

Creating Teacher Community: Research and Practice in Language Teacher Education

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The International Conference on Language Teacher Education

Three times since 1999, the University of Minnesota has organized a small, carefully planned opportunity for language teacher educators to meet—the International Conference on Language Teacher Education.¹ It is special for many reasons; due to its size, it supports a great deal of exchange among participants, and it is focused, which generates in-depth conversation on issues that are most important to teacher educators. One of the main aims of the conference is to establish an ongoing interdisciplinary dialogue between scholars and practitioners who often work in very different academic departments and educational settings. For instance, conference attendees often come from departments of Education, Linguistics and Foreign or World Languages. They are teacher educators preparing teachers for many diverse settings, including: ESL/EFL; foreign/modern/world languages; bilingual; immersion; indigenous and minority languages; and less commonly taught languages. This conference is a unique opportunity to pool the expertise of educators with the common goal of deepening our knowledge of language teacher development. It is an exciting meeting to be a part of because it creates a forum for veterans and newcomers in the field to share ideas of practice and research in teacher education.

Creating Teacher Community was an apt title for the conference of 2003 for a number of reasons. In 2003, there were 256 participants from 31 states and at least 12 countries. A large number of the attendees presented papers and there was much participation by graduate students, both in attendance and presenting. Many said that it was exhilarating to be among others who share similar questions, challenges and passions. The conference hosted papers and symposia on various critical issues in language teacher education, encompassing themes that addressed the following questions: What should language teachers know? How is language teacher education affected by formal and informal decision-making bodies? How do all members of the professional community join together to prepare teachers? How is the knowledge base conceptualized and operationalized in teacher preparation and development?

The papers in this volume all originated as presentations at the conference. The selection process involved an editorial pre-selection of papers which were then sent out for blind review to a number of recognized teacher educators. These chapters, with roots in different instructional

settings, offer a window into many of the issues touched upon at the conference and suggest directions for future discussions in the field of language teacher education. This volume is organized according to three themes of the conference: a) The Knowledge Base of Language Teacher Education, b) Social, Cultural, and Political Contexts of Language Teacher Education, and c) Process of Language Teacher Education.

I. The Knowledge Base of Language Teacher Education

What do language teachers need to know and be able to do to conduct their practice? How do they learn to teach, and once they begin to practice their craft, how do their knowledge and their practice develop and change? What makes a language teacher an experienced practitioner? These questions and others related to socialization, professional development and the nature of disciplinary knowledge describe the *knowledge base* of teacher education. Constructing this knowledge base has been the task of teacher development in second language education, but the nature of the knowledge base has differed somewhat for the various contexts in which second language teaching and learning takes place. Teacher preparation in foreign language, ESL, EFL, bilingual, and immersion education programs has followed separate paths, and only recently have we seen the stakeholders communicating across boundaries in order to identify common purposes and common practices.

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) describe both *knowledge-for-practice* and *knowledge-in-practice* as key categories of teacher learning. Knowledge-for-practice describes the particular formal knowledge that is characteristic of teacher development: subject matter content, instructional strategies, and effective classroom practices. Generally knowledge-for-practice gets its direction from national professional curriculum guidelines for content areas, accreditation guidelines for teacher education programs, teacher certification program requirements at the state level, and unique characteristics of a particular post-secondary institution in terms of the way in which teacher development is structured. Knowledge-in-practice refers to a kind of knowledge experienced through actual classroom contact with learners. This “in practice” type of teacher learning comes from “the particularities of everyday life in schools and classrooms,” (p.262) and values the experience of practitioners who live their work through daily action in the classroom. The ways in which teachers reflect on and modify their practice (Schön, 1987, 1991) is characteristic of the knowledge-in-practice paradigm. Most importantly in the field of teacher education research, the voices of teachers have moved much more to center stage in the discussions about what makes sense for teachers to know and be able to do (Johnson, Golombek, & Richards,

2002; Sharkey & Johnson, 2003). Fortunately for second language education, teacher educators in our field have begun to examine the research on teacher development and have begun to explore the extent to which the questions posed in that field generally can be applied to the varied contexts of teaching and learning language(s).

In second language education, questions concerning *knowledge-for-practice* have dominated the field historically: which particular instructional practices produce and promote language development/competence/proficiency? The field has, in fact, devoted decades to this question. Only recently we have begun to address the questions raised by a focus on *knowledge-in-practice*: What do effective teachers and learners do that promotes successful language development? What unique experiences and interactions take place that foster successful language learning outcomes? What is the unique interplay between language learning context, teacher, and learner and what can participants in other contexts take from these experiences?

Content and curricular knowledge refers to the grounding of educators in content knowledge and the ways in which knowledge is constructed. Teachers with content and curricular knowledge are able to make the content of the curriculum meaningful to learners. Pedagogical knowledge is the ability of educators to plan, implement, and evaluate teaching and learning. In this volume, the researchers who contributed to the section focused on the teacher knowledge base present the complicated interplay between content/curricular knowledge required of teachers and the pedagogical knowledge so important to successful teaching. They describe for us what they believe to be a mandate for language teacher education: the need to ensure that we as teacher educators, as well as our teacher-learners, engage in a reflective process that considers the wider impact of language teaching, the multiple stakeholders whose voices need to be heard in the process and the unique context involved in any language instructional setting.

Claire Kramsch has long been a strong voice for considering language teaching and learning in a cultural context. In her contribution as a keynote speaker to the conference, she took on the challenge of examining language teacher education from its most global implications to what one single teacher might do in actual practice. Framing the task required of language teachers, Claire Kramsch and Paige Ware in their chapter posit “In a world of increased multilingualism and multiculturalism, foreign language teachers seem to be called upon less to be authoritative transmitters of linguistic or pragmatic knowledge, and more often mediators between various identities, discourses and worldviews. Language study is finding itself in the crossfire of politics and ideology.” What does this mean for language teachers? Kramsch and Ware take on this question by exploring the challenges and the paradoxes in language teacher education, and ask us to consider

what this might mean in our global society in which language and culture are often fluid and always politically charged. They argue for giving language teachers a more critically grounded and socio-politically sensitive knowledge base such that they might understand the large scale implications of their practice—“an awareness that reaches the global level of geopolitics.” Beyond the immediate goals of language proficiency and cultural “competence,” language instruction thus serves a larger purpose, and language teachers need to be prepared from a knowledge base that considers the learners’ need for bilingualism as well as society’s need for individuals with the capacity for cross-linguistic, -cultural, -social, and -political boundaries. But are learners with us in this goal? The authors cite one study (Chavez, 2002) indicating that “fifty percent of the students resented learning about culture in language classes altogether and resented even more being tested on cultural knowledge, as indicated by their comments that the course was one on language, not culture, and that culture should be separated from language class.” It is clear we have a tremendous job to do in our field. If researchers and teacher educators are calling for a larger canvas on which to imagine language teaching and learning, and half of our students dismiss the exploration of culture as irrelevant to language study, there is clearly a vast divide in teacher versus learner conceptualizations of what language learning should entail. The focus of our work as language teacher educators is on the larger canvas, with “teachers called upon to be linguistic/cultural mediators, methodological mediators and professional mediators.” In Chapter 2, Kramsch and Ware consider the knowledge base as six different *savoirs* (knowledges) (Byram & Zarate, 1994), distributed across the three roles that teachers play, and delineate a “horizon of what language teachers might hope to understand about themselves and their lifelong teaching goals within a multicultural society like the United States and a multilingual global world.”

Discussions of what teachers need to know have been of interest to teacher educators for years. Freeman and Johnson (1998) draw from the work of Kessels and Korthagen (1996) in order to distinguish teachers’ conceptual knowledge (known as theory) and their perceptual knowledge (known as practice), applied to language teachers. In their framework, both types of knowledge inform teachers’ practices. Freeman and Johnson argue against strict divisions between learning of subject matter and learning about learner. Instead, they see much interplay between the various facets of “the complex terrain in which language teachers learn and practice their craft” (p. 406).

In this volume, Anne Dahlman argues that there has been little research on the interrelationships between teachers’ learning processes and their beliefs about theoretical knowledge. She explores the role of theoretical knowledge in preservice teachers’ learning about teaching and how a more careful examination of such processes and beliefs might help to explain

the discrepancy between theory and practice so often witnessed in the language classroom. The Dahlman study seeks to clarify the relationship between teachers' attitudes toward what they learn in their courses and the ways they do or do not use such knowledge in their own teaching.

Dahlman presents three case studies of preservice ESL/foreign language teachers in a cohort program working toward their first teaching license. Utilizing a lesson plan assignment and two extensive individual interviews, she analyzed the data of 12 preservice teachers, choosing three to reflect the differing profiles of the preservice teachers in the program. Three very different individuals, all presented with the same theoretical information, each made choices as to how such theoretical background informed their instruction. One demonstrated a very successful relationship between theory and practice, whereas another participant clearly struggled with drawing meaningful connections between theory and practice; she does not believe that theoretical knowledge affects her development as a teacher, and clearly mines course material for lesson examples which are in a ready-to-use format, which she can then apply directly or modify. The third participant exhibited a mixture of success and difficulty in linking theory to her practice. She does not believe that she will write lesson plans when she is teaching, because she perceives that they confine her creativity; with lesson plans she feels "cornered."

Applying a framework based on Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom, 1956), the study digs more deeply into the knowledge base for teachers, attempting to ascertain the kinds of cognitive processes participants were engaged in when exposed to theoretical information, i.e., whether they demonstrated application of the theoretical knowledge they received or perhaps even synthesis and evaluation. Dahlman describes this as an exploration of their "cognitive mindset or habits of mind." The window into thinking and the application of knowledge to actual practice is a fascinating characteristic of this study. It underscores the need for preservice teachers to see the various components of a teacher education program as contributing to a unified whole. Deeply embedded belief systems have led preservice teachers to expect a chasm between theory and practice. When this is reinforced by veteran teachers with whom they apprentice, attempts to establish new ways of thinking about one's own professional development are difficult. Donald Freeman, Karen Johnson and Jack Richards, in a number of publications, (Freeman, 1996a, 1996b, 2002; Freeman & Johnson, 1998, 1999; Freeman & Richards, 1993) urge that teacher education focus on teacher knowledge and experiences, building a carefully constructed web of teacher skill based upon beliefs, observation, reflection, and practice. This web crystallizes during the teacher development process. Teacher education must work from the center of the web, in essence, starting with the personal

interpretation of knowledge and the practical experiences of each individual teacher, and to the outer edges through the interaction of reflection and practice.

The final study in the knowledge-base section of this volume is Maloney-Berman and Yang's exploration of the language classroom. It examines the beliefs and expectations of an ESL teacher and his international students in an intensive English program at a U.S. university. The authors aptly point out, "It is not often the case that we 'lift the curtain' in order to examine the beliefs of the participants in the uniquely constrained social interactional setting we call a language classroom." While there has been research that has examined areas in which teachers' and students' beliefs about language teaching and learning vary (e.g., Horwitz, 1988; Kern, 1995), Maloney Berman and Yang seek to extend this work by describing how such beliefs might actually play out in classroom interactions. More importantly, utilizing a case study approach, their research attempts to get to the source of each learner's beliefs, compare this information among learners, and through in-depth interviews with both teacher and students, to examine potential effects of those beliefs on classroom interaction.

A strength of this study is the insight into the experiences and expectations of the ESL learners, achieved through extensive use of student voices. Interviews and classroom observations provide data about the ways in which beliefs were evident in practice. Three themes emerge in this data, *participation* (here teacher and students' beliefs converged), *accuracy/error correction* (it was this area in which beliefs diverged), and *affect—level of positive comfort in the class* (where differences in beliefs existed, the climate of the classroom served as a mediating factor).

Interestingly, the language teacher in this study turns out to have an immutable belief that his students should talk 90 percent of the time, and he should have, at most, the remaining ten percent. He reminds himself of this expectation constantly, and, as it turns out, actually adheres to that practice in his daily work in the classroom (no small feat, given what we know about the amount of "teacher talk" that often dominates second language classrooms!). The teacher has set expectations for his students in terms of what it takes for them to develop the English skills they need, and they clearly comprehend those expectations. One student says, "being passive is not an option." More importantly, the study posits the likelihood that beliefs and interactions serve each other in a reciprocal manner—their experiences challenge or strengthen their beliefs about particular aspects of language learning, and altered beliefs can take learners in new directions. The insights into the workings of a university level ESL class are varied and fascinating. The dynamic of students' relying on each other for language input and clarification are evident from both data sources. Clearly, these researchers have "lifted the curtain" to allow us to see what happens when a

teacher has very clear pedagogical strategies as well as very high expectations for his language classroom.

II. Social, Cultural and Political Context

Language education can best be described as encompassing a vitally important task, and one that is shared by global educators everywhere: providing an environment for the development of individuals who are bilingual, bicultural, and capable of learning within a new linguistic framework. The social, cultural, and political contexts in which such learning takes place sets the stage for the kind of instruction and language learning that will occur. The second section of this volume deals with these contexts as they relate teacher education. Because language, culture, and identity are intricately bound together, our field finds it impossible to discuss particular situations of language instruction without knowing something about these contexts. How does language policy and language planning determine the nature of second language instruction? How can we examine the institutions, communities and discourses within which the preparation of teachers for language classrooms occurs? How does language teacher education address the issues of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and language diversity as they play out in language teaching and how is such teacher preparation context-dependent? These and other fundamental questions encompass the social, cultural, and political contexts of language teacher education.

What is most evident as we explore language teacher education world-wide, is the tremendous variation in philosophy and practice that occurs, even within nations and within particular sub-fields such as foreign language education and bilingual education. It is thus impossible to understand the full picture of a language teaching/learning situation and the participating learners (there may not always be language teachers involved but there will always be language learners) without fully comprehending the specific *contexts*—social, cultural, and political—in which the event takes place.

In Chapter 7, Judy Sharkey finds in her work a “nexus of voice, teacher knowledge, and context” through teacher knowledge generated through inquiry by a group of ESL teachers in a U.S. elementary school. The social, cultural, and political context in which ESL teachers do their work is arguably the single most defining aspect of the field. Sharkey’s work follows the direction of other language teacher educators (e.g. Freeman, 2002) when she shows that the ways in which teachers learn can best be understood if the *contexts* in which these processes take place are brought forth and carefully examined as part of the research process itself. How does a teacher’s knowledge of context inform her work? It was necessary in this study to very carefully and specifically

delineate the nature of one state's ESL efforts, the characteristics of a particular community, its school district efforts, and the characteristics of two magnet ESL programs in order to describe the concentric contextual settings in which participating teachers carry out their work. "Regarding the role of teacher knowledge and voice in an ESOL curriculum project, the teachers' knowledge of their contexts was the filter through which all curriculum decisions and project possibilities were evaluated" (p. 143, this volume). Even the influence of federal policies on literacy and the instruction of second language learners became part of the teacher discussions. By naming the contextual layers, Sharkey believes that teachers are able to establish trust and legitimacy, articulate their needs and concerns regarding ESL instruction, and critique those political factors that affect their work. The strong voices of teachers in this study support the value in seeking out teachers' knowledge of their own work. The very complicated nature of serving ESL learners at school is brought forth through the rich discussions and arguments that occur in the sessions. As teachers seek to provide better instruction, by default they are examining the complex systems that they believe work against best practice and successful learning outcomes. Identifying and describing the context in which they work is one step. Evaluating the contextual factors within a concept of power, Sharkey argues, allows them to connect such factors to actual classroom practice; contextualizing "is a form of teacher praxis; it is an articulation of the theory/practice dynamic."

The many settings in which language teacher education takes place in different parts of the world has prompted Bonny Norton to direct her inquiry into sociocultural contexts in our field. In her plenary address to conference participants, she described her efforts at exploring the "critical practice" of language teacher education, examining six programs in China, Canada, and the United States that have worked to introduce innovation and social change in their teacher development programs. In her research Professor Norton finds that when a critical perspective is applied to preparing teachers at both the inservice and preservice levels, even when such perspective occurs through a variety of strategies and practices, there occurs at times frustration, together with disequilibrium.

A common theme in each of these efforts is the tremendous task of getting teachers to think differently about their work. It is also clear that the value in teacher community is substantial, and creating the environments where such value can be maximized is no easy task—yet many teacher educators have found creative and successful ways in which to engage teachers in new thought processes, while asking them to apply such insights to their own teaching practice. What also stands out in the chapter are the ways in which teachers are asked to stretch themselves

in both their thinking and their practice, and to engage with others in the discussion of that process. Whether writing, reading, observing, or sharing with other educators, the teachers in these programs are examining their “ways of knowing” in ways that challenge our concepts of traditional teacher development. “The challenge for us as language teacher educators is to better understand the communities of practice in which we work, and to incorporate innovative practices in our language teacher education programs.”

Teacher preparation programs in the United States have, of late, determined that both preservice and inservice elementary and secondary teachers should be able to work with English language learners in the classroom. Clearly a result of changing demographics and the pressures of increased accountability from the federal government, school districts have instituted their own staff development efforts, not relying on schools of education to always be ready to do the task. Many ESL teachers and language teacher educators found voices in mainstream professional journals and publications for their arguments for the need for all teachers to take responsibility for English language learners. But efforts to define and disseminate teaching strategies that best serve the linguistic and academic needs of ESL students has produced an interesting response: Isn't this just good teaching?

In this volume, Ester de Jong and Candace Harper argue that our field provides specific knowledge, skills, and dispositions related to language and culture that teachers must consider if they are to be adequately prepared to bring their content to English language learners at the elementary or secondary levels. Their position paper, exploring what constitutes good teaching for native speakers and the ways in which those practices match the needs of English language learners, seeks to identify which kinds of knowledge and what type of teaching skills are needed beyond “just good teaching.” The authors explore three areas where they find a gap in knowledge and skill: how second languages are learned (language as *process*), language as a *medium* of instruction, and language as a *goal* of instruction in the content areas. The authors question the foundations on which effective L1 literacy instruction is built for native speakers of English—presumptions of a strong foundation in oral English and comprehensive vocabulary knowledge, as well as facility with English structure. The importance of curricular goals that include language objectives is stressed. Finally, the delicate task at hand is the need to accommodate differing proficiency levels while promoting higher order thinking skills for all students and providing instruction and feedback that is specific to their individual needs. They argue, “All teachers must be prepared to accept responsibility for the academic content and language development of English language learners.”

Chapter 8 by Noriko Ishihara is another example where context is essential to understanding the nature of the teacher's struggle in her language teaching setting. In this study, the context is an ESL MA program at a large U.S. university. The participants in the research are a teaching assistant (the researcher) and an international student in a practicum course who was, at first, not able to make cultural adjustments in her interactional style. Both participants are Japanese. The data sources for this inquiry were interviews, the researcher's and the student's reflective journal entries and email communication among the student and her professors and mentors. The focus for analysis was the interactional difficulties the student had, the ways in which the teaching assistant helped facilitate cultural adjustments, and the outcome of those adjustments for the student.

Ishihara cites research indicting that practicum students struggle with a range of pedagogical, identity and self-esteem issues during their field experiences. Her study, however, deals with an understudied issue: the role of an unfamiliar institutional context situated within an unfamiliar culture. This study tells the story of a student who struggled in a practicum course due mainly to contextual and cultural factors, and was ultimately successful with the help of culturally relevant, and often very directive, assistance from the teaching assistant in the course. The teaching assistant had more experience in the institution and this allowed her to be a cultural broker for the student, helping her to interact in more culturally appropriate ways. This cultural scaffolding, as Ishihara aptly terms it, enabled the student to finish the practicum successfully and move on to teaching her own class in the intensive English program.

This chapter brings to light some of the possible difficulties international students may have in identifying the implicit expectations of their professors when assumptions about, for example, asking for help, talking in class and scheduling appointments differ greatly from their prior experiences. In this study, the culturally-relevant mentoring worked. There was evidence that the student was able to apply her new knowledge about interaction and culture in a variety of settings and in relationships beyond the practicum course. This chapter will give language teacher educators pause, encouraging us to contemplate the contextual factors that can pose barriers to the international students in our program. It is unusual to read an in-depth case of a struggling student in a teacher education program accompanied by an analysis of what was done to help the student. This aspect of Ishihara's study is unique and particularly relevant to the field and can say much about the need for careful, thoughtful and culturally-appropriate mentoring. Ishihara's inquiry shows how the cultural, the personal, the interpersonal and the pedagogical components of language teacher education intersect when a struggling student needs help. The sociopolitical and

cultural contexts provide a bridge between the knowledge base defined by a field and the actual practice conducted to promote language learning.

III. Processes of Language Teacher Education

The third section of this collection is devoted to chapters related to the ways language teacher educators conceptualize and operationalize the knowledge base in teacher preparation and professional development. These chapters deal with the examination of our everyday work: reflective practice, the integration of teacher education programs, the evaluation of courses and the description of a teacher education program.

Reflective Practice with Language Teachers and Language Teacher Educators

Teacher educators across disciplines have converged around the importance of facilitating reflective practice as an important process in teacher development. Reflective practice has many guises. It may involve mentoring or coaching in a student-teaching setting or with a university professor in a course. It may be individual and done in journals or portfolios; it may be collective and done in school-based inquiry groups or in cooperative groups in a course. The field of language teacher education has embraced reflective practice, although it originated outside of the field (Schön, 1983; Schön, 1987). Reflective practice helps teachers in a wide range of settings to sort through complex beliefs, understandings, experiences and practices in very personal ways. Now there are many notable contributions on this topic from scholars in language teacher education (e.g., Bailey, Curtis, & Nunan, 2001; Burns, 1999; Edge, 1992, 2000; Freeman, 1999; Sharkey & Johnson, 2003; Wallace, 1997). Many of these books lend much enthusiasm to one important area of reflective practice: action or teacher research.

It is common practice for graduate-level language teacher education programs to require some type of action or teacher research project. Such projects are typically carried out in the teacher's own classroom or school. This has resulted in many more practicing teachers "going public" (Freeman, 1998) with their research at local and national professional conferences. Consequently, teacher research is now available to the wider community of teachers and researchers. It is very positive for the profession to learn from teachers' questions about their own practice and the results they report based on the analyses of data from their own teaching experiences.

Teacher research, however, has not been without skeptics (e.g., Brown & Jones, 2001; Mohn, 1996) and some research suggests that reflective practice may not work well everywhere,

and with all teachers (e.g., O'Sullivan, 2002). Undoubtedly, the opportunity to engage in the examination of a particular issue related to one's teaching, often with the support of a site-based inquiry group of peers or a small graduate level class is a luxury. We know there are many places in the world where teacher education is delivered in a top-down fashion, to large classes, with very few if any constructivist methods. These are settings where a pre-determined body of knowledge is imparted and then tested via traditional tests. In some places, practicing classroom teachers have extremely large classes and little remuneration. Clearly, in such settings, there is little space for interrogating assumptions or exploring refined questions of practice. Nevertheless, teacher development programs striving to offer practical techniques for busy teachers to engage in reflective practice often choose teacher research as their vehicle for doing so. This collection includes two studies focusing on teacher/action research which address the logistics of doing teacher research as well as the many benefits of engaging in this type of research, as a teacher.

Sujung Park, Zhijun Wang, and Satomi Kuroshima write on their experience with action research. They did their projects as part of a course for practicing teachers while they were graduate students in the United States. They report on questions that arose from their own practice as language teachers. One project examined a teacher's transitions between classroom activities, another the effects of native language versus target language use for grammar instruction and the third project investigated how to motivate students to speak more in the classroom. Most interesting in this chapter is not necessarily the answers they found to their questions, because their findings are most relevant to them, and appropriately so. The reader will be intrigued, however, by the authors' description of the constraints that they faced when doing action research and their suggestions for finding ways to use such a valuable tool in the face of challenges.

For example, Park found that teacher research can take a great deal of time and that it is easy to be overly ambitious about analyzing hours and hours of classroom data. She attempted to analyze her use of transitions in transcriptions of ten lessons. Upon discovering the amount of time it takes to transcribe tapes, and the later discovery that it was very challenging to categorize transitions, she had to abandon this method of inquiry. Another fascinating observation was that while these teachers tried to ground their research in the existing knowledge on their topics, they found few publications on their topics. This is not surprising because their topics were of a very practical and personal nature, illustrating further the need for teacher researchers to publish their work with other practitioners and researchers. These teachers were in fact creating brand new knowledge for themselves by engaging in rigorous explorations of their own teaching and their own students.

Despite the challenges the authors list, they encourage teachers and teacher educators “to carry out their own investigations to learn about their immediate teaching contexts and contribute to building contextualized theories of learning and teaching by publicizing the outcomes.” The examples of teacher research and the teachers’ reflection on going through the process for the first time will be of interest to teacher educators as they help make action research relevant, appealing and manageable to teachers.

The second paper dealing with teacher research is by Diana Dudzik and is set in a teacher development program in Vietnam. This paper is extremely relevant for EFL teacher educators because it shows how teacher research can be integrated into a program in a very thoughtful way to respond to changing teacher development needs. In this chapter, the local need is for better-prepared English teachers at the university level due to a student body with higher levels of incoming language proficiency and higher expectations of their English classes.

Dudzik describes a teacher development program that addresses the need to improve the quality of English instruction, and it does this by being extremely aware of who the participants are and the cultural setting within which the program is located. Dudzik states that as teachers “explore language learning theories, and reflect upon their settings, they are empowered to theorize about the appropriateness of the theories to their particular settings.” This, Dudzik argues, develops “context-sensitive practitioners.” In this program, the action research questions sprang from concepts in communicative language teaching. Teachers worked in groups and learned in depth about an aspect of communicative language teaching, as it plays out in Vietnam. As they did their research, they also learned about writing and research processes. In other words, the teachers learned how to do teacher research (content) as they learned the conventions of academic writing (language). This aspect of their training brilliantly integrates language and content learning while at the same time modeling sound methods of teaching writing.

This chapter will be of particular interest to language teacher educators who work in settings where they wish to challenge the status quo, yet remain sensitive to the established roles of teachers. In Vietnam, due to high value placed upon the teacher and the text, taking on new roles such as researchers, writers and presenters was uncomfortable for some of Dudzik’s teachers. Dudzik points out that we know, however, that effective teacher education assigns additional roles to teachers, citing the work of Johnson (2000) and Murphey (2000), and argues that while it is essential to urge teachers to expand their roles, it is even more important for teachers educators to grow in context sensitivity, particularly when the teacher educator does not share the same linguistic or cultural background as the teachers. A failure to be sensitive to the instructional

context of beginning teachers can result in a mismatch of instructional delivery and student-teacher expectations. It can result in the teacher educator overstating the effectiveness of a current teaching approach and making assumptions about existing practices without knowing enough about the context. This chapter illustrates why teacher education practices need to consider *setting* and by doing so attend to the nuances of expectations for both teaching and learning within a particular national, regional, or ethno-linguistic locale.

Integrating Language and Content in Teacher Education Research

Integrating content in language teaching and integrating language in content teaching has been of interest to language teacher educators for a number of years. This interest is the result of various movements in many areas of foreign and second language teaching. Bilingual education has long addressed the need for grade-level and content-area teachers to consider the need for content and language to be wed (e.g., Gaarder, 1967). Most notable of late has been work done in foreign language immersion education (Genesee, 1994; Snow, Met, & Genesee, 1992; Swain, 1996, 1999), university adjunct classes (Gee, 1997; Snow & Brinton, 1988) and sheltered English classes at the secondary level (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2000; Short, 1999; Short, 1997; Short & Echevarria, 1999). Nevertheless, while there have been many advances in conceptualizations and frameworks on how to integrate content and language in a number of settings, only a small body of work has considered the challenge of integrating content and language effectively from the perspective of what teachers need to know to do this task well (e.g., Peterson, 1997). An even smaller body of publications has consisted of empirical research investigating how teachers learn to be able to integrate content and language effectively or what their knowledge base should be in order to do this effectively (e.g., Bigelow & Ranney, in press; Brinton, 2000).

It is clear that more research is needed so that we may better understand how teachers come to know how to plan curriculum with both language and content objectives and how to use instructional strategies that help the teacher keep the language focus without dropping the content. In addition, it is important to better understand what teachers need to know in order to develop sound content-based curriculum and enact their curriculum using strategies that allow them to reach their content and language objectives. Two studies in this volume contribute to this emerging understanding of how we might set the stage for teachers to accomplish this complex process of integrating language and content.

In Chapter 11, Stella Kong proposes a way of meeting her preservice teachers' language and content needs that functions at the program level and involves collaboration across courses. In

Hong Kong, teachers are often still working to improve their English language skills while studying to become English teachers. Like the Vietnamese context described earlier, much is expected of English teachers in Hong Kong and teaching positions require a high level of English proficiency. Teacher education candidates, as nonnative speakers of English, prepare to be teachers at the same time they must continue to improve their language skills.

A less creative teacher education program would require candidates to take language classes as they move through their pedagogy courses. However, professionals in this program decided that having parallel tracks of English and pedagogy was not efficient. Nor did it model best practice to the students in the program. Their answer was to integrate the two tracks and into a curriculum which combines language and content, thus eliminating the need for the separate English courses. Admirably, the faculty members in the teacher education program are developing content obligatory and content compatible language objectives (see Snow et al., 1992) for their lessons in order to guarantee that they attend to the language needs of the teachers as well as to the program's content goals of education and pedagogy.

This chapter presents a creative way to integrate content and language, thus greatly enhancing the quality of instruction in their teacher education programs by modeling the key concept of developing language compatible and language obligatory objectives for their lessons. Interesting also is the fact that the language teacher educator experiences the same challenge of meshing language and content learning goals that is faced by bilingual and immersion language teachers and should be faced by *all* language teachers. Educators interested in content-based instruction should watch this program as it develops. It is an embedded model that is not often seen, where the very process of language and content learning in preparing teachers is itself a model for the kind of successful second language teaching we wish to see. This process of integrating language and content instruction serves as both a model for and an impetus for improving the repertoire of new teachers.

In Chapter 12, Philip Hoare examines the issue of content and language integration from the science classroom perspective. He chose two teachers for this study: one who seemed to have a great deal of language awareness, and one that seemed to have less, according to their prior course experiences. He analyzed the language produced in the two classrooms to find out how the teachers identified and prioritized content obligatory technical vocabulary. He also looked at how such vocabulary is “unpacked” and what opportunities are given to students to construct meanings of new terms by relating them to the students' existing concepts. Through his analysis of classroom discourse, Hoare contributes greatly to what the field knows about content and language

integration as it relates specifically to immersion teachers' knowledge base. He finds that the level of language awareness the teacher possesses makes a great deal of difference in terms the extent to which the teacher maximizes students' access to the language needed for science class. He finds that immersion teachers of science need an understanding of language-content relationships, so as to illuminate the challenges students face in tackling Science content.

Hoare's study brings to light the many layers of knowledge about language and pedagogy immersion teachers need to have in order to integrate content and language effectively. He finds that "it is the accumulation of opportunities to construct steadily richer meanings which leads to better science learning" and that the skill at this task varied with the two teachers. Hoare concludes that the teachers' awareness of what language is needed for learning and *how* such language interacts with subject matter content was essential to their successful language-content integration. His data also show that helping students see content-language connections can often be very discipline specific. These issues beg the question of whether immersion teachers are sufficiently prepared to handle this essential and very complicated task of maximizing content learning, particularly the content of high school classes, through a second language. With so few teacher education programs focusing on immersion teacher education as a specific niche, it is safe to assume that this is a gap that has yet to be filled in many countries where immersion education is offered.

The teacher as learner is a strong theme in this volume. In Chapter 13, Michèle de Courcy, puts the teacher at the very center of language learning, by exploring the experience small groups of teachers had as they learned a new language. Teacher-as-language-learner was shown to facilitate heightened awareness of the teachers' beliefs about language learning and their application of such beliefs to language teaching. De Courcy shows the importance of knowing, or not forgetting, what it is like to be a language learner. During ten weeks of language study, teachers in her study kept a learning diary of their experiences, eventually utilizing the diary as a foundation for an exploratory self study. The diaries and the case study became rich data sources.

The researcher found, for example, that teachers reflected on the role of silence in language classes, the importance of positive group dynamics, the need for teachers to attend to different learning styles, and their feelings of stress or anxiety about their performance in the classroom. It is evident that this experience proved to be a powerful catalyst for much reflection upon unexamined beliefs about language learning and teaching. This study illustrates how the exposure to a new language gave teachers a personal experience to which they could relate their newly developing knowledge about second language acquisition. As de Courcy points out, there are many ways of

knowing the world, not the least of which is through focused and pointed experiences, followed by focused and pointed reflective practice. Because of the multiple ways the teachers were able to synthesize the various aspects of their program through this one experience, teacher educators may wish to consider adding even an abbreviated language learning experience to the other experiential aspects of their courses. Teacher education programs are often over-committed in requirements due to the need to address externally-imposed standards and regulations, resulting in minimal likelihood that rich activities such as this could be included in programs. Just like language teachers, we must advocate for best practice in our programs and make the hard decisions about what assignments, engaging activities and experiences might be the most powerful for teachers. De Courcy's chapter is likely to inspire some teacher educators to re-examine which components of their program receive time and resources. The power of a language learning experience cannot be underestimated. It clearly has great potential for challenging teachers' assumptions and beliefs in ways other facets of a teacher education program could not accomplish.

Teacher Education Course and Program Evaluation

Another area of reflective practice consists of examining whether or not courses meet their goals and documenting teacher education practices underway. By engaging in this close examination of our own practices, we learn much about ourselves, our students and the pedagogy of language teacher education. Documenting what we do is essential, particularly in a climate where the broader field of teacher education is questioned (Darling-Hammond, 2000). As teacher educators, we must amass a research corpus that shows that our programs make a difference in teacher quality—that sheer experience and school-based mentoring, while important, are not sufficient to produce effective teachers. We need to show that most teachers are made, not born.

Ironically, it seems that at the same time we are learning more about what teachers need to know to be effective, there is great outcry for abbreviated paths to the classroom, for example, the possibility to “test out” of teacher education by virtue of professional background and/or demonstrated content knowledge. In this scenario veteran scientist from a company could be deemed prepared to teach a high school chemistry class or a native speaker of a language could be charged with developing a foreign language program. It is because of these challenges to teacher education that it is essential for us to gather systematic outcome data on the teachers we prepare. While society asks large questions about effectiveness of the nation's teachers, and teacher education programs have begun through the electronic portfolio process to systematically document the learning outcomes of their candidates through institutional accreditation and

evaluation procedures, we feel that some of the most valuable questions concerning teacher development can still be answered through the evaluation of courses and programs on a small scale. Two such studies are included here.

In Chapter 14, Ann Mabbott and Andreas Schramm explore online instruction, an option for teacher development under consideration in many nations. Whether contemplating a technology-based direction, implementing it, or resisting altogether, teachers educators are faced with hard choices. Online instruction raises a number of very interesting questions about teaching and learning, all the more interesting when they involve preparing individuals for teaching and learning settings. Mabbott and Schramm compare the online sections of their English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher development courses to those offered in the traditional face-to-face format. Online courses in their program were developed in response to a need for ESL teachers in many rural areas where access to traditional teacher development is limited. In designing their on-line courses, the authors/instructors took into consideration the types of interaction that occur in the traditional face-to-face courses and attempted to reproduce such engagement in the online format. This is an important and commendable step in the process of course development. By doing this, the authors address the often-voiced skepticism that valuable interaction and reflection between teachers is at risk when the course format does not involve face-to-face interaction.

Mabbott and Schramm evaluate two of their online courses by studying the student performance on equivalent assignments and the student evaluations of the course. They find overall that the courses are comparable. Regarding interaction, the student evaluations in the online courses often highlight the interaction they had with peer groups as a positive aspect of the course. One issue that surfaced for some students, however, was that the online course did not provide enough interaction with the instructor of the course. What is noteworthy about this study is the desire on the part of the researcher/teacher educators to investigate how well their online courses functioned and what were the areas in need of revision. Given the pressure that many post-secondary institutions are facing to do instruction online, the hard work of asking basic questions at the virtual classroom level is a necessary requirement to addressing effectiveness and efficiency.

The second study examining course effectiveness was carried out by Blair Bateman. He collected student opinions and reflections to analyze how well his course served the purpose of helping undergraduates decide whether or not they wished to pursue a career in language teaching. This topic, much like an action research topic, cannot be informed by the broader literature because none exists and if it did, it would not address whether *this* course worked at *this* institution with *these* undergraduates.

Bateman's study, while informing the instructor and his colleagues, also allows other teacher educators to have an in-depth look course outcomes as reflected in student attitudes. His study exemplifies a succinct methodology for exploring his question on course effectiveness. The two data sources used were a questionnaire given at the beginning and end of the course and a final paper. These data revealed that not only did the course fulfill its goal of helping students decide whether teaching was a good career choice for them, it also worked to shape, and in some cases change, attitudes and beliefs. Students' reflections on the experiences offered in the course offered powerful evidence for our oft-asked questions, "Does this course matter? Does it achieve our objectives?" A striking example offered in the study is the student who emphatically states that as a result of the course, he has decided not to become a language teacher. Through the process of observing classes, hearing teachers talk about their work and interacting with texts and peers about the world of teaching, this individual has come to a powerful and life-changing realization that this particular profession will not be his future. At the same time, other prospective teachers concluded the course with the firm sense that despite the challenges of teaching, life as an educator was indeed the right choice. The future instructors of these students will appreciate their having this foundational knowledge as well as the prior experience of questioning previously unexamined assumptions about language learning and teaching. The implications of the choice to bring the world of teaching into stronger relief for these prospective teachers cannot be underestimated. Teacher education would be well advised, regardless of the subject/content area, to make sure that at the beginning of teacher development programs there is an opportunity to step into the world of teaching in more ways than simply observation.

Equally important, and often a precursor to the evaluation of a course or a program, is a full explication of a program innovation. In Chapter 16, Silvio Avedaño-García and Susan Blunck describe a program for Egyptian EFL teachers at the University of Maryland. Their information includes a theoretical rationale for the decisions made as they worked to design a program specifically tailored for a particular set of teachers who would be teaching students of a particular language background. One of the reasons for bringing the Egyptian EFL teachers to the United States for professional development is to provide them with an opportunity to improve their English skills in a second language setting. Then, to assure the relevancy of the program, all of the instruction and carefully planned experiences include reflection on applications to the Egyptian context from which they came. This really is the only way to, as the authors say, encourage "thoughtful and purposeful change in education." EFL instruction in many national contexts is changing rapidly. A number of countries have developed national requirements for beginning

English language instruction that have been moved from secondary down to elementary levels, and the race is on to both prepare record numbers of new teachers, but to tap into the latest in language teaching pedagogy that can maximize both oral language and literacy development. It is incumbent upon many nations to, for the time being, focus exclusively on bringing sound practices to their own national context(s). Once again, the operative word here is *context*.

Conclusion

It is clear that we can be optimistic about the place of research in language teacher education, and, more importantly, the mutually informative process of research and practice. More than ever our practice is informed by people who are asking interesting and relevant questions in ways that expand our sense of what is possible. The ranks of “researcher” in our world of second languages have been expanded to include teacher educators, as well as teachers themselves. The settings where research is conducted have also been expanded to include not only actual (and virtual!) language classrooms, but meetings and mentoring sessions. We now seek to examine not only what we are teaching, but what and how we *think* about what and how we are teaching. We now consider rich research data to even include conversations with learners about this wonderful process called language learning.

Language teachers who engage in action research should serve as inspiration to language teacher educators to examine their own practices using the same methods. Admittedly, one challenge to doing the sort of research that needs to be done in language teacher education is the fact that this type of inquiry is often not part of the research interests of those teacher educators who lead or provide instruction in their teacher education program (Bartels, 2002). In the same way we want to hold high expectations for our language teachers, we must continue to require high expectations of the programs that prepare them. Teacher education has come into its own. It is imperative that this also occurs very specifically in language teacher education, where we can, as professionals, take advantage of the encouraging research conducted at every classroom level from the immersion Kindergarten to the graduate preparation course for foreign language teachers and including what can be learned from the English for Specific Purposes course for nurses on a small Pacific Island.

All of the studies in this collection contribute to what we know about language teacher learning and cognition and to what we know about best practices for facilitating teacher development. And while many of the papers are situated in their own unique context, it becomes readily apparent that we all have much to learn from each other and that findings on one side of the

globe can inform research and practice on the other. We are preparing teachers to fan the fires of developing bilingualism and biliteracy, a daunting task to be sure. Asking and answering questions, then discussing both processes across national and cultural and professional boundaries, is part of that task.

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Notes

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