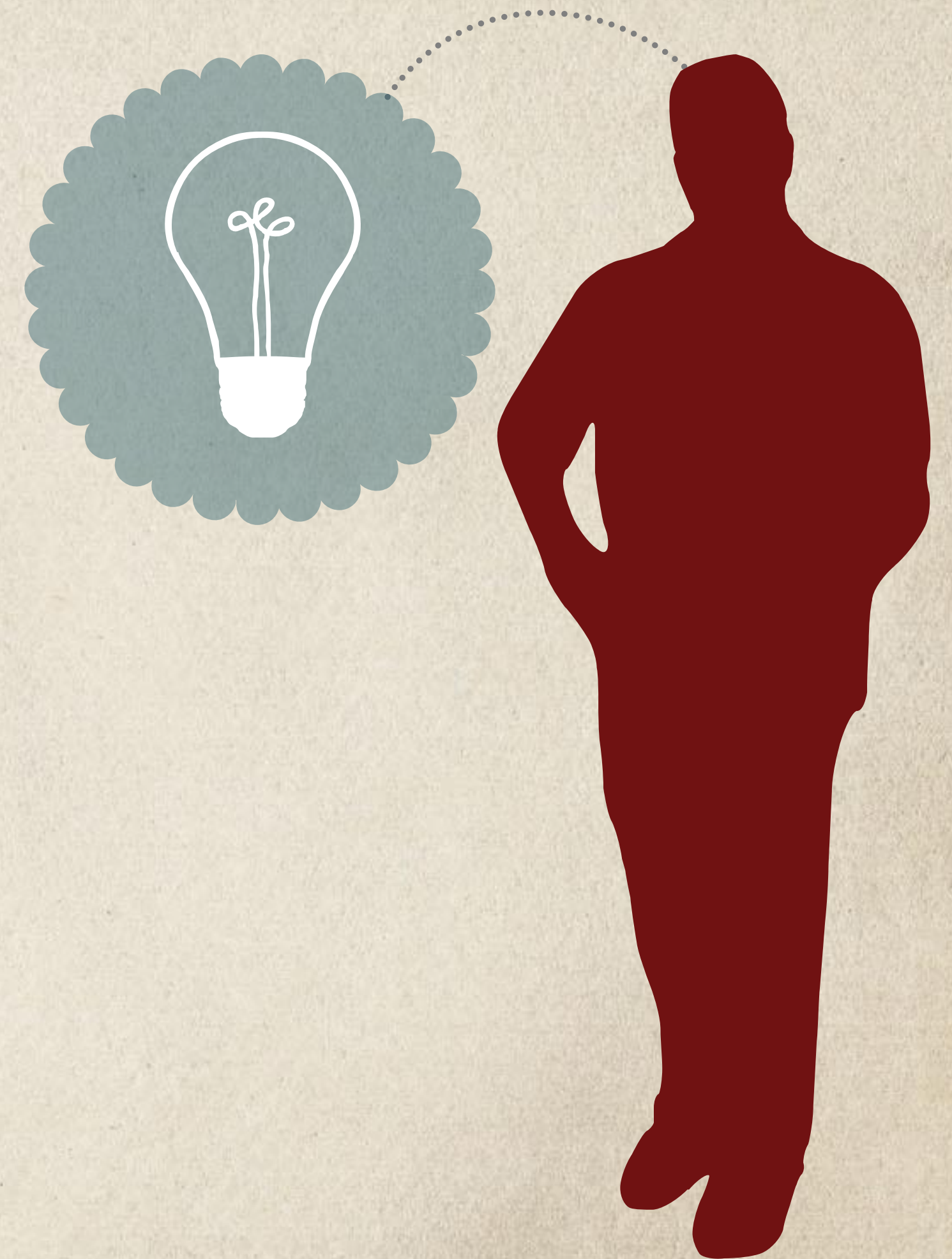
- ★ Recording your classes
- ★ Observing other teachers
- ★ Attending demonstrations
- ★ Reviewing your assessment methods
- ★ Reviewing your feedback techniques



Renewal: value of teacher centres

Teacher centers like **Diplomat** allow teachers in this stage to

- ★ gather together
- ★ help each other learn or re-learn skills, techniques, and methods
- ★ exchange ideas
- ★ organize special workshops → meet specialists in curriculum, child growth, ...



Renewal: Outcomes

Explore

**Appreciate
other
methods
and
techniques**

**Seek out
others in
the field**

**Add
variety
and avoid
repetition**

Stage 4

Maturity



Maturity: years 3 or 5 onwards

- ★ Accept yourself as a teacher
- ★ Comfortably sure of your competence
- ★ Ask deeper, more abstract questions:
 - ▶ What are the historical and philosophical roots of my practices?
 - ▶ What is the nature of growth and learning?
 - ▶ How are educational decisions made?
 - ▶ Can schools change societies?
 - ▶ Is teaching really a profession?

Maturity: years 3 or 5 onwards

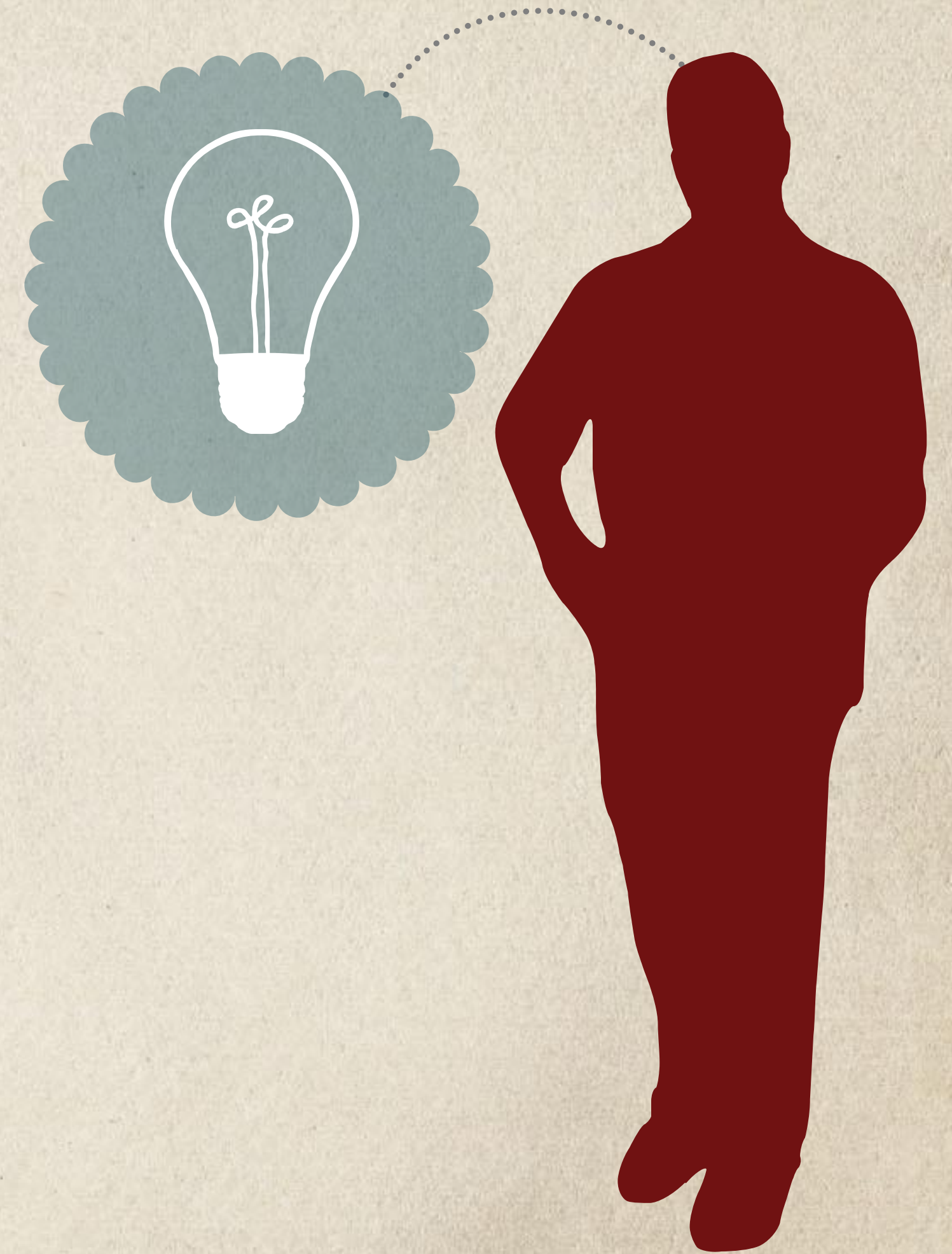
★ Ask deeper, more abstract questions:

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- ▶ Is teaching really a profession?

Note: *Perhaps you've asked these questions before. But with experience, the questions represent a more meaningful search for insight, perspective, and realism.*

Needs: Stage 4

- ★ Attend seminars and conferences
- ★ Work towards an advanced degree
- ★ Read Widely
- ★ Interact with other educators:
 - ▶ introspective, in-depth discussions
≠ stages 1 and 2



BURNOUT



Teacher Burnout: Reasons

- ★ Teaching is emotionally, physically, and mentally consuming
- ★ Worry about how to reach every student
- ★ Shifting work/balance in favour of work

➔ Success comes at great cost

Teacher Burnout: Signs

★ Exhaustion

- ▶ Deep fatigue
- ▶ Long for bed
- ▶ Appreciate consecutive holidays too much

Teacher Burnout: Signs

★ Extreme graveness

- ▶ Hours without smiling or laughing
- ▶ Do not appreciate humour from students or colleagues
- ▶ Complain a lot

Teacher Burnout: Signs

★ Anxiety

- ▶ Constantly feel you can/should do more
- ▶ Constantly feel you must disconnect
- ▶ Constantly feel there's a lot left to do

Teacher Burnout: Signs

★ Being overwhelmed

- ▶ Fear of new tasks and expectations
- ▶ Compromising your values of excellence to stay on track

Teacher Burnout: Signs

★ Seeking

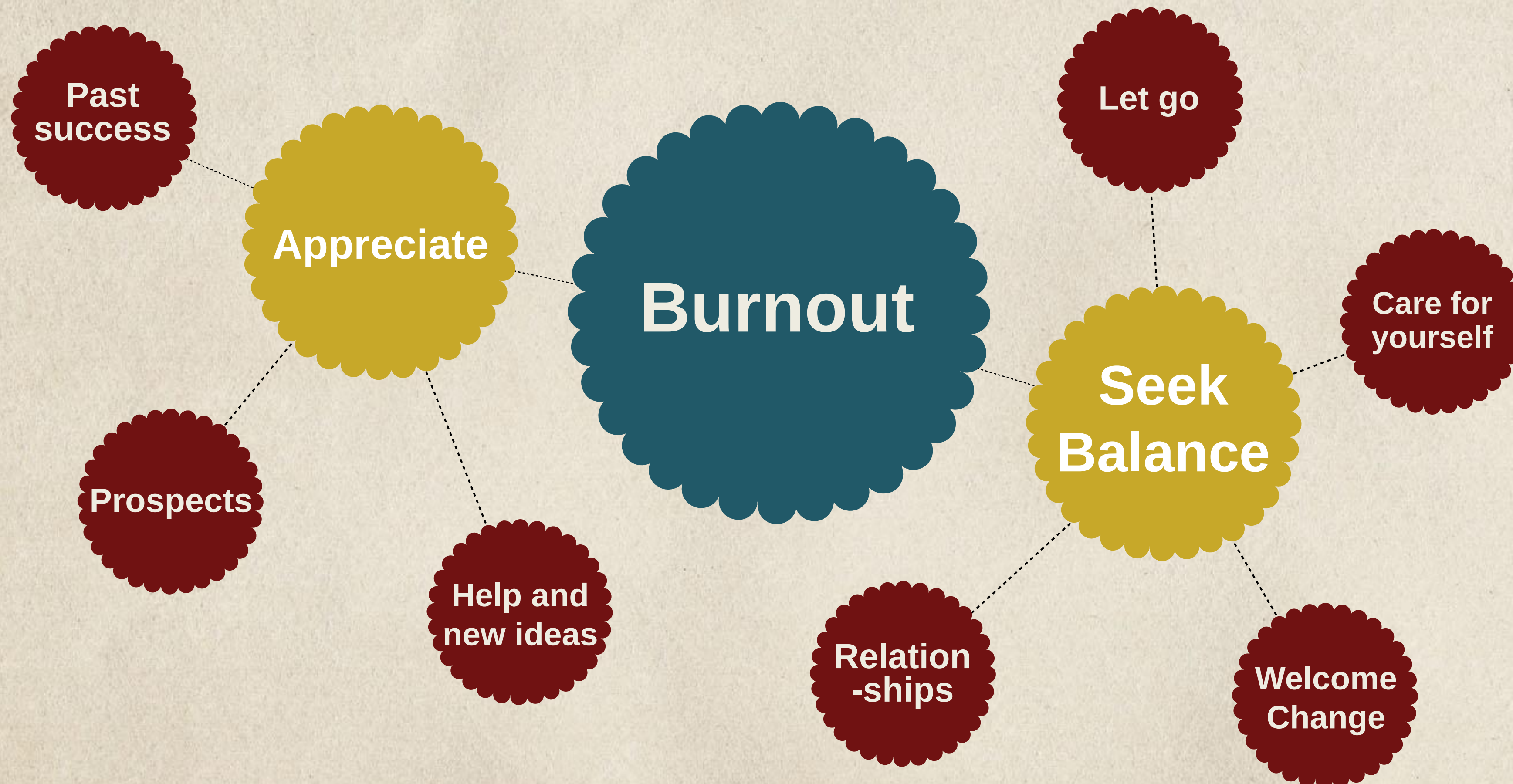
- ▶ Losing your creativity, imagination, patience, and enthusiasm for daily challenges
- ▶ Actively looking forward to delegating your tasks, or finding shortcuts and easy solutions in website and books

Teacher Burnout: Signs

★ Isolation

- ▶ Hate when your limits are noted and discussed
- ▶ Avoid observation so no one realises your vulnerabilities
- ▶ Craving reflection time and productive collaboration rather than group complaining
- ▶ Stop attending events
- ▶ Stop sharing

Burnout: Self-help tips



A professional is someone who can do his best work when he doesn't feel like it.

Alistair Cooke
Journalist

Want a copy of this presentation?

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