



Creating Teacher Community

*Selected Papers from the Third International
Conference on Language Teacher Education*

EDITED BY MARTHA BIGELOW
AND CONSTANCE WALKER

CARLA Working Paper #24

CARLA | Center for Advanced
Research on Language
Acquisition

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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Creating Teacher Community: Research and Practice in Language Teacher Education

Martha H. Bigelow and Constance L. Walker

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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What Language Teachers Need To Know

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The Challenges

It is not easy to be a foreign language teacher nowadays. The endeavor is fraught with paradoxes. The textbooks pretend that they are teaching a second language (L2) to speakers of English, but, more often than not, the students in the class are not monolingual English speakers, but non-native speakers of English learning a third or fourth language. They are likely to be either foreign, second, or heritage language learners, engaging in language study for a variety of educational, occupational, sentimental, or symbolic reasons. The increased Internet exchanges across linguistic and cultural borders have increased the risk of miscommunication at the same time as the rapid globalization of culture is seemingly facilitating communication across cultures. The geopolitical tensions make it more imperative than ever that people learn each others' languages at the same time as the spread of English as an international language is making all other languages seemingly superfluous. The very notions of "native speaker" and of "national standard languages" are being put into question by the research community at a time when nationalism seems to be again on the rise. 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.

This paper will define the challenges and the paradoxes in language teacher education, suggest a way of conceptualizing such an education in the multilingual/multicultural environments we live in today, and examine how language teachers might ideally deal with a specific challenging language learning event.

Life is changing rapidly for teachers of foreign, second, and heritage languages both at the high school and at the college level. The rationale for learning these languages has become much more complex, and so have the pedagogic goals and the methodologies. To illustrate this complexity, we would like to consider various voices and opinions on what the current challenges are in language teacher education.

On the one hand, we receive increasingly frequent calls for more reflective practice and awareness of the social, cultural, political import of language education. Donald Freeman and Karen Johnson (1998) shift the focus away from a major concern with received content knowledge (i.e.,

English grammar and vocabulary) and the received knowledge of SLA (second language acquisition) research, towards a concern with teaching itself. They explore teaching as an educational and institutional endeavor, in particular the social context of schools and schooling, and the socially negotiated, constructivist processes of the pedagogical activity.

On the domestic level, there is a call for a greater awareness of the convergence between the goals of foreign language education and heritage language education. For example, Timothy Reagan (2002) points to the paradox of on the one hand, encouraging children to abandon their mother tongues in favor of English, and on the other, encouraging native speakers of English to learn other languages. He adds that language classrooms provide the ideal space for cultural, political, and ideological issues of language, power and identity to be discussed and addressed. He emphasizes the need to include such discussions in the language classroom based on the myths and ideologies that characterize the status quo.

On the international level, we hear several voices of educators concerned about the potentially alienating effect of being taught to speak and write a foreign language as desirable but as controversial as English. They focus on issues of identity and desire and call for a pedagogy of engagement. Awad Ibrahim (1999), studying African immigrants learning English in Canada, writes: “we as teachers must, first, identify the different sites in which our students invest their identities and desires and, second, develop materials that engage our students’ raced, classed, gendered, sexualized, and abled identities” (p. 366). In Australia, Alastair Pennycook (1999) proposes a “pedagogy of engagement” which is “more than arranging the chairs in a circle and discussing social issues” (p. 338). Rather than simply including multicultural topics (such as food, customs, religions, etc.) to broaden the representation of people from different backgrounds in the curriculum, or promoting rational discussion and debate of social issues on a general level, a pedagogy of engagement focuses on how students are invested in particular discourses and how these discourses structure their identities and pathways in life. It links teaching with the lives and concerns of students and requires any educator of second language learners to consider ways to work with issues of identity formation in their classes.

In Singapore, Allan Luke (in press), an educational sociolinguist, feels that language education (and English language education in particular) has become a huge market commodity, together with objective product testing and market research; textbook production has become a multibillion dollar industry; educational policy has become a commodity testing, purchase and endorsement, and educational research has slowly been co-opted by a technocratic/industrial model of education that deskills and deprofessionalizes teachers and makes them into “commodity

fetishists.” He makes an ardent plea to liberate language teachers from this fetishism and to enable them to be the full educators they deserve to be, namely cosmopolitan, trans-cultural go-betweens, who can better respond to the new economic and political conditions of a globalized economy:

What is needed is nothing short of the re-envisioning of a transcultural and cosmopolitan teacher, someone with the capacity to ‘shunt’ between the local and global, to explicate and engage with the broad flows of knowledge and information, technologies and populations, artifacts and practices that characterize the present moment. What is needed is a new community of teachers that could and would work, communicate and exchange—physically and virtually—across national and regional boundaries. (p. 14)

Here too, we find a call for a more aware generation of language teachers and for an awareness that reaches the global level of geopolitics and the consequences of our teaching on a world policy scale.

In all these cases, there is a push for giving language teachers a more critical, socially, culturally and politically aware knowledge-base than just content knowledge (grammar/vocabulary or facts about SLA). Language educators seem to sense a need for language teachers to become attuned both to the local needs of the students and the global demands that will be placed on these students once they leave the school; a need for schools to respond not only to the domestic needs of greater equity of access and economic opportunity but to the much more multifarious international need for translators, go-betweens, mediators, peacemakers, cross-linguistic and cross-cultural catalysts.

The Paradoxes

These voices from the domestic and the international scene are not endorsed by everybody, however. Funding trends by the State Department and the Department of Defense and to some extent, our Department of Education, reflect a strong interest in the teaching and learning of advanced language skills in those languages that are critical to U.S. homeland security. Efforts are directed not in teaching native speakers of English beginning French, Spanish or Russian, but in teaching immigrant heritage speakers of Arabic, Farsi, Spanish or Korean advanced literacy skills in those strategically critical languages. Advanced language skills, according to many SLA experts, are conceived as languages for special purposes (e.g., the skills needed by surgeons, lawyers, and engineers to do their jobs in foreign countries), not general education capacities and a sophisticated understanding of foreign societies and cultures.

Back on our campuses, foreign language students seem to be split on the value of social and cultural awareness-raising in foreign language classes. Two recent articles document the sobering facts. Monika Chavez (2002) reports on a survey she did of some 200 first, second, and third year students of German at the University of Wisconsin on how they defined culture at large, and more specifically, the notion of culture in the context of learning a foreign language. Although there were differences according to proficiency level, there was an astonishingly ever-present definition of culture as food, dress, and customs. Beside food and dress, students definitely preferred to see culture as what the National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project (1996) calls “practices” (patterns of social interaction) and “perspectives” (attitudes, values, ideas, social and political issues), rather than as the “products” that German teachers have traditionally considered to form the core of German culture, such as science, music, literature, arts, and economics. Chavez reports 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. In fact, many not only put in doubt the significance of cultural knowledge to foreign language learning, but indeed the very existence of a national culture. Chavez sums up students’ concerns as follows:

1. Teaching culture takes away time from the real object of language instruction, that is, grammar.
2. Teaching culture in a foreign language class devolves into dilettantism, either because of time constraints or because teachers lack expertise.
3. Teaching culture is a political issue, guided by politically correct, ivory-tower views and autocratically imposed on classroom teachers and students. (p. 135)

An article by Kubota, Austin, and Saito-Abbott (2003) in *Foreign Language Annals* responds to a call to pay closer attention to the sociopolitical and ideological nature of language and culture in order to create greater equality among language learners. Kubota and her colleagues decided to survey a total of 244 beginning learners of Japanese, Spanish, and Swahili, as well as advanced learners of Spanish at the University of North Carolina with the questions of whether and why foreign language invited them to reflect on issues of race, gender, class, and social justice. While advanced students definitely made the link more readily than beginning students, the results showed that some, particularly male students in beginning-level classes, resist engaging in sociopolitical issues:

Further research is needed to find out if the resistance is related to resentment toward multiculturalism in general or a desire for detachment from one's own marginalized racial/ethnic background. This desire for detachment suggests the need for further investigation into culturally responsive pedagogy. . . [In particular], some minority students in this study did not think that foreign language learning should be made relevant to their ethnic background. (p. 21)

Kubota et al. (2003) conclude their article with a plea that echoes that of their English teaching colleagues mentioned earlier that researchers and educators “shift their attention beyond apolitical appreciation and celebration of foreign culture, to critically explore issues of diversity and sociopolitical aspects of human communication, and to make foreign language education instrumental in creating greater equality” (p. 22).

To summarize, we find foreign language education at the intersection of the major political issues of our times. The demands for greater critical awareness of the international and global dimensions of language teaching (Chavez, 2002; Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Luke, in press) intersect in interesting and often conflictual ways with the local dimensions of language teaching to serve the needs of either homeland security or greater social justice at home. Meanwhile, many students just want to play it safe, pass the test and maintain their grade point average. So how should we prepare teachers to face these challenges and paradoxes?

Preparing Teachers for Multilingual/Multicultural Environments

Gone are the days where we could hide behind rules of grammar and the discipline of dictations to get students to learn the language. But gone are also the days when we could rely on the tacit, communicative knowledge that the native speaker has of his/her (standard national) language and (standard national) culture. This is no longer true of the native English speakers teaching their own native language in the U.S. or abroad, nor is it true of the native English speaker teaching a foreign language and culture in the U.S. to other native English speakers. Language teachers can no longer take for granted the unquestioned authority of their own and of the other linguistic or cultural standard. They are now poised at the intersection of local and global languages and cultures, those cultures are increasingly hybrid and complex, and language learners are increasingly multilingual and multicultural, codemixing and codeswitching their way through the shoals of intercultural communication. The intersection of language and culture has become the site of conflict and contestation. It requires critical awareness and reflection and a sharper sensitization to the ultimate goals of language education.

If we define the language teacher as the quintessential go-between among various languages, cultures, generations, genders, ethnicities and historicities, then it might be appropriate to think of the language teacher as a cross-cultural mediator, someone who has acquired the ability to interact with “others,” be they native or non-native speakers, present or past writers; someone who has learned to accept other perspectives and perceptions of the world, to mediate between different perspectives, and to be conscious of their evaluations of difference (Byram & Zarate, 1994; Kramsch, 1998).

Language teachers wear three hats:

1. They are expert speakers and writers of the culture they teach. Even if they are not native speakers, a communicative approach to language teaching requires them not only to transmit linguistic facts, but to model native speaker language use, for example by making of the L2 not only an object of instruction, but the medium of instruction, and of putting the students in communicative situations that are as authentic as possible. Part of a language teacher’s knowledge is thus not only a good grasp of grammar and vocabulary, but an ability to use the language appropriately (i.e., to display a discourse, pragmatic and sociolinguistic competence adapted to a given social context).
2. They are expert methodologists of the instruction they deliver. It has long been recognized that native speakers are not necessarily good teachers of their own language without special methodological training. Part of the subject matter on which language teachers are evaluated is knowledge of second language acquisition/applied linguistic research, and of the most effective pedagogic methods for developing learners’ communicative competence.
3. They are expert professionals of the institutions they serve: their school or their university as well as the professional organizations, journals, collegial networks, and the national and international communities to which they belong.

In these three capacities, teachers are called upon to be linguistic/cultural mediators, methodological mediators and professional mediators. We might then conceive of what-a-language-teacher-needs-to-know not so much in terms of one *knowledge-base*, but, rather, as six different *savoirs* (knowledges), a term used by Byram and Zarate (1994) to characterize the intercultural learner, and a term that we apply here to the intercultural teacher. The French phrase *savoir + infinitive* (e.g., *savoir faire*, *savoir apprendre*) has the advantage of allowing for variations on the notion of knowledge-base. These six *savoirs* would ideally get declined across the three roles that teachers play as expert speakers, expert methodologists, and expert professionals. The list below represents a synthesis of what could constitute a critical foreign language awareness program for language teachers. It is not meant as a curricular blueprint, nor as a laundry list to be checked off in teacher development programs. Rather, it attempts to delineate the 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.

Savoir (Expert Knowledge)

As expert speakers of culture, teachers would ideally:

1. Know the academic subject matter, that is, how to explain and describe the standard linguistic system accurately and appropriately, but know how to explain its historically contingent nature, the variations of its use in various social contexts, and the symbolic value of these various uses;
2. Understand the relevant findings of SLA research (Cook, 1996; Doughty & Long, 2003; Ellis, 1997; Lightbown & Spada, 1999; Mitchell & Myles, 1998) and Applied Linguistics (Cook, 2003; Davies, 1999; Pennycook, 2001);
3. Understand language as discourse, and the role of discourse in society, in literacy acquisition, in literary and cultural studies (Fowler, 1996; Hanks, 1996; Hasan & Williams, 1996; Jaworski & Coupland, 1999; Scollon & Scollon, 2001); and
4. Understand culture as discourse, that is, as a differentiated, changing and conflictual, actual and virtual, multimodal, symbolic, *social semiotic* (Halliday, 1978; Kramsch, 1993, 1998, 2002; van Lier, 1996).

As expert methodologists, teachers can be expected to:

1. Be familiar with the major methodological options in language teaching and their theoretical rationales (Brown, 1994, Brown & Gonzo, 1995; Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Richards & Rogers, 1986); and
2. Know which methodological options achieve which effects, which variety of tasks, exercises, activities are appropriate for which subject matter and for the kind of students teachers have in their class (Omaggio-Hadley, 1993; Nunan, 1989, 1991).

As expert professionals, teachers should:

1. Know the institutional context of schooling, the conditions of their own employment, their portfolio, theirs and others' expectations; and
2. Know their room for professional and intellectual maneuver within their institution, their professional association, their PTA (Parent Teacher Association), their funding sources.

Savoir Dire/Faire (Linguistic, Interactional Competence)

As interactional speakers of culture, teachers would ideally:

1. Be able to produce speech appropriate to their interlocutors and the communicative situation: for example, simplified talk when with students, near native speech when with native speakers, and activate the appropriate strategic competence when in trouble (Cohen, 1990; Swain, 2000);
2. Be able to realize appropriate speech acts in context (Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989; Rose & Kasper, 2001);
3. Be able to behave in the classroom alternately like native and like non-native speakers, looking at the language from both inside & outside; and
4. Model the multilingual speaker, share their experiences with their students (how do/did they deal with miscommunication in a foreign country?) (Kramsch, 2003a).

As interactional methodologists, teachers can be expected to:

1. Use multiple interactional formats in the classroom; and
2. Involve their students in the choice of teaching and testing methodology.

As interactional professionals, teachers should strive to:

1. Shuttle across disciplinary readings (e.g., literature, psychology, education, anthropology);
2. Get in touch with language teaching colleagues in other departments, other language groups, at their institution. Observe other language teachers' classes; and
3. Mediate between institutional constraints (e.g., testing) and educational values (e.g., teaching things that cannot and should not be tested).

Savoir Comprendre (Interpretive and Relational Competence)

As discerning speakers of culture, teachers need to:

1. Recognize that culture is constructed through discourse, is both myth and fact, but always real, even when imagined (Norton & Toohey, 2003);
2. Understand that culture is multiple, changing and always conflictual (Kramsch, 1998; Norton, 2000);
3. Know their own and others' discourse system: ideology, socialization, forms of discourse, face systems (Scollon & Scollon, 2001);

4. Be able to recognize established genres, registers, and styles (Bakhtin, 1986; Cook, 1994; Fowler, 1996; Kern, 2000);
5. Be able to analyze and interpret texts (Carter & McRae, 1996; Short, 1996); and
6. Be able to distinguish between the ideational, the interpersonal, and the textual levels of meaning making in written texts (Fairclough, 1989; Halliday, 1978).

As cross-cultural methodologists, teachers should strive to:

1. Interpret the intended and potential meanings of their students' utterances;
2. Relate what one student says to what others have said, to the on-going discourse;
3. Understand students' motivations, their identifications and 'desires' (Ibrahim, 1999), their need for play and creativity (Cook, 2000) but also what they are trying to escape, to run away from; and
4. Be aware of the cultural relativity of their methodology and its ideological biases (Kramsch, 2002).

As go-between professionals, teachers should:

1. Never cease to interpret concepts from one discipline, from one language in terms of another; and
2. Use textbooks critically, understand and make students understand the commercial, ideological, political interests at work there.

Savoir Enseigner (Methodological Competence)

As model speakers of culture, teachers ideally should:

1. Model the cosmopolitan, multilingual subjects they want their students to become; and
2. Position themselves both as insiders and as outsiders of the culture they identify with and of the culture they teach (Kramsch, 1993).

As competent methodologists, they need to:

1. Remember the crucial value of timing, rhythm, (re-)accentuation, memorability;
2. Be overprepared to leave space for improvisation;
3. Be rigorous in order to be flexible;
4. Be orderly/systematic so as to be judiciously disorderly; and

5. Be predictable so as to be able to introduce surprise and awaken curiosity (Kramersch, 1993).

As bilingual/bicultural professionals, they should strive to:

1. See their society, their discourse, their institution both from the inside and the outside;
2. Teach the social order and how to subvert/change the social order (Fairclough, 1992);
3. Help students deal with the constraints of the institution, their parents', the society's expectations; and
4. Create an intellectual community of cosmopolitan transcultural citizens, committed to and dependent on but not indentured to the institutions they serve (Pennycook, 1991; Luke, forthcoming).

Savoir Etre (Intercultural Attitudes and Beliefs)

As intercultural speakers, teachers can:

1. Understand that cultural relativity does not mean moral relativism;
2. Recognize the cultural relativity of their own linguistic and interactional behavior;
3. Adopt a "de-centered" stance, that sees events and persons in their full historicity and social contingency; and
4. Seek out opportunities to go abroad, to see themselves through the eyes of others.

As reflexive methodologists, teachers ideally should:

1. Value their student evaluations, take them seriously, act upon them;
2. Keep a teaching log for self-reflection; and
3. Single out 'telling events' in the flow of the lesson and make them into research projects (Kramersch, 2003b).

As life-long professionals, teachers ideally should:

1. Be prepared to continue learning over the lifespan;
2. Seek opportunities for intellectual, linguistic, pedagogic and professional development; and
3. Be observer/ethnographers of their own classroom, of others' classrooms.

Savoir S'engager (Critical Cultural Stance)

As critical speakers of culture, language teachers can be expected to:

1. Ask big questions (“Why is worthwhile learning Russian?”), even if they don’t have any simple answers;
2. Engage critically with these questions and appreciate their political dimensions; and
3. Encourage their students to ask big questions and help them engage critically with these questions.

As critical methodologists, they should:

1. Know what they believe in and have an answer for the fundamental question: “What is the one thing you want your students to have learned in your class?”;
2. Know why they decided to become language teachers, and why they ‘fell in love’ with that particular language; and
3. Be prepared to answer, for each activity: “Why this rather than that activity for this intended outcome?”

As transcultural and transnational professionals, they ideally should:

1. Engage in the current debates related to language education: for example, high stakes testing, literacy education, the role of literature, the value of study abroad, the use of technology; and
2. Seek intellectual engagement with other language teachers not only in their own American professional association, but across the world (e.g., American teachers of French and Chinese, German, Italian, or Spanish teachers of French in China and in Europe; see Kramsch, 1993, 2003b).

The *savoirs* charted above have fluid boundaries, and language teachers are constantly drawing on their competencies in each of the areas. We would like to emphasize this movement between and across areas of expertise, because it helps capture the complexities of language teaching. Common to many teachers, for example, is the knowledge that their work as professionals takes place within particular institutions of learning that can both constrain and enhance the choices available for professional and intellectual maneuver (*savoir*). And yet, it is also their domain to help make changes within these institutions as they engage with new disciplinary ideas and learn from the expertise of others at home and abroad (*savoir dire/faire*). In this professional capacity as go-betweens, they must keep constant watch on how concepts are interpreted through their own culturally situated discourses while keeping a critical eye on how

particular ideological positions are developed through language (*savoir comprendre*). This kind of vigilance and de-centeredness provides a strong methodological stance from which teachers can help teach their students to view themselves as the “other,” and can show them how to recognize conventional views even as they take more critical stances on those views (*savoir enseigner*).

This endeavor to become professional mediators involves a lifelong commitment to seek out opportunities for involvement in professional, intellectual, and pedagogic development and for engaging in ethnographic research on one’s own classroom (*savoir être*). As members of different cultural groupings, teachers must learn how to teach culture as discourse and to embrace multiple meaning-making systems from the typographical to the multimodal (*savoir*). This expertise extends from knowledge about discourse systems, registers, and genres (*savoir comprendre*), and also in knowing how to model their expertise for their students. Teachers can make their own sociolinguistic and pragmatic choices about interaction and interpretation available to their students, thereby providing models of the multilingual speaker (*savoir dire/faire*). Refracted through all these competencies is a clear vision of one’s own work, of knowing why one chose language teaching and what one hopes to impart to students (*savoir s’engager*).

What Would a Language Teacher Need to Know to Help Students Deal with the Following Language Learning Situation On-Line?

The need for a new kind of language teacher is nowhere more urgent than in the increasing use of computer technology to foster communication across cultures. (e.g., Belz 2002, 2003; Belz & Muller-Hartmann, 2003). Paige Ware (2003) explored the technological and the discursive parameters of cross-cultural telecollaboration between American students of German at a large southwestern university and German students of English at a university in northeastern Germany, in an effort to document the development of these students’ *intercultural competence*. In one typical exchange, where the students have been given the choice to write in their native or in the foreign language, Rob (U.S. university) and Marie (German university) enter into conversation about the assignment in the presence of their other, on-line, classmates. All student names are pseudonyms.

For the duration of the telecollaborative project from which the following excerpt is taken, students in the German and American classrooms were asked to write to one another in asynchronous discussion groups a total of twelve times during the semester. Their writing was organized around classroom assignments, to which they responded in German and in English in an asynchronous format, or delayed time forum. They wrote in response to teacher-directed assignments and to one another’s open-ended initiations of topics of personal interest. A typical

exchange would start, for example, with a student in Germany posting a message to the small-group bulletin board on one day, and her American partner responding the following day. This asynchronous format for discussion, while not as spontaneous and immediate as real-time (synchronous) interactions, alleviated logistical problems in scheduling incurred by the time difference between the two countries. Students were held accountable, however, for posting their messages by prescribed deadlines so that classroom instruction could utilize transcripts of the student writing for in-class discussions.

Students were asked to initiate their on-line contact during the first week of the exchange by commenting on the results of a language and culture survey they had filled out before the onset of the telecollaborative project. This first assignment was a comparison of a language and culture survey designed to have students produce text as the basis for comparing their own responses to culturally loaded words such as “democracy” and “culture.” (cf. Furstenberg et al., 1999). In the group from which the episode is taken, the initial part of the exchange for this group of five students is not as fruitful as they had hoped and ends rather quickly in frustration and disengagement on the part of one of the students. The exchange was actually so memorable for the other classmates on line that they often referred to it later in the semester, but did not understand what had caused the misunderstandings.

In the first turn of this episode between Rob (United States) and Marie (Germany), Rob enters his first posting to the group, comprised of five students: two Americans and three Germans. All members of the group have previously posted their first assignment, and they are waiting for Rob’s contribution. Rob’s posting deviates slightly from the task, as he neither addresses the survey nor his classmates’ responses to the survey. However, in his message he does provide the other students in his group with some personal context:

Well, I guess it is already Wednesday the 6th for you guys. I am not sure to which one of you I am supposed to be writing to, but I guess that will clear itself up in time. I am not sure I will be able to hold an interesting discussion today because I have had a very bad and long day and have a lot of work to do. Are you guys excited about doing the email exchange thing? Do you have much contact with Americans? There was an American army base in the town I was in [in former West Germany] and so many people there thought that all Americans were so loud and obnoxious. I soon learned that there were many American bases throughout Germany and unfortunately many similar Americans. I learned German fast and with a good accent just so I would not be related to them. But I am not sure how all that is in der ehemaligen DDR, I mean, with the American bases. Do you dislike being called that? If so, what do you prefer, if anything? Many people in the U.S. are proud to be from certain states [like ours] or even from the North or the South. We are such a big country that we need to divide ourselves up in order to define

ourselves and relate to others. I remember, before I left Germany last summer there was this horrible song on the radio about how everything in Osten was better than everything in Westen. Do you recognize this song? There was also something about how those in Osten could kiss better than those in Westen...I thought it was a terrible song. (March 5, 2002)

Along the dimensions of *savoirs*, Marie's language teacher would need to draw upon her linguistic and interactional competence (*savoir dire/faire*) to help Marie understand the ambiguity in Rob's message. Drawing on the terminology of sociolinguistics, she might explain that Rob has problems with footing, authorial voice and identity, as he attempts to establish "common ground." He makes an effort to align himself with them as a fellow peer who, as a student, is preoccupied with a multitude of tasks and is willing to apologize in advance for what may come across as an incoherent message: "I am not sure I will be able to hold an interesting discussion today because I have had a very bad and long day and have a lot of work to do." He also aligns himself as an atypical American, someone who has learned German "fast and with a good accent" to establish credibility with other Germans in face-to-face encounters. And yet, his attempts to relate to them personally are somewhat undermined by his apparent lack of having read their previously posted messages. He asks if they are excited at the "exchange thing," even though Marie and her peers had previously written that they were looking forward to it.

By helping articulate the interactional moves that Rob is making, the teacher might help avert the potential for misunderstanding that German students might feel when reading this message. From their perspective, Rob's first message can easily be interpreted as inappropriately informal: "I am not sure to which one of you I am supposed to be writing to, but I guess that will clear itself up in time." He indicates that he has not clarified his questions about the assignment with his instructor. The overall tone of his message keys a lack of seriousness about the exchange. He does not address the assignment, switches topics four times in seventeen sentences, and ends abruptly with a negative evaluation of a former East German song.

A language teacher would also need to draw on her competence in interpreting and relating discourse (*savoir comprendre*). In Rob's discourse system, he makes two moves which are seemingly harmless attempts to demonstrate his knowledge about Germany. And yet, from a German perspective, he has threatened their national identity. He code-switches into German when referring to former East Germany, and he divides Germany in "Osten" and "Westen." From a discourse system that values directness and inquisitiveness, these moves position him as someone interested in eliciting their perspective on how these labels are perceived: "Do you dislike being called that? If so, what do you prefer, if anything?" However, the peers in his group are not all from

East Germany, and further, they try to avoid labels that underscore national divisions along east-west lines. A language teacher would need to help her students interpret Rob's questions as open invitations for information, not as pre-conceived assumptions about their fixed regional identity.

In her response to his questions, Marie demonstrates what can be seen as a critical cultural stance (*savoir s'engager*). She addresses each of Rob's five questions and elaborates on them in full detail. In turn, she asks several "big" questions of her own:

Hi Rob,

this is Marie. I read you letter today and I have been a little suprised. You have made the experience, that the Germans think or thought the Americans are abnoxious? Why that? Because of the role they played after 2nd worldwar? Actually the US was an occupation power after the 2nd worldwar. Do you experienced any anger or something like that?

Now a little history lesson: After 2nd worldwar the former 3rd empire was splitted up by the Allies into two parts. Western Germany was controlled by the US, France and England. The Eastern was controlled by Russia. The ideas of order weren't not the same in each part of Germany. So they argued with each other, then came the wall and the cold war (is this the right word?) So there can't be any army-base in the eastern part of Germany. Nowerdays there are also no army-bases in the East.

Now about your question, if we are interested in having an one to one email? I thought our group is the kind: small group discussion. Or didn't I understand you? Do you like to write email to private email account?

I have no contact to Americans. In former times I had a pencilfriend in America. Her name was [Nancy] but I think we don't fit together. She had some strange ideas about the world I couldn't handle with.

Well, I was born in the former GDR. Now I'm just a German girl. We have also federal states like you in the US. I live in the new federal state of Mecklenburg/Vorpommern. It was created after the reunification. It is situated in the northeast you might know.

Nowerdays there even several conflicts between East and West. The younger generation is more progressiv than the older people in Germany. Many of the old eastern and western people couldn't handle with the new situation. After the wall broke down many of eastern Germans lost their jobs. Today we have the highest number of unemployed poeple. We never knew that in our former state. The social system in the GDR was bad but there weren't enemployed people. That's just one reason for bitterness here.

To my point of view the reunification was just fine. Now there are so many abilities for me. I'm really happy and glad. Everything in the GDR was strictly organized. You have to do this, you are going to work there, you won't have the chance to do the A-level. Today it is possible to do what you want. Just having a little American dream. For instance: go on holiday maybe to the non-social-states. People from GDR were always controlled by our secret service: STASI = Staatssicherheitsdienst. My boyfriend has relatives in the western part of Germany. When his aunt send a package to his family in former times those packedes were allways opened by others first. To see if there is anything hostile in it. He also told me when he was about the age of 10, 4 years before the wall came down, the

principal took his pullover away. On the pullover was an eagle, some football players and the US flag. He had to go to the principal and to explain who gave him the pullover. There are so many things like that.

Today it is like in America maybe. We are allowed to do what we want, to go where we want and to say what we think. We are just glad. There are always good and bad things.

To my mind it was the best that could happen to us.

The song of Mr. Niemann is just a reaction to the snippy western people. Some of them think they are better than the eastern ones. It's a little revenge. He said in an interview, that he couldn't believe it, that 10 years after reunification so many prejudices are still existing. I think he is right. Both sides of Germany (it is stupid to think in sides) had pros and cons.

What do you think is Bush a warhawk. We had a little discussion in class about. Write me your opinion.

Greetings Marie (March 6, 2002)

One of the keys to reading Marie's message relies on one's ability to interpret and relate discourse (*savoir comprendre*). A language teacher would need to invite Rob to approach her message, not as an email from which to extract information, but as a foreign language text rich in contextualized meaning. Despite the length of her message—or perhaps because of it—the tone of her posting is in no way easy to decipher. In this text, Marie presents herself as a Westerner, suggesting alignments as an “American,” as free to voice her opinions and to ask others about their opinions, and as free to criticize or at least to express the criticisms of others.

Marie's instructor would need to realize that Marie is attempting to take a critical cultural stance (*savoir s'engager*) as she answers Rob's questions and asks some “big” questions of her own. Marie is direct, however, as Germans are often perceived, and in several specific passages of her text, she comes across as conversationally more aggressive than the more relaxed conversational partner Rob might expect to find in an on-line e-mail exchange. For Marie, this message is not to be read as a simple email. Rather, she attempts to engage Rob in an exchange of questions and answers with real political dimensions. For example, Marie asks about the U.S. president as a “warhawk” because she had recently heard his speech regarding the “axes of evil.” However, from Rob's point of view, her lexical choice suggests an aggressive stance. Further, she introduces her question rather abruptly and ends her request for his opinion in a way that comes across less as a question and more as a command: “Write me your opinion.”

Rob, in his turn, responds with his opinion, although in such a way that he disengages from the topic and shuts down a critical stance:

Dear Marie,

Thank you very much for the little history lesson, but unfortunately I was already aware of that. My only question was whether the American army bases had

moved into the old eastern part of Germany since die Wende. Maybe because you did not grow up around any of these bases, you do not have the same experiences as the people in West Germany do with the soldiers. And yes, I met many people that did not like Americans at all...As I said, I learned to speak German very fast and with a good accent, so that later I was able to avoid these problems. As far as Bush is concerned, I would apologize for his being elected as our president, but, as I was in Germany at the time of his election, I was not able to vote and therefore am not guilty of his being elected. Now that he is president, all I can do is hope that he does what is right instead of criticizing him. (March 6, 2002)

From Rob's recasting of Marie's phrase "little history lesson," it is clear that he has been offended. At this point, a language teacher would need to draw on her expertise as a professional language educator (*savoir—expert knowledge*), well informed of second language acquisition issues. In effect, Marie's use of the phrase "Now for a little history lesson" is a problem of negative second language transfer. In German, "klein" often serves to mitigate the face threat, but in English, the lexical choice "little" incites a very negative reaction from Rob, as he perceives it as belittling and certainly face-threatening. He feels obviously peeved at the history lesson, in part because he interprets her intended mitigating use of the word "little" as derogatory. Rob could have been instructed to recognize Marie's "mis-use" of the term in English and might not have reacted as strongly.

Marie interprets his message as having an offended tone, and she attempts to reconcile with him in her next message:

Good morning Rob,
it's about 7 and it's my birthday.
Probably my English knowledges are to blame for the misunderstanding,
I'm sorry, I wouldn't teach you. Your answer in order to Bush sounds a little bit
sulky. I don't want to attack you. Or was it just ironic?
My English seems to be that bad that I maybe can't hear those fine
differences.
Have a nice day. Marie (March 7, 2002)

Marie seems to be struggling with the truth value she is expected to attribute to Rob's statement. Surely he must be "sulky," a word that she had looked up in the dictionary under "schmollend." She makes an attempt to apologize for the misunderstanding by pointing to her control of English as the source of the difficulty. Pointing to language as the source of the problem is a common strategy for both language students and language teachers. In this way, the culprit of miscommunication is seen as language itself, not as an underlying individual difference in ideology or a cultural difference in the pragmatics of interacting. Students often view the solution as

improving their language skills so that they can, in Marie's words, "hear those fine differences." This effectively neutralizes the conversation and clears a path for engaging in less controversial topics.

In the promotion of intercultural competence, however, neutralizing the conversation is not always perceived as the best goal. In asking our students to become intercultural mediators themselves, we want to encourage them to engage critically with questions that have no easy answers (*savoir s'engager*). Rather than avert or avoid misunderstandings, we should encourage them to explore their differences in respectful ways and to move through them as an opportunity to take a critical stance on their own, and others', perspectives.

In Rob's final message of the week to Marie, however, he latches onto the opportunity to pave over the misunderstanding, at least enough to save face for the remainder of the exchange: "happy birthday, and no, your english is not bad at all" (March 7, 2002). Rob's one-liner acknowledges her previous message but disengages from a pursuit of any of the conversation topics. However, the upshot of the exchange is that from this message on, Rob participates very little in all subsequent weeks, and he distances himself interpersonally by using no more second person pronouns to address his on-line peers. Marie, however, continues to write more prolifically than any of her peers on either side of the exchange.

After the on-line exchange ended, one of the instructors attempted to clarify this misunderstanding by asking Rob and Marie their perspectives. Rob did not respond to attempts at clarification, but Marie replied over e-mail with this explanation:

...I wanted to avoid misunderstandings. I felt like I had to explain everything, because I wanted him to understand what I was trying to explain. I had a long time to think about it and in the end I can't say what made him angry. I read the letter once, twice, again an again. I cannot say...my big explanations maybe? My writing sounds very teachful, don't you think so? I wrote him so many things, he had already known, because he had spend time in Germany before...Could this be the reason? Write me your opinion. (Marie, personal communication, October, 2002)

This paper is a partial response to Marie's request for the instructors' opinion of "the reason." Clearly, we do not believe this episode of misunderstanding stems from a single reason. Rather, the tension emerged not just through the turn-by-turn interaction, in which Rob and Marie misinterpreted one another's intentions. In addition to their different historical and cultural subjectivities, it was brought about by their differing expectations of the exchange, their different levels of investment in learning and using the target language, and their prior experiences as language learners.

We have presented this episode in order to illustrate the challenges language teachers face in their roles of intercultural mediators, and to forward a vision of these roles as they serve the context of technology-mediated learning. With the rapid exchange of information and the ease of developing cross-cultural contact through the Internet, we expect that such conflictual encounters as the one we presented may well be unavoidable in the context of technologically mediated intercultural communication. Precisely because of the increasing turn toward on-line cross-cultural communication as a classroom pedagogical tool, we believe language educators must develop new kinds of expertise in their roles as intercultural go-betweens in these mediated environments, because the resources available to instructors and their students differ significantly both in proportion and in kind between the contexts of face-to-face encounters and on-line writing. The teacher's role is less to help students avoid misunderstandings, than to help them work through the misunderstandings in ways that render them valuable learning experiences.

If we look back at our six *savoirs*, it is clear that the teacher will have to play a crucial role in making this and other on-line experiences a learning experience for the students rather than just a frustrating encounter. Not only would the American teacher of German have to know the historical facts of the two German states (*savoir*), know the connotations of the expressions “the former German Democratic Republic” or “East Germany” (*savoir dire*) but she would have to be able to interpret the meaning of the pattern of German conversational style and American teenager's e-mail style (*savoir comprendre*). Moreover, the teacher would need to be sensitive to the differences in the way recent German history has been written in the U.S. and in Germany, and how Rob and Marie have been socialized into seeing the world, what ideologies underlie each student's discourse, what facework strategies he and she are putting in place to defuse the situation (*savoir comprendre*). As a cross-cultural methodologist, she would need to know how to lead the students to discover these things for themselves and to discuss them without taking things personally (*savoir enseigner*). Furthermore, given the polarity that this excerpt invariably creates whenever we share it with language teachers, the teacher would need to be aware of where her sympathies lie and why (*savoir être*), and to place her interpretation and that of her students into their larger social and political context (*savoir s'engager*).

Conclusion

Language educators have been advocating a more critically aware pedagogy of foreign languages and cultures. After the euphoria surrounding communicative and proficiency-oriented pedagogies, in which the challenge was mostly mastery of the code and its appropriate use in

circumscribed situations of everyday life, we now realize that cross-cultural understanding requires a basic willingness to question one's own and one's interlocutor's assumptions and beliefs, to interpret intentions, and to engage worldviews that are different from one's own. If the purpose for teaching foreign languages is to help students gain a better understanding of other ways of making meaning in the world, language teachers have to be prepared to go beyond linguistic form and to discuss meanings of all sorts: grammatical, semantic, social, cultural, political, ideological meanings, expressed in and through language as discourse.

Rather than pretending we all have the same communicative goals (e.g., exchange of information and the solving of practical communication problems), we would do well to face the fact that we very often do not share the same communicative goals, nor even the same definition of the communicative situation. Teachers, therefore, together with their students, have to engage critically with the material and be ready to discover new potential meanings as they go along.

Rather than merely facilitate learning, technological advances are raising the educational stakes. The computer is problematizing the very knowledge base of language teacher education. Teachers are needed to mediate communication across cultures, but the process requires quite a different role for them than that of conveyors of linguistic or cultural information. The six *savoirs* outlined in this paper might provide the beginning of a blueprint for the cross-cultural mediation capabilities that will be required of language teachers in the future.

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The Role of Second Language Preservice Teachers' Cognitive Processes and the Relationship between Theory and Practice

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Introduction

Second language teachers draw from two sources of knowledge in their instructional decision-making: theoretical and practical (Freeman, 1996; Freeman & Richards, 1996; Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Wallace, 1991). Theoretical knowledge, or conceptual knowledge (Johnson, 1996), entails “facts, data, theories, etc. which are either by necessity or by convention associated with the study of a particular profession” (Wallace, 1991, p. 52). For language teachers, this includes second language acquisition theory, methodology (pedagogical knowledge), and content knowledge. This kind of public knowledge is typically available in research reports, books, and lectures (Roberts, 1998).

On the other hand, the more practical knowledge, also known as perceptual knowledge (Johnson, 1996), is acquired through teaching experiences, classroom observations, and teachers' experiences as learners. Clandinin and Connelly (1987) call this kind of knowledge teachers' personal practical knowledge, which describes teachers' experiential knowledge based on “the narrative of a teacher's life” (p. 490). As is evident from research, teachers typically rely more on their practical knowledge in their instructional decision-making than on theoretical knowledge (Drever & Cope, 1999; Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Golombek, 1998; Nelson, 1999). Freeman and Johnson (1998) point out that “much of what teachers know about teaching comes from their memories as students, as language learners, and as students of language teaching” (p. 401).

Teachers' reluctance to use theoretical knowledge arises during the process of interpretation, which entails mental processes that teachers engage in when faced with new information (Freeman, 1996; Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Roberts, 1998). During interpretation, teachers attempt to make connections between their practical knowledge-base and the more theoretical information available to them through professional literature and textbooks, lectures and seminars. More specifically, the interpretation of theory involves a process where teachers engage in forming more “categorical and conceptual” (Dalton & Tharp, 2002), yet personal, generalizations from the more context-bound practical phenomena in the classrooms through reflecting on both the theoretical and practical knowledge (Wallace, 1991). Woods (1996) draws from research in text comprehension to explain

teachers' interpretation processes. According to him, teachers' interpretations of incoming information, including "curricular information and directives, discussions of pedagogy and methods, research reports and articles" (p. 58) can have an influence on their classroom practice. This interpretation, however, depends on two factors, namely on a teacher's background knowledge and his/her belief system (Woods, 1996). Freeman (1996) refers to these two factors as the "cognitive and affective dimensions" in interpretation. He further maintains that these dimensions not only "accompany" but as a matter of fact "shape" teachers' behaviors in the classroom (p. 94). Teachers hold various beliefs that have a strong impact on how they evaluate the knowledge available to them, both practical and theoretical, during interpretation. For example, teachers have varying beliefs about teaching and learning (Johnson, 1994; Johnson, 1999; Pajares, 1992) and beliefs about knowledge, both theoretical and practical (Woods, 1996). Furthermore, during the interpretation process, teachers make connections between their personal practical knowledge and theoretical knowledge based on their beliefs about teaching and learning on one hand and their beliefs about knowledge, both theoretical and practical, on the other hand. For instance, the participants in Woods' (1996) study interpreted the theoretical and pedagogical concepts presented to them based on their beliefs, assumptions, and background knowledge. Johnson (1994) describes beliefs as a "unique filter" (p. 440), through which teachers make decisions concerning their practice.

The disparity between theory and practice arises during interpretation for many reasons. During interpretation, teachers take away from theory only what is meaningful and relevant for them based on their personal practical knowledge and their beliefs about teaching, learning, and knowledge. The problems with making meaningful connections with theoretical knowledge during interpretation are varied. For example, practicing teachers often do not see theory as relevant to their everyday classroom practice (Stigler & Hiebert, 1999). The underlying assumption of theory is that teaching can be described. This assumption often results in abstract, "decontextualized," and "detemporalized" descriptions of practice that is significantly different from the "contingent" and "extemporaneous" (Roth, Lawless, & Tobin, 2000, p. 2) qualities of practice. In addition, there are a number of affective factors that contribute to the reluctance of using theory. For example, teachers might be antipathetic to research because they perceive researchers as removed from the classroom, or teachers may not be able to understand highly technical research articles, thus feeling frustration. Also, many teachers feel disappointed in the improvements accomplished by research (Wallace, 1991).

Even though research has offered some explanations for teachers' tendencies not to consciously apply theoretical knowledge as described above to their teaching, little attention has been directed to teachers' cognitive processes or teacher beliefs as possible explanations for the theory/practice discrepancy. In the area of second language education, the beliefs research has mainly focused on the effects of beliefs on second language learning and teachers' instructional decision-making without exploring their possible role in theory/practice connections. Johnson (1994) calls for investigations into how teachers "interpret new information" (p. 440). This paper presents the results of a study examining the relationship between second language teachers' beliefs about theory and their cognitive responses to theoretical knowledge and how this relationship might in part explain the disparity between theory and practice, that is, teachers' reluctance to use theoretical knowledge. The following research questions are explored:

1. What cognitive processes take place during preservice teachers' interpretation of theoretical knowledge?
2. What are second language preservice teachers' beliefs about theoretical knowledge? In what way are these beliefs connected to the teachers' mental processing of theoretical knowledge?
3. How might this relationship of preservice teachers' interpretation processes and their beliefs of theoretical knowledge in part explain the disparity of theory and practice, that is, teachers' reluctance to apply theoretical knowledge?

Method

The case-study research design was deemed to be the most appropriate for this study because case studies pay careful attention to the context of the study and describe a "bounded system" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000, p. 181). The three cases that this study describes come from an intact cohort of preservice teachers working on their first teaching license in second and foreign languages. Furthermore, this study sought to "analyze intensively the multifarious phenomena that constitute the life cycle of the unit" (p. 185), that is, the perceptions of each of the three second language preservice teachers in an initial licensure program at a large Midwestern university.

Participants and Setting

The three cases described in this paper were selected from 12 participants, all who were second language pre-service teachers enrolled in an initial licensure program leading to a Master of education degree. The selection of the participants was based on their potential to reflect the

differing profiles of the preservice teachers in the program on one hand and offer as insightful view as possible of the phenomenon of focus on the other hand. For example, one of the participants selected represented a preservice teacher who demonstrated a very successful relationship between theory and practice, whereas another participant clearly struggled with drawing meaningful connections between theory and practice. The third participant was selected based on the unique features of her perception of theory and practice, which is a mixture of success and struggle and sheds an illuminating light on the process of making those connections between theory and practice.

The participants were in the process of becoming licensed to teach either English as a Second Language (ESL) or a foreign language (Spanish, French, or German), or both ESL and a foreign language. The initial licensure program is unique in that it is a fifteen-month integrated program where preservice teachers conduct their university coursework and student teaching simultaneously. The university courses focus on topics such as curriculum design, second language methodology, Second Language Acquisition (SLA), standards, and teaching English grammar. Students are in their student teaching placements in the morning and attend university classes in the afternoon. The participants' prior teaching experience ranged from volunteering in language classes to teaching a language class independently for about a year. All participants had rich experiences studying and traveling abroad. The study was conducted during an eight-month period. The participants had been enrolled in the program for seven months, taking university classes and student teaching, when the interviews were conducted.

Preservice teachers were chosen as the target population because they offer an excellent opportunity for a “constructivist view” (Freeman & Johnson, 1998, p. 402) of teachers, that is their *developing* cognitive responses to and beliefs about theoretical knowledge as they are introduced to the theoretical foundations of teaching and learning. Because participants experienced simultaneous immersion in both theoretical knowledge and practical teaching experiences through student teaching, this program offered an excellent opportunity for a closer examination of the factors involved in theory/practice connections.

Data Collection

Lesson plan assignments.

A content-based lesson plan assignment, a required assignment in the methods class, comprised the first part of the data. The preservice teachers developed these lessons following the principles of content-based instruction. The detailed, ten-page assignments consisted of the

following required sections: students and setting, topic and theme, targeted modalities, time frame (typically two class periods), materials, targeted ESL (English as a Second Language) standards, lesson objectives, procedures, assessment, and reflection. In the reflection, preservice teachers were asked to provide their rationale for the instructional decisions they made in planning the lesson sequence and reflect on what informed them in their planning process including references to outside readings and readings in seminars.

Lesson plans were selected as a data source because they typically reflect preservice teachers' teaching philosophies describing their deeper, more fundamental convictions about teaching and learning (Jensen, 2001). Thus, lesson plans were deemed useful in exploring teachers' beliefs and cognitive responses to theoretical knowledge.

Interviews.

The reflective interview was chosen as the method because it aims to provide a context where participants have an opportunity to reflect on their experiences (Flowerdew, 1999). The participants' interview responses were used for "generating hypotheses, explaining meanings of the research process and formulating conclusions" (p. 250). The interview questions were designed based on the literature review, research questions, and the lesson plan assignments. The participants were interviewed on two occasions during the study. Each interview took between 45 minutes and 1 hour and 15 minutes. The interviews focused on the preservice teachers' lesson planning, their experiences with theoretical knowledge, and teaching. The interviews started with "initial questions" (p. 252), which were open-ended and descriptive (Spradley, 1979) and were designed to elicit more general data on the preservice teachers' experiences with lesson planning, theoretical knowledge, and teaching. Open-ended interview questions allowed the researcher to make "a truer assessment of what the respondent really believes" (Flowerdew, 1999, p. 275). The initial questions were followed by structural questions (Spradley, 1979), which were modified to the individual participants' responses to the initial questions "to test hypothesized categories, and to elicit examples to fit into hypothesized categories" (Flowerdew, 1999, p. 252). Also, customized structural questions following up on each preservice teacher's lesson plan assignment were asked in this section. These structural questions enabled a more in-depth interview by following up on the themes and issues present in the responses to the initial questions and the preservice teachers' lesson plan assignments. The interviews were semi-structured in that the questions and the sequence of questions had been determined in advance and all the respondents answered the same initial questions (Patton, 1980).

Data Analysis

The data consisted of a lesson plan assignment and two transcribed interviews with each participant. The lesson plan assignment and interview transcriptions were coded both deductively by using categories derived from the literature review and the research questions (Freeman & Richards, 1996) and inductively by identifying additional themes and topics emerging from the data. The goal of the data analysis was to look for both commonalities and differences between the participants. Based on the analysis of the 12 participants, three cases were selected to represent the distinctive attributes of the participants. This study employed a cyclical investigation of the emerging themes and topics in the data (Miles & Huberman, 1984); that is, when a new theme or topic was discovered in one of the data sets, the other sets were compared against that one to identify similar or contradictory instances.

In its exploration of the preservice teachers' cognitive processes during their interpretation of new information (research question 1), the study utilized the categories established by Bloom, Engelhart, Frost, Hill, and Krathwohl (1956). They created a taxonomy of educational objectives in three distinct categories: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor, respectively. This study utilized the principles of the cognitive domain as they were deemed suitable for analyzing second language preservice teachers' cognitive processing of theoretical knowledge based on their function as describing the kinds of cognitive responses that individuals have toward new information. The study used preservice teachers' own definitions of theoretical knowledge. They defined theoretical knowledge as information presented in the university courses, interactions with university professors, commentary from university supervisors, (text)books and research reports.

The cognitive domain of Bloom et al.'s taxonomy (1956) consists of six basic educational objectives, which can be understood as a hierarchy, that is, the first three are the lower-level and the last three are the higher-level objectives (1956):

1. *Knowledge*: Remembering or recognizing something without necessarily understanding, using, or changing it.
2. *Comprehension*: Understanding the materials being communicated without necessarily relating it to anything else.
3. *Application*: Using a general concept to solve a particular problem.
4. *Analysis*: Breaking something down into its parts.
5. *Synthesis*: Creating something new by combining different ideas.

6. *Evaluation*: Judging the value of materials or methods as they might be applied in a particular situation.

Both the lesson plan analysis and the interview data were coded based on the kinds of cognitive responses evident in them. For example, the analysis focused on what the interview questions brought out both directly and indirectly about the kinds of cognitive processes participants were engaged in when faced with new information, that is, whether they demonstrated application of the theoretical knowledge they received or perhaps even synthesis and evaluation. It is important to note that this study did not examine the participants' cognitive *ability* but rather the characteristics of their cognitive mindset or habits of mind. Thus, the main question was in what kinds of cognitive processes the participants seemed to engage during their interpretation of new information.

In addition to the preservice teachers' cognitive processes following Bloom et al.'s categorization, the study examined the preservice teachers' beliefs about knowledge (research question 2), both theoretical and practical, as evident from the interview data and the lesson plan assignments. Given the fact that beliefs are difficult to investigate (Rokeach, as cited in Johnson, 1994), this study did not only consider the statements that the teachers made about their beliefs but also what their statements in the interviews and the teachers' lesson plan assignments demonstrated about their "intentionality to behave in a particular way" (Johnson, 1994, p. 440).

The lesson plan assignments were analyzed by using critical discourse analysis as the method. Critical discourse analysis is a text-linguistic analysis of discourse (Georgakopoulou & Goutsos, 1997). Critical discourse analysts believe that "the process of linguistic articulation shapes our perception of things" (p. 10-11); this means that texts consisting of language always come "pre-packaged" (p. 10) with personal views and ideologies. The lesson plan assignments were analyzed using critical discourse analysis concerning the preservice teachers' cognitive responses to new information (research question 1) and their beliefs of theoretical knowledge (research question 2) as evident in the linguistic structures of the written discourse. Based on the principles of critical discourse analysis, this qualitative analysis considered the structure and the stylistic value of the utterances in the lesson plan assignment. For example, the analysis focused on the stylistic value of the writers' choices of vocabulary and the organization of the discourse and considered how these items might reflect the writers' personal views and beliefs.

Results

The data used in this study revealed interesting features of the participants' cognitive processes during the interpretation process of new information as well as their beliefs about theoretical knowledge. The following three cases from the data, Janice, Rose, and Karen, were selected as exemplars to illustrate the distinctive attributes of the participants. Table 1 summarizes the characteristics of the participants' cognitive responses to and beliefs about theoretical knowledge followed by individual discussion of each preservice teacher's processes.

Table 1: The Participants' Cognitive Responses to and Beliefs about Theoretical Knowledge

	Cognitive responses			Beliefs of theory	Relationship to theory
	Bloom taxonomy	Unique characteristics	Processing of new information		
Janice	Higher-level (analysis, synthesis, evaluation)	Rational decisions based on what makes sense considering what else she knows.	Able to assimilate, i.e., modify <i>incoming</i> information.	Theory as valuable background, explaining phenomena.	Informed by theory. Positive relationship.
Rose	Lower-level (remembering, comprehension, application)	Trial and error, little proactive analysis.	Forced to accommodate, i.e., change <i>existing</i> mental schemes due to her inability to modify <i>incoming</i> information.	Theory as providing practical classroom ideas and problem solutions.	Not informed by theory due to difficulty with comprehending texts and perception of theory as a threat due to forceful accommodation. Negative relationship.
Karen	Higher-level (analysis, synthesis, evaluation)	Affective decisions based on how she feels and what she likes.	Able to assimilate, i.e., modify <i>incoming</i> information.	Theory for personal inspiration, adding to professionalism and providing means to contribute to the profession.	Not directly informed by theory. Theory perceived as confining her creativity. Relies on intuition. Positive/negative relationship.

Janice: Rational Evaluator of Information

Janice's cognitive responses to theoretical knowledge clearly reflect Bloom et al.'s (1956) higher-level cognitive objectives (analysis, synthesis, and evaluation). For example, Janice demonstrates a highly analytic approach to theoretical knowledge, which she is exposed to through her university seminars and methodology classes, as well as to more practical knowledge, that is, her teaching experiences during student teaching. Janice emphasizes that the readings make her think and that she spends a lot of time processing the readings in her mind. Janice considers herself a critical reader. When reading, Janice constantly analyzes the concepts and ideas in the readings based on her previous knowledge and her experiences as a teacher and learner. During this analytic reading process, Janice not only breaks down components, thus analyzes, but also evaluates the information, thus judges the value of that information for her own teaching context. Janice explained:

Usually when I'm reading something, whatever it is, I always think about relating it to my experience of what other things I know. So I usually think about it a lot when I'm reading unless I'm in a super super hurry. But for the most part, you know if I'm taking time with something, when I'm reading, I'll make notes you know things like "oh, I don't know about that" and then "I really like this" or "I don't know about this" and then kind of think back over it: "Does this make sense? Would this work for me? Is this true with my experience? Is this true with other things I've learned?" You know what I mean, so I think I'm pretty critical when I think about things.

Not only does Janice seem to analyze and evaluate the more theoretical knowledge that she is exposed to through the readings in the university courses, but also she carefully analyzes and evaluates her teaching practice by reflecting on her lessons after each class during her student teaching. Janice describes:

Then after I get done [with a lesson] I write notes afterward just to jot down you know "scratch this," or "this works well," "I would do this differently next time" or you know that kind of thing.

The point of comparison in this evaluation process is multifaceted. When reading, Janice reports comparing the issues and ideas discussed against her experiences in the classroom, as a teacher and the feedback she gets from her students. She also says she gains a valuable "basis and foundation" from the theoretical knowledge she is exposed to in her university classes and discussions. She synthesizes all this information and creates a teaching philosophy reflecting all the different sources. Janice describes the following when asked to reflect on what informs her intuition as a teacher:

I think a lot of experience. That's a hard question. I don't know, I think how I see the students informs my intuition in dealing with them, my expectations what I think students should be expected to do, so I mean I think there's some values in there too, not just...I mean of course like we were talking about before, the readings and the things that we learn in class, that kind of thing, but I also think sort of if you want to say your philosophy I don't feel like I totally have a philosophy together or anything but...yeah I think that also informs your intuition about things.

Janice's analytic and evaluative approach toward knowledge during instructional decision-making is also evident from Janice's content-based lesson plan assignment. First, her decisions are consistently well-grounded in theory (see the references to theoretical sources in the following examples). Second, the phrases that she uses, such as "I chose," "I decided," and so forth suggest that after engaging in reading multiple theoretical sources, she analyzed and evaluated the information available in them and made a rational, informed decision about which principles she agrees with and which she does not agree with and what she will do in her own teaching context. Third, she consistently motivates her choices. She always provides a rationale for her choices, which also demonstrates her tendency to analyze in that she explains *why* she is doing something. The following sentences are from Janice's assignment and the phrases describing Janice's analytic decision-making processes are printed in bold:

I chose to focus on mapping/geography skills as well as putting events in chronological order **because** they were cited as necessary throughout many of the grades in the Minnesota Standards.

Although the students will not be formally studying landforms and explorers in their mainstream classes until next year, **I thought it** important to prepare them for the mainstream content (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994, p. 86).

I chose to use actual photographs of U.S. landscapes and of Lewis and Clark **because** I thought they would qualify as valuable contextual cues to aid student understanding of the content (Snow, 2001).

I included authentic texts, the Lewis and Clark journal excerpts, to provide context and to "reflect the details of everyday life" as Lewis and Clark experienced it (Shrum & Glisan, 2000, p. 58).

I decided to "capture students' attention, activate students' background knowledge, and prepare students for the learning process" by using "photos and other visuals and/or written language" as suggested in Shrum and Glisan (2000, p. 64).

The questioning process **I suggested** followed the process of IRF presented in Shrum and Glisan (2000, p. 56).

I included modeling (putting the pictures on the map) as a form of scaffolding (Shrum & Glisan, 2000, p. 9). This was added to diminish students' confusion with the task.

One of the most interesting observations made regarding Janice's relationship to theoretical knowledge was that due to Janice's analytic mindset and consistent tendency to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate new information, Janice seems to be able to "assimilate" (Posner et al., as cited in Pajares, 1992, p. 320) new information, that is, to modify it to fit the existing beliefs and schemes. This is a less drastic cognitive procedure in that instead of modifying one's existing beliefs and mental schemes, called "accommodation," one modifies the *incoming* information to fit the existing mental models. Thus it can be that Janice's positive attitude toward theoretical knowledge is partly due to the fact that she is not forced to accommodate, which entails a process where existing beliefs are modified or reorganized in response to new information. Individuals are typically more reluctant to accommodate than to assimilate because accommodation involves changing one's own beliefs and mental schemes.

Yet another indication of Janice's analytic mindset is her tendency to ask *why* certain things happen in her classroom and to reflect on her own instructional decisions. Janice describes that the more theoretical knowledge has a special value for her in that it provides the basis and foundation for teaching and learning, thus partly answering the question *why*. The role of theory for Janice is to help her *understand* what is going on in the classroom, the process of teaching and learning thus informing her about the important factors involved in it. Janice explains what she means by theoretical knowledge providing the "basis":

I think just the overall you know like the idea of contextualization and making things meaningful and the whole you know flow of the lesson, using variety, all these kind of lesson planning ideas. The overall ideas of curriculum in using themes or you know topics or whatever to make it cohesive. All kinds...you know things with classroom management and rapport with the students, just kind of background ideas of what you...you know should try to incorporate into your teaching to make it more meaningful, make it easier for the students to learn and all that kind of thing.

Also, Janice stresses the importance of lesson planning. She says that planning assures that every lesson has a clear focus and a meaningful goal, which are the foundation of every lesson for her and which hold the lesson, or the activities, together. She accomplishes this by carefully thinking about the objectives of her lessons, which constitute the "goal" for her lessons. Janice describes the reasons why she considers lesson planning important for her:

Because I have to have some kind of goal. You know I have to have some sort of focus. So, there has to be something in the lesson that kind of brings it all together and is kind of the main piece. You know whether I'm doing a reading then I do something pre and I do something post but it all has to come together. Like I don't like to have just disjointed, "this doesn't relate to this." Like it all has to relate some way so the basic thing I have to get a main thing and from there I can go into the pre and post.

Janice's commitment to assuring a clear goal for each of her lessons, that is, creating well thought out lesson objectives again demonstrates her tendency to analyze her own teaching practices and the information available to her to reach the set goals and objectives.

Rose: Trial-and-Error

In contrast to Janice, Rose's relationship to theoretical knowledge can better be described by the lower-level cognitive objectives in Bloom et al. (1956) educational objectives scale. Rose describes that at times she struggles to understand the university readings, which points to the difficulties with reaching Bloom et al.'s second level in the cognitive domain, which is *comprehension* ("understanding the materials being communicated without necessarily relating it to anything else"). For example, Rose explained how she perceived learning about Krashen's "i+1" hypothesis:

That was in my linguistics course in...and that class was so difficult for me. There were [sic] so many [sic] new terminology and stuff that I was like I don't know what I'm getting myself into. The first time that I encountered it, I really didn't understand it. And it came up again in the seminar, the first seminar, and I read another article where they were talking about that and I was like "oh, I'm getting it now."

Also, in contrast to Janice, Rose demonstrates a lack of reflection on and analysis of theoretical knowledge and her own teaching practices, which would entail higher-level cognitive operations in Bloom's taxonomy. It does not seem essential for Rose to ask *why* things happen in the classroom or why she does certain things or why certain things work well in the classroom or not. Rose describes that she goes through more of a trial and error process to reach successful instruction. By trying out different kinds of activities and methodologies Rose learns which activities work and which do not. Rose explains that she knows that she is doing the right thing if "the kids are engaged and they're excited and they're talking." If the activity does not seem to work in the classroom, she knows that was not a good activity. Rose struggled with describing why she felt that using visual aids in her classroom was important:

I've probably heard millions of times in the classes here at the university and I think that when students...I don't know why, when students see things they're able to remember it better, write it the next time or I think through experience I've seen over and over with the kids.

Rose admits that she has difficulty with writing objectives for her lesson plans, whereas procedures come easily for her. She acknowledges the importance of coming up with clear objectives but struggles with creating them. She explains that during lesson planning she usually thinks about what activities she is going to be doing ("For me I think it is what I'm going to be doing exactly"). Rose's lack of analysis, asking the question *why* she is doing the activities is evident from her responses. She describes herself as "a more procedural person," who goes to her lessons with a set of activities planned out and tries them out with a trial or error mentality to figure out what works for her and the students in the classroom. Rose does not seem to engage much in a proactive analysis of her lessons but rather makes changes retroactively. Rose explains:

I think I'm more a procedural person, so writing the procedures step-by-step is easier and then sometimes after I do that I can look at...look at that and see what the objectives are and work kind of backwards that way.

Rose's objectives do not tend to arise from a thorough analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of the information available for her; she does not seem to engage in a conscious process motivating her choice of objectives. Rose describes her process of creating the lesson objectives:

Researcher: How do you decide what the objectives are? Where do you get those? For you personally? When you actually write them down, where do they come from for you?

Rose: I guess when I do lesson planning, I like my kids to learn the four modalities, you know listening, speaking, reading and writing. And if I do any of those in class, I'll make those an objective. So that's how I make them up. I just kind of make them up.

Researcher: Right, right, so I make them up based on what? How do you justify them? How do you say 'okay, this is a good objective, I'll use this'?

Rose: I don't know, I don't know.

Furthermore, Rose does not seem to draw from a variety of knowledge sources as a teacher and thus synthesize information by combining different ideas, which would entail higher-level cognitive processing in Bloom et al.'s (1956) taxonomy. She does not feel that the theoretical knowledge-base that she has received through the university particularly informed her. In her

opinion, the best preparation for teachers in general and for her, in particular, is to be in the classroom:

I think the best way to get prepared to be a teacher is to have experience in the classroom, just see how different teachers act and how they teach and behave as a teacher in the school being able to work with different populations of students, different diversity students. Seeing different schools and district to district schools are immensely different.

Rose's lack of analytic, synthesizing, and evaluative relationship to knowledge is also evident from her content-based lesson plan assignment. In her reflection on the instructional decisions concerning the lessons she created, she referred to readings (in class and outside) only six times, whereas there were 16 instances of references to sources in Janice's assignment. It is typical in Rose's assignment that she does not substantiate her decisions or arguments in any way, that is, she continues to demonstrate a lack of analysis (see examples A and B). Even when she cites a reference, she does not evaluate that reference or explain *why* she agrees with that or not (see example C). Furthermore, occasionally Rose engages in minimal analysis, that is, provides reasons for her decisions, but she bases her evaluation on very limited reasoning, that is, local circumstances only from her classroom, instead of synthesizing information considering more global phenomena and arguments (see example D). There was one instance where Rose presented a more global instructional decision that was motivated by a more global, synthesizing argument (see example E). However, it is not clear whether this argument is something that Rose had come up with or whether she is merely reciting an idea from a textbook.

Examples from Rose's lesson reflections.

- Example A. I chose to have ample activities to ensure the students understood the concept.
- Example B. I feel it is important to provide students with plentiful activities to take home and have more practice.
- Example C. I agree with Jenson [sic] when she says, "Good teachers error [sic] on the side of over planning and/or have some useful five to ten minutes supplementary activities available." (Jensen, 405).
- Example D. This lesson came about as I was talking with my cooperating teacher about ideas for a content-based lesson. Of all of my ideas, she liked this lesson the best because she felt that it would help her students to better understand that numbers have number names. She thought it would be valuable because number names are often used in story problems in their grade-level math classes and found when reading stories.

Example E. I believe focus on content-based instruction is crucial and important for learners and teachers. Adding academic content to the ESL curriculum prepares students for content in their grade-level classrooms.

Rose's evident disconnect with theoretical knowledge can partly be explained by the consequences of her tendency not to engage in higher-level cognitive responses to knowledge (analysis, synthesis, and evaluation). Because Rose is not effectively modifying the incoming information through analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, it is more challenging for her to assimilate new information into her existing knowledge base. This seems to leave her only with the option of accommodation, where she needs to reorganize and adjust her *existing* beliefs and knowledge-base to process the new information. Rose resists accommodation since, as commonly is the case, her existing personal beliefs of teaching and learning are very deeply rooted. She explains that she has known that she was going to be a teacher since she was five years old. She also believes that she has the knowledge in her that she needs for teaching ("I have the ideas in my head and if I just went to the classroom just with my ideas I would be fine").

Due to her apparent struggles with analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating, Rose perceives information in more of a ready format and thus she either approves of an idea *as such* and accommodates it by reorganizing her existing beliefs, which she seems very reluctant to do, or she rejects the new idea without seeing the possibility of assimilation. As is evident from the next comment, Rose explains that when reading, she usually looks for examples in a ready, already applied format that she can compare against her experiences: "I kind of look at examples, kind of how I would look at my own lesson plans again and kind of use different examples in the book."

She also explains that when reading in the university courses about different philosophies, teaching techniques, models, and ideas, she "get[s] to pick out what [she] like[s] and what [she] agree[s] with and use those." In the following, Rose describes that when writing her lesson objectives, she looks at sample objectives that provide her a ready model to follow:

Yeah, I kind of look at like sample objectives. Like sometimes I go and look in the POLIA-handbook and sometimes like taking examples of writing lessons like my lesson plans and reading through other people's and making and how they word things and different things helps me go back to my computer and start writing my objectives again.

The following example from Rose's content-based-instruction lesson plan assignment is especially interesting in that Rose demonstrates the same mindset, either approving of or rejecting a ready format. In this excerpt she explains the decisions she made concerning the ideas for the lesson:

I was going to use the eight-page book idea from Routman, but decided against it for three reasons. The first reason being that it would be too small for second graders to write and draw on each page. Secondly, making the book would take valuable time away from my short thirty-minute lesson. Lastly, it was only an eight-page book and it would make more sense to chunk number names in groups of ten. Therefore, I decided to make a plain ten-page book using half sheets of paper to avoid the obstacles of creating the eight-page book.

The interesting point about the quote above is that Rose in fact did use this instructional technique in her lesson, thus modified Routman's eight-page book idea (assimilation), but according to Rose's thinking, she had rejected Routman's idea (accommodation) and created something entirely different ("a plain ten-page book using half sheets of paper to avoid the obstacles of creating the eight-page book") even though it clearly was an extension of Routman's idea.

Karen: Affective Evaluator of Information

Similarly to Janice, Karen engages in the higher-level cognitive responses to theoretical knowledge based on Bloom et al.'s educational objectives scale. She has no problems with comprehending the assigned readings. Karen explains that she really "enjoy[s] theory and the academic setting." Also, she synthesizes information to which she is exposed; for example, she explains that in addition to classroom ideas, she has learned about "assessment," the "community-oriented" classroom, and "the whole-language approach" from the different readings, which are more global pedagogical issues and require a synthesis of ideas and sources. Karen sees the university courses and readings as a valuable background: "I feel like it's the foundation you know like here's the theoretical background and exposure to academics through experts in teaching."

However, Karen does not perceive this theoretical background as directly informing her teaching as was the case with Janice. Rather she feels that the issues presented in the readings are important background for her to know as a teacher, and she struggles with implementing the information in her own teaching. Karen's perception seems to be that even though the university courses and the readings provide her with a valuable background or foundation, this background does not directly inform her teaching. The main value of this theoretical background is to add to her professionalism as a teacher and provide her with the means to make a personal contribution to the profession. Karen described:

You know one thing I really have gained from X [one of her professors] in particular. . . . She's very professional. I mean X really talks about us being representatives of our profession like you know thinking on upon things that affect us, and about, you know, second language learning processes and like really the

academic center of our profession. That's really motivating for me because I enjoy it and would like to play a role in it.

Theoretical knowledge plays a very personal role for Karen. She enjoys doing the assigned readings, not as much to be informed by them, but for inspiration and ideas. Karen described one of the readings that was assigned to them: "I don't feel like she's [the author's] instructive like how to do this but I feel like she's a great place to go for inspiration and for ideas about how to approach a theme."

Karen demonstrates a tendency to evaluate information also in her content-based lesson plan assignment. Her arguments are well-grounded in theory citing twelve references to theoretical sources. The difference between Janice and Karen is that Karen's own voice in the reflection section is very strong and she adds her commentary on the ideas she uses or the references she cites. The interesting point is that whereas Janice's evaluation of the sources she used or the ideas for a lesson are based more on her careful *rational* analysis of the readings, which are based on her experience as a teacher in the classroom and on her existing knowledge-base, Karen's evaluation is more affective-based. She gauges the value of a certain idea or information source by how she *feels* about it, whether she personally likes it or not. Karen's personal, affective motivations are written in bold.

I have always loved the idea of situating smaller lessons within a larger unit or theme.

I knew that **I wanted to teach** a Service Learning project during my student teaching.

After talking with the third grade classroom teacher, I discovered that maps were a part of the third grade social studies curriculum, along with "Community Ties"- a **perfect fit with what I had envisioned.**

Another component of Routman's learning theory **that I particularly like** and tried to include in this lesson is her orientation towards the process of learning.

I like what CALLA stands for as well.

This affective orientation of Karen is also evident in her description of herself as a teacher. She is highly intuitive. She explains that she enjoys spontaneity and goes by what she feels. She admits that lesson planning is important and could be helpful, but she does not think that she will write lesson plans when she is in her own classroom because she perceives that they limit her creativity. She feels like she is "cornering" herself when planning lessons. Karen describes that it is difficult for her to follow the lesson plan and to keep her objectives in mind because she notices that

she gets “so wrapped up in the activity” or “takes a tangent” during the lesson that she easily forgets what her objectives were.

Nevertheless, Karen says she feels that lesson objectives are important. It is important to know what the “end goal” of each lesson is, why certain activities are done (“it helps like really think through the end, what do I really want them to be able to do in the end”). However, Karen struggles with writing objectives because she needs the freedom to be able to be creative and be in the moment and act based upon her instincts and intuition.

But I’m realizing now that that [being spontaneous] might be successful even better if I can like structure a little bit and wing some of the parts in the middle, so like maybe have... I think the objectives are really important, especially in this placement, like the more clear that my objectives are then I can kind of fangle how I reach the objectives and then I can like have some creativity how I get to the end goal. Once I have the end goal clear but up until now my end goal has been kind of hard to define so...

Discussion

This study set out to investigate the relationship between second language preservice teachers’ beliefs about theory and the teachers’ cognitive responses to theoretical knowledge during interpretation and how this relationship might in part explain the disparity of theory and practice, that is, teachers’ reluctance to use theoretical knowledge. The study portrayed three different consumers of theoretical knowledge. Janice and Karen both demonstrated consistently higher level cognitive responses to theoretical knowledge. Janice is a critical reader who analyzes, synthesizes, and evaluates incoming theoretical information based on her personal knowledge-base. She engages in a rational evaluation process of information, that is, she gauges the value of information comparing and contrasting it to what else she knows. The interesting difference between Janice and Karen was that Karen’s evaluation of information was more affective-based, in contrast to Janice’s more rational assessment of information. Karen based her judgments about readings on how she felt about the ideas, topics, and issues in the readings and what she liked or did not like.

This difference in evaluating information is also reflected in Janice and Karen’s beliefs of theoretical knowledge. Janice’s apparent ease with and rational approach to analyzing theoretical knowledge has surely contributed to her belief of theoretical knowledge as a valuable foundation and background for teaching and learning. Janice’s knowledge-base is a balanced sum of her practical experiences as a teacher and learner and theoretical information, between which she constantly draws connections and which she continuously organizes in her mind into a logical representation. On the other hand, Karen, who frequently engages in cognitive processing of the

incoming information and who feels that she has learned from theoretical knowledge and gained classroom ideas, maintains that the main purpose of theoretical knowledge for her is not as much informing her practice but self-fulfillment, that is, to be inspired by theory and to make a personal contribution to the profession.

One of the most interesting patterns that emerged from the data was the differences between the cognitive processes between Karen and Janice on one hand and Rose on the other hand and their implications for theory/practice connections. Janice and Karen's consistent tendency to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate new information allowed them to assimilate new information, or to modify it to fit their existing beliefs and mental schemes. In contrast, it was more challenging for Rose to assimilate new information into her existing knowledge-base. This left her only with the option to accommodate, which involves a more drastic reorganizing and adjustment of her existing beliefs and mental schemes. Rose demonstrated her attempts to accommodate new information by her approach to ready-made lessons, which she either approved as such and accommodated by reorganizing her existing beliefs or rejected without seeing the possibility of assimilation.

Given Rose's struggles with understanding theoretical texts and the fact that she is forced to change her existing mental schemes and beliefs to fit new information into her mental models, it is not surprising that Rose explained that she often shied away from theoretical readings. She did not believe that theoretical knowledge was the primary means for her development as a teacher but believed that the best preparation for teachers is to spend time in the classroom. Rose turned to theoretical knowledge mainly to get practical teaching ideas and problem solutions.

Research has suggested that one of the main reasons why practitioners do not perceive theory as useful is because they feel that theory is not relevant for them (Stigler & Hiebert, 1999; Freeman & Johnson, 1998) and because theory is often perceived as abstract, "decontextualized" and "detemporalized" descriptions of practice (Roth, Lawless & Tobin, 2000, p. 2). This study hypothesizes that this perception could be a result of teachers' struggles to make those categorical and conceptual (Dalton & Tharp, 2002), yet personal, generalizations from the more context-bound practical phenomena (Borg, 2003) in the classrooms. The ability to generalize requires analyzing and synthesizing information in order to consider one's local teaching context through a more global perspective. Generalizing pulls together many teaching contexts to form common principles which are free from the detailed, unique characteristics of the "contingent" and "extemporaneous" (Roth, Lawless & Tobin, 2000, p. 2) qualities of the local contexts. This study supports the belief that the ability to see one's own teaching context as one of many contexts is critical in easing the theory/practice tension. Successful theory consumers, such as Janice, do not

expect the ideas in the readings to provide a ready model for them that can be implemented in their classroom “as is,” but rather these ideas can be adopted to differing extents, ranging from using a model, idea, or principle to applying a variation of a suggested model in one’s own context.

This study did not examine the participants’ cognitive ability but rather their cognitive mindset or their tendencies to engage in cognitive functions. The study raises an interesting question, namely whether teachers who do not seem to engage with theory analytically can be taught to engage with it in more analytical ways. Clearly there are ways in which teacher education programs and teacher educators can support their teachers’ engagement in the higher-level cognitive processes during interpretation of new information. First, in order to achieve this, teachers should be encouraged to engage in reflective practice (Wallace, 1991; Richards & Nunan, 1990). Teacher education courses should include activities that promote the ability to analyze by having preservice teachers constantly consider how the issues in the reading and discussions relate to their own teaching context. The reflection should be rich, that is, preservice teachers should be encouraged to reflect not only on what happens in their classrooms but they should be encouraged to draw connections between everything they know, such as, readings, student teaching, students, other teachers, supervisors, cooperating teachers, and university assignments. In order to enable this kind of reflection, an integrated teacher education program, where university studies and student teaching take place side-by-side, is undoubtedly ideal because preservice teachers have the opportunity to analyze theoretical knowledge *immediately* upon exposure based on their experiences in the classroom. As the findings of this study indicate, lesson planning, especially creating the lesson objectives, is another effective way to promote the ability to analyze because it forces teachers to analyze their teaching and decision-making and ask themselves *why* they are doing certain things and *why* certain activities should be done in a given manner.. It also makes teachers evaluate information by having them describe the choices available for them, comparing the different options through synthesizing various information sources. Teachers like Rose, who had a difficult time creating lesson objectives and felt more comfortable writing the procedures, should be given practical tools to identify the objectives embedded in the procedures they have chosen. This can be accomplished by having preservice teachers describe how the activities of their choice support the learning goals described in the various standards, the school curriculum, SLA theory, and the language learning needs of their students evident from needs analyses conducted.

Second, the findings of this study emphasize the importance of preservice teachers’ ability to see the various components of a teacher education program as parts of a united whole instead of as seemingly unrelated isolated pieces. Clifford, Friesen, and Jardine (2003) call this kind of

fragmented view “basics-as-breakdown” (p. 11), which entails teachers’ perception of instructional decisions and curricular issues as unrelated fragments. In order to overcome this kind of fragmented mind-set, a meta-level discussion with the preservice teachers of the connections between the various components of second language teachers’ knowledge-base should be conducted. Instead of considering the university courses as competing with the more practical experiences in the classrooms during student teaching, as was the case with Rose, preservice teachers should be helped to understand the different functions of the various components of their teacher education, that is, to treat these components “as a part of some longstanding whole to which it belongs” (Clifford, Friesen & Jardine, 2003, p. 12). When doing one thing, one is actually the whole thing “from a particular locale” (p. 12).

Third, the findings of this study prompt us to realize that the ability to engage in higher-level cognitive processes during interpretation alone does not guarantee that a teacher is directly informed by theory, as was the case with Karen. Karen had the mental ability to effectively process incoming information but nevertheless did not feel significantly informed by theory. Karen raises an important issue to be considered in the discussion of theory and practice discrepancy, namely the role of “ownership” (Borg, 2003, p. 1). Borg (2003) describes that teachers often feel research to be a “top-down affair” (p. 1), in which teachers do not have an equal role to play. Karen is a highly intuitive and creative teacher and felt confined by theoretical principles established by others. Following guidelines and suggestions from theoretical sources meant for her limiting her ability to express her creativity and intuition. In order to assist teachers like Karen in benefiting from theoretical knowledge, thus moving from relying solely on intuition to relying on *informed* intuition, teacher educators should place the teacher at center stage (Freeman & Johnson, 1998) by recognizing the importance of teachers’ personal practical knowledge and taking into consideration “the individual experiences and perspectives of teachers” (p. 399). Karen explained that she appreciated a mixture of freedom and structure in lesson planning, which meant that she was asked to define the lesson objectives, thus motivate her instructional decisions for the lesson but allowed the space and freedom, during the lesson, to spontaneously create the means and ways to meet these objectives. Karen also valued choices in terms of readings and suggestions, which made her feel that the outside information complemented her intuition rather than confined it. Second language teacher education programs should welcome teachers to have the courage to invest the more personal qualities of themselves into teaching as did Karen, for whom teaching was a creative act. Preservice teachers should be assisted to realize that good teaching is not an exact reproduction of the directions provided in the university courses, but that teachers need to use their intuition

since the core of every teacher's authentic self is a critical component of a well-informed teacher. Teachers' personal qualities are pivotal in the formation of a positive relationship with theoretical knowledge.

The results of this study lead me to argue for teachers taking an active role as consumers of theoretical knowledge. Many of the papers discussing the theory/practice relationship focus on the failure of the theoreticians to provide comprehensible and relevant input. Many of the teachers' problems with theoretical knowledge can surely be attributed to the apparent miscommunication between researchers and practitioners as described by Borg (2003). However, instead of waiting for others or academic cultures to change, this paper hopes that by better understanding teachers' cognitive processes during their interpretation of theoretical knowledge, we can positively influence teachers' beliefs of theoretical knowledge and consequently support them to grow into confident readers of theory, who have a positive mind-set toward theory allowing it to inform their teaching practice.

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Sharing the Stage: Beliefs and Interactions in an ESL Class¹

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Branko:² But I have this one student, Jed, you know Jed? Oh my gosh, he wants me to correct every single mistake that he makes, and I can't. I just don't have the time to do that. I don't have the energy to do that. I don't even have the willpower. You know, I just don't want to. He wants me to correct everything. Every mispronounced word. Everything that's spelled incorrectly...And I just can't do that. Not for every student. Not even for him.

Colleen: I wonder why he wants to have that.

Branko: I don't know...And plus, I think that would just interrupt. Personally, I think it would interrupt his communication. I don't want to stop him every time.

Colleen: Have you told him that?

Branko: That I would interrupt his communication?

Colleen: Yeah.

Branko: If I corrected every pronunciation error? I didn't tell him, no.

What does this teacher, Branko, believe about error correction? What does his student, Jed, believe? How do their beliefs about correction affect their expectations and actions in class? What are their beliefs about other aspects of language teaching and learning? Both Branko and Jed seem to have clear beliefs about error correction, but it appears that neither of them is aware of the reasons underlying the other's expectations. What are the sources of their different beliefs? If they understood the sources and contexts of each other's beliefs, would they have a better appreciation of each other's expectations and actions?

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. This is what we aim to do here: to examine the interplay of a teacher's and his students' beliefs about communicative language teaching in light of the interactions that play out in the particular setting of the language classroom they share.

Review of the Literature

Many previous studies have identified teachers' and learners' beliefs about teaching and learning languages, beginning with the formative studies of Horwitz (1985, 1987, 1988), who designed the Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI).

Several studies have pointed out areas of difference between language teachers' and students' beliefs, including their expectations about error correction, the importance of grammar and vocabulary, the length of time it takes to learn a language, and the usefulness of various classroom activities (Green, 1993; Horwitz, 1985, 1987, 1988; Kern, 1995; McCargar, 1993; Peacock, 1998, 1999; Truitt, 1995). However, few studies have examined how these differences affect classroom interactions.

Some studies have focused on ESL/EFL (English as a Second Language/English as a Foreign Language) learners' beliefs. Wenden (1986, 1987) and Yang (1999) discovered links between students' beliefs about language learning and their subsequent choices and uses of learning strategies. Other studies have focused on ESL/EFL teachers' beliefs. Many have found that teachers' beliefs have a strong effect on what they say and do in class. Johnson's (1994) research revealed that the pre-service teachers in her study wanted to teach very differently from the ways they had been taught. Peacock's (2001) study with pre-service EFL teachers led him to surmise that their "mistaken beliefs" could have negative consequences in their future teaching. Borg (1998), Burns (1992, 1996) and Woods (1991) all examined experienced ESL teachers who entered their teaching assignments with firm beliefs, but due to various constraints, had to re-consider their stands on curriculum and course content.

Whether they have focused on students, teachers or both, most studies have implied that it is important to understand how differences and commonalities in teachers' and learners' beliefs might affect classroom interactions. An important question that is often raised is what might happen when beliefs clash. Horwitz (1988) warned of "negative outcomes for many language learners" (p. 292) who believe, for example, that they can learn a language in two years or that mastering a language is mostly a matter of memorizing grammar rules and/or vocabulary. These students might become frustrated and disappointed at their lack of achievement in two years or their lack of communicative ability even though they know some of the formal features of the language. In Peacock's (1998) study with Hong Kong EFL teachers and students, he concluded that differences between their beliefs about the effectiveness of class activities had "a negative effect on these learners' linguistic progress, satisfaction with the class, and perhaps also on their confidence in their teachers" (p. 245). For example, we were interested to know if learners with language learning

experiences in an Audiolingual or Grammar Translation classroom would experience frustration when placed in a classroom with a teacher (like the one in our case study) who adheres to communicative language teaching methods.

To avoid such negative outcomes, and to better appreciate the underlying reasons for one another's expectations, choices and actions in class, many researchers have proposed that teachers and students actually discuss their beliefs about language teaching and learning (Horwitz, 1987, 1988; Kern, 1995; McCargar, 1993; Peacock, 1998, 1999; Truitt, 1995; Wenden, 1986, 1987).

Several studies acknowledge that it is important to identify the sources of beliefs in order to appreciate the depth of their influence. The pre-service teachers in Bailey, et al. (1996) kept journals in which they cited their previous formal and informal language learning experiences as providing the basis for many of their beliefs about successful teaching and learning. The pre-service teachers in Johnson (1994) identified their informal language learning experiences as a powerful force in shaping how they aspired to teach, and their formal language learning courses as sources of their beliefs about how they did not want to teach. Borg (1998) studied a teacher whose beliefs had been profoundly shaped by his teacher training in the communicative approach, and the teachers in Woods (1991) cited their years of teaching experience as the source of their beliefs about how to implement a new curriculum. The two novice ESL teachers in Campbell (1999) cited personal experiences as having shaped their professional personae.

Very few studies have investigated the sources of learners' beliefs. In his 1999 study, Peacock (1991) conducted brief interviews with 121 university EFL students in Hong Kong to ask about the origins of their language learning beliefs. Peacock described the interviews as "not very successful" because "many learners did not seem to know the origin of their beliefs" (p. 257). Half the students gave no response, and the other half cited a variety of sources, from formal language learning to family, friends, media, and living abroad. Some studies suggest, but do not explicitly question, the sources of students' beliefs. Cotterall (1995) inferred that international university students' confidence correlated with their "belief in one's ability to influence the outcome of learning and derives from perceptions of previous learning experiences" (p. 201). Cotterall cautioned that the confidence the students developed from language learning in their home countries might unduly influence their belief in their ability to succeed in an English language university, and noted a "need to explore with learners their 'myths' about themselves" (p. 201).

Rarely has research in this area utilized in-depth interviews with teachers and students in order to discover the roots of their beliefs. No studies, to our knowledge, have examined an entire ESL class—teacher and students. The aim of this study, then, is to investigate the beliefs about

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) of an ESL teacher and his students, to identify the sources of their beliefs, and to examine the effects of their beliefs on their classroom interactions.

Methodology

Data Collection

The participants in this study are the teacher and students of an ESL class in an Intensive English Program (IEP) at a public university in the northeastern United States. The teacher-participant in this study, Branko, has a master's degree in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) and 12 years' teaching experience. The student-participants in this study (11 of 14 in the class) come from around the world (see Appendix A), and most of them intend to pursue academic studies at American colleges or universities.

Classes in the IEP are composed of students at the same language proficiency level, and each class has 4.5 hours of lessons together daily. The students in this study are at the high-intermediate proficiency level, and they were observed in one of their four courses—Reading and Discussion—which they attend for two hours daily.

The IEP assigns texts for each course, and teachers are free to supplement these books with materials of their own design. Branko is known for his innovative teaching units, such as ESL Survivor (where teams of students compete to out-read, out-write, out-scan and out-summarize one another) and Century 21 (where aspects of life in the future are discussed using readings from such journals as *The Futurist*). He adheres to a communicative approach in teaching and aims to make class activities appealing to his students and applicable to their academic and social language needs.

Data were gathered from the teacher and students throughout the spring 2002 semester. Sources of data included classroom observations, two questionnaires on beliefs, and in-depth interviews with the teacher and students. There were 10 observations, beginning in the second week of the semester and ending in the last week. The questionnaires were administered after the fifth observation, during two class sessions at which the teacher was absent by arrangement. During these two sessions, Colleen discussed Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) with the students, as well as their EFL experiences and some results of previous studies about ESL teachers' and students' beliefs. The purpose of these discussions was to familiarize the students with terminology on the questionnaires and to help them to see that language teachers and learners hold a wide variety of beliefs about language learning and teaching.³ The questionnaires were used as a first step for identifying participants' beliefs. The first questionnaire was based on Horwitz' (1985) BALLI; we

composed the Beliefs about Communicative Language Teaching and Learning (BACLTL) questionnaire because several items on the BALLI were too broad for purposes of this study. The second questionnaire contained four open-ended questions on sources and effects of the students' beliefs as well as their views of their teacher's beliefs (See Appendix B). Both the teacher and students were interviewed about the meaning of their responses and the sources of their beliefs.

Colleen undertook this study as part of her doctoral degree requirements; she conducted all observations, questionnaires and interviews. Lynne collaborated on the design of the study, its theoretical base and literature reviews as well as the analysis of its findings.

Data Analysis

As we read through the findings, we looked for evidence of beliefs about communicative language teaching and learning. We noted each episode of apparent evidence of beliefs, and coded each into a category (Creswell, 1998) such as teachers' roles, students' roles, error correction, pair and group work, fluency versus accuracy, and so forth. As Creswell (1998) advocates in his approach to case study analysis, we then searched through the categories looking for "issue-relevant meanings" (p.154). That is, we attempted to interpret the categories in terms of the participants' apparent beliefs about language teaching and learning- what their beliefs are, where they originated, and how they might affect interactions in the classroom.

Through the analytical process described above, we combined categories into three themes: participation in class, accuracy/error correction, and affect. We chose to explore these particular themes because they represent areas where the participants' beliefs converge (participation), where their beliefs diverge (accuracy/error correction), and lastly, where differences in their beliefs are mediated (affect).

The Three Themes and the Participants' Beliefs

In this section, we examine each theme in detail. First, we present the participants' stated beliefs as they relate to the theme. Next, we discuss theories from the language learning literature that support the participants' beliefs about the theme. Then we attempt to confirm the participants' beliefs and identify the effects of their beliefs through interview findings and through observed interactions in the classroom.

Participation—A Case of Accord

Stated beliefs about participation.

Four of the BACLTL items relate to student participation in ESL classes. The participants generally agreed to these items (see Table 1).

Table 1: Student Responses to BACLTL Items Related to Participation

Questionnaire Item	Agreed/ Agreed strongly	Neutral	Disagreed/ Strongly disagreed
Item 9: Students in ESL classes taught through CLT have more opportunity to participate.	12	0	0
Item 10: Students in ESL classes taught through CLT participate more than students in teacher-fronted classes.	12	0	0
Item 15: In CLT, it is important for a teacher to encourage students to participate from the very beginning of a course.	11	1	0
Item 20. In CLT, the role of the ESL teacher is to give students opportunities to express themselves in English.	12	0	0

Note. (N=12)

One of Branko's strongest beliefs is that his students must participate in class. He attributes this belief to an idea that he learned in his master's program in TESOL, and which has affected his teaching ever since. As he explains, "Right from my graduate program, I've really tried to have, like, 90 percent student, you know, having the students speak for 90 percent of the time and me 10 percent of the time." Branko says that he reminds himself of this guiding ratio constantly.

Branko also believes that student participation must begin from the first day of class. He ascribes this belief to his own nervousness on meeting a class for the first time. He reasons that if he is nervous, there is a strong possibility that his students are, too: "The first time you speak in front of a group of people, you're going to be nervous...no matter how long you've known them." Hence, he dismisses the idea of waiting until later in the semester to have students dominate class talk: "I want them immediately to start talking...and then it becomes easier each time."

The students take to this dominant role in class with alacrity, in spite of—or perhaps because of—EFL backgrounds that many of them claim were very restricted in terms of participation. All of the students spoke of EFL experiences that offered them limited opportunities

to speak English. Jong, from Korea, said his EFL classes were very big and it was “difficult for student to contact teacher personally”⁴ and also “difficult for students to show their opinion.” Jong added that when he did succeed in asking a question, the teachers did not always “explain my answers or show his or her opinion.” He described his experience of trying to participate in his EFL classes in Korea as “some difficult” with the effect that a student could “easily give up, yeah.” When asked if he did, indeed, give up on the idea of participation, he replied wistfully, “Yeah.”

Surprisingly, this discouraging experience is the source of Jong’s strong belief that “the most important factor in teaching and in studying is participation.” Jong is not deterred by his former, limited experiences with participation. He adds that in his class with Branko, “we had better speak more and more even if we don’t know the exact way.” Based on his experience of limited opportunities for participation in EFL in Korea, Jong developed an appreciation of the value of student involvement in his class with Branko.

Another student, Lila, concurs with Jong on the lack of participation in previous EFL classes. She said that in Japan she did not “need to say something in class...we just listening teacher saying, and take a note without say anything.” As a result, she says, she could “become more...passive.” However, in Branko’s class, being passive is not an option. Lila says that if she does not participate Branko “gave me some question or...he asks.” Lila thinks that in this class, students “have to express ourselves something to the teacher,” and she adds, “I think it’s American style.” She believes that as a result, “we can talk more and more, yeah, without hesitation,” so she, too, values participation in Branko’s class.

Theories about participation.

Much research supports the belief that participating in class benefits language learning (Gass & Varonis, 1993; Krashen, 1981; Long, 1991; Pica, 1991, 1994; VanPatten & Cadierno, 1993; Young, 1993). The Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1981) proposes that students need to be pushed to understand meaningful messages in the target language without focusing on form. Branko attempts to do exactly this when he speaks with the students and when he provides them with authentic readings from newspapers, magazines and the Internet.

Swain’s Output Hypothesis (1985, 1993) argues that learners need to be pushed to convey messages in the target language. Swain reasons that output can provide learners with opportunities to try out their own hypotheses about language. This is part of what Jong describes doing with his classmates: he tests his own hypotheses of English, then checks with his classmates and Branko. Swain adds that output “may force the learner to move from semantic processing to syntactic

processing [which] forces learners to recognize what they do not know or know only partially” (1993, p. 159). This “noticing the gap” (Schmidt & Frota, 1986) between what one can say and what one wants to say appears to be what Jong is doing intuitively when he participates in class.

One way to encourage participation is through group work. Brown (2001) stated that group work increases opportunities for interactive language use, helps create a more positive affective climate in the classroom, encourages learners to assume more responsibility for their own learning, and helps teachers meet individual students’ needs.

Increased student participation and language practice are frequently mentioned among the many benefits of cooperative learning (Crandall, 1999; Olsen & Kagan, 1992). In order to succeed at cooperative learning tasks, students must participate through speaking and listening with others. Hence, by their nature, these tasks motivate students to participate.

The role of the teacher in a communicative class is to manage student participation. Richards and Rodgers (2001) have referred to this role as “group process manager” (p. 168), and they say it includes organizing communicative activities such as group work in which the students participate.

Confirmation of beliefs about participation and their effects on interactions.

Branko’s strong belief in student participation is evident in his classroom practice, where he consistently tries to implement the 90:10 ratio of student-talk to teacher-talk. Often in our observations, especially on days when students were giving individual and group presentations, this ratio was even exceeded. On one such occasion, our field notes record: “Branko arrived. He walked right to the back, smiling at students as he did so, took off his coat and took out some notebooks. He smiled hello to me. Students were chatting quietly amongst themselves.” It was interesting that Branko did not try to attract anyone’s attention as he entered the class. The students continued their quiet conversations until the student-presenter for the day was ready. Branko limited his involvement to brief introductions, nods of approval and softly voiced encouragement to the presenters. Branko’s adherence to his student-talk to teacher-talk ratio is consistent, and it demonstrates the lasting influence that teacher education programs can have on individual’s beliefs.

The effects of Jong’s belief about participation were apparent in his interactions in class. He often enjoyed asking questions and verifying answers with other students and Branko. As Jong describes it, “even if [Branko] answered the question, we talk, we continue to talk about the answer, it is correct or not.” In accord with his 90:10 ratio of participation, Branko does not object to such prolonged discussions; he encourages them.

In his interview, when Jong spoke of the importance of participation in class, he also described improving his English by way of “noticing the gap” (Swain, 1993). Jong said that when the students try to “speak more and more... talk with our classmates more and more, we can correct each other, our mistakes.” Jong’s belief that participation can help improve his English is directly related to Swain’s Output Hypothesis and Schmidt and Frota’s theory of noticing the gap.

Another Korean student, Sung, echoes Jong’s and Lila’s beliefs about participation: “If we talk, we talk to other people, we have to use our own words. So that is very good to improving, improve my English.” Sung seizes opportunities to improve his English in genuine communication with others, and he values participation in Branko’s class as a way of improving his English.

Accuracy and Error Correction—A Case of Relative Discord

Stated beliefs about accuracy and error correction.

Five of the BACLTL statements (items #3, 4, 5, 6, and 18) relate to accuracy and error correction. There was much disagreement on these items between Branko and the students, and also among the students themselves (see Table 2).

Table 2: Student Responses to BACLTL Items Related to Accuracy and Error Correction

Questionnaire Item	Agreed/ Agreed Strongly	Neutral	Disagreed/ Strongly Disagreed
Item 3. Grammatical accuracy is very important in CLT.	1	4	7
Item 4. Error correction is very important in CLT.	6	4	2
Item 5. Correct pronunciation is very important in CLT.	4	5	3
Item 6. Correct intonation is very important in CLT.	7	3	2
Item 18. ESL students should not speak very much until they know how to say everything without error.	0	0	12

Note. (N=12)

Branko believes that a focus on accuracy and correction can distract students from expressing themselves freely in English, so he disregards students’ errors in grammar, pronunciation and intonation as long as they do not impede communication. He credits this belief to his own experiences as a student of Japanese, Russian, and Serbian. When he attempts to speak in these

languages, Branko says, “I don’t want somebody stopping me every time I make a pronunciation mistake...I lose my train of thought.” To illustrate the intensity of his belief, he adds that ever since a Russian acquaintance began to correct his spoken Russian, Branko has “refused to speak a word of Russian with him.”

The students have varying beliefs about accuracy and error correction. Six of the twelve disagreed with item #3 (“*Grammatical accuracy is very important in CLT*”). Dina, from Venezuela, believes that self-expression is more important than accuracy. Dina admits that her grammar could be better, but she claims, “I can communicate very well without my grammatical skills.” In contrast, she argues, some students are “expert in grammar” but they do not know how to express themselves.

Another Korean student, Young, was neutral on the importance of grammatical accuracy and error correction in CLT “because communication itself is important so grammatical accuracy is not strongly required.” However, Young further explained that if Branko’s class—and the questionnaires—were not based on CLT, he would “strongly agree” that grammatical accuracy is very important. We see that Young has firm beliefs about accuracy and correction, which were formed in the context of his EFL learning in Korea. However, he was able to expand on these beliefs in the communicative context of Branko’s reading and discussion class.

There is, seemingly, an inconsistency in some students’ beliefs about grammatical accuracy and error correction. For example, on the BACLTL, Lila was neutral on the importance of grammatical accuracy. In her interview, she said, “too much care about the grammar is not good to speak, to improve speaking ability.” However, on the BACLTL, Lila agreed that error correction is very important in CLT. Lila offered an explanation for this acceptance of struggling grammar and an expectation of correction: “If student doesn’t know their error, they can’t prove, improve...if they didn’t know their mistake, they can’t correct their mistake.” So Lila, like several other students, accepts errors as unavoidable, but she also believes in the importance of error correction from her teacher and fellow students.

Theories about accuracy and error correction.

Branko adheres to the CLT approach, which has been the prevailing methodology in ESL (but not EFL) instruction for over 20 years. The goal of CLT is to help learners develop their communicative competence in the target language. In CLT, “errors are tolerated during fluency-based activities and are seen as a natural outcome of the development of communication skills” (Larsen-Freeman, 2000, p. 132). This is how Branko and several of the student-participants view

errors- as a natural part of the language learning process. As long as errors in grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation do not hinder comprehension of a student's message, Branko does not correct them even though he acknowledges that students want correction.

CLT is clearly more fluency-oriented than accuracy-oriented. As Brown (2001) states, "current approaches to language teaching lean strongly toward message orientation with language usage offering a supporting role" (p. 269). Richards and Rodgers (2001) affirm that the "correction of errors may be absent or infrequent" in CLT (p. 166). Teachers might make notes about student errors and return to them later, after the student has finished speaking.

CLT is widely practiced in North America, but the most widely used methods in the student-participants' home countries are Grammar-Translation and Audiolingualism (Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Li, 1998; Maloney-Berman, 2000). Accuracy and error correction are key features of these two methods. Accuracy is of the utmost importance in Grammar-Translation, and mistakes are corrected immediately. Indeed, one of the Grammar-Translation teacher's main tasks is to judge the correctness of students' written work (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Accuracy is also very important in Audiolingualism. Errors are believed to lead to the formation of bad language habits, so one of the teacher's main duties is to correct all errors immediately. This includes errors in grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Therefore, it is understandable that a number of the students believe their errors should be corrected. This is what their former teachers have done, and this experience has shaped their beliefs about the role of the teacher in the classroom.

Branko's emphasis on meaning is advocated by research into focus on form (Fotos, 1993; Izumi, Bigelow, Fujiwara, & Fearnow 1999; Kowal & Swain, 1997; Long, 1991; Swain, 1993). The purpose of language lessons with a focus on form is to "overtly draw students' attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning, or communication" (Long, 1991, p. 46). Branko's lessons- whether based on the course texts or on his own materials, such as ESL Survivor- are all clearly aimed at increasing students' ability to comprehend and use English in meaningful communication. When the content of his lessons leads students to notice linguistic elements about which they are not certain, Branko encourages students' questions and discussion about them.

Confirmation of beliefs about accuracy and error correction and effects on interactions.

An aversion to correction clearly affects Branko's treatment of errors in his ESL classes. For example, in reference to the student Jed in the opening vignette, Branko said, "If I keep stopping

him every time he mispronounces a word, that's going to inhibit the communication, the conversation." As a result of his belief, Branko does not interrupt Jed to offer corrections. Instead, Branko focuses on the content of the message, and he wants his students to do the same.

An example of this emphasis on meaning occurred when one student, Rafi, gave a presentation on the drug Ecstasy. Rafi mispronounced *chemical* as *shem-ickle* and *muscle* as *musk-ul*, but Branko did not correct either mistake. In a later interview, Branko said that he had not noticed the errors, presumably because he was focusing on the content of Rafi's presentation. Branko added that if he had noticed the errors, he "would not have corrected [Rafi] in front of everybody. I think I would have, maybe afterwards, said something." However, he did not notice these mistakes, so no correction was offered. Moreover, none of the students seemed to notice these mistakes or be confused by them; no one asked for clarification during or after Rafi's presentation, and they all proceeded to animated discussions on the topic of illicit drug use in their respective countries.

While our classroom observations did not include any instances of overt correction by Branko, the students expressed a variety of opinions about what they saw happening in class. Jong thought that Branko believed that error correction is important because, he said, "Sometimes I gave an answer to Branko about some question, it is some incorrect sentence or incorrect word. He said to me the correct answer." Based on his own experience with Branko and error correction, Jong felt that Branko considered it an important feature of his teaching practice.

Jong referred to mutual corrections and clarifications between himself and his Latino classmates. Jong said that he has "more vocabulary than the Latino, Latinos" so he is often able to "correct their answers." Conversely, Jong said that the Latinos' aural comprehension is better than his is, so when he does not understand what Branko or another student says, he asks his "Latino friends...so I can understand." Hence, the students recognize one another's strengths and use them to organize their own system of accuracy checks and error corrections.

During her interview, Lila also referred to this inter-student correction system. She referred to some of her classmates as "good at grammar people," and she said, "if they use different grammar, I can ask them, and then we can maybe discuss, or we can correct our grammar mistake." In particular, Lila admired Young's grammar skills, which she described as "perfect" and "amazing!" Lila was one of the students who had deemed error correction important in order to improve her English.

Affect—A Case of Mediation

Stated beliefs about affect.

The third theme that emerged from the findings was the important role that affective factors play in this classroom. Three items on the BACLTL relate to the theme of affect (Items # 7, 8 and 11). All participants unanimously agreed that CLT promotes cohesion and that it is easier to learn English when there is a feeling of belonging (see Table 3).

Table 3: Student Responses to BACLTL Items Related to Affect

Questionnaire Item	Agreed/ Agreed Strongly	Neutral	Disagreed/ Strongly Disagreed
Item 7. Use of CLT promotes a feeling of cohesion amongst students.	12	0	0
Item 8. It is easier to learn ESL in a class where there is a feeling of belonging amongst the students.	12	0	0
Item 11. Students in ESL classes taught through CLT seem to have more confidence in speaking.	12	0	0

Note. (N=12)

Branko's belief about the role of affect in class is reflected in this comment:

I want the students to always feel relaxed in my class... I hope whatever I'm doing is not, you know, intimidating, or frightening them. I just hope they're always relaxed, and feel comfortable, where they'll be able to speak in class.

Clearly, Branko is aware that students can be apprehensive about participating in class. He knows from his own experience how intimidating it can be to express oneself in front of other people in another language. He is aware that his students might feel self-conscious, and he understands that making them feel comfortable, and developing a sense of group cohesion, can help the students feel more relaxed and encourage participation.

Dina summed up her beliefs about the benefits of communicative language teaching when she said, "CLT...increases the cohesion, yes! Of course! Because communicating and discussing bring, bring them [students] together... They might notice that they're interested in some topics, or they have a lot in common." Dina's feelings about the role of cohesion are in concordance with her beliefs about participation and accuracy. She values participation—regardless of inaccurate grammar and other errors—for the opportunities it gives students to learn more about one another and to develop a sense of cohesion.

Dina also believes that the teacher should be “one more classmate” who participates and interacts with the students. She claims that this makes the students “feel comfortable” because there is not “a wall between the students and the teacher.” In Dina’s estimation, Branko does this “perfectly” because, she said, “he’s always asking us our opinion, and he gives his opinion, too. We also ask him his opinion about this, the things we’re talking about.” Dina’s statements seem to reflect Branko’s beliefs about the value of a positive affect in class.

Taif echoed Dina’s description of the role of affective factors in CLT. He said that CLT aided ESL learning because “a social classroom, a socially interactive classroom, I think really makes it easy, a lot easier for you to just, you know, learn and all that. Because, you know, you feel comfortable.” Taif credited Branko for managing this: “He makes everybody, you know, connect to each other.”

Young claimed that this “feeling of belonging” leads students “to participate more and more,” underscoring the links between the emerging themes in this study.

Theories about affect.

According to Arnold (1999), affect comprises both positive and negative “aspects of emotion, feeling, mood or attitude which condition behavior” (p. 1). Arnold asserts that affect is an important consideration in education because its negative aspects (anxiety, fear and stress) can impede learning, and its positive aspects (motivation and empathy) can lead to more effective learning. Arnold claims that language learning can be one of the most anxiety-prone of all disciplines because students need to express themselves “in a shaky linguistic vehicle” in front of their classmates and teacher (p. 9).

Various studies have explored the positive and negative influences of affect on language learning (Arnold, 1999; Crandall, 1999; Horwitz & Young, 1991; Krashen, 1981; Schumann, 1997; Tsui, 1996). Krashen’s (1981) theory of an affective filter posits that when students’ affective filters are low, they will be more likely to acquire language through comprehensible input. Schumann (1997) examined the neurobiological link between cognition and emotion and argued that affect plays a central role in language learning.

In communicative classes, where students are engaged in disclosing personal preferences, opinions and feelings with one another, affect is an important consideration. The abundance of pair and group work in CLT requires co-operative and supportive relationships among group members in order to succeed (Hadfield, 1992). In communicative classes, Hadfield asserts, a positive affective atmosphere “can have a beneficial effect on the morale, motivation and self-image of its members”

(p. 10). For CLT instructors, then, it is important to try to enhance positive affective factors and decrease negative affective factors.

Hadfield (1992) suggests a number of ways for teachers to create a positive affective climate: organize ice-breaker activities when students first meet one another; organize information-sharing tasks that involve exchanging personal information about one another's interests and backgrounds; provide activities that help students understand one another's points of view and that require compromise; and ensure that groupings are "fluid" so that students mix and work with different classmates.

In working with adult ESL learners, Hilles and Sutton (2001) affirm that personal characteristics such as "warmth, compassion, empathy, and kindness...along with a keen ability to observe and respond" all contribute to a positive affective climate (p. 391). It is impossible to mandate these or any other qualities in a teacher, but their importance in decreasing students' anxieties deserves mention.

Yang and Lee (2001) examined the role of pedagogical caring in the language classroom and found that adult Asian students were motivated to participate more frequently and to take more risks when they perceived that their teachers cared about their students and about their work.

According to Crandall (1999), one way to increase positive affect is to incorporate co-operative learning in the classroom. Co-operative learning reduces anxiety, promotes interaction, increases self-confidence and motivation, and provides opportunities for the development of cross-cultural understanding, respect and friendships. Moskowitz (1999) argues that humanistic language learning exercises benefit learners by improving their attitudes toward the target language, increasing their self-esteem, and developing a greater appreciation and understanding of their classmates.

In contrast to the above research, Tsui (1996) examined the consequences of negative affective factors in EFL classes and discovered that teachers unwittingly contributed to the negative environment. They constantly insisted on grammatical excellence; they allowed students only one or two seconds' wait-time for an answer before moving on to another student; they corrected students immediately, in front of their peers; and they spoke for most of the class time. (One teacher observed by Tsui spoke for nearly 80 percent of the class time.) The students in Tsui's study claimed they felt so anxious, and so susceptible to criticism in front of their peers, that they avoided participating in class.

Many of the students in the present study described EFL classes in their home countries that were similar in nature to the classes Tsui (1996) described. The students spoke of needing to

quickly produce grammatically accurate answers and of receiving prompt and insensitive error correction. Considering these past experiences, the students' strong beliefs about the importance of a positive affect in language learning are even more understandable.

Confirmation of beliefs about affect and their effects on classroom interactions.

Branko establishes the positive, co-operative tone of the class from the first day when he organizes ice-breaking activities that require the participation of all group members. Indeed, group work was a feature of every class we observed. Group membership is fluid, as Hadfield (1992) suggests, so that students have the chance to work with everyone in the class on several occasions during the semester.

Branko demonstrates concern for his students and interest in their cultures (Hilles & Sutton, 2001; Yang & Lee, 2001) by linking class activities to their home countries. For example, during a lesson on reading and writing headlines, as Branko circulated, he quietly asked Rafi (from Mexico) if he had heard about the recent phone call between Vicente Fox and Fidel Castro. He then asked Sami and Carlos (both Colombian) what they knew about the kidnapping of the governor of Carlos' state. Rafi, Sami, and Carlos all eagerly shared with Branko what they knew about these events. On other occasions, we observed earnest discussions of topics such as cell phone use in the participants' countries, international air travel safety, and manifestations of racism all over the world. (This last topic was inspired by Branko's choice of the novel *Snow Falling on Cedars* as a class reader.) By allowing the students to share their personal and cultural knowledge, Branko increases their self-esteem and fosters their appreciation and understanding of one another (Moskowitz, 1999; Yang & Lee, 2001).

An unexpected finding in this study was the nature of Branko's voice. He speaks softly and quietly to the students, raising his voice only when he wants everyone's attention. Several times during our observations, we closed our eyes and tried to discern Branko's voice from the general buzz of conversations in the room; we could not do it. This was a surprise, and we believe that Branko's voice has a considerable effect on student participation and classroom affect. Because Branko does not dominate interactions in the class, the students seem to feel free to converse among themselves both during group work and in between class activities. In a later interview, we asked Branko if he was conscious of how he spoke in class. He was completely surprised by our observation; he had never considered this aspect of his teaching and its apparent effect on his students.

Another characteristic of Branko's class is the gentle sense of humor that marks many interactions. Branko often jokes about his own foibles and, at the same time, includes impromptu lessons on American culture. One day, he asked the students if they knew the meaning of the word "stranded" and proceeded to describe how he had been stranded at his parents' house the night before due to a sudden, severe snowstorm. The students guessed the meaning of "stranded," and then one of them asked how often adult Americans visit their parents. Branko revealed that he visited his parents about five times a week because his mother is such a great cook.

Another day, while Branko was collecting homework, he got into an amusing exchange with a student who had either confused the homework with a reading assignment or perhaps had not done the homework. The conversation started off quietly, but became louder and funnier as it went in circles, rather like Abbott and Costello's "Who's on First" routine. It was not clear who was enjoying it more—the student and Branko, or the rest of us.

The findings also included confirmation of the students' beliefs about affect. Lila, the student who had reported feeling closer to her classmates as a result of participating in class, described the special respect that she developed for her Korean classmates:

Because I can know their different opinion, and I can feel more close, close, closely with them... Especially Korean. My, for me, brother. Big brother... when I talk with them, or when I stay with them, I feel very, very comfortable. They are, they teach me a lot of things, like teach me grammar, grammar, English how to study or everything.

Due to the positive affective climate in the class, and constant interactions in and out of class, Lila was able to improve her English and develop good friendships with other students. As we observed this class over the semester, we saw a number of indicators of positive affect: gestures, smiles, laughter, personal conversations, friendliness, and respect among the participants. Our field notes illustrate these indicators:

There are smiles and nods of agreement between Miki and Sami as they compare their answers [about an article on euthanasia]. Then they high five! I think of this as a rather overdone and typically American gesture, but it looks so joyful and sincere here, between this young Japanese woman and this young Colombian man.
(Observation #6)

The noise level is quite high, and it is not all about the homework. Lila [an engineer] is explaining nuclear power plant accidents to Joe. Rafi approaches Branko. They talk at Branko's desk about Rafi's paragraph summaries. Rafi has questions about his main ideas. I close my eyes. There is laughter in one corner of the room, mock protest in another corner, Rafi and Branko discussing paragraphs and two other conversations about the homework. I must force myself to focus on

any one conversation. There is a lot of talk happening in this class...Students are searching through the text for answers and comparing their answers. I overhear, "I say 'false'. You said 'true' already! Make up your mind!"...Class is taking up the true/false answers, about burying nuclear waste in the Yucca Mountains...an excellent site for nuclear waste because they're arid. Sami jokes that Saudi Arabia would be a good place to bury nuclear waste. Taif laughs at this. (Observation #8)

After break, the students are reading some of their paragraphs—based on headlines only—to one another. Yumi reads a paragraph about a teacher named Branko who was caught napping at work and lost his job. Then he got caught stealing food—he had no money to eat—and he was sent to jail. Everyone thinks it's hilarious. (Observation #9)

These comments and observations are evidence of the participants' beliefs about affect and its influence on classroom interactions. In Questionnaire #1, they unanimously agreed that it is easier to learn ESL when there is a feeling of belonging among the students, that communicative classes cultivate this feeling of cohesion, and that students' confidence in speaking increases in such environments. The participants' reflections also show an awareness and appreciation of one another's backgrounds, cultures and abilities. There is an unmistakable esprit de corps in this class.

Conclusions and Implications

Conclusions

In this study, we examined the relationship between what is believed—usually unsaid and unseen—and the observed interactions between a teacher and his ESL students. We found that this teacher and his students share many beliefs about communicative language teaching (CLT). They believe that student participation is very important in a communicative class. The students believe that the more they participate in communicative activities, the more they improve at doing so. It is notable that these activities, such as stating opinions, sharing observations about topics that interest them, and agreeing and disagreeing with one another are culturally appropriate in many Western settings, but they can be unfamiliar—even uncomfortable—for students from cultures where group harmony is more important than individual stances. Nevertheless, these students take personal and linguistic risks to participate in class.

We found that the participants have varying beliefs about the importance of accuracy and error correction in communicative language learning. When asked directly about this issue in interviews, the students did not complain about the lack of correction from Branko. In fact, they stressed how Branko's exhortations to use their own words to express themselves had led them to feel more confident in speaking English. Those students who favored accuracy and correction

turned to their peers for verification. Those students who preferred to concentrate on meaning were comfortable with the teacher's avoidance of correction.

The participants unanimously agree on the importance of positive affect in communicative language learning. The positive affective factors in this class lead to a sense of cohesion and confidence among the students. The more confident they become, the more they participate. This is consistent with findings that suggest that group events are responsible for (a) student confidence and satisfaction (Dornyei & Malderez, 1997), (b) participants' affective perception of the learning process (Ehrman & Dornyei, 1988) and (c) the quantity and quality of interaction between group members (Levine & Moreland, 1990).

The three findings in this study are firmly linked. It is our view that the strong, positive affect in this class is a mediating factor in the potentially contentious issue of error correction. Although several students disagree with Branko on the importance of error correction, and even though they have firm ideas about the role of correction in language learning, they seem to accept Branko's reluctance to correct them. They value the feeling of belonging in this group, and the opportunities to participate, to express themselves and to discuss personally meaningful topics. They also feel a sense of confidence that perhaps they did not experience in previous language classes. These benefits outweigh the students' desire for correction from Branko. Moreover, the students have devised their own correction networks, capitalizing on their peers' proficient grammar and aural skills. Aoki's (1999) students developed similar autonomous capacities when the teacher removed herself from roles that are typically afforded to the teacher. She also argues that in order for students to develop autonomy, they need a socially supportive atmosphere like that we observed in Branko's class.

We believe we have shown evidence that this teacher and his students' beliefs affected their class interactions, but we would also like to consider the possibility that their interactions in this class influenced their beliefs. We know that many of the students had limited experience in participatory language classes prior to entering Branko's class, yet they still espoused a firm belief in the importance of participation. They may not have known specifically the ways in which participation in a communicative class could enhance their language learning; nevertheless, it is likely that their experience in using the language for meaningful communication in Branko's class strengthened their beliefs about the value of participation. Following this line of thinking, students who came to the class firmly believing in the necessity of error correction, likely due to their past familiarity with constant correction, seemed to adjust their beliefs when they received almost no correction from Branko. With regard to affect, most of the students had limited prior experience in

developing relationships in language classes, but they still believed in its importance. Perhaps because of their previous experience, they appreciated the specific benefits of their interactions in Branko's class. It is our contention that the positive affective factors in this class likely mediated any disagreements that might have arisen about error correction. In addition, these positive affective factors likely strengthened the students' beliefs in the importance of participation in a communicative language class.

Implications

The findings of this study include implications for ESL teachers and students, language teacher educators and researchers. ESL teachers and students could benefit from examining their own—and one another's—beliefs about language teaching and learning. In a textbook that is widely used in language teacher education, Richards and Lockhart (1996) devote two chapters to teachers' and learners' beliefs. As the authors point out, teachers and learners have a wide range of beliefs about the nature of English and the best ways to teach it and learn it. The consequences of not clarifying one another's beliefs “are likely to be misunderstanding and mistrust” (p. 35). Learning about one another's beliefs could lead to greater understanding of teachers' and students' preferences for participation, correction, explanation, evaluation, and so forth. When we consider ESL students' backgrounds, it seems likely that their home cultures will have some influence on their beliefs about teacher and student roles. Discussing students' and teachers' beliefs about what should happen in the language class could allay much possible frustration and misunderstanding.

Language teacher educators could include in their programs an examination of beliefs about language teaching and learning. Such an inquiry could provide new and experienced teachers with a firmer understanding of their own teaching practice. Through careful consideration of their beliefs about language teaching, teachers can develop a deeper understanding of the basis for their decision-making. They can become better equipped to make sense of their own stances in relation to conditions imposed upon them at the institutional and classroom levels.

Moreover, this study offers researchers an example of practical research that can be undertaken in ESL/EFL classes. As Borg (2003) indicates, there seems to be a gap between teachers and researchers in ESL/EFL. Three important ways to bridge that gap are to make research more “conceptually, linguistically” accessible to teachers, to refer to “local knowledge” that is “specific, contextualized [and] experiential” (p. 1) with which teachers can identify, and to share ownership of the research with classroom teachers. This study is a good example of such accessible research,

involving local knowledge, and which depends on classroom teacher implementation and ownership.

Limitations and Future Research

We have already detailed the findings of this study and the ways that these findings can be applicable to the field of language and language teacher education. It is clear that the beliefs of the participants in this study affected their interactions in class. What cannot be concluded from this study is how beliefs about language teaching and learning might affect interactions in any other classroom. Beliefs and personal interactions are as individual as the people who hold them. However, we see this limitation as further support for the need for more examination of beliefs about language teaching and learning. There can be no quick and easy application of the findings of this case study to other teachers and students. Each class requires its own careful study of its participants' beliefs in order to better understand its teacher's and students' interactions.

This study has discovered that affective factors can mediate the differences between a teacher's and his students' beliefs. In future research, it would be interesting to learn how classroom experiences influence beliefs. For example, we wondered afterwards if any of the participants in this had changed their beliefs about whose job it was to correct errors. We did not see direct evidence of changed beliefs among our participants. However, when changes in beliefs do occur, it would be interesting to understand what factors cause such changes. An in-depth case study, such as the one we described above, might be one avenue for examining such change.

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Appendix A

Profile of Student-Participants

Name	Country of Origin	Name	Country of Origin
Carlos	Columbia	Sung	Korea
Dina	Venezuela	Sami	Columbia
Jong	Korea	Taif	Saudi Arabia
Lila	Japan	Young	Korea
Miki	Japan	Yumi	Japan
Rafi	Mexico		

Appendix B

Questionnaire #2:

Open Questions on Beliefs about Communicative Language Teaching and Learning

1. What do you think are your teacher's beliefs about English language teaching? Why do you think so?
2. How have the lessons and activities in this class influenced your beliefs about language learning?
3. How have your beliefs about language learning influenced your opinion of the lessons and activities you have experienced in this class?
4. What do you think are the sources of your beliefs about language teaching and learning?

Notes

¹ We wish to thank the participants in the study for their time and willingness to take part in this study. We also wish to thank an anonymous reviewer and Constance Walker for their helpful comments.

² We use pseudonyms for all participants in the study. We refer to ourselves using first names.

³ It should be noted that the questionnaires were the first step in discovering participants' beliefs and were followed by in depth interviews and observations. They were not the sole basis for understanding the participants' beliefs. In the two class sessions with students, the investigators took care to provide examples from studies in which participants held varied beliefs and to show that it was normal for teachers and students to sometimes disagree. It should also be noted that the first questionnaire asked students about their beliefs about Communicative Language Teaching, not specifically about Branko's class. However, in the interviews the participants did state clearly when they referred to their experiences in Branko's class.

⁴ All quotes from interviews appear unedited.

Language Teacher Education as Critical Practice

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Introduction

An increasing number of scholars in the field of language education have noted that “teacher education has been much done but relatively little studied” Freeman and Johnson (1998, p. 398). In the field of English as a second language (ESL), they make the case that while much published research does conclude with “implications for the classroom,” these insights do not necessarily extend to the professional preparation of ESL teachers. Indeed, the publication of Freeman and Richard’s (1996) collection, “Teacher Learning in Language Teaching,” represents the first formal collection of research on teacher learning in the field of language teaching. Further, in the field of foreign language education, certainly in North America, it is the struggle for legitimacy that dominates the research agenda, rather than a focus on foreign language teacher education, per se. Reagan and Osborne (2002) for example, focus their book on an “attempt to explain why foreign language education is relatively unsuccessful in contemporary American society” (p. 2), making a persuasive argument that we need to understand the broader sociocultural context in which foreign language education takes place.

Notwithstanding the relatively brief history of the field of language teacher education, there has been in recent years an increase in momentum, particularly with respect to sociocultural approaches to language teacher education. Johnson and Golombek (2002), for example, have drawn on teachers’ narrative inquiry as a form of professional development; Johnston (2002) has brought issues of values to the fore in language teacher education; and Hawkins (in press) examines diverse sociocultural approaches to language teacher education. This paper seeks to contribute to this emerging literature by examining language teacher education from the perspective of a diverse set of language teacher educators, working with language teachers in different parts of the world. Furthermore, extending the work of Reagan and Osborne (2002) and Hawkins (in press), I wish to better understand the sociocultural context in which these language teacher educators are working, focussing in particular on their attempts to engage critically with teacher education practices in their respective programs.

I use the term “critical” here in the sense in which it is used by such educators as Alastair Pennycook (2001, 2004) who describes three uses of the term “critical” in language education, only one of which focuses on power and possibility. “Critical” in the sense in which it is used in

discussions of “critical thinking,” suggests an attempt to create objective distance in pursuit of rational questioning procedures. Because such a view fails to link questioning to a broader social agenda, it is unhelpful in my work in language teacher education. A second view of “critical” is concerned with issues of social “relevance.” As Pennycook notes, while such a view has greater potential, it does not have a larger vision of social critique, and thus fall short of the analytical framework needed for this paper. The third notion of “critical” is centrally concerned with incorporating explicit social critique into pedagogy and research, seeking to change inequitable social conditions and people’s understanding of them. It is this third view of “critical” that I have found most helpful in my work in language teacher education, and which informs the model of critical language teacher education that I have developed.

In this paper, I focus on the teacher education practices taking place in six sites with which I have, through my work, become particularly familiar (Kanno & Norton, 2003; Norton & Toohy, 2004; Norton & Pavlenko, 2004). The first three sites address innovative practices in the curricula of language teacher educators in Hong Kong, Canada, and the U.S., respectively. I examine the work of Angel Lin (2004), who has introduced a critical pedagogical curriculum in her MA TESL program at the City University of Hong Kong; Tara Goldstein (2004), who has developed what she calls “performed ethnography” as a teacher education resource in Toronto, Canada; and Sarah Rilling and Rebecca Biles (2004), who have worked collaboratively on innovative uses of technology in teacher education. The other three sites to be examined are centrally concerned with diverse communities of practice in language teacher education, focussing on the practices of student teachers (Pennycook, 2004), graduate students (Pavlenko, 2004), and experienced language teachers (Toohy & Waterstone, 2004).

The practices at each of these six sites offer different perspectives on what it might mean to be a “critical” language teacher educator. Further, it will be evident from the discussion that my use of the term “teacher educator” refers not only to work with preservice teachers, but also to work with inservice teachers. Indeed, I suggest that the commonalities within these two groups may be more extensive than their differences. Many “preservice” teachers in language education programs have had much experience teaching, while many inservice teachers frequently take professional development courses to keep up to date with innovative practices in the field. In this paper, both preservice and inservice teachers are referred to as “student teachers” in the context of the language teacher education programs discussed. I conclude the paper with a model of language teacher education as critical practice, drawing on the insights from the six sites of practice.

Innovations in Curriculum Development

The following teacher educators, working in China, Canada, and the United States, have sought to introduce innovation and social change in their teacher education programs. Their work is a reminder that innovations in teacher education practices that are centrally concerned with social change require sober reflection, rigorous analysis, and creative action. The common theme that runs through the work of Lin, Goldstein, and Rilling and Biles is the attempt by these teacher educators to encourage student teachers to relate to the world from a position of strength rather than weakness and to utilize diverse resources to effect educational and social change.

Critical Pedagogical M.A. TESL Curriculum: Angel Lin, City University Hong Kong

Angel Lin, a teacher educator at the City University of Hong Kong, has introduced an innovative critical pedagogical curriculum in her M.A. TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) program, with mixed results. The challenges she has experienced include student teacher frustration with the academic language of critical pedagogical texts as well as feelings of pessimism and powerlessness. Lin makes the argument that schoolteachers, unlike academics, are situated in contexts in which cultural capital is determined not by mastery over academic language, but by the ability to make learning meaningful for students. In this context, the inaccessibility of some critical texts serves simply to alienate the very teachers who seek insight from these texts. Such frustration, she notes, is exacerbated by pessimism arising from a teaching context which is largely undemocratic and in which labor relations are unfavorable to teachers. Lin's work highlights the tensions arising from the unequal relations of power between teacher educators and student teachers, noting, in particular, the challenges faced by education workers in Hong Kong who are both junior and female.

Lin has sought to address these challenges, in part, by developing course assignments that are designed for a wider educational audience. As she notes:

To be honest, I was caught up in this sense of frustration and helplessness myself. What rescued me from such a depressing mode of thinking and helped me to see the value (albeit limited) of the critical curriculum I put into the course was the publication (albeit limited) of the teachers' writings (i.e., their critical project reports in my course) in TESL-HK (a newsletter for English language teaching professionals in Hong Kong) and some of my students dropping by my office telling me how proud and happy they felt about the publication of their writings and the opportunity to voice their views and share them with other English teachers in Hong Kong. (Lin, 2004, p. 280)

What Lin has sought to do in her innovative curriculum is to encourage her student teachers to see themselves as part of a range of communities, which includes not only language learners but professional colleagues. Through the publication of their writing, the student teachers can imagine different ways of relating to the profession, and gain inspiration from being part of a larger professional community.

Performed Ethnography: Tara Goldstein, Canada

Another powerful tool in teacher education, according to Tara Goldstein (2004), is what she calls *performed ethnography*. In seeking to prepare student teachers to work across linguistic, cultural, and racial differences in multilingual schools, she has found that ethnographic playwriting and performed ethnography offer a unique set of possibilities for addressing learning and teaching challenges. To this end, Goldstein has written a play called “Hong Kong, Canada,” which addresses some of the tensions that arise in multilingual/multicultural school contexts. Material for the play was drawn from a four-year (1996-2000) critical ethnographic case study of an English-speaking Canadian high school that had recently enrolled a large number of immigrant students from Hong Kong.

In her teacher education program, Goldstein draws on this play to help student teachers explore issues associated with identity politics prior to confronting such issues in schools. The play also addresses the complex interplay between speech and silence in multilingual schools and offers the opportunity for student teachers to consider alternative endings to the play. Goldstein cautions that teacher educators need to work actively and critically with student teacher responses to performed ethnography and to draw attention to the linguistic privileges of target-language speakers. She suggests that ethnographic playwriting and performed ethnography will help student teachers engage in conflict resolution and anti-discriminatory education that will, in turn, help to create safe and equitable learning environments for language learners in multilingual schools.

The following excerpt from the script is illustrative of the rich material that can be drawn upon for discussion and analysis.

Sarah: Hey...were you at the Talent Night on Friday? I didn't see you there.

Joshua: No, I couldn't make it. My cousins from Montreal were in for the weekend and my mother wanted me home for dinner. How was it? I heard it was pretty good.

Sarah: Yeah. Some of it was good. Like, the teachers' band, “P.E.T. School Boys,” they were good. And the dance numbers by the Jazz Dance class were great. But,

there were so many people who sang songs in Chinese and you couldn't understand a word of them. And all the people who do understand Chinese—most of our school—went crazy. Clapping, whistling. But, like, if you didn't understand any of the words, it was boring. It made me mad.

Joshua: What made you mad?

Sarah: All those songs in Chinese. This isn't Hong Kong. This is Canada. In Canada, people should sing in English. You know what I mean? And I'm not the only one who was mad. Some of the girls from Iran were mad too. Nobody performed in Persian. So how come so many people performed in Chinese? (Excerpt from Scene 5)

Ethnographic playwriting and performed ethnography hold exciting possibilities for preparing language teachers to effectively respond to the complexities of working across linguistic, cultural, and racial differences in multilingual schools. Goldstein argues convincingly that performed ethnography provides language teachers with the possibility of entering new communities, trying out new identities, and imagining new possibilities for the language classroom with the use of a relatively safe pedagogical resource.

Gender and Technology: Sarah Rilling and Rebecca Biles, USA

Another innovative course for an M.A. TESL/TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) program has been developed by Sarah Rilling in a U.S. institution. In a recent research study, she and Rebecca Biles (Rilling & Biles, 2004) describe a graduate technology course that examines the relationship between gender and technology from their respective positions as instructor and graduate student. Their action research project was based on the premise that a technology course is an ideal site for student teachers to learn how gender can affect teacher-student and student-student interactions and that insights from such a course will help student teachers create safe learning environments for their ESL students.

In their recently published chapter, "Explorations of language and gender in a graduate technology course," Rilling and Biles (2004) outline the technologies used in the course, such as *Syllabase*, *E-chatting*, and *Tapped In*, describe the prompts Rilling used to promote discussion on gender and technology, and summarize the responses Biles made to each of these learning opportunities. Two central concerns for both Rilling and Biles was the extent to which technology could either enhance or compromise the safety of the learning community, and how issues of gender and language learning/teaching could be productively examined. They found that the

course successfully helped students to increase their computer skills while simultaneously providing greater insight into gender, technology, and the language learning classroom. As they said,

In a language learning classroom, self-expression is important because it allows teachers and students to learn from their classmates' experiences and ideas. Self-expression raises critical questions and highlights commonalities in human experience. Creating different types of spaces for ESL learners to discuss issues and explore language could motivate a variety of students. These spaces might be used for authentic discussion, role play, and simulations—spaces where students could explore both their own and alternate personae. (Rilling & Biles, 2004, p. 121)

Rilling and Biles note further that a particularly significant finding was the realization that the virtual world, while being an imagined reality, nevertheless evoked emotions that were real. The challenge for the language teacher educator is to ensure that this imagined community remains a safe community, in which student teachers can explore ideas, negotiate difference, and take risks.

Communities of Practice in Teacher Education

While the pedagogical practices of Lin, Goldstein, and Rilling and Biles highlight the challenges and possibilities of incorporating innovation in language teacher education programs, the pedagogical practices of Pennycook, Pavlenko, and Toohey and Waterstone provide insight into the challenges and possibilities of working with diverse student teachers, whether novices, graduate students, or experienced practitioners. These diverse communities offer important insights for a model of language teacher education as critical practice.

The Practicum as Praxicum: Alastair Pennycook

In recent work, Alastair Pennycook (2004) reminds us that a great deal of language teaching does not take place in well-funded institutes of education, but in community programs, places of worship, and immigrant centers, where funds are limited and time at a premium. Of central interest in his work is a consideration of the way in which teacher educators can intervene in the process of practicum observation to bring about educational and social change. Pennycook's quest is for critical moments in the practicum: "a point of significance, an instant when things change" (Pennycook, 2004, p. 330).

In his review of a student teacher, Kath, in a practicum experience in Sydney, Australia, Pennycook identifies three such critical moments in Kath's class. These critical moments arise from the actions of a disruptive male student; the use of practice dialogues for calling technicians; and

the recognition of nonstandard English in the classroom. Each of these critical moments, Pennycook argues, raises larger questions of power and authority in the wider society and provides an opportunity for critical discussion and reflection. In this spirit, in his after-class discussion with Kath, Pennycook examines these critical moments with respect to complexities of gender politics, authentic language, and the ownership of English. As he notes,

Having finished our talk and wished [Kath] well in the rest of her teaching, I reflect that we seem to have covered three critical moments: turning the discussion of the difficult student into a broader consideration of gender, culture, power, and rights; looking at how consensual dialogues not only fail to prepare students for the world outside but also potentially construct passive, consensual roles for them in the face of more powerful others; and the notion that it may not be the so-called standard versions of English that are the most common or useful for students. (Pennycook, 2004, p. 340)

By locating these critical moments in a wider social context in which there are ongoing struggles over language, identity, and power, Kath can better understand her practicum experience. Pennycook makes the case that while the analysis of critical moments may not change the world, it does provide a window on central issues in critical teacher education.

Imagined Communities and Language Teachers: Aneta Pavlenko, USA

Aneta Pavlenko's (2004) study of pre- and in-service ESL and EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers enrolled in one TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) program in the U.S. provides insight into the way in which theory can provide empowering options for graduate students of language education. Pavlenko found that a discursive analysis of the students' positioning in their linguistic autobiographies suggests that the traditional discourse of linguistic competence positions students as members of one of two communities, native speakers or non-native speakers/L2 (second language) learners. Pavlenko thus introduced the student teachers to more contemporary theories of bilingualism and second language acquisition, in particular Cook's (1992, 1999) notion of multi-competence. In doing so, she opened up an alternative imagined community for her student teachers, that of multi-competent, bi- and multilingual speakers. This option allowed some teachers to construct themselves and their future students as legitimate L2 users, rather than as failed native speakers of the target language.

The comments of Ikuku, a female Japanese student, and Meredith, a female American student, illustrate the power of theory to provide a larger set of identity options for student teachers:

Ikuku: Every day, I learn a new insight about English and sociocultural aspect of the language, which knowledge empowers me. For instance, I hesitated to see myself as a bilingual person until recently, and I kept thinking that my English was not good enough and ultimately I should be able to speak or write like native person until I learned the concept of multicompetency by Cook.

Meredith: Although I can communicate well in these three languages [Italian, French, and Spanish], I have never liked when people refer to me as “fluent” in them or “bilingual.” These terms make me very uncomfortable, and I have always corrected those who use them in regard to me. For me, these terms could only be used for those who were able to communicate equally well in their first and second languages. I felt that these could never apply to me because it requires growing up with two languages, or spending many years in the target language environment, to reach that level. Although my understanding of these terms has now changed, and I realize that a bilingual can know very little of a second language, I still don’t feel comfortable using them to describe myself. And although I have always rejected these terms, I have never known what to replace them with, until now. The term multicompetent, as described by Cook, seems to accurately fit the way I perceive my language abilities. . . . It is a term that accurately and positively describes the majority of second language learners, and a term I can finally be comfortable with. (Pavlenko, 2003, pp. 262-263)

What is particularly significant about the power of theory is that, as student teachers negotiate a wider range of identity options for themselves, they may also re-evaluate the identity options available for the language learners in their own classrooms.

Teacher/Researcher Communities: Kelleen Toohey and Bonnie Waterstone

The relationship between theory and practice is also central to the teacher education research of Kelleen Toohey and Bonnie Waterstone, but has a very different focus from that of Pavlenko’s study. In Toohey and Waterstone’s study, the challenge for the student teachers was how to translate their own practice into a wider theoretical framework.

In their study, “Negotiating Expertise in an Action Research Community,” Toohey and Waterstone (2004) describe a research collaboration between teachers and researchers in Vancouver, Canada, with the mutual goal of investigating what practices in classrooms would make a difference to the learning opportunities of minority-language children. While teachers were comfortable discussing and critiquing their educational practices, they expressed ambivalence about translating their practice into publishable academic papers. Like the student teachers in Lin’s study, the teachers in the research group felt little ownership over the academic language characteristic of many published journals. Marcy, one of the teachers, raised the concern that a

paper that is “too journalized up” would no longer be appealing to teachers, while Donna, another teacher, noted as follows:

I had an interesting [*unintelligible*], just driving home last week when we were talking about my question and I don't tend to talk in really academic type language. It was interesting because Kelleen very helpfully reworded what I had said her way. (*Whole group laughs*) Those aren't my words. And yes, it sounded great and wonderful but I won't be using those words now. I might, maybe next year, but right now they are not my words. (Toohey & Waterstone, 2004, p. 299)

Toohey and Waterstone draw on this experience to suggest that writing which respects both teachers' and researchers' ways of knowing might artfully blend narrative with analysis and tell dramatic stories of classroom incidents enriched by a consideration of theoretical insights. The crucial question in collaborative research, Toohey and Waterstone argue, is not, “Is power equitably shared amongst participants?” but “What should participants *do* with the diverse sources of power they have?” The acknowledgement of different sites of expertise renders collaborative research a powerful tool in teacher education.

Towards a Model of Language Teacher Education as Critical Practice

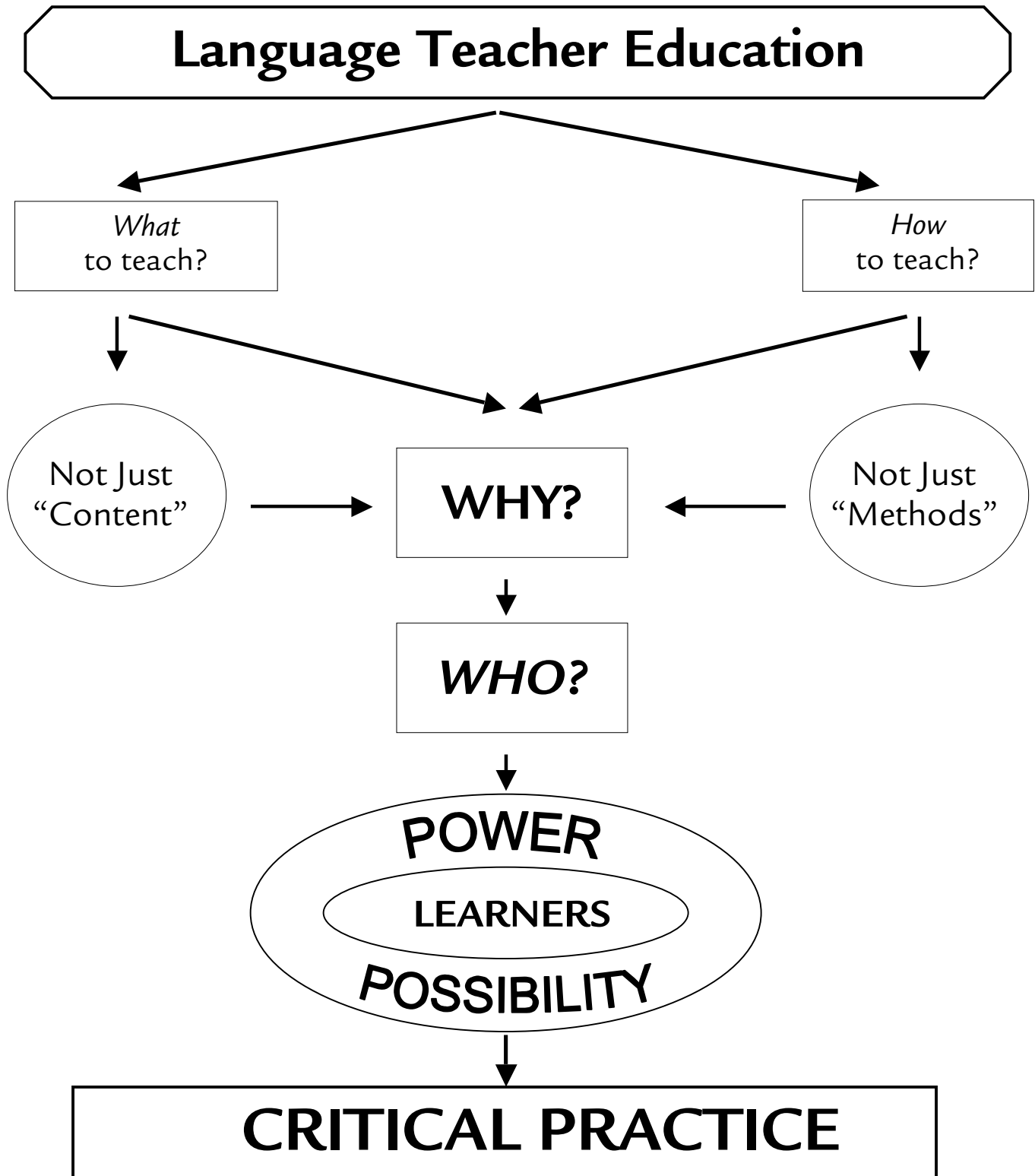
Drawing on the insights of the language teacher educators discussed in this paper, and reflecting on my own experience as a language teacher educator, I would like to propose a model of language teacher education as critical practice (see Appendix). When student teachers enter language education programs, the two central questions they ask are as follows: “What do I teach?” and “How do I teach it?” The research examined in this paper suggests that teaching is not just about “content” and that teaching is not just about “methods”. We have to ask the question, “*Why* do we teach *what* we teach?” and “*Why* do we teach the *way* we teach?” Of central interest is who the student teachers are, what histories they bring with them to the classroom, which communities they desire to be part of, and what learners they will have to teach. It is clear from the research discussed that learners, teachers, student teachers, and teacher educators are part of wider sociocultural communities in which there is frequently unequal access to power and possibility. 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. The work of language teacher educators in Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, and the U.S., as discussed in this paper, serves as an inspiration to us all.

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Appendix
Language Teacher Education as Critical Practice



Is ESL Just Good Teaching?

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Introduction

Changing demographics dictate that teachers be prepared as effective teachers of native English speakers *and* of non-native speakers of English. The growth in the number of English language learners (ELLs) greatly outpaces that of the general school population throughout the United States (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2003). Over 40% of all teachers in the U.S. report teaching English language learners (ELLs) but few (12.5%) have received eight hours or more training specifically related to ELLs (NCES, 2002). These trends make it imperative that teacher education programs prepare their students to become effective educators in classrooms that include ELLs.

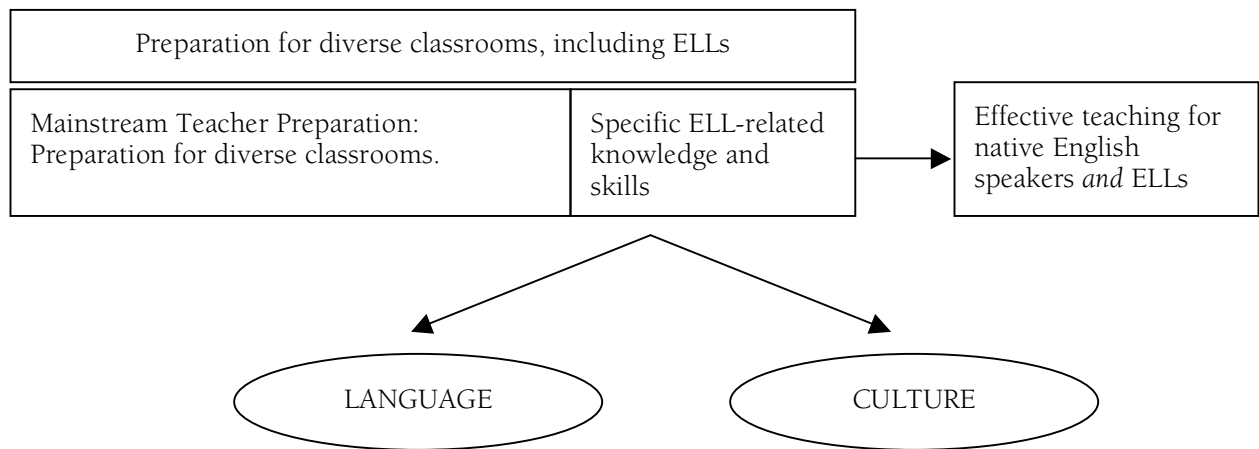
As teacher educators, we often encounter the response that little change is necessary in current teacher education practices to address the educational needs of ELLs because they do not differ significantly from those of native English-speaking students from diverse racial or socioeconomic backgrounds. We refer to this position as the “just good teaching” approach, which views teaching ELLs as a matter of pedagogical adaptations that can easily be incorporated into a mainstream teacher’s existing repertoire of instructional strategies designed for native English speakers, such as activating prior knowledge, cooperative learning, process writing, and using graphic organizers or hands-on activities.

We question the adequacy of the “ESL is just good teaching” approach for preparing teachers to work effectively with all students, including ELLs. We argue that there are ELL-specific knowledge, skills, and dispositions related to language and culture that must be explicitly addressed if teachers are to be prepared to teach linguistically diverse populations across all subject areas. The purpose of this position paper is to first identify the general nature of the gap between effective practices for native English speakers and effective teaching for ELLs. Next, we discuss the complexity of the relationship between these two approaches by examining the role of individual learner characteristics in mediating the extent to which teachers must deviate from a native-speaker-based approach in order to be effective teachers of ELLs.

“Just Good Teaching”: Not Quite Good Enough

Being prepared to teach a diverse group of native speakers is important but will not be sufficient to meet the educational needs of ELLs. When it comes to preparing prospective teachers for integrated native English speaker and ELL classrooms, teacher preparation programs must provide additional knowledge and skills related to two domains, language and culture (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Effective Teaching for ELLs



Because of space limitations, we will focus our discussion on the language domain (for a complete discussion of both domains, see de Jong & Harper, 2004). By considering “best practices” for native speakers and by analyzing how these practices match or fail to meet the linguistic and academic needs of ELLs from an L2 or bilingual development perspective, we can identify the knowledge and skills that teachers need in order to bridge the gap between the teaching of native English speakers and that of native English speakers and ELLs. We will describe this knowledge and skill gap along three dimensions. The first dimension considers how second languages are learned (language as a *process*). Our discussion here focuses specifically on language and literacy development. The second dimension focuses on the role of language as a *medium* of instruction across subject areas and the third dimension emphasizes the importance of making language a *goal* of instruction for ELLs, particularly in the content areas. The following sections provide examples of each dimension.

Beyond Similarities: L1 Learning is not the Same as L2 Learning

There are significant similarities between first language (L1) and second language (L2) development. Both are developmental in nature and involve constructive and social processes in

which input and interaction are central components. When English language and literacy instruction is grounded in constructivist and interactionist approaches (Bruner, 1986; Vygotsky, 1978; Wells, 1981, 1986), many suggested classroom practices for L1 learners correspond with those recommended for ELLs. For example, a teacher guiding a class discussion of authentic literature or teaching new vocabulary in context (Peregoy & Boyle, 2001) will assist oral language development for both L1 and L2 speakers. Similarly, literacy practices for native speakers of English, such as guided reading, process writing, or the use of graphic organizers to scaffold reading comprehension can also benefit L2 learners (Freeman & Freeman, 2000). The “ESL is just good teaching” approach emphasizes these similarities and, by extension, considers L1 practices sufficient for L2 learners. The first dimension of the gap between this approach and effective teaching of ELLs emphasizes the importance of including differences between L1 and L2 language and literacy development when planning curriculum and instruction.

In the area of literacy development, the “ESL is just good teaching” perspective takes for granted a strong foundation in oral English, i.e., the sound system, vocabulary, grammar, and discourse structure. Oral language skills are important resources for L1 literacy development, including phonemic and phonological awareness, reading comprehension, and vocabulary development (Snow & Burns, 1998). Assumptions of oral competence can lead to misdirected L2 reading instruction (e.g., using nonsense words to teach sound/symbol associations) or inappropriate assessment (e.g., interpreting lack of fluency as lack of reading comprehension). Additionally, ELLs’ native languages may differ from English in a number of important ways that affect their L2 language and literacy development. For example, the type of grammatical information carried in the structure of words varies across languages. In English, past tense is signaled through “-ed” suffixes on verbs whereas many Asian languages indicate tense by using separate words. At the clause and sentence level, the order of words (e.g., subject/verb/object) is fixed and extremely important in English, whereas the order and consistency are more flexible in other languages, such as German or Russian. Finally, the organization of larger units of written text, such as the canonical English paragraph structure involving a general statement followed by supporting details, can also vary for students who are literate in their native language. Such cross-linguistic differences can alter and limit the effective use of important cuing systems in reading in English (Birch, 2002; Grabe & Stoller, 2002).

In addition to differences in language competence at the word, sentence, and discourse levels, ELLs frequently do not have the same control over the sounds of English. If a teacher uses a picture of a nail on a phonics cue chart to represent the vowel sound in the word “nail,” she may fail

to see that this example is meaningless if ELLs do not already know the word “nail.” When a student comes across an unknown word, the recommendation to “sound it out” is of little use if s/he does not already know the meaning of the word orally. In a similar vein, tasks for building phonemic awareness that use minimal pairs to isolate contrasting consonant and vowel sounds (e.g., “bark-park” or “cop-cope”) become ineffective if an ELL does not perceive or produce these distinctive contrasts in English (e.g., /l/ may not sound different from /r/, or the vowel sound in “sick” is not distinguished from the vowel sound in “seek”).

Finally, assumed intuitions about the English language can also lead to ineffective teacher feedback. For instance, comments used with native speakers during teacher-student writing conferences such as “Does this word make sense here?” or “Does this sentence sound right?” or comments at the discourse level stating that a paragraph is “awkward” will be inadequate for ELLs. There are important differences between ELLs’ L1 writing experiences and expectations for English writing that teachers need to consider for students who are literate in their L1 (Ferris & Hedgecock, 1998). In their feedback, teachers cannot assume that ELLs share the same vocabulary base or facility with English language structure as native speakers. They must be prepared to provide clear explanations for aspects of the English language that are unnecessary for native speakers, such as rules of word order at the phrase or sentence level (e.g., placement of adjectives before nouns, the formation of negatives and questions in English), or the use of articles and prepositions.

Mainstream teachers’ understanding of the *process* of language learning and the implications for classroom practice needs to expand beyond what they already know about L1 acquisition and L1 literacy practices. They also need to understand what makes learning a second language different or difficult for ELLs. This implies that teachers need to understand language variation and the effect it may have on their ELL learners. Explicit instruction of word formation and patterns of sentence and paragraph structure may be necessary for ELLs who do not have the linguistic competence in English or the instructional experience in U.S. schools to draw upon in developing their literacy skills in English. Teachers must also be able to embed literacy activities, such as building phonemic and phonological awareness, in contexts where ELLs have access to meaningful vocabulary. Finally, teachers must be able to identify the specific writing development needs of ELLs and adjust their instruction and feedback accordingly (Reid, 1998).

Beyond Invisibility: National Content Standards

The second dimension focuses on English as a *medium* of instruction. Over reliance on good practices for native English speakers to meet the needs of ELLs conceals the role of language in

curriculum planning. The mediating role of English is invisible because its presence is assumed rather than made explicit. The national standards for core content areas are good examples of how this invisibility permeates curriculum planning and implementation (see for example, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 2000; National Council of Teachers of English, 1996; National Academy of Sciences, 1995, National Council for the Social Studies, 1994). The national standards provide a comprehensive overview of the disciplinary knowledge base of the content area and describe effective instructional practices, such as cooperative learning, encouraging critical thinking, and building on student's prior knowledge. Though claiming to address "diverse" learners, these standards are primarily directed at a diverse *native English-speaking* student population (Dalton, 1998). They tacitly assume that students have mastered sufficient levels of oral language and literacy skills in English to participate meaningfully in content classrooms. Students in these effective content classrooms are expected to learn new information through reading texts, to actively participate in discussions, and to demonstrate their learning by presenting oral reports and preparing research papers. Such demands on the students' ability to manipulate sophisticated language and literacy skills remain invisible in the national standards documents. While there is an emphasis on creating classrooms where students will "talk to learn," there is no consideration of how students will "learn to talk," which is the additional task facing the L2 learner. Recommendations do not specify the pedagogical tools necessary to provide ELLs with access to these high-quality content classrooms (Dalton, 1998).

The national standards documents show the invisibility of the English language as a medium of teaching and learning in K-12 schools. What distinguishes a classroom that explicitly addresses the needs of ELLs from the "just good teaching" classroom is that "English is very much present and accounted for...teachers extend practices of good teaching to incorporate techniques that teach language as well as content" (Diaz-Rico & Weed, 2002, p. 117). Mainstream teachers therefore need to develop an awareness of the role of language in their classrooms so that they can effectively mediate the language demands of instruction for ELLs across all subject areas. For instance, one important adjustment that teachers of ELLs must make is in their vocabulary choice and in the use of idiomatic language when addressing the class. Further, they need to be able to anticipate linguistic challenges in literature or textbooks.

Beyond Content: Setting Language Objectives

The third dimension, language as a *goal*, focuses on the relation between language and content teaching. An awareness of language in content classrooms generally focuses on the

specialized vocabulary of an academic subject. Teachers who organize their instruction based on expectations for native English speakers may attempt to mediate these language demands by explicitly teaching the content-specific vocabulary or by using graphic organizers to reinforce the students' use of the academic register.

However, as Gibbons (1998) points out, unlike curriculum planning for native English speakers, for L2 learners “the construction of new curriculum knowledge must go hand-in-hand with the development of the second language” (p. 99). To meet their content goals for ELLs, teachers must therefore also take on the responsibility of second language development by explicitly including language objectives in curriculum planning. For instance, a focus on content mastery and cognitive development without attention to the language through which the learning takes place may result in overlooking linguistic demands that are particularly challenging for second language learners. Everyday vocabulary terms such as “table,” “crust,” or “seat” carry special meaning in the content areas and may confuse L2 learners. The same concept or operation may be expressed through many synonyms that are familiar to the native speaker but are unknown to the L2 learner. In math, for example, addition can be signaled through a range of different words, such as “add,” “plus,” “and,” “increase,” “gain,” “more,” or “sum” (Dale & Cuevas, 1987). Content area texts typically use syntactic structures beyond the L2 learners' level of proficiency (e.g., the use of passive voice, or conditionals) and ELLs may be unfamiliar with the multiple ways that authors create cohesion and coherence in their texts (through the use of transition words and phrases such as “nonetheless,” “moreover,” or “consequently.”) Whereas native speakers may not need such extensive scaffolding in the grammar and discourse structures of the language, ELLs need consistent instruction that will facilitate L2 development in these areas while learning the content of the discipline (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994; Gibbons, 2003).

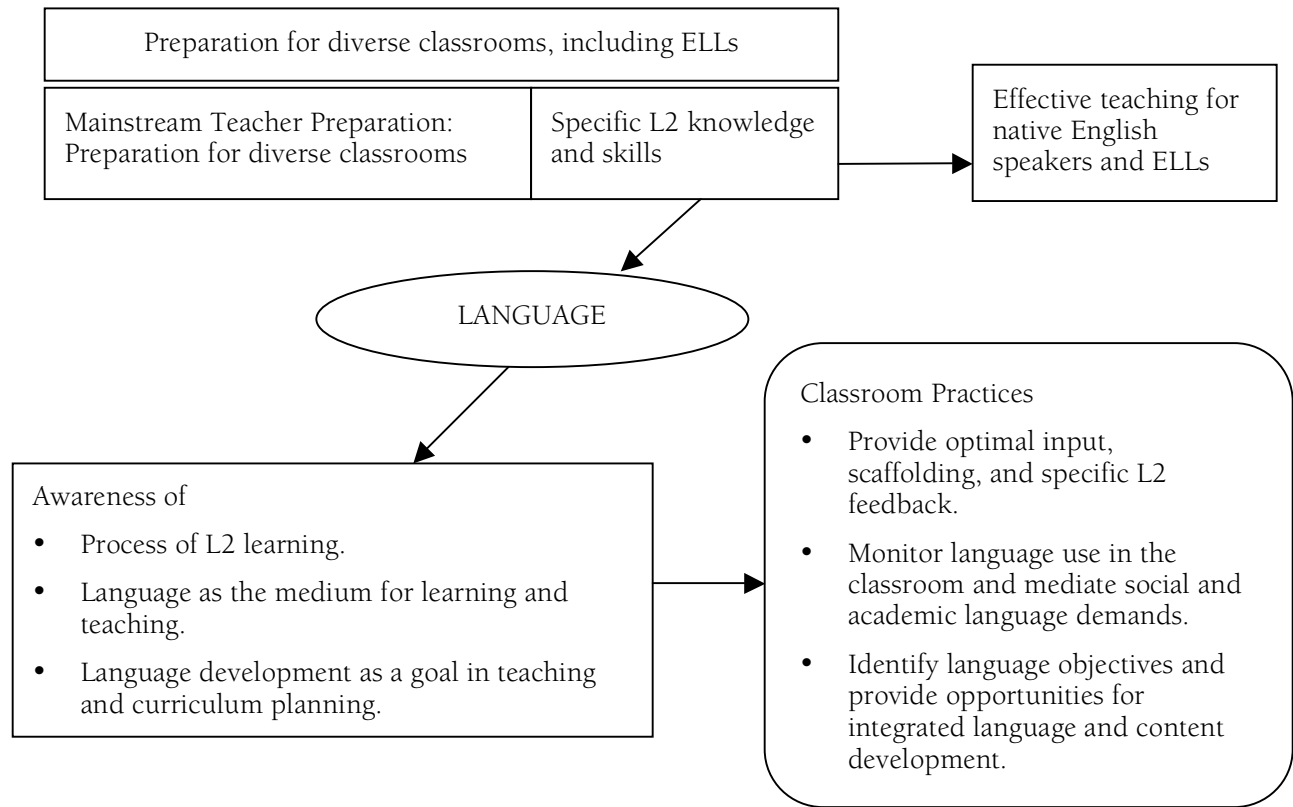
By understanding the academic language demands of their content areas, teachers can purposefully attend to the underlying “linguistic register” (Short, 2002, p. 20) of their discipline and include the development of these language skills in curriculum planning (Gersten & Baker, 2000). Focusing on language as a goal implies that content teachers are able to identify the academic language demands in their classroom and accept responsibility for the language development of ELLs.

More Than Just Good Teaching

In the examples above we have defined the gap between “ESL is just good teaching for native English speakers” and effective teaching of native and non-native speakers for the language

domain along three dimensions: (a) an understanding of the second language learning process and how it is similar to and different from L1 learning, (b) an understanding of how language is used as a medium in teaching and learning content, and (c) an understanding of language development as an explicit goal of curriculum (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: The gap between effective mainstream practices and effective teaching for ELLs



Mainstream teacher preparation programs must, therefore, go beyond the assumption that “best practices” are good enough for ELLs. In their course work and field experiences they must make ELL-specific knowledge, skills, and dispositions visible and explicit for each dimension (process, medium, and goal) in order to enable teachers to meet the academic and language standards for all students, including ELLs.

Mediating the Gap

Up to this point, we have treated ELLs and schools as static, one-dimensional concepts. However, the ELL population varies tremendously according to level of L1 literacy and schooling, parental educational background, socioeconomic status (Thomas & Collier, 2002) as well as other

variables such as age, personality, motivation, and attitudes toward language learning (Brown, 2000). Classroom environments change according to the nature of the curriculum at different grade levels, in addition to teachers' theories of teaching and learning.

These learner and learning context variables will mediate the gap between effective classroom practices for native English speakers and effective classroom practices for ELLs. While they will not necessarily affect the ELL-specific knowledge base that mainstream teachers need (i.e., the role of language as a process, as a medium, and as a goal; see Figure 2), they do alter the extent to which these teachers must go beyond the “just good teaching” approach in order to meet the linguistic and academic needs of ELLs. Gersten and Baker (2000) refer to the *modulation* of instruction, that is, “teaching that is tempered, tuned, and otherwise adjusted . . . to the correct ‘pitch’ at which English-language learners will best ‘hear’ the content (i.e., find it most meaningful)” (p. 461). To illustrate this point, we will explore the interaction of one learner characteristic (L2 oral language proficiency) and one learning environment variable (grade level) with a framework that emphasizes effective L1 teaching practices. We are fully aware that isolating individual variables oversimplifies the complex process of L2 teaching and the interaction of individual and societal variables with the rate of L2 learning. It allows us, however, to outline the role of individual variables and learning context in relationship to the assumption that ESL is just good teaching.

Native Speaker-Based Practices and L2 Oral Language Proficiency

As stated previously, when working with native English speakers, mainstream teachers can assume fluency in spoken English and their ability to participate in class activities such as group presentations and discussions. When teaching ELLs, mainstream teachers need to understand that neither exposure nor interaction will be sufficient for the oral language development of ELLs. For instance, interaction between ELLs and native English speakers are often limited to brief exchanges that do not provide optimal academic language development experiences for ELLs (Harklau, 1999; Valdés, 2001). Even cooperative learning arrangements where students are assigned academic tasks that require active participation may assume language skills that ELLs do not possess at their current level of L2 proficiency, for example, being able to question, agree, disagree, or interrupt appropriately (Pica, 1994; Swain, 1995). Such scenarios require mainstream teachers to be aware of the role of language in teaching and learning and to appropriately scaffold their tasks for their ELLs' language development, for example, by providing cuing cards with question stems for ELLs (Harper & James, 2003).

The level of L2 oral language proficiency affects the extent to which such oral language scaffolding diverges from mainstream teachers' "best practices." Beginning ELLs reflect the largest difference between the oral skills of native speakers and those of L2 learners and they require the most significant adjustment. Oral language classroom activities developed for L1 learners will be the least appropriate for L2 learners at the preproduction, early production, and speech emergence stages (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). Including these students in their classroom requires teachers to make more significant changes in their instruction in order to ensure opportunities for comprehensible input and meaningful interactions with peers, as well as targeted instruction and feedback. On the other hand, teaching practices will better in meeting the oral language needs of intermediate and advanced L2 learners when informed by an interactionist, constructive theoretical framework (see the discussion above). These learners are better able to take advantage of a language-rich learning environment and of interactions with more capable native English-speaking peers through cooperative learning activities.

In short, the gap between effective native English speaker-based practices and the effective teaching of ELLs may widen or narrow, depending on the students' oral L2 proficiency level. The lower a student's L2 oral proficiency, the less likely it is that good mainstream teaching practices will be sufficient to support L2 oral language development. As ELLs become more fluent, teaching practices aimed specifically at English oral communication are more likely to be effective for ELLs.

Native Speaker-Based Practices and Grade Level

The deceptively straightforward relationship between L2 oral proficiency level and the "just good teaching" approach becomes more complicated when academic language proficiency is taken into consideration. The nature of academic language changes as students advance in grade level. Increasingly, teaching and student learning becomes more embedded in language with limited non-verbal contextual support (Cummins, 2000). As learners move from predominantly oral discussions and activities grounded in their own personal experiences (K–2) to writing and talking about abstract content-related concepts, they must master the more complex vocabulary, syntactic structures, and pragmatic conventions that are appropriate for the specific discourse of the subject and the grade level (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 1996; Gibbons, 2002; Scarcella, 2003; Short, 2002). While L1 speakers also need to acquire many aspects of the linguistic register of school, they have the advantage of being able to build on many prior (linguistic) experiences within and beyond the school setting (Menyuk, 1999).

When considering academic language development in addition to L2 oral proficiency, we can see that the gap between good mainstream teaching and effective teaching of ELLs is modified further. Lower grade mainstream teachers' practices will be more closely aligned with ELLs' needs than those of secondary teachers due to the nature of the curriculum and instructional practices occurring at those grade levels. While elementary students continue to be provided with hands-on activities, manipulatives, visuals, and small group and whole group discussions to help mediate and scaffold their learning (including language learning), secondary level students are expected to be prepared to learn in and through language. "It is words themselves that provide the conceptual links for learning in the high-school years... talking about text remains the high school's curriculum foundation" (Corson, 1999, p. 127). Effective secondary classroom teachers engage students in complex oral discussions that promote critical thinking, center their lessons around more difficult reading texts derived from a wide range of primary and secondary sources and different genres, and they demand more complex and extended writing (cf. our discussion of the national content standards earlier) (Corson, 2001).

Given the language development orientation of early childhood programs and the curriculum of the lower elementary grades, English oral language development and English literacy practices for native speakers will more likely meet the needs of second language learners as well. This is not to say that no accommodations for ELLs at different proficiency levels are needed. As discussed above, even elementary teachers need to pay more attention to vocabulary development and explicitly scaffold language for ELLs to help them acquire a deep understanding of the English language to support L2 literacy development. Keeping exceptions in mind (e.g., more focused activities on identifying certain sounds or the use of certain cuing systems), we would argue, however, that at these grade levels, the accommodation is generally one of degree rather than a substantial shift away from existing practices.

In contrast, the upper grade teacher who assumes a general good teaching perspective must diverge more from his or her mainstream practices as the grade level increases and the language of schooling becomes more demanding. As teaching practices assume oral command of English and rely heavily on class discussion and texts, they are least likely to meet grade level L2 oral language development needs. Secondary teachers must therefore make significant adaptations for ELLs across proficiency levels.

Many mainstream teachers do in fact notice when beginner ELLs are completely lost and will attempt some changes in instructional approaches, though they do not necessarily feel prepared to make such accommodations (Penfield, 1987; Short, 2002). However, the secondary

teacher's responsibility to adjust their practices from effective approaches to teaching native speakers to effective teaching for ELLs continues even when students have reached intermediate or advanced stages of L2 oral language proficiency. As Gravelle (1996) points out, "Once pupils become more fluent in their use of English the immediate need for extra support is less obvious. It is at this stage that learners are often left to manage as best as they can and their achievement is affected" (p.9). In order to avoid that older ELLs reach an intermediate oral or writing proficiency "plateau" where they can superficially participate in the classroom but miss out on the academically challenging tasks (Freeman, Freeman, & Mercuri, 2002), good teachers of ELLs must explicitly scaffold the academic language of the classroom and they must be able to set specific linguistic objectives to meet this goal (Cloud, Genesee, & Hamayan, 2000). For instance, they can explicitly model the use of passive voice in reporting the stages of a science experiment or teach discourse markers of cause/effect or chronology in a history lesson (Schleppegrell & Colombi, 2002). They may use graphic organizers not only to display relationships among concepts, but also as a scaffolding tool to teach the language needed to express these relationships (Tang, 1992). Even though secondary level students are cognitively more mature and have prior language learning, schooling experiences, and general world knowledge from which they can draw, the language demands placed on them are significantly different from those of younger learners (Collier, 1995).

In short, in order to meet older ELLs' academic language and content learning needs, mainstream teachers must go beyond their good mainstream practices for native English speakers and scaffold instruction appropriately. Cummins (2000) puts it succinctly,

Development of academic knowledge and skills in the majority language will *not* "just take care of itself"; it requires *explicit* teaching with a focus on the genres, functions, and conventions of the language itself in the context of extensive reading and writing of the language. (p. 23)

Scaffolding ELLs is not simply a matter of degree for upper elementary and secondary teachers. It involves a much more significant change, including adding curricular goals (i.e., language objectives), providing contextualized instruction for content and language learning, creating activities that are specifically designed to address L2 needs that are different from L1 needs (e.g., grammar-related activities), and changing questioning practices to accommodate different proficiency levels while promoting higher order thinking (de Jong & Derrick-Mescua, 2003). Finally, unlike their more generalist elementary counterparts, secondary teachers must change their image of themselves as content area teachers to include an accepted responsibility for teaching language (Reeves, 2004; Short, 2002).

Conclusion

Harklau (1994) warns of the challenge of mainstream classroom settings for ELLs when there is no explicit attention to the special language needs of ELLs. She notes,

It has been suggested that one of the most powerful arguments for mainstreaming ... is that it provides naturally occurring opportunities to use and develop language through purposeful use. Yet in the mainstream classroom the main teaching purpose is to get on with the curriculum content. The classroom exchanges are primarily concerned with curriculum meaning; language development work is not necessarily the focus of attention. (p. 171)

Mainstream teachers cannot rely solely on “just good teaching” practices designed for diverse native English-speaking students and based on native speaker monolingual norms when teaching ELLs. They need ELL-specific knowledge and skills related to the process of second language learning and ways that language shapes learning and teaching in school.

We have argued that the extent to which the “ESL is just good teaching” framework is appropriate for teaching ELLs is mediated by individual learning characteristics (e.g., level of L2 oral proficiency) as well as by learning context (e.g., grade level). We hypothesized that a much wider gap emerges when mainstream teachers who use a “just good teaching” approach teach ELLs at the secondary level than at the early childhood level, due in part to differences in the extent to which teaching and learning is contextualized through non-verbal means and is grounded in shared here-and-now experiences. We argued that, as the language demands of instruction increase, teachers need to be able to provide not only *more* scaffolded language support, but also language instruction and feedback that is *specific* to their needs. This requires that they are aware of the explicit and implicit language demands of their instructional practices and are able to intervene appropriately for ELLs in ways that provide access to the content but support ELLs’ academic L2 development.

More research is necessary on what makes teaching ELLs different from teaching a diverse group of native speakers. Our framework (Figure 2) is based on theoretical insights and, indirectly, on classroom-based research and anecdotal evidence from our own work. Few studies have directly addressed this question, which shapes not only the identity of the bilingual and ESL profession but also our expectations for mainstream teachers and their level of preparation (Mohan, Leung, & Davison, 2001). Some key questions to examine are:

1. Does the definition of “diversity” as reflected in mission statements and course objectives explicitly include reference to “linguistic diversity”? What do we mean by

“linguistic diversity” and how can we include it in our course work and practical (field) experiences?

2. Do we subsume ELLs and their needs under the umbrella term of “diverse” learners rather than paying explicit attention to the similarities and differences between L1 and L2 learners?
3. Do our teachers learn about the nature of language, the processes of first and second language learning, and the ways in which languages and learners can vary? (Fillmore & Snow, 2000)
4. Are our teachers aware of the way that language is used as a medium of instruction and can they mediate the language demands placed on ELLs? Can they provide challenging instruction for ELLs at a range of English and native language proficiency and literacy levels?
5. Are our teachers aware of their role as language teachers? Can they identify language demands in their content areas and are they able to articulate appropriate language objectives and activities to support ELLs’ academic language development?

Follow-up studies with teacher graduates are needed that compare the expertise and skills of students from teacher preparation programs with a “just good teaching” framework and those who participated in a teacher preparation program in which explicit steps were taken to incorporate ELL-specific issues through course work and field work (e.g., Morales-Jones, 2003).

Many ELLs spend their entire instructional day in mainstream classrooms. Even those students who have access to direct language support (e.g., pullout English as a Second Language classes, sheltered English content classes, or bilingual instruction) spend most of the day in mainstream classrooms. Therefore, all teachers must be prepared to accept responsibility for the academic content and language development of ELLs. “Even inclusive constructivist approaches to teaching will be inadequate when they assume that similarities among students override differences related to ethnicity, primary language, and social class” (Au, 1998, p. 306). This means that teachers need to know about the language of their subject, the process of language development and the complexity of the interaction of learner variables and L2 learning, and ways that they can influence this process to help both ELLs and native English speakers meet high academic standards.

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“OK, But it’s Not Our Reality”: ESOL Teachers’ Knowledge of Context in a Curriculum Development Project

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Setting: Curriculum Development Workshop for Elementary ESOL Teachers

Diane:¹ We know BICS and CALP². We don’t always look at the research about oral language development. Inner city kids, they don’t have the 6,000 words they need. If we use Cummins (1996), BICS is the magnet; CALP is the pullout. Before we go into the curriculum, I want to know what we are supposed to do. Everyone is saying, literacy, literacy. How do I get my kids to the fourth/fifth grade [level] of literacy in one year?

Mary: Yes, it’s always us and them. How long in the magnet? Will they ever be ready?

Linda: This is part of Title I. I know that if they are exited, they will get Title I support.

Mary: If it’s a Title I school. Johnson’s not a Title I [school] (Curriculum Workshop, May 17, 2002).

Introduction

What is going on in this densely packed jargonistic conversation? BICS? CALP? Magnet? Title I? Diane, Linda, and Mary are elementary teachers to English to speakers of other languages (ESOL). Their conversation occurred during a workshop designed to help them develop an ESOL curriculum aligned with their public school district’s mainstream curriculum. In unpacking this excerpt over the course of this paper, I aim to illustrate the complex, multi-layered nature of teachers’ knowledge of context and how that knowledge affects their curriculum development process. My argument is based on findings from phase I of a projected three-year qualitative case study investigating the role of teacher knowledge and voice in an ESOL curriculum development project. Phase I: Defining and Planning the Project, covers work completed from December 2001 to August 2002.

The risk in opening with the exchange between Diane, Linda and Mary is that some readers might be put off by the insiders’ jargon and view this project as one only applicable to the U.S. public school ESOL community. That would be unfortunate because these teachers’ comments capture the nexus of voice, teacher knowledge and context, a site that highlights the tension

between teachers' defining their work and its being defined for them by contextual forces, an issue applicable to a wide range of language teacher projects.

The findings here have important implications for understanding the role of context in teachers' production of knowledge, an area that has gained greater attention in recent debates on the knowledge base for teaching (Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Freeman, 2002). If teacher educators hope to help ESOL teacher learners be effective in their future classrooms and learning communities, we must acknowledge the complexity of those communities and the factors that affect successful interpretation and negotiation of those communities.

Locating the Study, Clarifying Key Terms

In a recent review of the research on teacher learning and teacher knowledge, Freeman (2002) identified four principal themes: how teachers learn content and teaching practices; how teachers' mental processes are conceived; the role of prior knowledge; and the role of social and institutional context in learning to teach (p. 2). I locate the topic of this study within the fourth theme. In terms of perspective and design, this study is informed by the teacher research/social critique movement within teacher education (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; Wideen, Mayer-Smith, & Moon, 1998). Projects within this movement draw on feminist and critical social theories to problematize concepts of teaching, research, and knowledge and articulate alternatives. Consistent with this theoretical frame, teachers are not passive recipients of university-produced theory, but are active readers, users and producers of theory.

The concepts of voice, teacher knowledge/learning, and context inform this study and thus warrant clarification. Voice is conceptualized as "the individual's struggle to create and fashion meaning, assert standpoints, and negotiate with others. Voice permits participation in a social world" (Britzman, 1991, p. 12). Teachers are participants in educational reform and their expertise and knowledge must be recognized and included in the research base (Britzman, 1991; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; Duckworth, 1997; Elbaz, 1991; Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Hiebert, Gallimore, & Stigler, 2002). In considering the role of voice in curriculum development, I focused on how teachers were defining and interpreting the project. The title, "OK, but it's not our reality" seeks to capture sentiments expressed by teachers such as Diane and Sally as they weigh the curriculum recommendations and models offered by outsiders with the specific challenges and issues in their contexts. Thus, the relationship between voice and participation is both generative and contentious because it is mediated through language and is affected by relations of power in any social context.

Teacher knowledge and teacher learning are posited as mutually informing (Freeman, 2002). Teacher learning is an ongoing process that spans teachers' careers (Freeman and Johnson, 1998) and is most productive when it is directly connected to school initiatives and activities (González & Darling-Hammond, 1997; Parsad, Lewis, & Farris, 2002). Although teachers possess a range of knowledge (e.g., Shulman, 1987), they must integrate rather than compartmentalize these categories as they negotiate the complex realities of their classrooms.

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) highlight knowledge for teaching as “inside/outside” in order to draw attention to the ways that teaching does not occur in isolation. Rather, teachers and learners are affected by the “relations of power that structure their daily work” (p. xi). This notion of “inside/outside” is implicit in Diane, Linda and Mary’s discussion. The relations of power they allude to include how the ESOL community (students, teachers, and families) is positioned and (mis)understood by the mainstream community (“It’s always ‘us and them.’ How long in the magnet? Will they ever be ready?” said Mary). Teachers’ decisions regarding when and how to exit students to mainstream classes is a judgment based on the students’ language proficiency *and* what types of support and resources will be available to those students, including intangibles such as “ESOL-friendly” mainstream teachers. In her comments, Diane is specifically questioning academic expectations made by administrators who do not take into consideration the variation in her students’ cultural/linguistic/academic backgrounds and experiences. During the 2001-2002 school year, Diane’s students spoke eight different languages and included Bosnian children with several years of academic schooling and Sudanese children who had never been to school and were not print literate in their first language.

Teacher knowledge is generated in inquiry and is facilitated by learning communities. Teacher learning involves teachers and others engaged in critical inquiry into their experiences, beliefs and assumptions, as well as policies and practices in schools and communities. The goal is not to produce findings but to “ultimately alter practice and social relationships in order to bring about fundamental change in classrooms, schools, districts, programs, and professional organizations” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, p. 272). Teachers are viewed as capable of generating knowledge, theorizing their experiences, and acting as leaders and activists in schools and communities. Collaboration facilitates learning not only through its supportive function and in bringing together a variety of experiences and perspectives, but it also challenges teachers to make their knowledge accessible to others (Heibert et al., 2002).

In teacher education research, the notion of context has changed over the last twenty-five years. “Context” is more than geographical location and a host of concrete factors that shape

classroom practices (physical space, number of students, type of program, materials, etc). It also encompasses the sociocultural and sociopolitical contexts, i.e., the values and ideologies that inform the policies, practices and interactions that shape teachers' work (Britzman, 1991; Freeman, 2002; Freeman & Johnson, 1998).³ For example, the "literacy, literacy" that Diane names refers to a particular notion of literacy (and literacy instruction) as defined and financially supported by current federal literacy reform initiatives.

For this study, context is conceptualized as a series of concentric circles that identify the different layers of context that teachers work within and against (e.g., classroom, school, community, state, and nation). These layers overlap and interact in dynamic ways. And the ways in which teachers identify, evaluate, interpret, negotiate and contest these layers of context hold valuable insights for teacher education. As Freeman and Johnson (1998) assert, "[teachers'] learning processes can only be adequately documented or understood if the sociocultural contexts in which these processes take place are explicitly examined as part of the research process." (p. 407)

Evolution of the Inquiry

In December 2001, ten elementary ESOL school teachers in Millville, a historic mill city in the Northeastern United States, were invited by Margaret, the district's ESOL coordinator to be active participants in developing a curriculum for the district's elementary magnet⁴ ESOL program. Nine of the district's ten magnet teachers agreed to participate. The acting superintendent of the school district supported the project but emphasized that the group would not be creating a new curriculum. Rather, the document they produced must be aligned with the district's mainstream curriculum.

New to the community, I was looking for ways to initiate collaborative relationships with teachers and schools. Facilitative involvement in the curriculum project offered an opportunity to begin this work. I hoped that documenting the curriculum project process would serve the teachers and the district in the subsequent rounds of curriculum development projects (at the middle and secondary levels). The project also promised to inform my work as an ESOL teacher educator who teaches methods courses and supervises teacher interns in K-12 (kindergarten through twelfth grade) public schools. With this background and motivating factors, I designed a particularistic qualitative case study with the overarching research question: *What is the role of teacher knowledge and voice in an ESOL curriculum development project?*

Originally, Margaret envisioned the curriculum being developed and ready to implement by September 2002. However, as the teachers tried to develop a framework, they came to the

conclusion that they could not adequately design a district curriculum until they answered the questions: Who are we? What is the purpose of our work? By articulating and pursuing these questions, the teachers gave shape and definition to the initial piece of the project. Hence, Phase I: Defining and Planning the Project.

Method

Yin (1994) states that the case study approach is the best strategy when “a question is being asked about a contemporary set of events over which the investigator has no control” (p. 9). As is appropriate with case studies in education, “the interest is in process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation” (Merriam, 1998, p. 27). This phase of the case was bounded by place (Millville school district); participants (nine teachers; ESOL coordinator; researcher); task (defining and planning the project); and time (December 2001–August 2002); the unit of analysis was the curriculum meeting spaces. I have included an extended description of context for two principal reasons: rich description of context is integral to analysis of case study research (Cresswell, 1998); and the focus of this paper is how teachers’ knowledge of context informs their work.

The participants were the ESOL school district coordinator, nine elementary ESOL teachers from four different schools, and the university researcher. The teachers represent a broad range of experience from novice to twenty-year veterans. Seven are certified in ESOL and two are pursuing ESOL certification. Seven hold master degrees. One is a career change professional who came to teaching after twenty-five years in business and nursing. All participants are women; all European or European/American; two fully bi or multilingual; several with beginning to intermediate levels of other languages; age mid-twenties to early fifties;

Role of the Researcher

I was a full participant observer (Spradley, 1980) and tried to maintain a balance between observer and participant/facilitator. I have helped secure funding for some pieces of the project (such as bringing in a curriculum consultant whom the teachers had requested and secured university space for the all-day workshop). When teachers said they’d like to look at other curriculum models, I tracked examples and sent them out. As I tried to gauge my participation in the project, I sought to be a facilitator whenever possible and let the teachers’ suggestions and

concerns guide my actions. My position, questions, interpretations reflect a particular perspective and are influenced by own negotiation of the social contexts which I work in and against.

Data Collection and Analysis

During the time period of phase I (December 2001–August 2002), qualitative methods of data collection consisted of: field notes and transcripts from four 2-hour meetings (in December 2001, January 2002, February 2002, and March 2002); and two curriculum workshops (one 6-hour, May 2002, and one 3-hour, June 2002); surveys completed by the teachers regarding the curriculum project; interview with the ESOL school district coordinator; mainstream district curriculum documents; documents produced and circulated during meetings and workshops; classroom observations and individual interviews with two of the teachers; and feedback from participants on summaries of the project thus far.

Analysis consisted of methods appropriate for qualitative case studies. Thus, descriptions of the context (Cresswell, 1998) as well as categorizing and contextualizing strategies (Maxwell, 1996) have been used. The process has been ongoing, recursive and dynamic. Coding and analytic memos of meetings generated themes to follow up on in subsequent meetings. The survey was used to gather background information on participants and to identify their principal issues and concerns with the project.

Some of my analysis received immediate verification from teachers. Their concerns and suggestions in early meetings led to specific actions. For example, teachers wanted to hear from someone who had been through the curriculum development process, so we brought in a consultant who had those qualifications. At the end of an all day-workshop with the consultant, the teachers' concerns created the agenda for the following meeting. As the project has proceeded, I have mailed out summaries of the project work completed and received feedback regarding its accuracy from teachers. Teachers read early drafts of the descriptions of context and of my analysis and provided feedback.

Context(s)

Millville

The city of Millville, population 107,330, is the largest city in the state. Historically, Millville has been home to wave after wave of immigrants who came to work in the mills or sought other forms of manual labor. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these immigrant groups were primarily from Quebec (Canada), Poland, Greece, and Ireland, with the largest group

being French Canadian. Today, the city's population is listed as White: 89.32%; Black: 1.91%; Asian: 2.31%; Hispanic: 4.62%; Other: 1.84%; statistics that are rapidly changing.

Over the past ten years, Millville has experienced rapid growth in the numbers of residents who have a primary home language other than English (PHLOTE). One reason for this increase is that Millville is a center for resettlement of refugees. Families from Bosnia, Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Sudan have been among the most recent newcomers. In addition to the refugee population, Millville has seen increased numbers of immigrants, primarily Hispanic, and a growing Puerto Rican population.⁵

Millville's identity as an immigrant city has long been a source of pride and contention. Language debates have a long history in the city and the state. Examples include a late nineteenth century petition (rejected) that French be a language of instruction in the Millville public schools; a 1919 law prohibiting employment to workers who could not speak English or produce a certificate of attendance in an English language program; and a 1995 law designating English as the official state language.

The Schools

During the 2001-2002 school year, there were 17,500 students in the district, housed in fourteen elementary schools; four middle schools; and four high schools. The student population was described as 86% White, Non-Hispanic; 3.8% Black, Non Hispanic; 7.6% Hispanic; 2.4% Asian; .43% Native American. 1,447 students were listed as limited English proficient (LEP)⁶ (8.3%) and over 70 different languages were spoken in the schools, with Spanish being the largest language group.

In the last five years, the number of elementary and secondary students designated as LEP has risen from 386 to 1,447. For the fourth consecutive year, the state has designated ESOL as a critical shortage area for teachers. The highest concentration of ESOL students attend the lowest performing schools that, not surprisingly, have the highest concentration of poverty in the city. For example, in October 2001, Elm Elementary School, which has the highest concentration of ESOL students (31.1%), reported that 80% of the school was reading below grade level and 84.5% of all students were eligible for free or reduced lunch. Thus, in addition to facing the challenges of adequately preparing ESOL students for academic success, these schools face a number of serious school-wide challenges.

ESOL in Millville Schools

The Millville school district uses magnet (self-contained) and pullout programs. In a pullout program, ESOL students attend mainstream classes for the majority of the day but are “pulled out” of their classes to receive additional support from an ESOL teacher. When students enter the school district, they are assigned to a school and a classroom. The district uses the IDEA Proficiency Test (IPT) to determine a student’s ESOL program. If the student’s level of English places him/her out of the magnet, he/she will be assigned to a mainstream classroom and will either be monitored or receive pullout support services during the school day/year. During the 2001-2002 school year, four elementary schools; two middle schools; and one high school had magnet classrooms. All schools had pullout programs. The participants in this study represented the elementary schools with magnet classrooms. (See Table 1 for school profiles.) Three of these schools, Elm, Hoover, and Willow are Title I⁷ schools. In January of 2002, Elm and Hoover were awarded Reading Excellence Act⁸ (REA) grants to improve K-3 literacy instruction. The funds through these three-year grants brought on-site professional development opportunities for teachers. Thus, Title I and REA monies affect access to valuable resources. Knowing about these programs and how they work is of great benefit to ESOL teachers.

Table 1: Millville Elementary Schools with ESOL Magnet Program

Name of school	Total K-5 enrollment	No. of students designated LEP (% of school population)	% of all students eligible for free/reduced lunch	Magnet classrooms
Elm	627	195 (31.1%)	84.5%	Grades 2, 3, 4, 5
Hoover	524	158 (29.9%)	66.9%	Grades 1, 3
Johnson	507	12 (2.4%)	26.5%	Grades 1, 2
Willow	577	81 (14%)	52.5%	Grades 2, and a combined 4 & 5

The ways in which the magnet teachers are perceived within their schools varies across the district. For example, at the Elm School Web site, the ESOL magnet teachers are listed among the teachers for that grade (e.g., Sally, the fifth grade magnet teacher is listed alongside the other fifth grade teachers) but at Hoover, Johnson, and Willow, these teachers are listed under a separate category of either ESOL, ESL (English as a second language), or “support services.”

ESOL in the State

Millville is located in a predominantly rural state. For the 2001-2002 school year, the state LEP population was 1.7% of the total school population. Of the 3,516 LEP students in the state, 42% of them (1,447) attended Millville schools. Currently, there are no ESOL standards or frameworks in place. The state's curriculum frameworks are the frameworks for ESOL students as they are for all students. ESOL teachers are expected to use those frameworks for their curriculum. Although this is cloaked in the discourse of "high standards for all students," it denies the reality that without support, standards are meaningless (Goodwin, 2002). In 2002-2003, under the mandates of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation,⁹ the state office of education equity is working to determine and define how the federal mandates will translate into state guidelines for the ESOL students and teachers. The Millville teachers report a lack of initiative, leadership, and communication by the state in the area of ESOL education, and this has caused some tension between the state and local curriculum.

Findings: Teachers' Knowledge of Context(s) as Evaluative Filter

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. Over the course of the meetings and workshops, teachers named the following contexts: their particular classrooms, the ESOL program within their school, their school community, the school district, the city, the state, the nation (federal legislation and profession organizations). Table 2 identifies and separates contexts for illustrative purposes only. Often, a statement would reference more than one context. For example:

I know we are all feeling a lot of pressure and we don't know how it's going to come down with this Reading Excellence grant and the real pressure of getting our kids to improve and we know that the city of Millville is taking money from the federal government. (Ginger, team workshop, June 26, 2002)

Table 2: Layers of context the teachers named and example statements/questions

Context	Examples
Classroom	<p>“How do I get my kids to the 4th/5th grade [level] of literacy in one year?” -Diane, May 17, 2002</p> <p>“They [my students] are scared of writing. What works for me is journals” -Anya, May 17, 2002;</p>
ESOL program within the school	<p>“Just the location [of the magnet classrooms] in the same schools makes it a hard time to communicate” –Mary, May 17, 2002</p>
School Community	<p>“I try to remind my mainstream teachers that for some of these kids it’s the first time they have ever been in a two-story building, first time they’ve used stairs” –Diane, March 22, 2002</p>
District ESOL program	<p>“If I get a 4th grade child who’s coming to me from Hoover, it would be nice for me to be able to say, OK, this child has already been through [this] 3rd grade curriculum” –Lorraine, June 26, 2002</p>
School District	<p>“Did your school district have the same materials dilemma? Using mainstream materials? Special ed. materials?” –Sally, March 22, 2002</p>
City	<p>Mary: Who would think that Millville would have enough kids [for ESOL magnet classes]?</p> <p>Linda: It’s a federally-mandated relocation place, that’s why. ...that’s what makes us different” –June 26, 2002</p>
State	<p>“We have to show adequate yearly progress” –Ginger, May 17, 2002 [reference to state assessment]</p>
Federal /National	<p>Ginger: I’ve copied an article, “Reading First¹⁰ with ELLs” (she distributes to the group)</p> <p>Diane: Mary, it has exactly what you are talking about—teaching ELLs how to read –May 17, 2002</p> <p>“We should find out who in America [sic] has done this [develop ESOL curriculum]” –Lorraine, May 17, 2002</p>
National/ International Professional Organization	<p>“What do the TESOL (teaching English to speakers of other languages) standards say about content?” –Lorraine, May 17, 2002</p> <p>“At the International Reading Association conference in California, whenever you mentioned ESL, all the publishers just said ‘Oh, next summer’ or ‘Next year we’re coming out with materials for ESL to go with balanced literacy” –Diane, June 26, 2002</p>

After tabulating references to layers of contexts, I sought to understand the ways in which teachers’ knowledge of these contextual factors shaped how they interpreted the various pieces of the curriculum project, asking what function do they serve? That is, how does the naming of these contextual layers affect the teachers’ work in this project? Knowledge of context as evaluative filter operated in three principal ways:

1. As a way of establishing trust and legitimacy
2. As a way of articulating needs and concerns regarding the project
3. As a way of identifying and critiquing the political factors that affect their work

Taken together, these three areas begin to form an interpretive framework that may offer a more complex understanding of the role of context in teachers' production of knowledge. Furthermore, they capture that tension of working within and against the contextual factors that shape teachers' work.

Establishing Trust and Legitimacy

At the meeting in January 2002, the teachers said they would like to work with someone who had been through the ESOL curriculum process. At the February meeting, when I told the group that I had contacted a consultant from a neighboring state with similar ESOL demographics, they wanted to go ahead and set up a meeting with him. However, Dorothy raised an important concern: "Did you ask him if he is familiar with our ESOL program in Millville? Because that could be an issue. I'm concerned that a pre-fab model wouldn't fit" (team workshop, February 20, 2002). In other words, if the consultant does not demonstrate understanding of this context (Millville), his knowledge will not be so useful.

The March meeting with the curriculum consultant had two parts; the first half consisted of his explaining to the teachers what he had done in his district with elementary and secondary ESOL and mainstream teachers. His explanation was very detailed and he walked us through a number of documents that his team had produced including: curriculum templates, strategies for using the TESOL K-12 standards (TESOL, 1997), and sample lesson plans. The teachers did not talk during this presentation. The second half of the meeting (approximately fifty-five minutes) was an open discussion. The two main lines of questions/comments by the teachers were: tell us about your context and issues in our context. (See Table 3 for examples.)

Table 3: Examples of Context Statements

Tell us more about your context		Issues in our context	
Diane:	How long do your students stay in self-contained classrooms?	Diane:	I'm worried about the kids who aren't ready for the context. If they are not ready for the 4 th grade content, I have to go back to the 3 rd , or 2 nd , or 1 st grade content. During the last two months, I try to get all the 4 th grade content in.
Sally:	How are kids organized? By grade level? By proficiency?		
Ginger:	What about planning an exit criteria. Does it indicate a reading level?		
Dorothy:	How big are the classes?	Dorothy	The point is, we are always getting newcomers.
Miriam:	Do you have a model for a transition level?	Linda:	I wonder how the REA grant will affect the ESOL curriculum?

Out of forty-one teacher utterances, thirty-four fell into these areas. Within these two broad categories, teachers reference different levels of contexts (classrooms, district, city). Of the remaining utterances, four were comments to questions/remarks made by Margaret and three were Lorraine's call to action, including, "I want to get something down. I want to produce something," and "What would the [next] meeting be about? We need to start working and stop talking" (team workshop, March 22, 2002).

Articulating Needs and Concerns Regarding the Project

The three major needs/concerns that teachers raised regarding the curriculum were: consistency and coordination across the district ESOL program; a clear articulation of the purpose, function, and scope of the magnet program; and a curriculum document that reflected the reality of their situation.

The March survey identified initial, general concerns. In response to why they were participating in the project, the majority of the teachers cited the need for *guidelines*, *consistency*, and *coordination* across the district. This theme was reiterated in the responses to a question about priorities: "I would like consistency across the district. I want a scope and sequence for the curriculum. Articulated goals for each grade level." "I would like to see better communication from those involved in the ESOL magnet classes, shared information." "Consistency in teaching across all schools in the district."

As the teachers moved from the more unstructured, exploratory discussions of the December 2001 to February 2002 meetings to the more focused discussions initiated by the

curriculum consultant in March and May, their discussions shifted from sharing descriptions of their classrooms and identifying some common issues that affected those classrooms to the more challenging work of creating a curriculum framework that would work across their collective classrooms. They knew they wanted something that would be *consistent* and *coordinated* but that was easier said than done. One of the objectives of the May workshop was to develop a curriculum template, a product that would facilitate consistency and coordination. However, during the course of the workshop, the teachers identified a key step that had been skipped: before they could begin to formalize the curriculum, they wanted the purpose and function of the district's magnet program to be clearly articulated. Ginger, Dorothy, Diane and Lorraine raised this "who are we?" question six times during the workshop. Although the teachers were asking for specifics, Margaret's responses were very general.

Dorothy: My question is, what is the major focus of the magnet? Teach newcomers? Teaching reading? Transition?

Margaret: All of the above (field notes, May 17, 2002, p. 8).

Diane: Our population is changing. When I look at this [materials from consultant], this is ideal. . . . I can take five years and develop a fourth grade Millville curriculum but my kids will not get it. Where do you want the emphasis to be? What is the standard? Not to mention that the Millville standards keep changing.

Ginger [to the consultant]: It may seem we are dragging our feet but it goes back to what Diane was saying. Who are we? What are we doing? If we can get that, then we can begin. Are we all of that—newcomers, non-literate?

Margaret: Yes, start with the children (field notes, May 17, 2002, p.12).

The teachers were not calling for Margaret simply to tell them what to do; rather, they were calling for an extended collaborative discussion on the scope and purpose of the magnet program. The issues raised in the May workshop shaped the agenda for the June workshop: draft a mission statement for the magnet program; read curriculum models from other states; and share more detailed information from current curriculum.

Inextricably linked to these issues of consistency and definition was the concern that the curriculum reflect the reality of the teachers' situations, i.e., that it be useful and meaningful for them and their students. As Diane mentioned, "I can take five years and develop a fourth grade Millville curriculum but my kids will not get it."

Identifying and Critiquing the Political Factors that Affect How They Define Their Work

By the end of the May workshop, the teachers had come to the realization that before the project could proceed any further, the purpose and scope of the ESOL magnet program needed to be defined. Thus, one of the agenda items for the June workshop was to draft a working mission statement for the magnet program. Seven teachers attended the workshop and I facilitated it. Margaret was unable to attend but had sent us her draft; the teachers at Elm school had created a draft together, and Linda had prepared a brief statement.

As the group analyzed and evaluated the different statements they had a rich discussion on the meaning and implications of “providing a supportive learning environment” and “welcoming students and their families” (a line from Margaret’s draft). Here we have that volatile nexus of voice, teacher knowledge, and context overlapping and clashing. As these teachers actively participate in defining their work, they identify the political realities and power struggles of the contextual forces they work within and against. The following exchange is a rich example of this point:

Sally: I’m looking at the first part of this [Margaret’s statement]...It says, “welcome students and families to the school.” Well, on many, many occasions, the first time we ever see the family might be if they came to school to register. We might have had the opportunity to meet them but not necessarily—if they registered over the summer. If they are there at a time when we had parent conferences, we might meet one parent but we don’t necessarily have the interpreter there to even understand what they are saying or for them to understand us. And quite possibly, we might go through the entire year without ever having even *met* the parent, let alone welcome them and engage them in real conversation. I’m looking at this [Margaret’s statement] and this is very “nice” but do we really do it and do we have the opportunity to do it?

Dorothy: Or the resources?

Lorraine: Shouldn’t we?

Mary: We should. You know, when I think of the move of the ESOL 1 program from Hoover over to Riverview. This year it was just a handful of my students who were bused and I didn’t get a chance to talk to those parents but most of the other parents were parents of Hoover School students and if I needed to talk to them I could see them; I saw them on a daily basis out on the sidewalk but when I think of moving the magnet program over to Riverview, it really...every student *will be bused*, and if I’m lucky, one student will be a Riverview student but practically every student will be a student from another school. That’s the thing, just like what you [Sally] said. I won’t get to see those parents *at all*. Ever, because the kids will come on the bus, the kids will go home on the bus and I’ll never see the parents, and there’s just no opportunity to talk with them. And that is one thing that is not

good about moving. Having moved that program into a different school, we have totally turned off the parent contact by doing that.

Sally: (referring to Margaret's statement): Let's consider [the statement] "make the kids feel emotionally secure." That's why we move them three times a year. I'm exaggerating now, but some kids are introduced to two schools during a year, other times kids go to one school one year and even if they don't move, they're moved to another school the next year because somebody thinks differently about something or whatever the case may be. I mean, I think it's very important for kids to learn about one school, let them feel secure about it by allowing them to attend one school for more than a year. Sometimes they'll go to Willow [school] then Hoover [school] then on to Elm [school].

Lorraine: Yeah, I have one student who started at Hoover then he came to me [at Willow] and now he's going to you [Sally at Elm].

Sally: And we do that to these kids. We want to make them feel emotionally secure, reduce the culture shock, get to know the families and yet we don't allow it. We don't allow ourselves that luxury or the higher ups don't allow us that luxury. Kids are supposed to be assigned to their home schools but now it doesn't occur and there are reasons why it doesn't occur but we need to look down the road to see if they are going to get that little piece of security and be able to keep it.

Dorothy: I think the other piece no one has really taken a lens to is the program. This is my fifth year and it's [district ESOL program] always seemed to be ad hoc, you know, because there's the population that they don't see as a stable population and they don't see them as stakeholders. I'm talking about the administration, so they [the ESOL population] can be more manipulated and pushed and pulled. (team workshop, June 26, 2002)

After the group had crafted and accepted a working draft of the mission statement, Sally offered a telling comment: "You can tell that this one was done by teachers and that one [Margaret's] was done by an administrator" (team workshop, June 26, 2002).

The teachers' discussion illustrates the politics of a mission statement and succinctly captures Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (1993) notion of inside/outside, that is, how relations of power affect teachers' work. The tensions here are caused by the clash over what teachers' know is best practice, for example "secure learning environment" and parent-teacher communication, and how they are positioned *not* to be able to provide that. The teachers name the forces that impede these practices: busing ESOL children out of neighborhood schools, having magnet classrooms scattered around the city so that students may attend up to three schools in their elementary school experience. They also name the roots of these impediments: the ESOL community not seen as stakeholders by the larger community.

This rich discussion on the mission statement is also an illustrative example of the power of collaborative communities in teacher learning. In drafting a mission statement, teachers from four different elementary schools shared their individual observations and articulated a powerful collective critique of the district attitudes, policies and practices regarding the ESOL community. As a result of this discussion, they crafted a group-authored mission statement that was not hypocritical to their work and linked district policies to classroom events.

Recognizing how teachers identify and critique the political factors that affect their work is significant not only because it helps us better understand the complex nature of curriculum development but also because it highlights professional voice as a “struggle to create and fashion meaning, assert standpoints, and negotiate” (Britzman, 1991, p.12).

Discussion and Implications

At this early stage in the curriculum project, the findings here echo the work of others who have depicted teaching as a complex, interactive, context specific activity that requires teachers to integrate knowledge of students, of schools, of communities and of personal experience (e.g., Elbaz, 1983; Connelly & Clandinin, 1985; 1988). Here, that context is widened to include state and federal education policies and initiatives. As the Millville teachers demonstrate, teaching does not occur in a vacuum; their classroom realities are affected by the politics of the broader educational contexts in which their classrooms are embedded. The findings support Freeman’s (2002) argument that “in teacher education, context is everything” and his call for more focused attention on the role of social and institutional contexts in teacher learning.

The Millville teachers’ knowledge of context(s) is a complex dynamic. It is not just restricted to the identification and description of contextual layers and factors but in evaluating those factors and linking them to implications for classroom practice. One cannot evaluate these factors without raising issues of power—from the positioning of the ESOL community to the allocation of resources. The type of “contextualizing” that the Millville teachers were doing was an intellectual process whereby they were engaged in constructing a conceptual framework for the curriculum. They considered a range of contextual factors from their specific classrooms to local administrative politics to federal education initiatives and first and second language research communities. Contextualizing, then, is a form of teacher praxis; it is an articulation of the theory/practice dynamic. Going back to Diane’s opening comments, we see how she is trying to pull together theory from first and second language acquisition research and her knowledge of her specific students to envision a curriculum that is useful and meaningful in her classroom. As Sally

and others struggled with the creation of a mission statement, they acknowledged both theory and reality of providing “a secure learning environment.”

In terms of teacher voice, the process of contextualizing is a site of contestation and negotiation where teachers struggle to define their work while recognizing the factors that define it for them. This is evident in the way the Millville teachers questioned the usefulness of a curriculum consultant for their project, and the ways in which they voiced their concerns and wishes for the curriculum. An emerging finding that requires follow up in the subsequent phases of the project is how participation in the project affects teachers’ voices across their educational contexts. For example, Lorraine saw the mission statement as a document that legitimized her work to mainstream teachers in her school so that they would respect her work, and see that she actually *teaches* (Lorraine, personal communication, June 25, 2002). Armed with the mission statement, she was looking forward to initiating more professional conversations with her mainstream colleagues.

It is important to note that the findings here in no way negate or displace the crucial role of subject area knowledge (e.g., first and second language acquisition theories and processes) in ESOL teacher education. Knowledge of L2 (second language) processes is prerequisite for ESOL teachers. But it is just one piece of the knowledge base in English language teacher education. This point is worth emphasizing because recent calls to consider the importance of sociocultural contexts in teacher education have been misconstrued as calls for abandoning subject area knowledge (see Yates & Muchisky, 2003). Teachers such as Diane and Ginger use their knowledge of second language acquisition (SLA) to modify mainstream materials for their students and to question and critique mainstream education reforms, in particular, those related to literacy and testing. However, knowledge of SLA alone does not necessarily help them gain access to valuable funding sources (e.g., Title I and REA). Again, it is not how much compartmentalized knowledge teachers have, but how they use the different kinds of knowledge to successfully negotiate the complex contexts in which they work (Freeman & Johnson, 1998).

To date, the project has already had local significance for the participants as it has increased their knowledge of what they as a community of ESOL teachers do and can do, and it has increased communication across classrooms and within schools. For me as a teacher educator, the study raises questions regarding how well I help my students identify and navigate the multiple layers of contexts that affect teachers’ work. I now must re-evaluate the ways I ask students to define the contexts of their lessons and curriculum projects. As the Millville teachers help me understand what an ESOL teacher must know and do to navigate the multiple contexts in which they work, I bring that understanding into my methods courses.

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Notes

¹ Names of participants, schools, and communities are pseudonyms.

² Basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) (Cummins, 1986).

³ For a more complete discussion on this shift in defining context, see Freeman, 2002.

⁴ “Magnet” refers to the self-contained ESOL classrooms, classrooms that consist of all ESOL students.

⁵ Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens, and it is therefore, inaccurate to describe them as immigrants.

⁶ Using the term LEP is problematic because it emphasizes students as “limited.” However, it is the term the federal government uses. Whenever it is used in this paper, it refers to public/government documents. The term “LEP” is another example of context as an ideological and sociopolitical construct.

⁷ Title I is a federal grant program designed to give educational assistance to students living in areas of high poverty. The funds are allocated to each state, and the states in turn allocate funds to the local school systems based on poverty data gathered from many different sources (e.g., the percentage of students eligible for free/reduced lunch. Schools where more than half of all students are low-income can operate a school-wide Title I project. This means that resources funded by Title I are available school-wide. Schools with less than a 50% poverty rate, may receive targeted assistance, with only particular students being eligible for services (support, materials, etc) funded by Title I.

⁸ Reading Excellence Act (REA) was the Clinton administration’s reading program that targeted improved literacy education for grades K-3. States awarded REA funding individually decided how to distribute these funds.

⁹ NCLB is the Bush administration’s major piece of education legislation. Among its many components, it requires that states test students yearly in grades 3 through 8 and be able to demonstrate “adequate yearly progress” (AYP). It also mandates that all states have standards for ESOL students.

¹⁰ Reading First is the Bush Administration’s reading program. It replaced Clinton’s Reading Excellence Act.

Intercultural Challenges and Cultural Scaffolding: The Experience of a Nonnative English-Speaking¹ Student Teacher in a U.S. Practicum in Second Language Teaching

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The practicum is often a required core course in language teacher education programs in the U.S. In these courses student teachers are assigned to a mentor teacher² and teach and observe in a language class for a certain number of hours.³ Normally student teachers are also required to do some course readings, write a reflective journal, and are observed or videotaped, in addition to other requirements (Kamhi-Stein, 2000; Porter, 2002; Richards & Crookes, 1988; Richards & Lockhart, 1996). It is generally believed that student teachers can learn by observing an expert through the hands-on experience of teaching (Collins, Brown, & Newman, 1989). K. E. Johnson (1996) argues that teachers create their own interpretation of teaching in the real context and that conceptual knowledge (theory) can be truly meaningful only when it is situated in their own classroom practice through the process of “sense-making.” The practicum is of particular importance in teacher education programs, as it is the central and perhaps the sole course that assures extensive sense-making opportunities in actual teaching contexts. Therefore, the practicum is vastly different from most other courses in language teacher education programs in which collective conceptual knowledge about language learning and teaching can be passed down to students.

Some issues experienced by student teachers in the practicum have been investigated in the language teacher education literature. Brinton and Holten (1989) report recurring themes that emerged in the reflective journals written by novice native and nonnative English-speaking teachers in the practicum and show how the weight shifted among them throughout the practicum course. Most themes dealt with pedagogical issues such as curriculum and methodology, teaching techniques, materials, and student population. Another theme dealt with teachers’ self-awareness, namely the formation of a new social identity or a “new persona as teacher” (Brinton & Holten, 1989; Hayashi, 2003; K. A. Johnson, 2001; McKay, 2000; Polio & Wilson-Duffy, 1998). In addition to these primarily instructional issues experienced by both native and nonnative student teachers in the practicum, there are some additional challenges reported by many nonnative English-speaking international student teachers. While teaching in the practicum, they raise other concerns such as English proficiency and self-esteem (Hayashi, 2003; K. A. Johnson, 2001; McKay, 2000; Polio & Wilson-Duffy, 1998), and cultural knowledge of the content matter (Hayashi, 2003;

McKay, 2002; Polio & Wilson-Duffy, 1998). Not surprisingly, these are the central themes that appear in the literature related to nonnative English-speaking teachers (Árva & Medgyes, 2000; Braine, 1999; Liu, 1999; Medgyes, 1992; Reves & Medgyes, 1994).

Besides teaching a second language and culture in one's second language, international students, who are often nonnative speakers of English new to the country, must teach in an unfamiliar setting where they were not educated (Polio & Wilson-Duffy, 1998). International students in the United States are unlike nonnative speaking American teachers of foreign languages who usually share the students' first language and have in-depth knowledge of the student population and the educational setting. In contrast, international student teachers are often unfamiliar with many aspects of their own teaching placements and diversity found in their classes. Polio and Wilson-Duffy recognize that such contextual knowledge is unlikely to be taught in the program's courses and that it may often be left to international student teachers to learn through experience.

The practicum is also unique in that it involves multiple layers of institutional relationships such as those with the supervisor of the practicum, the mentor teacher, and English as a second language (ESL) students. For some of them apprenticing in a university community, a campus-wide international teaching assistant (ITA) consultant may also be involved in assisting them with their language and teaching improvement, which adds another layer of institutional complexity. In a case study of a novice teacher in the process of teacher socialization, Farrell (2001) documents that the student teacher had difficulties in establishing collegiality in the institutional relationship. Negotiating complex institutional relationships is particular to the practicum and is often a common concern for student teachers. In fact, it may even be a prerequisite for successful performance in the practicum. Such negotiation requires excellent intercultural skills of nonnative student teachers who operate in second language settings.

Despite this multi-faceted nature of the practicum requiring shifting between multiple roles (e.g., student, teacher, and mentee), little has been investigated about the interactional difficulties that could be obstacles for nonnative student teachers due to their unfamiliarity with the new cultural setting.⁴ What are some difficulties that nonnative English-speaking student teachers might face in negotiating the multiple relationships while learning to teach a second language in an unfamiliar setting? How do the student teachers' first language and culture influence their interactional negotiations, facilitating or hampering effective performance in the practicum? For example, speech styles in Japanese culture are sometimes perceived as indirect and inarticulate by Western speakers. This may be the result of a difference in interactional style. While English

speakers are expected to present their ideas as clearly as possible, in Japanese, “mind-reading” on the part of the hearer is a common practice. In Japanese culture, explicit verbal expression is likely to be avoided to preserve group harmony; instead the hearer is responsible for probing and understanding the speaker’s real intent that is often implicitly conveyed (Clancy, 1986, 1990). It seems likely that in a cross-cultural interaction, differences in speech style cause misunderstandings as to each other’s true intent. Not only do these misunderstandings hamper successful communication, but they are also likely to induce negative stereotypes of another culture. For instance, while American speakers may perceive Japanese as inarticulate, indecisive, or uncooperative in conversation, Japanese speakers may find Americans too aggressive or self-centered.

However, even among Japanese student teachers who commonly share culturally-specific speech styles, their concerns vary according to many factors such as their individual differences in personality, learning and teaching backgrounds, and teaching contexts (McKay, 2000). Bearing in mind that each individual student teacher’s perceptions and concerns might differ, this ethnographic case study will examine the practicum experience of a nonnative English-speaking international student teacher from Japan in a U.S. language teacher education program. The paper will first discuss the interactional difficulties which she initially faced and the cultural adjustments she eventually succeeded to make during the practicum. The paper will also investigate the way in which I, the teaching assistant (TA) of the practicum, who shared the first culture with the student teacher, assisted her in her cultural adjustment.

Research Questions

1. Did a nonnative English-speaking international student teacher initially face interactional difficulties in the practicum in a language teacher education program in the United States? If so, what were they?
2. a. What role did a practicum TA, who shared the cultural background with the nonnative English-speaking student teacher, play in assisting her?
b. What cultural adjustments did the nonnative English-speaking student teacher successfully make in the practicum?

Method

Participants

Emi, a nonnative English-speaking student teacher in a large Midwestern university, participated in this qualitative investigation. She is in her early 20s and from a metropolitan area in

Japan. She was educated exclusively in Japan except for one year which she spent in the United States as a college exchange student. She majored in English language and literature and is licensed to teach English in public schools. She scored sufficiently high on the SPEAK (Speaking Proficiency English Assessment Kit) Test to teach in the practicum at the University with the condition of taking a concurrent tutorial with a campus-wide ITA consultant. In addition to a three-week practice teaching experience in a Japanese high school (a requirement for the licensure), she had taught part-time in a cram school⁵ for six months. She was taking the practicum during the second semester of her program after completing a methodology course in the previous semester.

As the TA for the practicum, I was asked to assist the supervisor with the teaching and operation of the practicum. I completed the very same practicum as an M.A. student two years prior to the study, and during the time of the study was pursuing a Ph.D. degree. I am also a nonnative speaker of English from Japan. I have five years of teaching experience in a private English school in Japan, and taught six terms in the university-level U.S. intensive English program in which Emi was placed.

Data sources and analysis procedure

Although limited in scope to a single Japanese student teacher's experience during one practicum semester and her reflection over the following year, the study attempts to describe this instance in its authentic sociocultural context using multiple data sources. While the investigation of a single case has been established as a legitimate inquiry, the report of the findings in this ethnographical case study is not intended to represent the entire population of nonnative English speaking student teachers, nor Japanese student teachers in the U.S. practicum (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2001; Merriam, 1998). By using participant observation, analyses derive partially from the natural outcome of the practicum course over the five months of the semester. Data sources included my practicum observation notes and teaching journal for all student teachers enrolled in the practicum throughout the semester, and my spontaneous e-mail communications about the practicum course with Emi, the supervisor of the practicum, Emi's mentor teachers, and her campus-wide ITA consultant. Additional data sources were Emi's weekly journal written as she went through the practicum, her reflective statement completed at the end of the course,⁶ and an extensive reflective paper in which she contemplated her practicum experience and professional growth approximately one year after the practicum. Also, two semi-structured interviews were conducted for approximately one hour each time. The first interview was designed to identify Emi's challenges in teaching in the practicum and interacting with all those involved, and the second

interview further probed some of the teaching issues she raised to obtain more of her perspectives and examples. Prior to the interviews, confidentiality of the data and the use of a pseudonym were discussed. The written consent for the participation in the study and permission to audiotape the interviews were also obtained at this point. All data were generated in English except for the interviews, which were conducted in Japanese and transcribed for the analysis. The segments quoted in this paper were translated and checked by another bilingual speaker for accuracy and interpretation.

For the purpose of the study, only those themes related to the interactional difficulties Emi encountered in communicating with teacher educators were selected for analysis, because as the review of literature has established, much of this area is yet to be investigated in language teacher education. The data were first triangulated and coded to analyze Emi's interactional difficulties with teacher educators involved in the practicum. Categories of interactional difficulties emerged from the data and will be reported below. These categories were compared across items for a recurring pattern which could be attributed to the cultural differences between her familiar academic environment in Japan and the U.S. practicum setting in question. Although her interaction with ESL students emerged as a difficulty in her reflection, because of its close connection with ESL pedagogy it was excluded from the analysis for this study. My role as a TA in relation to Emi's professional development was analyzed through self-reflection or teacher-initiated investigation of teaching practice (Beattie, 1995; Richards & Lockhart, 1996) used in my teaching journal. The journal included record of and my introspection about my interactions with Emi and about dialogues with the supervisor, mentor teachers, the campus-wide ITA consultant, as I was making decisions in providing scaffolding for Emi. The emergent themes in the journal, as reported below, were examined together with the reflections that Emi made separately in her reflective writings.

Due to the fact that I was a participant observer as the TA for the practicum, this study has methodological benefits and drawbacks. My role as someone of authority in this setting could have affected Emi's responses in the interviews. In order to minimize this effect, the naturally occurring data (i.e., my practicum observation notes, teaching journals, and e-mail messages, and Emi's weekly journals, reflective statements, and a more extensive paper) were studied retrospectively and compared to her responses in the interviews, which found no discrepancies. When the interviews were conducted a year after the practicum, I was no longer in the position of authority; Emi and I were peers taking the same class in the program. We had always spoken in English during the practicum semester, and when we switched to Japanese according to Emi's preference, her language showed a minor shade of honorifics. This is perhaps indicative of her interpretation of

our relationship as close-to-equal, rather than vastly status-differential, which might suggest only a slight function of power in our relationship at that time. However, there still remains a possibility that my role as a researcher might have altered her behavior and responses in the interviews (Patton, 2002). Furthermore, for a more accurate reconstruction of the reality, member checks (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) were conducted with the participant student teacher by sharing an earlier version of this paper with Emi, who was invited to add her observations or suggest amendments for the researcher's interpretation. After some modifications she validated the revisions and authenticated the final version of the paper.

Findings

Research question 1: Did a nonnative English-speaking international student teacher initially face interactional difficulties in the practicum in a language teacher education program in the United States? If so, what were they?

In the first half of the practicum, Emi seemed to be struggling in the course, yet her behavior occasionally struck her supervisor, mentor, campus-wide ITA consultant, and me as somewhat uncommitted. Although I did not know her personally prior to the course, the faculty practicum supervisor insisted that Emi was a diligent, intelligent, and motivated “A” student the previous semester. This gap remained a mystery during the first several weeks of the practicum. The analysis of the data below shows interactional difficulties Emi initially experienced that were likely to have been caused by differences between her native culture and the U.S. academic culture, and the way she overcome the difficulties over the practicum semester.

Interaction with Mentor Teachers

While handling multiple tasks in the practicum, just like other student teachers, Emi had to deal with new institutional relationships such as with her mentors and the campus-wide ITA consultant. In the first practicum seminar meeting when the institutional relationship was introduced as a topic, it proved that this was in fact a common concern among the student teachers. In the interview, Emi reflected on her feeling that negotiating her role daily in the institution was challenging because it was compounded by the cultural issues of the unfamiliar environment:

I didn't know how I was to interact with the mentors. I wasn't equal, but lower [assuming the role of a student teacher/mentee]. But in American culture, if I come across as too low, Americans don't like it. I didn't know how I should interact with them at all—how much can I say what I had in mind? Probably it's okay to say

whatever I was thinking, but these intricate relationships were difficult... (N. Ishihara, personal communication, October 31, 2002).

Emi even felt as if she were not understanding the intended meaning accurately, which led her to be passive in these relationships. She states:

Because the mentors are all Americans and I am Japanese, there were a lot of things I didn't understand in communicating with them...like if I should treat them as a teacher, or I could talk to them like friends...I ended up treating them as teachers. Like they teach me, and I learn...[I was] passive. (N. Ishihara, personal communication, October 31, 2002).

She also mentioned that she did not want to spoil the class by incorporating her ideas that might be "strange" to the mentor. She was also reserved since she was unfamiliar with the school culture. Moreover, because she did not have much teaching experience, she felt that she had no say. Perhaps Emi's confusion can also be attributed to indirect use of language that is frequently employed by the teacher educators such as a politeness strategy in deference to the interlocutor when they make suggestions, advise, request, or criticize (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig & Harford, 1991; Thi Thuy, 2003). For example, such indirect expressions as *you might want to ...* and *it could be better if you ...* are often intended as suggestions or even requests for improvements from an academic advisor, although a nonnative speaking advisee might see it as a mere suggestion or an option. As the true intentions did not seem transparent, Emi ended up not expressing herself sufficiently:

Perhaps I felt a little bit that they didn't say everything...or that they had something they couldn't say...I felt like I didn't understand [their intentions...I sometimes interpreted [their suggestions] as something like "how about doing this" but in fact as I found out later, it was "I need you to do this"...I did not argue to my heart's content. (N. Ishihara, personal communication, October 31, 2002).

On the other hand, Emi's mentor seemed perplexed not knowing how to interpret Emi's behavior or her interactional style. Knowing I am from Emi's culture, she occasionally shared with me her confusion. In Emi's interview with her for the reflective paper, the mentor recalled her initial confusion as to whether Emi's interactional style was first-language based. In fact, as briefly touched earlier, inarticulation of ideas is an often-cited interactional style characteristic of Japanese speakers. Although in "speaker-oriented" American culture, the speaker is responsible for a logical and persuasive presentation of his/her ideas, in Japanese "hearer-oriented" culture, the speaker is expected to be indirect and inarticulate whereas the hearer is to extrapolate the speaker's intent (Clancy, 1986, 1990; Lakoff, 1985; Lebra, 1976; Rose, 1994).

Unsure of how to interact with her mentors in the U.S., Emi seemed to have transferred the speech style in her native language and her past experience as a student teacher in Japan to the U.S. context. She taught for three weeks in Japan, where mentor teachers often have the power and authority and student teachers are supposed to comply.⁷ In such an institutional setting, student teachers are often expected to emulate the expert teacher and are accustomed to being told what to do. Emi was not an exception; she recalled in the reflective paper that she did not negotiate her teaching with her Japanese mentor but followed his instructions in order to show deference to him. The following is her analysis of the relationships with her mentors in the U.S. practicum:

I unconsciously brought in the Japanese custom of interacting with older and respected people, which was to formally communicate, do what I was told, and not to argue for my opinion. In retrospect, I behaved exactly as I did in Japan with my mentors in the United States. This behavior, however, seemed to appear inappropriate to them.

As she described her own attitude as being passive in one of the previous quotes, what is normally considered appropriate and even preferred behavior in her native culture for a student teacher seemed to have been regarded as overly passive in this context.

Interaction with the Campus-Wide ITA Consultant

Emi's reserved behavior seemed also true in her initial interaction with the campus-wide ITA consultant. Whereas it is typical for prospective international teaching assistants to have class observations and post-observational discussions at the beginning of the semester on alternate weeks, Emi's first observation was not conducted until the sixth week of the fourteen-week semester. Emi later reported in the interview her confusion and difficulty in making an appointment with the campus-wide ITA consultant.

One or two weeks had already passed when I first realized that I needed to initiate the contact with him. Because I didn't really know about the situation at first, a week or two passed. (N. Ishihara, personal communication, October 31, 2002).

She also revealed in the interview that she had reservations about being observed as well, much as both novice and experienced teacher may often feel.

Initially, I probably blamed myself. I had things I didn't understand, and I didn't ask for help...Initially, I was feeling shy, and had problems being observed. (N. Ishihara, personal communication, October 31, 2002).

Emi also felt as if she were burdened by the expectation that she should assume the role of liaison between him and the mentors due to the way the system was established. Her campus-wide

ITA consultant echoes this in his description of what appeared to have happened in his e-mail correspondence with the practicum supervisor:

This semester I began by e-mailing [Emi] asking when she would be teaching and when I could observe her. From what I gather from her responses, she doesn't seem to know. That is, she doesn't seem to know ahead of time what she'll be doing or "will only be teaching for a couple of minutes." After two weeks of that, last week I e-mailed and informed her that I would be coming to her class. Even if she wasn't teaching anything that day, we needed to meet and figure out what we were going to do. So I did, and we talked for 10 minutes or so outside the classroom. (N. Ishihara, personal communication, March 4, 2002).

At this point, Emi may not have been able to negotiate her teaching time with her mentor and thus was probably unable to set up an appointment with the ITA consultant, and felt caught in between by the way the two institutions were set up. Judging from her initial reservation, it might also be the case that Emi was worried that the campus-wide ITA consultant would evaluate her rather than help her improve her language and teaching. Emi also mentioned in a paper that such campus-wide institutional support is unavailable in most academic situations in Japan but that she could have utilized it in the U.S. practicum more fully in the early part of the course. For example, during this time, Emi was also passive in our relationship. She waited to schedule an informal observation with me as the course TA until the sixth week, finally responding to my third invitation specifically made out to her. This seems to parallel the avoidance behavior exhibited with the ITA consultant.

The Practicum Seminar Meeting

Emi's passivity was also observed in her attitude during the practicum seminar meetings. Emi met weekly for 150 minutes with six other peer student teachers along with the supervisor and myself as the TA. The seminar meetings typically began by debriefing, and moved on to discussions of assigned topics or student-raised issues. Although the voluntary participation in such discussions was vital, Emi remained silent most of the time unless it was clearly her turn to speak. The practicum supervisor, in fact, was attentive to this tendency and suspected that this might be indicative of Emi's level of commitment to the practicum.

In a reflective M.A. paper approximately one year after the completion of the practicum course, Emi reflects:

In weekly practicum meetings, I did not speak as much as I wanted to. One of the reasons was that I waited too long, looking for "right" things to say as I used to do in Japan. Another reason was that I was overwhelmed by the discussion skills of my classmates, including their outspokenness and argumentativeness. Even when I had

something to say, it was difficult for me to jump in the middle of someone talking. I felt frustrated because I found myself not being able to quickly adapt to the new classroom culture.

Here again, we see an additional burden Emi was bearing—a cultural difference in discourse style in her first and second languages, which is commonly shared by many international students in the United States. Emi’s classroom behavior which would be normal and appropriate in her first culture appeared to be viewed as passive in the U.S. practicum. Despite her genuine struggle to adjust to the unfamiliar classroom culture, her first-language discourse style might be misinterpreted as her personality trait.

Research Question 2a: What role did a practicum TA, who shared the cultural background with the nonnative English-speaking student teacher, play in assisting her?

First of all, to share some of my teaching decisions as the TA for the practicum, initially I decided to be an informal mediator between the supervisor, the mentors, and the students. I took what is termed as a non-directive approach in language teacher education (Freeman, 1982, 1990; Gebhard, 1990), getting the student teachers to think and make instructional decisions for themselves without directing them to a concrete course of action.

Also, without knowing Emi personally, I attempted to avoid making an assumption that she would act in a way that is more appropriate in Japanese culture than in American culture. However, I began to suspect that this might be the case with Emi as the time progressed. In my observation, she was being passive in most of the institutional relationships in the practicum, as the previous section has shown. I suspected that by drawing on her first culture interactional style, Emi was misunderstood as reserved, unclear, or sometimes even uncommitted by her mentor, supervisor, and campus-wide ITA consultant.

While trying to learn who Emi was, I was in the process of defining my role in ways that might help her. During the sixth week, I finally decided to make extensive use of my greatest advantage that I shared with Emi, that is, the status of being a nonnative English-speaking teacher from Japan. Like Emi, I grew up in Japan and received most of my education there. It was when I chose to engage this asset that I began to understand what might be happening and how I might be able to assist her.

Considering Emi’s background, I decided to take advantage of my TA position in becoming directive with her, at the same time communicating with her privately and informally. During the sixth week, I began to give her specific teaching suggestions and constantly encouraged her to take a more active role in institutional relationships. Excluding all our discussions on teaching, the

following section focuses on the informal scaffolding I provided to her regarding culturally appropriate interactional behavior.

My cultural scaffolding centered on communicating to Emi that “the squeaky wheel gets the grease,” in American culture. In my view, she needed to get her voice heard more. In Japan, squeaky wheels are perhaps replaced and not greased, so the lesson to be learned is that you had better not squeak at all. As they say, “the nail that sticks out gets hammered down” (Li, 2000; Tannen, 1994). However, in American culture the importance of taking the initiative and going for help seemed crucial in the given practicum setting. Not doing so seemed to have prevented Emi from using the available resources that would allow her to learn how to teach and develop professionally—the focal point of the practicum.

To illustrate my typical cultural scaffolding, one critical incident for Emi happened mid-semester. She experienced a major shock when the supervisor warned her in a post-observational meeting about her current teaching performance in the practicum. My teaching journal notes an interesting miscommunication that occurred between her and the supervisor in this meeting. As Emi and I headed home together, Emi mentioned that the supervisor *offered* to meet with Emi especially before videotaping *if she needed*. I was taken aback, since the supervisor had told me that she would tell Emi to come to meet *every week* to improve her teaching. Thus, in order for her to pass the course, it was not an option. Therefore, I passed the supervisor’s intentions on to Emi and asked her what concrete actions she was going to take. She bounced the question back to me, mentioning working hard at teaching. My teaching journal states:

She asked, “what should I do? Plan and prepare for teaching better?” I replied, Yes, that’s crucial. And let [the mentor], [the supervisor], and me [the TA] know that you are working hard. I discussed informal observation, doing extra videotaping, discussing lesson plans and practice teaching with me [the TA], and [the supervisor]. She seemed like she wasn’t sure why she needed to do it with the supervisor or how to go about it. I asked if [the supervisor] suggested meeting and if she mentioned how often. [Emi replied,] “she mentioned it, but not how often. She said I could meet you [the TA] or her [the supervisor] especially before teaching if I need to.” I told her that [the supervisor] expects [Emi] to meet with [the supervisor] or me [the TA] every week. Emi was a bit shocked. I stressed her demonstrating hard work. (N. Ishihara, personal communication, March 26, 2002).

Emi and I also discussed her relationship with the mentor and briefly confirmed her plans to meet with the campus-wide ITA consultant. Then, we discussed her participation in the seminar meeting:

I also told her that practicum class participation was important and added that she did a nice job [that day] since she was engaged in the small group discussion and did

Speak out a bit more in later class discussions. (N. Ishihara, personal communication, March 26, 2002).

Before we parted, as usual we confirmed the four things she had on her plate: a) take practicum journals more seriously, b) keep on participating in class discussion, c) meet with me or the supervisor to get more feedback on teaching through extra observation, and d) plan and practice daily teaching. Later, I remembered that Emi needed to meet with the campus-wide ITA consultant as well. Since this was not in the final to-do list (although we discussed it earlier), I sent her an e-mail reminder:

Just a friendly reminder! Make sure you send e-mail to [the campus-wide ITA consultant] as soon as possible to set up a meeting to discuss your teaching (and/or have him observe another piece of teaching). Let me know what happens, if you will. (N. Ishihara, personal communication, March 26, 2002).

Emi responded shortly:

Thank you very much for the reminder. I have a weekly planned meeting tomorrow with [the mentor], so I will talk with her to have [the campus-wide ITA consultant] in the class. Then I can ask him to come to the class sometime next week. Thank you very much again for the note. (N. Ishihara, personal communication, March 28, 2002).

This turned out to be a critical incident in which Emi may not have fully understood the cultural and pragmatic use of language (e.g., politeness strategies in the request that the supervisor probably used). Moreover, she later commented that as a student teacher in a status-differential relationship, she had expected a fair amount of criticism from her mentor and supervisor as she would have received in Japanese culture, but she did not receive it until this time. Therefore, she had understood that her teaching had been acceptable in the practicum. This cultural assumption that direct criticism should come from the senior appeared to have prevented her from appropriately understanding indirect requests or suggestions in English. The critical incident is also a typical example of the directive cultural scaffolding that I provided repeatedly over the sixth to fourteenth week of the practicum. However, this was not my typical teaching style and was much different from the way I interacted with the other mostly native speaking practicum students. Although feeling uncomfortable stretching my interactional style, I constantly questioned whether I was doing too much “hand-holding” that Emi did not really need. Yet, as the time progressed, I became more and more sure of the directive approach I was taking with Emi. The following section will discuss Emi’s successful adaptations in the second half of the practicum.

Research Question 2b: What cultural adjustments did the nonnative English-speaking student teacher successfully make in the practicum?

During the second half of the practicum semester, Emi started taking action gradually. She was quite responsive to my guidance; she listened to my suggestions, returned my e-mail reminders thanking me, and contributed more to weekly class discussions by bringing up relevant teaching issues. She contacted the campus-wide ITA consultant more persistently and was observed by him a few more times. She also negotiated her teaching with her mentor and obtained more teaching time and responsibilities. Emi also invited me to observe her classes two extra times, and eventually the supervisor once. I monitored these daily efforts and gave her positive reinforcement while pushing her further. I was careful to do this coaching informally and in private so that she would not feel singled out from her peers. In the interview, she reflected:

...I have a feeling that if I had done those things [classroom observations and post-observational discussions with the supervisor, campus-wide ITA consultant, and the TA] sooner, I would have improved earlier... Now I think I got the help later, so it was okay. But looking back, it was a tough time, and I should have done it earlier. (N. Ishihara, personal communication, November 16, 2002).

As Emi indicates here, during the last six weeks she made extensive use of the resources in the practicum and improved rapidly. She successfully passed the campus-wide ITA teaching test and the practicum. Moreover, during the subsequent semester, she became a successful teacher in the intensive English program, and was appointed as a coordinator of orientation activities in addition to a regular English class due to her good rapport with ESL students. Approximately one year after the practicum, she states in her reflective paper:

I was a reserved person who may be typical of students from Japan. I kept quiet and waited to take action until I was sure of what was appropriate to do or say when in the unfamiliar practicum environment. I was afraid of doing something unacceptable in the context. I was always looking for “right” things to say and could not reveal my real thoughts. Because of this, I made a mistake in playing the expected role as a student in practicum meetings, as a mentee in my relationships with my mentors, and as a student teacher in the ESL classroom.

In the same paper, she enumerated lessons she learned from the practicum course. Asking for help to utilize resources in the practicum is one of the lessons she lists:

Through this experience, I learned to consult appropriate people with my concerns as soon as possible. During the first half of the course, I experienced a lot of difficulties, but I tried to overcome them by myself and did not utilize the available resources as a practicum student, namely asking the supervisor, teaching assistant, and the campus-wide ITA consultant for advice. Later in the semester, I invited them to observe my lessons more frequently, and I received a lot of valuable

suggestions. These considerably helped me negotiate the challenges I had encountered.

Discussion

Interestingly, what might appear to be overly directive coaching in the U.S. culture may not be interpreted as such by someone from another culture. Whereas student teachers in the practicum course from other cultural backgrounds might view the directive scaffolding as excessive “hand-holding” that hinders their independence and self-respect, Emi seemed to have accepted it without hesitation and responded favorably to it. This may be due to the nature of the scaffolding that was perhaps tailored to her native-culture interactional style. For example, the directive coaching about taking a more active role in her interpersonal relationships might have been invisible to Emi who was accustomed to that communication style in her native culture and was concentrating on learning to teach in the practicum. Intriguingly, none of the data generated by Emi (including the reflective statements, interviews, and extensive reflective paper) acknowledged the existence of this cultural scaffolding. Emi’s behavior change was discussed as if it had happened naturally and spontaneously during the second half of the practicum semester (see the last quote). It can be argued that the directive cultural scaffolding might have facilitated a gradual and seamless transition from her interactional style more appropriate in Japanese culture to that more common in U.S. culture.

The readers might assume that since Emi and I shared our first language and culture, our interaction must have taken place in our first language Japanese. In a sense, the choice of language in the initial phase of our relationship was made strategically. Although Emi was not a language student, I suspected that improving the language and learning about the culture might still be one of Emi’s goals, as they were mine while in the language teacher education program. Because I did not intend to spoil Emi’s opportunity to function in English, I negotiated this decision with her. We met speaking in English in the practicum seminar meeting, but soon I asked her which language she wanted to use with me. She responded that either was fine, and as a result we kept speaking in English. This language choice, in fact, assisted me in building a non-threatening relationship with Emi that is close to equal rather than institutional, although the trade-off was some awkwardness and distance created by the use of our second language. Speaking in Japanese would have required Emi to use some degree of honorific language with me, two years ahead of her in the program and several years her senior, whereas I would have used fewer honorifics back to her. This would have clearly and constantly underscored an institutional relationship of me being a

senior TA and her a junior student. Although a variety of politeness strategies do exist in English, its use helped me build a more friendly, supportive, and egalitarian relationship with Emi.

However, after the practicum semester, we switched to Japanese due to Emi's preference. Therefore, our further interactions and interviews were conducted in Japanese. When we switched, her language exhibited a friendly tone with a slight shade of honorifics, which probably indicated her perception of our relationship as close-to-equal rather than vastly status-differential, although as time wore on she started to use more respectful forms with me. Such negotiation of the language choice and code switching indicates that scaffolding or collaboration between nonnative speakers with similar cultural backgrounds could take place either in the first or second language depending on the needs and preferences of those involved.

As this is a case study, the intention of the paper is not to generalize issues that nonnative speaking language teachers (or novice student teachers in practicum from Japan) tend to have, but to delineate interactional challenges for a nonnative English-speaking student teacher who was learning to teach in an unfamiliar cultural setting. Additionally, as Emi herself cautions in her reflective paper, we need to be careful in ascribing issues solely to culture. Culture does shape the speaker's interactional style to a varying degree. However, other factors, such as personality traits, past teaching and cross-cultural experiences, and familiarity with the teaching context, influence and interact with how a nonnative student teacher adjusts and accommodates interactional styles while learning to teach in the second language environment.

Implications of the Study

Through an extensive apprenticeship, practicum students are constantly engaged in complex and delicate institutional relationships. Negotiating and maintaining these relationships requires excellent interpersonal skills on the part of the practicum students, because smooth personal relationships allow them to function effectively in the given setting. One implication of this study is that for nonnative English-speaking student teachers relatively new to the U.S. culture, juggling multiple interpersonal relationships could be another challenge. On top of learning how to teach in an unfamiliar setting in a second language, they are expected to behave in a culturally appropriate manner in the university institution. Such interactional difficulty has rarely been problematized in language teacher education, although the issue may in fact be shared among many nonnative English-speaking student teachers.

Another implication of this case study is that the interactional difficulties that nonnative student teachers may have might not always be visible or readily understandable to all TESOL

(teachers of English to speakers of other languages) educators. In Emi's case, her initial actions were incomprehensible and confusing to the native English-speaking supervisor and mentors who did not share Emi's cultural and educational background. Nonnative speaking teacher educators, especially those who share the first culture with nonnative student teachers, may be able to provide sensitive and appropriate scaffolding. Those with similar cultural backgrounds are likely to have some common issues and might have effective strategies to share, or have a more sympathetic understanding of the issues. Cultural scaffolding might be seen as providing an equal distribution of resources to nonnative student teachers, who may not otherwise have the equal access to such resources due to cultural differences in interactional styles.

Teacher educators may wonder how extensive the scaffolding needs to be in order to be effective and whether its effect transfers to other contexts beyond the practicum. The answer will naturally vary, yet with regard to this particular student teacher, for Emi, the directive coaching over nine weeks seems to have assisted her in taking more initiative in her institutional relationships. By taking an active role in the practicum interactions, she appeared to have gained sufficient help and opportunities to improve her teaching. She was successful in passing the course and teaching in the intensive English program in the following year. Later when she encountered an issue in her ESL classroom, she immediately called for help from an appropriate individual in the program and received much needed assistance. Furthermore, one year after the practicum, her academic advisor mentioned that Emi was taking an active role while assisting the advisor in teaching an undergraduate course in TESOL. Considering Emi's success as an ESL teacher and as a graduate assistant TA herself, her learning to act in a more culturally appropriate manner perhaps allowed her to obtain necessary opportunities to improve her teaching performance in the practicum and to transfer such skills to contexts beyond the practicum.

Conclusion

With this case study, it is not my intention to claim that Japanese pre-service student teachers are likely to need directive spoon-feeding assistance. Rather, my point is that cultural mentoring or collaboration between nonnative speaking teachers with similar cultural backgrounds could be an effective tool for coping with issues that are unique to the teachers themselves. Although collaboration between native and nonnative teachers has been very much advocated, the value of collaboration between nonnative teachers is yet to be empirically explored. It is hoped that this study will provide an impetus for further investigation for this rather new model of

collaboration between nonnative English-speaking teachers in the area of language teacher development.

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Notes

¹ Despite the difficulty and debate in an attempt to define the construct of the native speaker (e.g., Braine, 1999; Liu, 1999), this paper uses the simplified dichotomy of the native versus nonnative speaker following convention. This is due to the self-categorization of the participants in this study. They identify themselves as nonnative speakers of English, coming as adults from the Expanding Circle (Kachru & Nelson, 1996) where English is studied as an academic subject and not used as an official or common language.

² Although the role of a master teacher and terminology vary according to the organization of the practicum (Gray, 2001), the term in this paper refers broadly to an expert teacher who assists a student teacher to learn to teach in an academic context. For the particular context being described in this paper, a master teacher team-taught with a student teacher while modeling good teaching practice and articulating his/her teaching principles.

³ In a curriculum analysis that examined ten currently used practicum syllabi in the United States (Ishihara, 2003), the required hours varied vastly from 30 to 140 hours.

⁴ Some notable exceptions are Cheng (2003) and Hayashi (2003). Both are self-reflective papers of their own language teaching practicum experiences that include reflections on the institutional relationships in the practicum.

⁵ A cram school prepares its students for university entrance examinations by way of an accelerated curriculum.

⁶ Requirements in the practicum consisted of apprenticeship (full participation in planning and teaching a university level ESL course for 105-140 hours), reflective writing (weekly journals and a reflective statement at the conclusion of the course), observation reports (three reports on other ESL classes than you teach), participation in the course meeting (weekly seminar meeting with the faculty supervisor), and compilation of a portfolio.

⁷ This phenomenon may be a characteristic of Japanese culture that is argued to build on a “quasi-familial relationship” (Lebra, 1976). While the senior exercises the power in educating the junior in the role of a parent or patron, the junior, or the disciple, in turn becomes dependent assuming the role of a protected child.

Professional Development through Action Research for Language Educators

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Action research for improving educational practice has gained its popularity in the literature and among teachers and teacher educators in the past years (e.g., Carr & Kemmis, 1996; Zeni, 2001). As one form of teacher research (Carter & Halsall, 1998), action research empowers teachers by enabling them to engage more closely with their students; helping them generate solutions to problems through collaboration with colleagues (and possibly with students); and increasing their awareness of teaching practice (Burns, 1999).

As practical as it may sound, in this chapter, we hope to inform teachers and teacher educators of the principles of action research by sharing our own experiences. First, we will begin by defining action research in a general teaching context and discuss teacher collaboration. Next, we will briefly describe the context in which we conducted our individual action research projects. Following this, we will present the details of our projects. The first project examined a teacher's transitions between classroom activities. The second project looked at the effects of native language (L1) versus target language (L2) use for grammar instruction. The third project investigated how to motivate students to speak more in the classroom. After the presentation of these projects, we will describe the constraints that we faced and give some suggestions for coping with those constraints. Finally, we will conclude this paper by discussing the role of action research in terms of professional development and some implications for future research.

General Principles of Action Research for Teachers

Action research has generated a number of definitions that encompass many aspects of action research (Allwright & Bailey, 1991; Carr & Kemmis, 1996; Wallace, 1998). Of these definitions, the following one by Burns, given in an interview by Cornwell (1999), seems to concisely and effectively articulate the principles of action research:

Action research involves a self-reflective, systematic and critical approach to enquiry by participants who are at the same time members of the research community. The aim is to identify problematic situations or issues considered by participants to be worthy of investigation in order to bring about critically informed changes in practice. Action research is underpinned by democratic principles in that ownership of change is invested in those who conduct the research. (p. 5)

This definition suggests a number of features of action research. First, action research deals with practical and immediate issues that are problematic in a particular setting. Therefore, knowing what is possible to accomplish in a limited time frame with the sources available is important in planning action research. Although action research is centered on practical classroom issues, its data may enrich the theories behind the issues, and the theories in turn can better inform teaching practice.

Action research is a reflective, systematic, and critical process (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988). It is important to note here that reflective in this sense does not indicate the traditional notion of intuitive reflections, but rather the reflective process of action research in a systematic and critical way. For example, the action researcher senses some problem in his or her classroom. In order to pinpoint exactly what the problem is and to resolve the problem, the action researcher needs to systematically collect and critically analyze data and implement necessary actions that may resolve the problem, or lead to another cycle of action research. In other words, in action research, reflecting on a phenomenon in one's mind is not the end: implementing new actions and evaluating the effects is the essence of action research—action research is action oriented.

In the same vein, action research involves dynamic processes unlike traditional linear research. Each cycle of research leads to a deeper inquiry, and the questions posed at the beginning of the research are likely to change over the course of the project due to the complexity of social situations (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988). Suppose an action-researcher decides that her students' not following instruction (e.g., often turning in late homework assignments) derives from her young age and sex, thereby failing to project her as an authoritative figure. After a couple of weeks of observing, planning and implementing actions, and evaluating the results of the actions in a spiral manner, she then realizes that the real problem is with the students' own motivation. At this point, she will change her original question from "how to maintain my authority as a teacher" to "how to motivate my students." Unlike experimental researchers, action researchers should expect that the original goals in their research projects might change over time, that it could take awhile to identify the real problems, and that they should not hesitate to change their initial questions.

Action research is participatory. Cameron, Frazer, Harvey, Rampton, and Richardson (1992) discuss three views of action research in terms of the relationship between the researcher and the researched: ethics, advocacy, and empowerment. With respect to the classroom, the notions of advocacy and empowerment represent the relationship between teachers and students well. In terms of advocacy, the action researcher is concerned with how the research outcomes can benefit the researched (which may include the teacher). In terms of empowerment, however, the

researcher involves the researched to a greater extent, either in the partial or entire process of research. In short, this form of research is *on*, *for*, and *with* the researched.

Indeed, many classroom practitioners, including us, have observed that efforts made to collaborate with peer teachers and/or students tend to yield more objective and reliable outcomes (Burns, 1999; Hobson, 2001) than can be achieved individually. Using the resource of colleagues who share common problems and concerns, as well as students who may observe what teachers miss can be an enormous help to the action researcher. In addition, even though action research focuses on a phenomenon confined to a specific context, a look at that phenomenon from various perspectives increases generalizability to different teaching contexts. Hobson argued that although teachers may initially be skeptical to the application of one situation to other situations, it is possible and encouraged, because as teachers hear about and discuss one another's experiences, they contribute to one another's learning about teaching and may be able to apply one another's findings in their own settings. Furthermore, the power of collaboration can take action research beyond the level of personal or professional development and may bring about institutional change as well, if institutions are supportive of teachers (McLaughlin & Marsh, 1990).

Finally, because collaborative action research involves both the researcher and the researched in the process, the outcomes are likely to have an impact on all the participants. Teachers, by undertaking action research, are engaging in a professional development opportunity. For example, action research can help novice teachers develop their teaching practice with assistance from experienced teachers and help the experienced teachers by challenging them to view their practices in a different way (Burns, 1999; Little, 1990). Students in turn benefit from action research, because improved practices enhance their learning. Specifically, Zeni (2001) states that teachers working with students as fellow investigators seeking to solve a problem that all have in common can establish a democratic, student-centered atmosphere. Moreover, according to Cumming (1994), active involvement in action research can provide language learners with an authentic and communicative learning environment as the research is discussed or negotiated with the students.

In summary, it is the action researcher (insider) who documents one's own practice, not an outside researcher who intervenes and investigates teaching practice (Zeni, 2001). Therefore, the researcher and the researched in action research take complete charge of the context in which they work and voluntarily make attempts to bring about changes in teaching practice that directly benefit both teachers and students. Nevertheless, it is often very helpful to have at least one other

teacher involved in the research. The next section will deal with issues of collaboration in educational settings.

Teacher Collaboration

Of those general principles of action research discussed above, teacher collaboration is the most essential part for achieving professional development. In this section, we will consider the major factors that make it difficult for teachers to work together, detail the reasons why the benefits of collaborative teaching practice outweigh the obstacles, and describe specific methods and techniques that are often used by teachers working together.

Lack of time is one of the primary concerns that prevent teachers from embarking on collaborative work (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; Freeman, 1998). They have multiple unending teaching related tasks and administrative commitments. In exposing themselves to other teachers by way of collaboration, teachers face the possibility of being criticized (Bailey, Curtis, & Nunan, 2001; Edge 1992). Similarly, they are afraid of being compelled to agree with their colleagues for the sake of “cooperating” with them (Little, 1990). Most importantly, some teachers simply are not aware of collaborative teaching practices, their importance, and the techniques required to carry out effective action research (Burns, 1999; McKernan, 1993).

Despite these pitfalls, the advantages of teacher collaboration merit serious consideration. Teachers’ experiences and research reveal that colleagues reflecting together as a team generate a greater range of creative ideas, new materials and methods, and higher quality solutions to problems than they would working individually (e.g., Bailey, Dale, & Squire, 1992). This teamwork particularly will place inexperienced teachers at advantage because it helps establish an emotional and professional relationship with their colleagues. Furthermore, colleagues casually conversing often with one another about teaching, in spite of their tight schedules, leads to theoretically and practically fruitful discussions (Little, 1990). Debriefing with colleagues is especially critical because it combines teachers’ subjective, immediate observations in the classroom with objective, follow-up reflections from their peers. Colleagues helping another teacher also benefit from hearing about how successfully their specific suggestions have worked in the researcher’s classroom or if they failed, they learn why and to what extent, they failed. This “feedback on the feedback” will help the feedback-givers provide even more helpful feedback to their peers next time (Hobson, 2001, p. 181).

Understanding that collaboration is an important element of professional development does not mean knowing the practical skills required of teachers to effectively and efficiently work with

one another. There are a range of activities that collaborating action researchers most often make use of. These include brainstorming, classroom observation accompanied by taking field notes and/or videotaping, interactive journal writing between colleagues (continuous, shared dialogue maintained by writing back and forth to one another), networking with other practitioners using methods such as e-mail exchanges, interviewing/surveying colleagues, periodic conferencing (taping one's own discourse about the progress one makes over time, being interviewed by one's peer), and collecting data outside the classroom with the assistance of other teachers (Arhar, Holly, & Kasten, 2001; Freeman, 1998; Hobson, 2001; Little, 1990). Focused classroom observation is one of the classical techniques often employed in action research (Arhar, Holly, & Kasten, 2001; Little, 1990). This technique is used when the colleague(s) of an action researcher closely attend to previously agreed-upon classroom events or interactions as an observer or a participant observer (Freeman, 1998; for examples of classroom observation tasks, see Wajnryb, 1992). Interactive journal writing and networking with colleagues via the Internet may well serve its purpose when collaborating teachers cannot find times and places to get together. Periodical conferencing is another useful option for teachers who have difficulty making sense of their own observations when they orally express them. By having an interviewer who reflects and asks clarifying questions, those researchers can gain a clearer understanding of what they are reporting to the interviewer (Hobson, 2001).

Thus far, we have discussed the general principles of action research with an emphasis on teacher collaboration that we hope will give some background to beginning teacher researchers who wish to conduct their own action research projects. In the sections that follow, we will illustrate our individual action research projects beginning with the background.

Background of Action Research Projects

As graduate students in the early stages of our individual programs, most of us had not acquired adequate research knowledge of any sort before taking a course on action research. In spite of this lack of research experience, however, we knew that we needed to improve our classrooms. We were not satisfied with our teaching practice—either with the materials, the institutionally created syllabi, the student response, or our own ability to explain a subject effectively. We found shortcomings in our teaching and were looking for a way to improve our practice. It was this personal drive that motivated us to take the action research course that was offered in a graduate program in TESL (Teachers of English as a Second Language).

The course was offered as a seminar for one semester. We met twice a week and discussed the assigned readings about action research with our classmates, all but one of whom were currently language teachers. We carried out our own projects by relating the knowledge we learned from the readings and by discussing various issues or problems with our peers and professor during a portion of class time set aside particularly for our individual projects. The professor in our class served both as a leader of the class discussions and as a colleague who provided insights as valuable as those of our peers. Having such a leader in an action research group was important because it prevented the group from dwelling on one topic/project too long and thus enabled everybody to have equal opportunities to discuss his or her own projects. In addition to the readings and discussions, we, outside the classroom, recorded our feelings about both action research in general and our specific individual projects in a professional journal twice a week.

By taking this course, we were able to gain a rich understanding of action research, and we were able to put the knowledge into practice by conducting our own projects. As action researchers, we learned to be critical about the situations we were in, and we were excited to observe the improvements we made in our own classrooms. To demonstrate this, the next section will present each of our three individual projects that we carried out as action researchers in the supportive environment of peer collaboration, fostered in our practicum class. We hope that this section will give a more concrete picture as to how to carry out action research for those who have never conducted action research themselves.

Individual Action Research Projects

Developments of a Novice, Non-Native Teacher's Use of Transitions, by Sujung Park

Context and research question.

The course that I was assigned to teach for the first time as an instructor after completing my master's degree program (English teacher training) was an ESL (English as a Second Language) writing course for international graduate students at a large Midwestern university. The class consisted of twenty-two students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. About half the population of the class was comprised of students enrolled in the master's program from which I had graduated, while the other half was comprised of students from other disciplines at the university. Part of the reason that I was given this unique position was the supervisors' expectation that I could be a successful role model for those who wanted to become English teachers. Despite their confidence, I was overly concerned that as a non-native teacher I might make errors when I spoke, and this greatly affected my fluency. In addition, the majority of my students were Asian,

most of who were not culturally receptive to having a young non-native female as their teacher. Realizing all these facts negatively affected my confidence as a language teacher.

After several lessons, I realized that the immediate problem that I needed to address in my action research project were my transitions between activities. I was not confident enough as a teacher to deliver any unplanned speeches to the students. I was afraid of making linguistic errors, and I was not familiar enough with the language needed to comment on students' performance and move on to the next activity. Thus, my action research question was formed: "How can I improve my transitions (or teacher talk) in terms of language and content?" I hoped that finding the answer to this question would increase my confidence as a language teacher.

Method, analysis, and results.

In order to obtain multiple perspectives on my topic, I included three groups of participants in this study: six of my experienced peer teachers (who were all classmates except for one colleague working in a different but similar teaching context), 18 of my students (all of them), and myself. Over the course of the semester, my colleagues observed my classes separately on different dates and I observed their classes as well, focusing on their transitions. Soon after each observation, we had a follow-up session in which my peer teachers gave me feedback on my transitions. Observing various types of transitions used by my colleagues and receiving feedback from them proved to be quite useful because I could compare the way the experienced teachers moved between activities with the way I did.

From my student participants, I collected two journal entries and two free writes on regularly assigned dates. In their first journals, students wrote about one general question regarding how well they understood my transitions between activities. The second journal contained eight specific questions based on the feedback I received from their first journal entries and first free-writes that included my time management between activities, the connection between the beginning of the class to the first activity of the day, kinds of comments I made during transitions, and others. The two free-writes had one general question each like the question from the first journal, but the students were asked to focus on my transitions on the days when they were asked to free-write. Meanwhile, I reflected upon how my class was going by making journal entries at least twice a week for three months and audio taping ten of my own lectures. Journaling took place immediately after class so that I could remember any details that might be helpful for improving my transitions. In addition to this immediate journaling, post-journaling also took place after listening to my audiotapes.

Having various viewpoints on a certain phenomenon was very helpful and objective because I could compare what my peers and my students had observed in my classroom with what I had observed about myself. Based on this triangulation, Table 1 shows the problems diagnosed in terms of my transitions, the actions taken, and the subsequent changes made to improve my transitions.

Table 1: Problems, Actions and Changes

Problem	Action Taken	Change
Students unable to follow directions to the next activity	Finishing directions before handing out materials	Increased student understanding of directions
Lack of sequence of activities	Writing down a list of activities to do in order on the blackboard	Increased student understanding of transitions between activities
Huge pauses between words and/or sentences, especially in transitions between activities	a) Planning ahead, memorizing, and trying to use transitions in class b) Building a student-centered atmosphere (e.g., decision making)	a) No improvement due to not remembering the transitions in class b) Increased comfort and confidence, resulting in smoother transitions
No connection between the previous lesson(s) and the lesson of the day	Reviewing the previous lesson(s) and relating them to the lesson of the day	Increased student understanding of links between two classes

Reflections.

The improvements I made over the course of the semester followed the three main principles of action research: continuous reflection, action, and collaborative work. In reflecting on and analyzing my teaching practice, I discovered that confidence played a crucial role for a novice teacher to grow and survive and was influential in establishing new teaching practices. I found out from my journal entries that lack of confidence as a teacher negatively affected my transitions both in language and content, and the poor transitions in turn lowered my confidence. In order for myself, as a novice teacher, to gain confidence, and to improve my teaching technique, I realized that receiving input from my students and support from experienced teachers is critical. Doing so enabled me to deal effectively with future problems that I will encounter on my own.

The Use of L1 and L2 for Grammar Instruction of Japanese Foreign Language Class,
by *Satomi Kuroshima*

Context and research question.

My action research project was motivated by my inexperience in teaching Japanese grammar. Like Sujung, I was a novice language teacher and wanted to improve my grammar instruction by making use of both English (L1) and Japanese (L2). My class was an intermediate Japanese class which consisted of 12 undergraduate students. As I began teaching this class, I discovered that I wanted to know to what extent instruction in Japanese could improve my students' Japanese and to what extent instruction in English could assist their understanding of Japanese grammar. Hence, my research question was established: "On what occasions can I use Japanese (L2) to explain grammar without hindering students' understanding, and on what occasions can they benefit from English explanations (L1) to clear up their confusion about grammar topics?"

Method, analysis and results.

The collected data consisted of (a) fifteen questionnaires for students, (b) fifteen fill-in-the-blank worksheets completed after each grammar lecture, (c) six peer observations, (d) audio-taped follow-up interviews with ten students, and (e) audio-recordings of ten class periods. Each data set was collected during the grammar instruction of three chapters in the book, Nakama (2000), except (d), which was completed only during one chapter. In each chapter, five different grammatical points, including particles, auxiliary verbs, and honorific forms were introduced, along with other topics aiming at the four language skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing).

In the questionnaires for the first chapter, the students provided reasons for their incomplete understanding of lectures: the instructor's unclear explanation or articulation, complicated grammar topics, or the speed of the class. As for the percentage of each language used in the classroom, they estimated that 68% Japanese instruction was ideal for their grammar instruction. This meant that they still needed about 30% English instruction. I also had my six colleagues observe my grammar instruction during the instruction on the first chapter. As with the previous researcher, this helped me gain an objective standpoint regarding my own instruction. My peer teachers suggested that I use more Japanese in the classroom, because the students seemed to already comprehend the lectures in Japanese at the current level of instruction.

As a result of the early feedback, I articulated the L2 more clearly for the following chapter, providing English for complicated grammar points. To the questionnaires for that chapter, the students responded that they understood the lectures better than those for the previous chapter.

This outcome is also supported by the improved results of the fill-in-the-blank worksheets, as compared to the first chapter. Interestingly, however, their preferred L2 percentage remained the same as that of the previous chapter. Most of the students still needed English explanation as a meta-language for complicated grammatical points and vocabulary.

In the instruction on the last chapter, I conducted follow-up face-to-face interviews with ten of my students because some of them had not responded to the questionnaires and worksheets conducted for the previous chapters and I wanted to add more observations that my previous questions might have missed to ask. Every interview took 30 minutes and was semi-constructed. When asked about the benefits of my using Japanese to teach the class, their responses were (a) L2 input and exposure, (b) a better understanding of conceptual differences between the two languages, and (c) cognitive effects. When asked about the benefits of my using English to teach the class, their responses were (a) a better understanding of the instruction, (b) better clarifications, and (c) faster learning speed.

As a result of all the actions I took to improve my grammar instruction, I found that for simple grammatical points, Japanese should be used as long as the students can comprehend it because it provides the students with exposure to the target language. On the other hand, the use of the L1, English, is helpful for complicated topics in order to promote accurate understanding and learning at a reasonable speed. In fact, in the follow-up interviews, many of the students reflected that their listening skills improved to a degree that they could understand Japanese instruction without much difficulty.

Reflections.

Compared to the beginning of the semester, I noticed that the students came to understand my grammar instruction with more ease toward the end of semester. When I began teaching, I was not confident that I could provide effective instruction for my students. However, as I pursued my action research, I accomplished more than just answering my research question. Not only did I learn when to switch from Japanese to English and vice versa, I also learned which Japanese syntactic rules and conceptual differences between Japanese and English would require elaborated instruction. This is one of the aspects of teaching that a native teacher could easily overlook due to the different language learning process and experience between a native speaker and a non-native speaker. When realizing these benefits from my action research, I strongly felt that every language educator, including novice teachers, should be encouraged to practice their own action research. The method of action research provides teachers and teacher educators with a great opportunity to

notice particular problems and to deal with classroom issues closely, while being involved in the context as a teacher practitioner.

Discussion Tasks for Oral Skill Improvement in an Advanced Chinese Class, by Zhijun Wang

Context and research question.

While Satomi investigated her Japanese class, my research project centered on my Chinese 340 class, the fourth year advanced language course at the same Midwestern university. The main objective of this course is to improve students' reading and speaking skills by asking them to read assigned articles and discuss the content orally. During the first class, I asked my students what they wanted to accomplish by taking the class. Most of the students responded that they wanted to improve their speaking abilities, because they did not have many opportunities to speak the language outside of the classroom. Ironically, however, no matter how much they said they wanted to speak, their participation was very low. I thought that this was probably due to my traditional way of teaching in which I lecture first and ask content questions directed to any student in the classroom, hoping volunteers will speak up. In order to motivate them to participate in classroom activities, therefore, I decided to try oral tasks that made heavy use of discussions. Because the students were fluent Chinese learners, discussion tasks seemed to be a good way to motivate and challenge them to speak in class. Thus, my research question evolved: "Do discussion tasks motivate my students to speak more in class?"

Method, analysis and results.

Based on the input from my classmates, I investigated four oral tasks that included some aspect of discussion: follow-up discussion, oral presentation, group discussion, and in-class debate. In the follow-up discussion task, the students took turns reading out loud the last three paragraphs of a novel in a textbook. After this reading, I asked questions about the content, and the students discussed the relevant issues. In the oral presentation, I gave a list of topics for the students to choose from, and they went to a library to find out more information about these topics. Then, they chose a topic for a short oral presentation and had five additional minutes to answer questions from their classmates and discuss any related issues. As for the group discussion task, the students were divided into four groups. In each group, the students took turns reading paragraphs, inferring the meanings of new words and phrases and idioms, summarizing each paragraph, and answering content questions. Each group had one student who was more fluent than the rest in the group so that he or she could lead the group and provide any help needed by other students. Finally, in the in-class debate, the students were asked to choose the most interesting debate topic from eight

choices that I had provided. The class was divided into two groups in which each student was required to speak at least twice. A debate began with opening remarks by each group, and each side discussed their viewpoints and supporting evidence for their arguments.

To see the effects of these tasks, I asked the students to complete a survey after each discussion task was completed. The survey included questions such as how much they liked a task and why. My reflective daily journals and notes that were done immediately after class were collected as additional sources of data. Table 2 presents a summary of the students' survey responses and my reflections concerning the effects of the four oral tasks compared to the traditional method in which a teacher asks questions to the whole class.

Table 2: Comparison Between Oral Tasks and the Traditional Teaching Method

Activity type	Student response	Reason for response	Teacher reflection
Traditional teaching method	None	Unclear questions by teacher and uninteresting topics	Inactive classroom atmosphere
Follow-up discussion	Enjoyed discussions	Enhanced understanding of content, no need to refer to text, and easy questions to answer	More talking among students
Oral presentation	Increased speaking, improved public speaking, and learning of the Chinese culture	Interesting, controversial, and open-ended topics and opinion sharing atmosphere among students	Students' rehearsing before speaking and demonstrating increased confidence
Group discussion	Useful for oral skills but not for accuracy	Small group, casual environment, and being forced to read and explain	Good interaction among students
In-class debate	Improved oral skills	Good topic and equal speaking opportunities	Students motivated to win the debate

Reflections.

The findings of my research suggest that discussion-based oral tasks provide sufficient opportunities and incentives to encourage both active and quieter students to engage in classroom interaction. In comparison to the traditional method that I had used, the oral tasks motivated the students to speak more, due to the discussion-oriented nature of the tasks and the careful design of those tasks. In particular, I employed a variety of tasks, thereby keeping the students' interest consistently high in the activities they did in each class.

To summarize, by carrying out our action research projects in the specific contexts of our own classrooms, we developed practical research skills and experience dealing with the problems involving our students and our own practice. In every step of the process, our action research group played a crucial role by providing support and useful ideas whenever we needed them. Although our concerns were different as L2 teachers, we shared the ultimate goal of improving our teaching practice. As a result, each of us was able to complete a project successfully.

Conducting Action Research: Constraints and Suggestions

While we benefited from the research process, we also faced several constraints in conducting our action research projects. In this section, we will address those constraints that we were confronted with individually, and we will give suggestions for coping with those constraints.

One constraint that all of us struggled with was lack of time, as already pointed out as a critical element of action research (e.g., Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993). We were simultaneously teaching assistants, teacher researchers, and graduate students in our own programs. Preparation for class, data collection for our action research projects, and studying for our graduate courses required a tremendous amount of time and effort. When data that was collected and organized might not lead to any further use, it would be incredibly disappointing and the amount of time spent could be a critical loss. For example, Sujung audiotaped ten of her classes for the purposes of transcribing to find out what types of transitions she used in the classroom and to compare the outcome with that of her experienced colleagues. However, while transcribing some of them, she realized that it was not clear-cut to define and divide her transitions into certain types. In the end, she had to abandon this data source and the amount of time she had spent transcribing resulted in meaningless effort. In order to minimize this kind of drawback, Bailey, Curtis, and Nunan (2001) suggest that an action researcher needs to carefully and thoroughly plan every step and estimate the amount of time that each step may take including forming the research question; creating materials; collecting, transcribing, and analyzing data; and writing up the project, including meetings for discussions with colleagues whenever necessary during the process. On top of thorough pre-planning, Wallace (1998) draws specific attention to the importance of topic choice, pointing out that the choice of topic affects the amount of time that will be needed for the completion of a project. To illustrate, if one of the research questions requires activities that the teacher would do anyway in the classroom, the entire research process will take less time.

This pre-planning process may sound rather rigid for the flexible nature of action research where researchers can easily redirect their research goals when they make different observations and

reflections from their original thoughts about them. Given this flexibility of action research, our inflexibility in our projects is another constraint we had. We followed the cycle of action research in some way but did not in other ways. That is, our research patterned with action research in that we started with an issue to be improved, thought of action(s) to take to resolve the issue, reflected upon the consequences of the action(s) taken, and implemented them into the next action, and the cycle went on. In the meantime, however, it was also linear traditional research because we did not change our research questions, though some of us discovered in the middle of data collection that the topics we had been investigating were not the most critical and immediate problems to be solved. In most cases, members of our practicum decided not to change topics because we had to complete our projects in one semester, and by the time we settled on a topic, it was too late to collect new data for a new question. Thus, whether or not to fully complete the flexible cycle of action research depends on the allotted time researchers would have in hand and the need to think ahead and make plans accordingly.

The lack of literature on the topics is another obstacle we had. For example, the topic Sujung investigated was practical but certainly not unique just like the other researchers', but she did not find any directly relevant literature on it. This is not surprising if one considers that much of the literature in second language teaching and learning deals with very theoretical issues or topics. Furthermore, regarding that action research does not require thorough literature review like traditional experimental research, a relevant paucity of literature should not come as a disappointment. Nevertheless, references can be very helpful and speed up research because they provide the researcher with diverse perspectives and ideas that have been studied by a number of researchers on the topic. Kebir (1994) illustrated in her action research project that literature helps the researcher focus on the chosen topic and on what is relevant to the topic, thereby restricting the research and saving time. Likewise, if there had been literature on the classification of transitions that Sujung could have referred to (or if she had been able to create her own types), she would have saved the data and have not wasted a large chunk of time. (The recordings themselves were very useful, though, because she could go back to them whenever there arose a need to listen to herself, for example, while writing a reflective journal after a lecture.) Therefore, action researchers should keep in mind that a topic without any references and literature might be in some ways more difficult because they are working without the support of previous research and literature. They should not, however, abandon the topic only because they do not have rich literature and research on the topic. Rather, they can research professional books or create their own framework or

definitions that are reasonable and can be applied to their own contexts. This will be a way of bridging the gap between theory and research.

Some of Sujung's students were concerned that the teacher was experimenting on the class for her own benefit, that is, for the purpose of completing her course project. This misunderstanding could result in having a smaller number of student participants (although not in the case of Sujung's study). As a solution to this possible problem, teachers should make sure in the beginning of the research that their students clearly understand the purpose of action research and articulate its potential effect on improving classroom practice that will in turn impact the students. At most institutions, this involves obtaining Internal Review Board permission to carry out the study, replete with a process of obtaining informed consent.

Finally, some of us had administrative constraints such that we had to use fixed syllabi and teaching materials already made by our departments. To address this problem, honest communication with administration and knowing one's limits are important. This way, action researchers will not waste their time trying to change what they cannot change, but they may be able to improve their teaching situations by addressing their concerns to the administration.

In spite of the obstacles that we have discussed so far, at the end of our projects, we all felt a sense of achievement and contribution to improving our practice and ourselves as language educators. In the next section, we will describe the role action research can play in professional development.

The Role of Action Research in Professional Development

Action research is one of the most beneficial research methods for teachers who want to bring about positive changes in their classrooms and institutions, which in turn leads to teachers' professional development (e.g., Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988). Compared to the beginning of our project, we are now more confident about ourselves as language teachers, and we feel that we gained adequate knowledge and skills to continue to research whenever there is a need. For example, two of us (Sujung and Satomi) were novice L2 teachers, and everything was challenging and overwhelming to us. We had numerous concerns and problems about materials, students, and ourselves as teachers. However, our action research projects enabled us to concentrate on one single issue or problem step by step and to gradually improve the quality of our instruction. Because we were novice teachers, solving one issue out of many issues that surrounded us was an enormous help to increase our confidence in our teaching practice in general. In addition, all of us including

the experienced teacher, Zhijun, learned research skills and procedures that equipped us to continue investigating our future problems in our classrooms.

Collaboration in the action research group was an essential part in achieving a sense of professional development. Although we all learned from the literature that collaboration was a crucial component of action research, we were not convinced that consulting each other about our own projects in the beginning would be beneficial. We later realized that this would be a crucial factor in the success of our projects. One of the concerns was introduced by Little (1990) earlier in this article (peer pressure in a collaborating teacher group); however, we were not intimidated by our peers because we were all in-service teachers who wanted to improve our teaching practice, and we understood the importance of respectful and professional interaction. Rather, the reason that we were skeptical about teacher collaboration was due to the different teaching contexts in which we found ourselves. The subjects or languages we taught were different, the student populations were different in terms of nationality and level, and the teaching methods and goals were different. We thought that these situational differences might hinder us from collaborating. Despite our worries, and as Hobson (2001) argued in his work, “every time you listen to someone else, you gain something” (p. 180), the dialogues in the action research group did indeed provide new insights into issues that we were concerned about, resulting in more options for solutions. We brainstormed together to select the most practical topics to explore in our classrooms. We made suggestions for possible actions to take to investigate the topics. We shared our experiences by reporting what had happened in the classrooms after we had implemented our actions. This enabled us to critically analyze the actions and effects from multiple viewpoints. For example, two of us (Sujung and Satomi) sought our experienced colleagues’ advice by observing them and being observed in order to have another viewpoint about our own teaching. This peer collaboration stimulated and encouraged us in the process of completing our projects. In essence, learning through each other’s experiences and reflections broadened our horizons, and collaboration with other teachers generated a respectful and supportive atmosphere, in which we learned how to work with each other.

In summary, the nature of collaborative action research seems to be especially appropriate in a multifaceted classroom setting because it employs a cycle of several trial actions and interactive dialogue between colleagues. In the classroom, a number of issues could intertwine and develop into one major problem or issue. In attempting to solve the problem, if one action does not work well for some reason, then we can implement another action and observe its effect until we determine the best approach. In so doing, collaborative work with peer teachers, students, and

possibly administrators can provide various perspectives and insights into dynamic classroom issues and, through the process, enhance teaching practice and professional development. We would like to end this section with excerpts¹ from the reflection papers that we wrote at the end of our action research class. These reflections demonstrate the sense of professional development we earned as action researchers.

(Sujung) I want to point out that confidence is everything to a novice teacher. Lack of confidence resulting from lack of experience made me feel very small, and it affected my performance as a teacher and that affected my confidence in return. It's a cycling pattern. Peer teachers' support was of great help to me in gaining confidence in addition to the small techniques I tried out. Overall, I am glad that I had an opportunity to learn about action research and carried out my own as I started a new position as a teacher. I believe that action research can be a very valuable tool for a teacher, especially to a novice teacher.

(Satomi) Looking back to the beginning, I clearly remember that being a novice teacher, I had no clue as to how I could teach Japanese more effectively. To make matters worse, after class, I did not have time to reflect on what went wrong or well in the classroom. However, after I joined this action research class and learned what action research was about, I began to change myself as a teacher, and being a researcher gave me many insights into my own teaching.

(Zhijun) Not only did I improve my class as a teacher but I also developed myself as a researcher, which I had never imagined myself to be in a classroom context. This is progress in my research career, no matter what the results were. As a teacher, at the same time, I was so happy to see my students seriously engage in a discussion and debate on a topic in Chinese. I saw my class improve.

Invitation for Further Action Research

Stenhouse (1975) points out that action research contributes to not only problem solving but also theory building. Similarly, Bailey, Curtis, and Nunan (2001) argue that action research “offers us [teachers] the opportunity to generate contextualized theories of language learning and teaching based on and immediately connected to our own reality” (p. 139). These perspectives of action research well encompass its theoretical significance as well as its immediate practical usefulness in communities of teachers. It is a known fact that much research in language learning and teaching is lab-based for logistical and experimental reasons, and thereby not directly applicable to a real classroom. Action research, however, allows teachers to conduct research within a classroom and directly apply the outcomes in practice. By investigating classroom issues and sharing the results through collaborative meetings and/or publications, teacher researchers are likely to benefit from one another and gain a greater sense of professional development in their own

teaching contexts. Therefore, we strongly encourage the readers (both novice and experienced teachers, both language teachers and language 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. Finally, we would like to end this paper with a quote from Boomer (1987) that reminds us of teachers as role models for students' learning:

All teachers should be experts in 'action research' so that they can show all students how to be 'action researchers.' That is, all teachers should be experts in learning so that they can remind all students how to learn...all students at all levels must be researchers and all teaching should be based on the methods of research, if we are serious about learning. (p. 8)

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Note

¹ These have been edited.

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Teacher Research in Vietnam: A Context-Sensitive Approach to Teacher Development

Diana L. Dudzik

Introduction

Vietnam has been a land in flux since it implemented *doi moi*, an open door policy welcoming foreign investment, in 1986. As the country enters the global economy, English language learning is more in demand than ever before. One of the issues on this landscape of change is the development of new English language teachers. Students, especially those from the cities, are arriving at the university with higher proficiency in English than in the past, due in part to the increasing availability of native speaking models through popular media and the earlier introduction of English into the curriculum. Students are also arriving at the university with higher expectations of their English teachers. Hanoi University of Foreign Studies (HUFS), one of Vietnam's premiere language teaching institutions, recognizes this changing landscape, and is responding with innovative curricular restructuring. This institution has begun an experiment in teacher education that pragmatically addresses the needs of the increasingly advanced proficiency of its student body. Administrators are hiring highly proficient, recent graduates from HUFS, grooming them as developing teachers (DTs), and then funneling them into M.A. in TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) programs to address the increasing demands of the university's constituency.

In an attempt to address teacher education in a contextually appropriate way, a group of young teachers at HUFS were guided in a development process regarding the application of communicative language teaching (CLT) in Vietnam. This article describes the culmination of a one-year staff development project where a group of 28 young teachers in year one and 13 teachers in year two conducted teacher research on the practice of CLT in their classrooms and wrote about their research process and findings. The goal of this project was to facilitate the development of Vietnamese English language teachers who are informed of current literature on language teaching methodology; who inquire of their own practice; and who adapt methodology to their own settings.

Vietnamese Tertiary English Education

When I began working in teacher education in Vietnam, several differences in the structure of university education initially struck me. First, rather than offering broad, liberal arts training

with a variety of majors, Vietnamese universities are structured by unique specialties. HUFS, therefore, is the primary institution for the study of foreign languages. HUFS historically has specialized in training interpreters and translators, but is diversifying to some extent with a new English-based department of business and tourism. Other institutions are also developing English language programs to complement their specialties such as foreign trade or economics.

Vietnamese university structure also consists of cohorts of approximately 25 students who take all their classes together for four years. Each cohort has a monitor whose duties include assisting the teacher with attendance, getting information to students, and making copies. The monitor is usually a very strong student and, along with several other strong students, often dominates classroom interaction.

Instruction in Vietnam is generally delivered via lectures coupled with individual student work. As a result of a traditional, teacher-centered model of information transmission, English language learners in Vietnam, as is generally true in Asia (see Liao, December 2000/January 2001), are often more able to read and write than they are to communicate orally in English. These teacher-centered language classrooms often produce students who are proficient in grammar, vocabulary, comprehending information, and writing papers. However, students are often less able to ask questions, disagree, interrupt, or extend a discussion of ideas. The Vietnamese view of good student behavior seems generally to be listening, taking notes, and chorally interacting. Vietnamese teachers of English at the tertiary level inherit this legacy of student behavior. As is true in other Asian contexts (Liao, December 2000/January 2001), Vietnamese teachers are often reluctant or frustrated in their efforts to modify their teaching approach because testing does not usually measure communicative competence and grammar-translation-based curriculum does not support the changes. Nunan (2003) describes this situation in Vietnam:

The prevailing rhetoric in Vietnam appears to be “communicative,” with an integrated four-skills focus in the early years. In high school, however, the focus is exclusively on reading. . . . Despite the lip service paid to CLT, there appears to be a large gap between the rhetoric and the reality. (p. 604)

This reality is likely a direct washback effect of the types of tests high school students are required to take and the self-perpetuating cycle of teachers who are products of the same system.

Economic Growth and Its Impact on Tertiary English Education

Vietnam’s economy is growing at a healthy rate of seven to eight percent annually. The effects can be seen everywhere around Hanoi. New motorbikes fill the streets to near gridlock

capacity. SUVs and luxury automobiles now compete for road space originally designed for bicycle traffic. Construction is occurring everywhere.

In the midst of this economic growth, education is being impacted. The private sector is moving ahead at a rapid rate. Businesses are hiring proficient English speakers for considerably more than the wages of a university English teacher. As a result, highly competent English teachers are being drawn away from their university positions. Universities are scrambling to prepare a new generation of teachers to meet both the demands caused by economic growth and to replace the deficit caused by that same economic growth. However, the public sector is moving more slowly. Consensus at the government ministry levels takes time. Educational policies change incrementally. Among the needed changes is the official salary of university teachers. Teacher performance is impacted by low salaries, the slow rate of educational and curricular reform, and competition from the private sector for teachers' time and energy.

Learner-Centered and Context-Sensitive Teacher Education

Current literature states that effective teacher education is both learner-centered and context-sensitive (Bax, 1997; Burnaford, 2001a; Johnston, 2000; Johnson, 2000; Johnson, 2002; Milambling, 2001; Richards, 1998; Schleppegrell, 2001). The effectiveness of teacher-centered models of information transmission are being questioned, replaced by an approach that centers on learners, especially on encouraging learners to apply knowledge to their classrooms (Johnston, 2000; Huling, Richardson, & Hord, 1983, as cited in Burnaford, 2001a). This shift to more learner-centered, reflective teacher education includes components such as reflective journaling, negotiated syllabi, teacher-learner conferences, and alternative assessments (Johnston, 2000). This move toward more learner participation in language teacher education (LTE) may also include viewing teachers and learners as equals in the learning process and substituting discussions, brainstorming sessions, and small group tasks for the usual lecture-mode of information delivery (Guefrachi & Troudi, 2000). Learner-centered teacher education calls upon DTs to learn by doing, to think like students as well as teachers, and to experience as learners the kinds of activities that characterize learner-centered classrooms (Murphey, 2000).

In addition to being learner-centered, effective teacher education needs to be context-sensitive by responding to DTs' institutional, educational, and cultural contexts (Bax, 1997; Johnson, 2000; Johnson, 2002). DTs must become aware of the challenges of their individual settings, and be equipped to respond to the constraining forces, challenges, and limitations of those settings (Johnson, 2000). Critical thinking and reflection are crucial components of teacher education courses that seek to develop context-sensitive teachers.

Instruction in language teaching methodology delivered in a teacher-centered manner often results in that methodology not being integrated into the new setting (Bax, 1997). This lack of transfer is seen in Vietnam, where teacher-centered classrooms are the norm, and where DTs learn about language teaching methodology, but often do not experience that methodology in their teacher education courses. Teacher education programs are traditionally heavy on theory over practice (Johnson, 2000). However, as DTs explore language learning theories, and reflect upon their settings, they are empowered to theorize about the appropriateness of the theories to their particular settings, developing context-sensitive practitioners. A key factor in theory being translated into practice is the infusion of classroom tasks into teacher education courses that illustrate the theory being studied, followed by reflection upon those classroom experiences.

New Roles for Developing Teachers

Teacher education that is learner-centered and context-sensitive calls upon DTs to become more than classroom teachers as they ask questions of what they are learning and challenge what they assume (Bax, 1997). Effective teacher education assigns additional roles to DTs such as those of researchers, writers, and presenters, encouraging DTs to contribute their understandings to the language teaching profession (Johnston, 2000; Murphey, 2000). In Vietnam, these new roles are unfamiliar and uncomfortable because of the supreme value placed upon teacher and text. Teacher educators must guide DTs into these new roles, creating an atmosphere where it is safe both to value and to question theories, teachers, and tradition.

Context-sensitive Teacher Educators

While it is important for DTs to grow in awareness of their particular settings, it is perhaps more important for teacher educators to grow in context sensitivity (Bax, 1997). This context-sensitivity is crucial where English is a foreign language (EFL) and native English speaking (NES) teacher educators do not share the same background as their students. Effective teacher education curriculum must grow out of an awareness of the background, settings, and issues that DTs face (Milambling, 2001). This awareness allows teacher educators to adjust their expectations and to modify their input to address the situations of the DTs (Schleppegrell, 2001). Without contextual understanding, a mismatch of instructional delivery and learner expectations often occurs (Lewis, 2000). Without context-sensitivity, teacher educators may overstate the effectiveness of a current teaching approach, calling into question traditional approaches without regard to the institutional, political, or economic underpinnings of the traditional practices in a particular setting (Bax, 2003; Liu, 1999, as cited in Schleppegrell, 2001). NES teacher educators in Vietnam must understand the

traditional role of the teacher and the learner, the types of activities students believe are effective for learning language, and the classroom dynamics of cohorts of 25-30 students who remain together for four years of their undergraduate education. This understanding can help NES teacher educators to modify instruction, to ease frustration as they stretch learners' preferences through more participatory activities, and to guide a critical thinking process regarding approach.

As an American teacher educator working in Vietnam, I am convinced that I need to be careful not to assume that my perspectives regarding English education are appropriate to the Vietnamese context. Goodwin (1991), describing background for American involvement in the Vietnam conflict (known in Vietnam as the American war), writes:

Experience with [a leader's] own system typically determines what a [national] leader perceives in another system. It is hard for any leader to see that issues important to him are not important to others, and even more difficult to realize that others may be governed by very different values and assumptions. Perception is always influenced by personal and historic memory. (p. 269)

The teacher development project described in this paper is a response to my desire to contribute to teacher education that is effective, learner-centered, and sensitive to the Vietnamese context.

Teacher Development Through Teacher Research at a Vietnamese University

The Institution and Participants

In response to the needs expressed by the English Department of Hanoi University of Foreign Studies for a shift in language teaching methodology that would better prepare students for the challenges and needs presented by the country's rapid development, a new path on the way to teacher development was explored beginning in the fall of 2001. My co-teacher and I designed a two semester course to explore ELT (English Language Teaching) methodology which ran for two consecutive years with 28 new university English teachers the first year and another 13 recent graduates the second year. All of these young teachers (HUFVS graduates with a few exceptions) were hired primarily because of their speaking proficiency. They averaged two years of teaching experience, and nearly all had degrees in English with an emphasis in interpretation and translation, not in ELT.

Terms Used In This Discussion

Because the participants in this teacher development project were all working teachers employed by Hanoi University of Foreign Studies English department, I have chosen the term *developing teachers* (DTs) to refer to the participants. The term that is commonly used in ELT

literature, *in-service teachers*, holds a different meaning in this context and therefore I have chosen not to use it. In Vietnam, *in-service teachers* are part of a separate department whose students are part-time non-English majors. Because this project was not credit bearing for the working teachers who participated, I generally use the term teacher development rather than teacher education.

Semester I: Introduction to CLT

For the first semester of this two-semester teacher development project, the DTs learned the principles of a learner-centered, communicative approach to language teaching by exploring literature related to CLT and experiencing communicative tasks as learners. CLT adds meaningful language practice through its emphasis on the negotiation of meaning and the use of real-life language tasks (Savignon, 2001) that are largely absent in traditional teacher-centered classrooms. The approach we took with the DTs was that CLT complements the effectiveness of the traditional teaching that prevails and adds a dimension of meaningful language production that is lacking for most students.

Learning about and experiencing CLT.

Our goal in exploring the literature with these DTs was two-fold: first, that they would understand the content and second, that they would experience the kind of classroom activities that the literature described. For example, we read Hirvela's (1999) article, "Collaborative Writing Instruction and Communities of Readers and Writers," which deals with important content concepts in literacy. In an effort to model a communicative language teaching technique (jigsaw), we divided the article into sections, assigning each section to a small group of three to four DTs. After each group read and summarized their section, groups were reconfigured into expert groups, where a representative from each section of the reading explained the content of their section to representatives from the other sections.

Reflectively journaling about CLT.

The DTs were also encouraged to keep a teaching journal both inside and outside of class. We asked the DTs to reflect on classroom activities (such as the one described above) in their teaching journals by describing the activity and the perceived benefits to them as learners. We also asked the participants to compare the communicative activity with a more traditional transmission of the same information. Occasionally, we would give the DTs time in class to share their previous week's teaching questions and experiences as recorded in their teaching journals.

Classroom observations of CLT.

Throughout this period, we asked the participating DTs to apply a communicative, learner-centered approach to their teaching and we built classroom observations into this development process. We designed an observation tool that identified aspects of CLT such as meaningful, using communicative tasks; appropriate use of pair or group work; the teacher's role as facilitator; and the ratio of teacher talk to student talk.

Semester II: Teacher Inquiry Regarding the Appropriateness of CLT

Teacher inquiry became the focus of the second semester of this teacher development project as a follow-up to the questions generated by the DTs during the first semester's introduction to CLT. This focus was also a response to the university's need to prepare teachers to teach research writing, a recent addition to the undergraduate English curriculum. As a result, the DTs experienced an academic writing process of brainstorming, prewriting, drafting, peer editing, rewriting, and conferencing with instructors while exploring CLT in their own teaching.

Teacher research as the means to contextual practice.

By involving DTs in a process of inquiry about their practice and setting, we sought to give them an alternative to teacher-centered information transmission and to make the reading of research literature more meaningful as it was applied directly to the DTs' classroom contexts and questions (Allwright & Bailey, 1991; Burnaford, 2001b). We hoped to provide relevant, contextual teacher education by addressing the concerns of particular teachers in their particular settings at a particular time in their institution's history (Allwright & Bailey, 1991; Bax, 1997).

The research writing process and procedure.

This teacher development research writing course consisted of goals at three levels: at one level, the DTs needed to learn to write a research paper using a method of citation. Only fourteen of the DTs had previously written research papers. This was the primary goal from the university's point of view in order to train teachers to teach research writing to undergraduate English students. At a second level, our goal was to build upon the first semester's content by modeling a learner-centered classroom that allowed the DTs to experience process writing, collaborative tasks, and a communicative classroom as learners. At a third level, our goal was to engage the DTs in teacher-research regarding their practice, seeking contextually appropriate application of CLT as they pursued questions regarding the suitability, limitations, and challenges of CLT in a Vietnamese university setting (see Bax, 2003).

As discussed earlier, incentives are a major issue in Vietnam. Couple this with the time pressure new teachers anywhere experience when asked to perform teacher research in the midst of their first few years of teaching. The participating DTs worked an average of nine hours per week in addition to their official university teaching in order to make a living, but they were not compensated monetarily for their participation in this project which competed for their time. To support the teachers' participation in the project, the university administration assigned fewer classes to the participants in year two. The university awarded staff development certificates that the DTs could use in securing additional employment and in graduate school applications. Working with NES instructors provided additional incentives such as furthering the DTs' listening proficiency and socio-cultural awareness of the target language. In addition, we continually encouraged the DTs that, through their inquiries, they had an important role to play to inform their institution and a broader audience of English language teachers in Vietnam and beyond (Burnaford, 2001a; Freeman, 1998). The hope of contributing to the ELT profession by making research findings public through presentations to university administrators and colleagues and the goal of publishing top papers provided added incentive to these teachers.

The research writing course content was delivered in several ways. The first year, we met with the whole group for a weekly two and a half hour session and also with each small group for an additional hour and a half each week of coaching, guided peer review, and instructor feedback. We modified this format the second year; deciding to meet twice a week as a whole group, designating one session for peer review and instructor conferencing. The participants wrote an average of three drafts of each of the paper's components (abstract, introduction, literature review, method, results, conclusions, and references) after receiving peer review, and instructor feedback. The responsibility for writing paper components was distributed and assigned to members by each group.

Identifying areas of inquiry.

We began the research writing course with an extensive introduction to teacher-research. We needed to give the participants permission to ask questions and to wonder about their context. We needed to convince them that they had permission to look at their context critically and at the research literature critically in light of their context.

It took considerable time before the DTs felt comfortable articulating their own questions. Each small group gathered around a topic of interest. We then helped them to identify problems related to their topic, articulate *what if* questions, and finally attempt to formulate researchable questions. My co-teacher and I found that we needed to strongly guide this process. The DTs were

not very experienced in processes such as brainstorming, and as small groups, they were unsure of how to progress.

Identifying a researchable question.

One group of four DTs united around an interest in the topic of student self-assessment, an uncommon practice in Vietnamese classrooms. With guidance and prompting, the DTs brainstormed areas related to student self-assessment, musing about what would happen if they asked students to assess whether a class was meeting student needs and goals. The DTs wondered about asking students to assess their own learning strengths and weaknesses and about the value of adding periodic self-assessment into their courses. After initial brainstorming on the topic, we prompted the group to begin asking *what if* questions related to their topic (Freeman 1998). They asked questions such as: What if students kept a weekly learner's journal reflecting their language learning progress? What if students were fair, honest and open on their self-evaluations? What if the teacher doesn't fulfill students' expectations? What if students began to identify their own strengths and weaknesses through reflective journaling? From these *what if* questions, the group attempted to formulate a researchable question. They asked: What can we learn about Vietnamese English language learners' strengths and weaknesses from student self-assessment? What is the best way to have students overcome their shortcomings? Together we evaluated their questions according to Freeman's (1998) criteria and tried to identify assumptions based upon culture, experience, and tradition. Finally, this small group decided upon a question to guide their research: Will Vietnamese EFL university students benefit from self-assessment, and if so, how?

The priority of owning their own questions.

Our priority in this process was not whether each question was articulated in a manner that would hold up to professional scrutiny, but rather that each group of DTs own their questions in order to inform their contexts. We were freed by the notion that "inquiry—and not procedure—is the basis of teacher research" (Freeman, 1998, p. 14). Some of the groups modified their questions throughout the process. While the questions articulated by the groups were adequate for our purposes, several were yes-no questions and others were quite general in scope. In future courses, I would help the participants more carefully to articulate researchable questions.

Topics of research.

Other topics of teacher research developed as a result of this critical questioning process included:

1. How does multimedia lab teaching benefit students in acquiring listening skills?
2. What is the role of learning about target cultures in English language learning?
3. How can student-selected topics affect student motivation in a writing class?
4. What are the benefits and challenges of collaborative groupings in a writing class?
5. How do games affect vocabulary learning?
6. How are teachers adjusting to the paradigm shift from teacher-centered to more learner-centered classrooms in Vietnam?

Developing a research plan.

After identifying their areas of inquiry, we guided the DTs through a series of ways to find information that would answer their questions. Freeman's (1998) text, *Doing Teacher Research: From Inquiry to Understanding*, provided a framework for the process. Vietnamese students and teachers are familiar with the use of surveys and interviews to collect data. However, we introduced other methods of data collection such as keeping teaching journals and applying action research to their classrooms and observing the results. Consequently, the over-reliance on surveys as a primary means of data collection was moderated (see Burnaford, 2001b; Fischer, 2001). We also encouraged the DTs to look to a variety of sources for their data. As a result, some interviewed senior colleagues, NES colleagues, students, and peer colleagues. Surveys were still used in two-thirds of the research projects. However, other means of data collection were also used. For example, one group experimented with several different pronunciation activities and conducted follow-up discussions to elicit student feedback regarding the activities. Another group designed games (communicative activities) to teach vocabulary, and followed up by reflecting on their classroom observations in their teaching journals. A third group administered student self-assessment tools to collect their data. Additionally, several groups observed classrooms of NESs and Vietnamese teachers of English.

The majority of participants indicated that data collection was the second most beneficial component of the teacher research writing course experience. They enjoyed surveying, interviewing, and conducting action research in their classrooms. They indicated that surveying the literature and writing a literature review was the most beneficial component.

Most of the DTs who participated in this process did not have much exposure to language teacher education literature because they had graduated with English degrees, not language teaching degrees. As a result, a review of relevant literature was an important component of this project. Searching for information was meaningful because it applied directly to the DTs' contexts and questions. Writing the literature review became a reflective process as the "teachers [built] on what they [encountered]" (Burnaford, 2001b, p. 51) in their own classrooms.

Considerations for facilitating teacher research in Vietnam include the availability of resources for literature review. My co-teacher and I made a small library of current materials available related to several areas of interest to the DTs which included: CLT, teaching writing, testing and assessment, teaching speaking, cooperative groupings, using computers and media, affect in language learning, and learner-centered classrooms. Other resources included the British Council library and the ESP Resource Center in downtown Hanoi. One third of the DTs the first year indicated on a final course evaluation that they had used these additional library resources to some degree. In year two, many DTs also used the Internet to find relevant information. Since this teacher research project was completed, HUFs has opened a state-of-the-art library with high-speed internet access.

Writing a literature review.

This project was, at one level, a writing course to train teachers to teach undergraduate English majors how to write a research paper. Only 14 out of the 41 participants had previous experience writing a research paper of any kind. This fact affected the amount of time we could give to components such as honing research questions and data collection tools. Instead, we spent time teaching the participants how to keep note and reference cards, summarize, paraphrase, and cite sources in order to avoid plagiarism. We discussed how to use sources appropriately when writing for an international audience. The cumbersome task of applying APA style was more meaningful since one of the incentives was to publish the top papers in an international journal.

The literature review was one of the most time-intensive components in the writing process, and the degree to which final papers achieved success varied widely. The majority of the papers produced APA citations in the text at a good or excellent level, but the reference sections were more problematic. In year one, many papers included references that were not cited in the text. We asked the second year participants to search the first year papers to find textual citations that corresponded to the references and saw great improvement in the accuracy of the reference lists the second year. In addition to looking at the mechanics of APA style, we assessed the

literature reviews according to topic relevance, logical organization, and quality of writing. The majority of the literature reviews were written at an adequate level, reporting general information and piecing together direct quotes. Four of the groups produced literature reviews in the good-to-excellent range, using more specific, relevant sources, and developing their discussions more fully. Considering where these DTs started in their experience, I was quite pleased that a majority of the papers reached an adequate level.

Process, not prescriptive writing.

Vietnamese students and developing teachers are used to highly-prescribed writing instruction. Some English Department staff advised us to provide the DTs with a high degree of guidance, including specific wording and formats in which they could insert their information. However, we approached the project in a more global manner which felt somewhat ambiguous and insecure to the participants. This approach was an effort to model writing instruction where risks, experimentation, errors, and multiple drafts are acceptable parts of the process.

During the literature review writing, we asked the DTs to look at a literature review section of a *TESOL Journal* article, and in small cooperative groups, to circle all of the reporting verbs that introduced direct quotations which we then compiled into a class list. In place of prescribing a tidy list of reporting verbs, this activity effectively elicited the same function words, and gave the DTs a picture of how those words are used in context. The activity also modeled a principle of CLT by using small groups to perform a meaningful task.

Collaborative writing groups and peer review. The research writing component of the undergraduate curriculum contains small group writing projects. We extended this model by encouraging DTs to work in collaborative groups to produce papers that represented the efforts of all members. In addition to mirroring the undergraduate curriculum, collaborative writing groups added a context for supportive interactions with other teacher-researchers (Burnaford, 2001a). Small groups allowed us to model and monitor aspects of a more learner-centered, communicative writing course such as peer review and conferencing with instructors.

Peer review and collaborative groupings are aspects of CLT that can be challenging in Asian settings. Peer review asks participants to play roles that are different from the harmony-building roles common to their cultural backgrounds (Carson and Nelson as cited in Hirvela, 1999). By meeting with small groups to guide the peer editing process, my co-teacher and I were sensitized to “the power relations between participants” (Bax, 1997, p. 238). For example, it was rare for the DTs to offer constructive criticism because there does not seem to be cultural permission to

critique peers. Even if other members understood part of the process (e.g., APA format) better than the writer responsible for a component, these members would not offer opinions. Because of this reluctance, we spent much of the small group time re-teaching what had been covered in class.

Because I had assumed that Vietnamese students would be strong collaborators, the fact that the DTs did not collaborate as much as I expected was one of the most surprising lessons I learned in this process. Small group meetings intended for peer editing with instructor guidance evolved into individual writing conferences between the instructors and writers of various components. Because of the limited collaboration, each paper component primarily represented the ideas of one or two DTs responsible for that component. In the second year of this project, we limited group size to a maximum of three participants because the largest groups had produced papers with the least consistent quality among the components. It was also a concern that the participating teachers did not all experience the writing process to the degree that we had hoped. It is interesting to note that the top paper from the first year of this project was written by one individual. Two DTs wrote the top paper in year two; one writer introduced her co-writer as “a very collaborative partner” (K. T. Nga, final paper presentation forum for university administrators and peers, May 8, 2003).

The teachers gave additional feedback on the collaboration experience. Most found it to be frustrating to an extent. One DT wrote:

It seems to me that Vietnamese people do not have a habit of collaboration!!! Probably this is because of culture. Since the very first time attending primary school...we haven't been taught in a collaborative environment. I mean we didn't have many games, we didn't move, run, exchange ideas very much...I personally think I am more confident doing the work individually. I would, therefore, prefer an individual work. (Anonymous final course evaluation, May 6, 2003)

Several final course evaluations suggested appointing small group leaders to be in charge of the group collaborations, divide tasks, and enforce deadlines. One evaluator suggested assessing individuals' collaboration performance as well as their final papers, and reporting their performance on the staff development certificates.

Interpreting the findings. By the time the DTs had gathered their data and drafted results sections, the end of the semester was near. Most of the papers attempted to both describe findings and to make some sense of the meaning of the data that they had collected. For example, one DT found that multimedia labs, although embraced enthusiastically by both teachers and learners, failed to meet initial expectations of both groups in their effectiveness (Vu, 2003). The DTs in a second inquiry had expected to find teachers who understand CLT methodology and practice it. Instead, their findings indicated that most teachers who had some exposure to a communicative

teaching approach were no longer attempting to apply it in their classrooms (Tran, Nguyen, & Vu, 2003). In a third paper, DTs found that vocabulary games (communicative activities to practice new vocabulary) were effective in helping students to practice and retain new vocabulary, and that they were well-received in most classrooms. These teachers also identified factors that lead to success or frustration as teachers implemented communicative activities in their classrooms (Nguyen & Khuat, 2003).

Some of the most problematic writing issues occurred in this section of the paper (What section? Data?). We could have used much more time than we had to interface with DTs over the data they had collected and to help them make sense of it. Additionally, the participants would have benefited from more instruction about how to meaningfully report findings from surveys of large numbers of students. It was also problematic that many of the survey questions were not adequately designed to collect data to truly answer the areas of inquiry. While those DTs who collected more qualitative data were able to write about their findings more meaningfully, more instruction was also needed to help them use data from teaching journals, observations of other teachers, and classroom activities and interviews. In the future, I would limit the scope of the research to small scale qualitative data collection.

Drawing conclusions and making them public.

The conclusions section of the final papers allowed the writers to make recommendations to their institution and colleagues regarding curriculum, materials, teacher development, classroom activities, and student motivation. The DTs sought to make recommendations to an audience of English language teachers throughout Vietnam and beyond as they aimed to make their findings public. The conclusions of most of the papers were written at an adequate level with recommendations that grew from the literature review and teacher research process. While there were some overstated or over-generalized recommendations, the DTs also made recommendations that truly were informative to the university context in Vietnam and beyond.

These papers were discussed in a presentation forum where groups of collaborative teacher-researchers presented their research findings to the university administration, their instructors, their peers, and guests. One of the vice-rectors, the English Department dean, and the Director of Studies were among those who listened to the paper presentations. After attending the presentations, the Dean of Studies wrote:

I listened to [the young teachers'] presentations with joy. You see, [the rector] and the board of directors are very much for the changes. We are building more new standard classrooms, encouraging teachers to shift to new methods of teaching.

That is why I'm happy to see your students' eagerness and enthusiasm... It is easy to point out the constraints and difficulties but it is more important... for these teachers to... find solutions for the problems rather than pointing an accusing finger to issues that may not have immediate answers... You have added value... better teachers. (N. N. Hung, personal communication, May 9, 2003)

The goal of producing publishable papers was quite ambitious. Even though it seemed out of reach throughout much of the process, this goal provided incentives for the teachers to sustain their hard work, to apply the rigors of APA style guidelines, and to avoid plagiarism. After the first round of papers was complete, a colleague who served as an editor of my home area affiliate, *MinneWI TESOL Journal*, informally reviewed three papers. One paper (Vu, 2003) was submitted to the journal, but was not accepted for publication because the issues were seen as too different from the issues of Minnesota ESL (English as a Second Language) teachers. Informed by that experience, the teacher submitted the same paper to an online journal with contributors from China, Korea, Japan and Southeast Asia where it was accepted. Two papers from this project are now published online in *Asian EFL Journal* (see Nguyen & Khuat, 2003; Vu, 2003). In addition, all of the year two papers were published by the university and made available to the writers, administrators, and other staff.

Through publishing and presentations, the young teachers were given a voice in discussions generally held for more senior staff. Throughout the process, we held out the hope to the participants that their voices would be heard and their insights would further inform their colleagues, institution, and context. Regarding this incentive, Nguyen Ngoc Hung wrote:

It's great to hear that the article has been published... I believe that when this snowball starts to roll, it will gather more mass and energy and create more enthusiasm from both the staff and the students here. You don't really know how important it is to the teaching and learning mode at this university. (Personal communication, September 16, 2003)

Benefits of Teacher Research Writing Course

Benefits to the Participants

The participants benefited from this course in many ways. The DTs were given permission by the university administration to think critically about their classrooms, students, curriculum, materials, approaches, and activities. One participant shared at a recent teacher workshop that the teacher-research-writing process gave her the tools to reflect on her own teaching and to solve problems that arose in her classroom (K. T. Nga, personal communication, February 23, 2004). Another participant added that this experience prepared her to succeed in her M.A. thesis work (V. T. P. Thao, personal communication, February 23, 2004).

Benefits to the Teacher Educator

One of my primary goals in this process was to work with these young Vietnamese teachers of English in a way that is sensitive to the Vietnamese context while also becoming more informed of that context myself. I have benefited immeasurably from the privilege of interacting for an extended period with 41 young, capable, professional English educators in Vietnam. As a result of this process, I understand more about teaching writing in Vietnam, a subject that many Vietnamese teachers of English teachers would rather avoid. I better understand student behaviors and the challenges in making learning more communicative and learner-centered because these teachers exhibit many of the same behaviors as their students. Through the DTs' questions, research, and findings as well as through their own behavior, I have been informed about attitudes regarding homework, class participation, and the roles of age and gender in classroom dynamics. As a result, I am better equipped to contribute to the development of Vietnamese teachers as they continue to search for more meaningful and effective approaches, materials, and curriculum for their context. I am also better equipped to help them modify their expectations and to stretch learners' behaviors to embrace more learner-centered, communicative tasks.

Conclusions

Outcomes

The goals of this project were to provide contextually appropriate teacher development through teacher research, to give young teachers experience in the writing process, and to model CLT throughout the course. These goals were achieved, to a great extent, through the hard work and dedication of the participants and the encouragement and support of a visionary rector and administration. Fourteen areas of inquiry were conducted related to appropriate, contextual application of CLT in Vietnam and two papers have been published in an international journal. Throughout the process, the participants experienced communicative activities, guided peer review, and multiple drafts in the writing process.

This teacher research project allowed the DTs to make recommendations to their colleagues and university regarding the use of the multimedia lab, the writing curriculum, student self-assessment, and the teaching of pronunciation. Issues of student motivation, the role of teachers and learners, and the suitability of group work were examined as these young teachers wrestled with changes involved in moving from a teacher-centered model to a more learner-centered, communicative approach to ELT in Vietnam.

Modifications to the Process

The overwhelming suggestion the DTs gave when asked how to improve the course was more time. More than half of these DTs work second jobs in order to earn a living wage. The issue of time was addressed in several ways. The second year, we introduced the idea of teacher-research during the first semester's introduction to CLT by having the DTs read the research papers produced the previous year and by beginning to identify questions. None of the DTs suggested monetary incentives as a way to improve the course. However, one way to address the time pressure the participants experienced would be to compensate them financially for the time they invested in their development. In a Vietnamese university context at this time, this compensation would need to come from grants or outside funding. By doing so, it may lessen the amount of extra work the teachers need to do and thus give them more time to devote to their project.

Upon reflection, I would modify several aspects of this research writing process. First, I would make more sources available from partner institutions to strengthen the review of local literature. Second, I would further emphasize the *action* in action research and encourage teachers to try new ideas in their classrooms, then observe, and reflect on the results. Third, I would pursue further incentives such as grant funding for these busy teachers. Fourth, I would extend the process by a semester, spending a semester reading the research literature and writing a literature review, and an additional semester for the action research. This would allow more time to carefully design data collection tools to analyze data and learn how to better report the findings in writing. If I were to begin the process again, I would also document the process of one group of DTs more carefully in order to describe their journey in teacher research in Vietnam.

Impact on CLT in Vietnam

As DTs continue to inquire of their practice and have the opportunity for input in decisions related to curriculum, materials, and teacher development, ELT in Vietnam is likely to improve. As a result of this teacher-development process, young teachers were assigned roles in addition to that of classroom teacher. This process of inquiry and reflection has contributed to contextually sensitive teacher development as the participants sought to understand, explore, and evaluate CLT in Vietnam. This process has also contributed to my own understanding of ELT in Vietnam, equipping me to be more aware of the particular context in which I teach. I believe that this project has encouraged a community of “exploratory language teachers” (Allwright & Bailey, 1991,

p. 197) who are equipped to more appropriately apply CLT in a Vietnamese university setting and who will impact ELT in Vietnam for years to come.

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Using Language Objectives in a Teacher Education Programme

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Introduction

This paper describes and evaluates, at a preliminary stage, an immersion teacher education programme in the Hong Kong Institute of Education. The programme is not for prospective immersion teachers. It is a teacher education programme, run on immersion principles, for future teachers of English as a second language. The paper describes why and how language objectives are used to support the development of English, the students' second language, and discusses a number of problems this approach has given rise to. The programme, which is four years in duration, has only just started into its third year at the time of writing up this paper. Funding has been secured for a research project to investigate the effectiveness of using language objectives in the programme. Only preliminary data, which consist of interviews with lecturing staff and student evaluation on the use of language objectives in modules, have been collected at this stage. These preliminary data will be presented and discussed. The paper concludes with a discussion of the implications of the issues raised for immersion in higher education.

Before focusing on the programme, there is a need to explain briefly the context of second language teacher education in Hong Kong. There are a number of routes into teaching in Hong Kong. The programme described in this paper is a four-year Bachelor of Education in Languages (BEd[L]) offered by the Hong Kong Institute of Education, which is the major teacher education provider in Hong Kong. Students choose either to major in Chinese, their first language, or in English, their second language. The students are products of the local school system and the English proficiency of the English majors on entry is modest. They need to improve their proficiency considerably if they are to be high quality teachers of English and the development of their proficiency is, therefore, an important objective of the programme.

To understand some of the issues I will discuss later in the paper it is necessary to explain the organisation of the programme. The BEd(L) is structured on a modular basis where students take 21-24 modules in English and a further 18-20 elsewhere in the Institute, with module being 24, 36 or 48 contact hours. The 18-20 modules include professional studies in education (e.g., adolescent development, curriculum and assessment), foundation studies and electives. The 21-24 modules are on language study, language curricula and English language teaching methods.

Hong Kong is often described as a bilingual city and standards of English in a predominantly Chinese speaking community are high in many areas of society. Since the 1970s, there has been a huge demand for highly proficient speakers of English. This, combined with the very rapid expansion of education and the low status of teaching as a career, has resulted in having a significant number of English teachers with what are generally perceived to be inadequate levels of proficiency in English (Standing Committee on Language Education and Research, 2003).

This situation led the Hong Kong Government to introduce a proficiency test for new and existing teachers of English in 2001 (Coniam & Falvey, 2000). The BEd(L) is required to ensure that its graduates achieve the standard prescribed by this Language Proficiency Assessment (LPA) before graduation. This LPA then provides our teacher education degree with its English language syllabus to accompany other programme components. The syllabus focuses very specifically on the language needs of teachers of English in Hong Kong schools.

In planning the BEd(L) programme we considered two approaches to the English language development of our students. Our first option was to offer English language development modules alongside the other parts of the programme. These modules would use the LPA as their syllabus and be devoted wholly to students' English language development. The second option was to run the programme on immersion principles and to integrate the LPA syllabus fully into the content of the teacher education programme. The latter option was chosen. Students are also expected to develop their English independently throughout the programme in many different ways (e.g., through self-access work in the English Learning Centre, through a personal tutor system). They also spend a semester overseas in an English-speaking university. Nonetheless, the immersion aspect of the teacher education programme is the major mode of language development.

We are not aware of other teacher education programmes which have chosen to develop second language proficiency through the teacher education content of the programme in as focused a manner as we have. The only similar programme we are aware of was the LACITEP programme for immersion teachers of Japanese at Central Queensland University (Cox, 1993). Immersion in higher education, but not teacher education, has been described by Brinton, Snow, and Wesche (1989) and Burger, Wesche, and Migneron (1997).

Rationale for Adopting a Content-Language Integration Approach

We chose the immersion option for three reasons. First, we believe that language and content cannot be separated. We believe that language is always learnt through a content and that content learning is learning the language of that content. Our department offers a successful teacher

education programme for immersion teachers (i.e., teachers of science, mathematics, art, etc.) and we have a strong history of espousing the immersion philosophy in the context of Hong Kong education (Hong Kong Institute of Education, 2003). We believed, therefore, that we should have the courage of our convictions and develop the English of our own students through immersion. The following is an extract from the BEd(L) philosophy statement:

Language learning in an educational context is both a product and an integral part of all learning. Through the purposeful use of language in the context of a meaningful learning experience, language learning will take place alongside other learning (Bruner, 1985; Vygotsky, 1978). As a complement to this process, for second language learning, a contextualised form-focused approach has a significant role to play (Harley et al., 1990; Swain 1986; Swain, 1993; Swain, 1996; Swain & Lapkin, 1995). Language learning and learning through language take place when one is able to integrate new learning experience, acquired through active interaction with the world and with others, with one's existing knowledge to construct a new cognitive framework (schema) and the language needed to organise and express it (Anderson, 1983; Bruner, 1983). Language learning and learning through language is an integrative, coherent, holistic and developmental process. (BEd[L] Programme Development Team, 2001, p. 19)

Our belief in the integration of language and content means that we also feel that our students should take this into account when they become teachers. They should, through their experience of learning English on the BEd(L), appreciate that English cannot be taught in school without a rich content. That content may not be the curriculum of other school subjects but it must be rich and the language learning must have a purpose. In taking the immersion approach to programme design, we are attempting to model to students the content-language integration.

The second reason for adopting an immersion option for English development was practical. The inclusion of a language development programme running parallel but not fully integrated with the teacher education programme would take up too much of our limited time. We could not afford this. Although the immersion is not free of costs in terms of time, we believe it is more efficient. Much of the language teachers' subject learning is related to the English language and they would have to learn it twice if their language learning was not a part of the content learning.

Thirdly, if we separated language learning from content learning, then our colleagues who teach the students about teaching may not make the English language demands on students that are necessary to push their language development forward and the students might not push themselves to use English as accurately.

Using Language Objectives on the Programme

Snow, Met and Genesee (1989) point out the improbability of the desired levels of language gain being forthcoming simply through the teaching of content through the second language. The need for an explicit focus on language within an immersion programme has been recognised by many researchers, including Lyster (1987, 1998) and Kowal and Swain (1997). The use of language objectives within an immersion programme has, therefore, been proposed as a means of ensuring that language is given appropriate attention within content teaching and learning and in order that a language and a content curriculum can be properly integrated (Snow et al., 1989; Swain, 1996). Snow et al. (1989) emphasise that “content obligatory language objectives specify the language required for students to develop, master and communicate about a given content material” (pp.41-42). They also propose that “content compatible” language objectives can be included in a curriculum. These are language objectives “which *can* be taught within the context of a given content but which are *not required* for successful content mastery” (p. 42).

From the programme design perspective, the significance of the language objectives is that, as learning objectives of a module, they play an important part in planning the teaching and learning of the module. Planning has been recognised as essential to the success of content-language teaching and learning (Met, 1994). The use of language objectives leads to the integration of language and content at various stages of teaching and learning, from planning to delivery, from learning to assessment. Students cannot pass a module without attaining a required level of the aspect(s) of language which has been specified in the language objectives and is, therefore, included in the assessment criteria.

In order to explain how the language syllabus is integrated with the teacher education programme, I will describe three modules. These modules only address a small part of the language syllabus but they illustrate our approach. It is clear from these examples that we use the term language objective very broadly. It refers to objectives which focus the attention of the learners and the lecturers explicitly on an aspect of language development appropriate to the content of a module.

Example 1

These objectives are from a module on First and Second Language Acquisition. It is a Year 1 module and represents an early requirement for academic writing that students will be required to produce throughout the programme.

The content objectives are to enable students to: (a) demonstrate an understanding of the major theories of first and second language learning and their implications for English language teaching and learning, with particular reference to the Hong Kong secondary school context; and (b) draw implications from theories of second language learning, strategy use, learning styles and individual differences for the teaching and learning of English in Hong Kong.

The language objective is to enable students to recognise and produce a logical and coherent academic text.

The module includes lecture time spent on exploring the genre of academic writing from organisation to language use. The exploration is conducted with reference to the assignment students have to complete for the module at a later stage. The assignment demands students to write an academic essay to explain how English as a second language can be best learnt in the Hong Kong secondary classroom context. The assignment requires students to draw on both theories learnt in the module and experience gained through their school-based observations. The assessment criteria include reference to the accurate and appropriate use of features of academic writing.

Example 2

The second example is from a module on Adolescent Literature and Language Arts and associated teaching approaches and strategies.

The content objectives are to enable students to: (a) explore the value of adolescent literature and language arts in the English language curriculum, (b) appreciate and respond critically to adolescent literature through integrated language arts activities, and (c) apply the pedagogy of a literature-based language classroom.

The language objectives are to enable students to: (a) read aloud texts (for example, poems, extracts from plays or stories) with meaning and with correct pronunciation, stress, and intonation; and (b) use appropriate language to critically respond to literature-based texts.

The first language objective of this module addresses reading aloud, a skill which language teachers need but which is not commonly acquired as a part of learning a second language. This skill might not normally be taught and assessed within a literature module though for teachers it does not seem unfitting that they should learn language-related skills of using literature in the classroom as they learn about the literature itself and the associated teaching methods. The skill is also required in the LPA language syllabus.

The assessment of the module requires students to orally present a piece of literature work they choose for English language teaching and to write a critical appreciation of the piece of work.

Example 3

The third and final example is taken from a methods module within which students explore major classroom techniques in the teaching of English as a second language.

The content objectives are to enable students to: (a) design, implement, and evaluate English language lessons that reflect selected teaching methods suitable for use for different learner abilities at different secondary school levels; and (b) use effectively teacher-student interaction strategies for engaging students' thinking and doing, and for supporting their understanding and learning, including effective management of interactive language teaching.

The language objectives are to enable students to: (a) build competence to communicate with their students appropriately in the areas of grammatical accuracy, the language of instruction and the language of interaction; and (b) describe and evaluate English language teaching strategies in continuous prose.

The first language objective reflects three out of four parts of the classroom language assessment component of the LPA language syllabus. The intention is that while students are acquiring a repertoire of classroom strategies they need to operate as beginning teachers of English as a Second Language, they will also refine the English they need to employ those strategies. These classroom language skills are also assessed within their practicum. The second language objective reflects the need for students to acquire the meta-language to discuss language teaching which, again, is a part of the LPA language syllabus.

Part of the assessment of the module requires students to transcribe part of a lesson they taught during their practicum, then analyse and discuss how to improve the language they used in terms of grammatical accuracy, the language of instruction and the language of interaction in order to promote better language learning.

The examples above illustrate that we see the language which the students are learning as a part of their content learning. This content obligatory language (Snow et al., 1989) is a part of the module objectives, expressed as language objectives for the module. Students cannot learn the content without learning the language and they have to understand the content in order to understand and use the related language. In Halliday's words, the language of a discipline is both construed by and construes the discipline (Halliday, 1998; Halliday & Matthiessen, 1999). Students should not be able to pass the assessment for each module without using the content obligatory language accurately.

Problems of Using Language Objectives

These examples illustrate how we integrate language and content in our BEd(L) programme. They may also indicate some of the problems we face at the moment, when the programme is just two years old—in other words when the first intake is halfway through the programme. Five problems which the use of language objectives gives rise to are discussed in this section: coverage, spiral learning, assessment, extra-modular support, and language development across the curriculum. We have partial responses to some of these problems but not to all. Perhaps some of them are intractable. What interests us, however, is that if we find it difficult to deal with these problems in an environment in which many things are in our favour, what implications this may have for schools, where there may be less academic expertise, less time to think, and less motivated students. This may also have implications for immersion beyond the school level.

Coverage

We find that the content obligatory language in our modules does not necessarily address the entire language syllabus represented by the “official” LPA. Yet the syllabus is intended to meet the needs of English language teachers in Hong Kong. Should we adjust our content to meet the language needs of our students? We find that some aspects of language (e.g., writing) can be addressed in several modules whereas others (e.g., classroom language) are limited to just one. Perhaps we are being unrealistic in assuming that a teacher education programme necessarily involves the language use expected of a teacher in school. On the face of it, one might expect that it should but perhaps we need to re-examine this assumption. If we introduce significant numbers of content compatible language objectives to compensate, we risk diverting attention from the teacher education content itself.

Spiral Learning

How can we ensure language growth rather than “one-off” learning, teaching and assessment? The nature of content obligatory language is such that it occurs in contexts when specific content is being learnt and taught. How, then, do we ensure that language is recycled, revisited and extended in different contexts? It is impractical to structure a teacher education programme in such a way that the language learnt in Year 1 in, for example, an introduction to sociolinguistics, is reintroduced in Year 3, when there are no modules which make comparable demands. I stress that we are not talking here just about the technical terms of the content. Genres of writing and subject discourse might equally well be involved.

Assessment

Should students fail modules on language grounds alone? Assessment is always a complex issue in immersion and it is no less so in our programme. We demand that language be assessed in assignments with module content. We use integrated language and content descriptors that make explicit the language level that students must use to be awarded different grades. Still, however, it appears that students can demonstrate acceptable levels of content understanding without expressing that understanding with the level of language fluency and accuracy that is required by the language syllabus. Some students reach a level of functional competence which seems to enable them to perform adequately with only modest levels of grammatical accuracy. Lecturers sometimes feel reluctant to downgrade students who, they believe, demonstrate that they understand relevant issues on, for example, the Hong Kong school English language curriculum, but express that understanding in English that does not meet the language standard described. Does this indicate a lack of understanding of language and content integration on the part of our colleagues or does it mean that there are aspects of language which can be partially separated from content?

Extra-Modular Support

How can we address the need for on-going support or support to follow module failure? If language and content are fully integrated through the integration of language objectives with the language teacher education content, then can additional support for students focus on language without also addressing content issues. At present the Institute provides support for students' English development through a service English centre, the English Learning Centre. Students with perceived language weaknesses can be referred for additional English in a class or individual context. Inevitably, however, this English is outside the context of their teacher education study. The degree of integration that would be required to match supplementary English with the teacher education syllabus is beyond us at present. Does this invalidate the immersion model? Supplementary content learning is addressed within the integrated language and content model through, for example, students re-sitting a module they failed; supplementary language learning is not.

Language Development Across the Curriculum

How can we ensure that language development occurs in parts of the curriculum outside our own department? We have some influence and control over how colleagues within our own

department address language issues in the context of their own content teaching through, for example, staff development seminars, informal sharings and formal module evaluation by students. We have far less influence over colleagues from other parts of the Institute. So modules on, for example, adolescent development or curriculum and assessment do not have language objectives. Even among our own colleagues, there is pressure, as they see it, to cover their module content and have students complete content learning tasks rather than to focus more carefully on the language of the content. This mirrors exactly the pressures seen in immersion classrooms to prioritise content above language (Drexel-Andrieu, 1993; Salomone, 1992).

Preliminary Evaluation of Effectiveness by Staff and Students

Despite these problems, the programme staff have confidence that the use of language objectives is beneficial to students' language development. Now that the programme is settling and has started into its third year, a major research project has been launched to explore: (a) how teachers work with language objectives and what their attitudinal stance is, (b) how students experience language objectives and whether their performance reflects specified language objectives, and (c) the experiences and outcomes of attempting to map an L2 (second language) curriculum on to a content curriculum to bring about language proficiency gains.

One of the paramount issues we need to explore is whether the teaching staff are taking the language objectives seriously by actually teaching and assessing them. Without this, we may not be able to relate any student gains to the use of language objectives. The preliminary teacher interview data we have collected from the pilot study come from four of the eleven teachers teaching on the first two years of the programme. The interviews mainly focused on teachers' beliefs and their perceptions of the effectiveness of language objectives and their commitment to implementing them. The preliminary data generally show positive results.

When asked how they see the relationships between the content objectives and the language objectives in the modules they teach, three of the four colleagues interviewed offered the following comments:

I see these [the language objectives] as very closely tied with the content area... When they [students] talk about the concepts they have to use the language. They need the language to express the ideas, so it's very much integrated.

The content provides a meaningful and authentic context for students to raise their awareness of how language functions in that particular context, in expressing specific meanings that are relevant to the subject of study.

I think putting down the language objectives to me is for documentation, even

without the language objectives being specifically laid down, I think for the modules I'm teaching, the language objectives are just a natural part of the modules.

When asked if they think students can learn language through learning the content in a module, a colleague referred to language awareness:

I think it helps to raise language awareness—my awareness. Students' awareness...ah...yes, on those areas which are more explicit such as reading aloud, which is very concrete, they see it being practised and they know they have to be assessed on it.

Another colleague commented on her responsibility in relation to the language objectives in the modules she taught as:

My responsibility is to understand the relationship between the content objectives and the language objectives, so I have to understand it first and interpret it in a way which I can understand and I'm convinced [of], and through this understanding I design my teaching materials and plan the teaching so that I can achieve the language objectives.

The four colleagues interviewed talked about various strategies they used to implement the language objectives. These included giving explicit instruction on the language objectives, setting aside time in lessons to focus on the language objectives, drawing students' attention to the language objectives every time the relevant language arises in the context of the module, and providing feedback and comments on students' assignments in relation to the language objectives. More detailed analysis of how these strategies are used in relation to the language objectives needs to be conducted. Issues such as which strategies may be more appropriate to which language objectives need to be further explored.

Another preliminary source of data is the student evaluation of the use of language objectives in modules. As a normal practice of our Institute, students are asked to give comments on a module at the end of its delivery through an Institute module evaluation questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of both quantitative and qualitative items. Within the Institute module evaluation questionnaire, two items, one quantitative and the other qualitative, are of particular interest to the focus on the use of language objectives. Module lecturers teaching the BEd(L) English modules are requested to include an additional item for quantitative evaluation in relation to the use of language objectives in their module. The item reads: "My (an aspect of language development as specified in a language objective of the module) has improved during the module." Students then rank the statement on a four-point scale of strongly disagree—disagree—agree—strongly agree.

There were altogether five English modules in Year 1 and seven English modules in Year 2 evaluated, involving 52 Year 1 students and 21 Year 2 students. This provides about 400 student evaluation questionnaires. The average percentage of ratings for agree and strongly agree across 12 language objectives in seven modules is 80% (ranging from 62% to 95%, with 64% for agree and 16% for strongly agree). This sounds very encouraging. However, the fact that teachers of five modules did not include the additional item for student evaluation forces us to be cautious in our interpretation of the data.

The other item of interest comes from the open-ended questions for student comments. When asked to state 'the most useful aspects of the module,' there were the following comments (all comments are unedited) from 52 student evaluation questionnaires from the module on First and Second Language Acquisition where the language objective is academic writing skills (see module Example 1):

Drafting and getting feedback from my lecturer helps me to get better understanding in the context and this process help me to improve my English. Thank you!

Learn how to improve our academic writing. (with six other similar comments)

From 21 student evaluation questionnaires from the module on Adolescent Literature and Language Arts where a language objective is to use appropriate language to critically respond to literature-based texts (see module Example 2):

The analysing skills are useful for my language proficiency development.

We can experience the literature before teaching it. Good for our English development.

From other modules with comments on English language proficiency improvement:

Learn to be aware of the grammatical problems when I speak and write. (with three other similar comments on the development of grammatical competence)

With the knowledge of phonology, my spelling, pronunciation has been improved. (with two other comments on improvement of pronunciation)

Improve the meta-linguistic competence since meta-language was taught explicitly. (with three other similar comments on the development of meta-linguistic competence)

The module is very useful. My meta-linguistic, linguistic and communicative competence in vocabulary and English has improved a lot. (with eight other comments on the improvement of general English proficiency)

Though these comments come from a total of about 400 student evaluation questionnaires and therefore account for only about 7.5% of the total comments, students were not cued to write anything specifically on the language objectives. Also, they wrote these comments for the open-ended question about the most useful aspects of the module. Even for the open-ended item on the questionnaire which reads “This module could be changed in the following ways to help students learn better,” some comments still focused on what can be done to help improve their English; for example: “Can introduce us what’s a good written analysis of structured appreciation” “More assignment, more writings to improve proficiency in writing” and “We all worry about our proficiency. We worked hard but we have no idea what we should do.”

The students’ concern about their own English proficiency is very clear from the last comment. Despite the difficulties and constraints in implementation, there is no question but that students are more aware of the need to maintain and enhance their English within the English modules they take. Whether this is a result of the use of language objectives awaits further data analysis, for example, of students’ perception from their interviews. Preliminary test results, however, suggest that students have made significant improvements. One of the measures our programme has in place to ensure students reach the level of proficiency required upon graduation is that they have to pass an internal version of the LPA, which has been developed from a research project to ensure that the standard required is comparable to the Government LPA. The programme requirement is that students should reach the required level in the internal LPA by the end of Year 3 to be allowed to progress to Year 4 studies. They are therefore encouraged to take the internal LPA at the end of Year 2 to provide them with an idea of their own language proficiency level before they go on their overseas semester in Year 3 Semester 1. This can help them set targets for improvement during their overseas semester so that opportunities for language improvement during the semester can be maximised. The results of the internal LPA of the first cohort of students are encouraging. Out of 21 students, 11 had reached the required level across all the five components of the LPA (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, writing, and classroom language assessment) at the end of their Year 2 studies. The other ten students reached the required level in some of the five components. This is a significant improvement on their English proficiency level at entry to the programme.

Issues of Concern

The extent of the effectiveness of the use of language objectives on the programme, however, still awaits the full results of the research project in progress and the subsequent direction

for further work. Some of the problems we have faced do, nonetheless, give pause for thought about the efficacy of a full immersion model for our needs and these stem from the close integration of a language syllabus with the teacher education content. In other words, they stem from the use of language objectives.

One consideration is the extent to which content obligatory language is really content obligatory. If lecturers, both language specialists and non-specialists, feel that they can teach and assess students' understanding of complex content on a topic such as, for example, language assessment, without students being compelled to use certain aspects of language appropriately and very accurately, perhaps the whole notion of content obligatory language, attractive though it is, needs to be re-evaluated within a context such as ours. Perhaps, on the other hand, we are simply not good enough at identifying the language that is content obligatory. There is an important distinction to be made between language objectives at an elementary level. Snow et al. (1989) cite the example of the verbs *rise* and *pull*, and the noun *force* in a fourth grade science class on gravity and those which are applicable to very advanced learners. There is a further distinction to be made between the degree of specificity required in the writing of objectives for a lesson and for a module.

Another consideration is whether the immersion model in a teacher education programme which, inevitably, is restricted in scope, can cope with a broad range of language learning needs. (The same might be true of any programme which, as students grow older, may become much more specialised and, in consequence, restricted in breadth.) We probably can address all of the demands of the LPA language syllabus within our teacher education content modules through the use of language objectives. We are unable, however, to return to these aspects of language to recycle, to expand and to make ever more complex connections. What we are also unable to do is to support students' broad range of language learning needs beyond the language aspects specified in the language objectives. We feel that as future teachers of English, our students need to develop a much broader repertoire of the English language. We feel, however, at the same time that this repertoire is not adequately catered for in our language objectives and, perhaps, not in the LPA requirements either. There may be a mismatch between the demands of the ever broader language learning needs of advanced learners and content which is very specialised and focused. Indeed this may be a feature of immersion in higher education, where content tends to be more and more specific yet where language learning needs become ever broader.

Conclusion

I have described in this paper how language objectives are used as part of an immersion approach to developing students' second language proficiency in a teacher education programme for training second language teachers. I have discussed five problems we are facing and two issues of concern relating to the efficacy of using language objectives in a higher education programme. I have also provided some preliminary positive evidence though the extent to which the use of language objectives is effective in bringing about students' second language improvement requires more substantial data support. The major issue worth consideration seems to us to be the efficacy of using language objectives in higher education where there may be a mismatch between the specificity of the content need and the ever broader language learning needs of the learners. Having said this, however, we still have faith in the immersion model as a better approach than offering separate language development modules to develop students' second language proficiency, though we acknowledge that we need to work on improving it for better success.

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The Importance of Language Awareness in Late Immersion Teachers

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Introduction

This paper explores how language awareness in late immersion teachers contributes to their effectiveness in teaching science through the target language. It has been recognised by a number of researchers that the processes of immersion instruction have been under-researched and that the focus of immersion studies might usefully move from outcomes to how those outcomes might be maximised (Genesee, 1987; Day & Shapson, 1996; Swain & Johnson, 1997). Day and Shapson (1996), introducing their own studies of late immersion classroom practice, support Genesee (1987) in suggesting in particular that research is needed into “how immersion teachers integrate language and subject matter teaching” (Day & Shapson, 1996, p. 41).

A number of writers have identified ways in which late immersion is distinct from early immersion. Johnson and Swain (1994) suggest that the most important of these is the “proficiency gap” between “the level and type of L2 [second language] proficiency the students have and the target or ‘threshold level’ they require in order to engage effectively with the curriculum they are required to study.” (Johnson & Swain, 1994, p. 211). They also note the mismatch between the English learnt as a subject in primary school and the English required for study in secondary school. This is a consequence of the increased subject specialisation in secondary school, which is another distinction between early and late immersion (Berthold, 1995). Drexel-Andrieu (1993) points out the priority which late immersion teachers give to content over the target language, an issue supported by Day and Shapson (1996) and more recently by Snow (2001) and Tedick, Fortune, and Walker (2003).

It is within this context of content subject specialisation and prioritisation that the study reported here is set. The dual aims of immersion education and the limited second language proficiency of students in their language of instruction make very special demands on teachers. These teachers are frequently specialists in non-language subjects and may also be highly proficient users of the second language but they typically lack qualifications in second language teaching. They, therefore, lack both the knowledge and skills needed to help students learn a second language and an understanding of how language learning and content learning interact.

Immersion teachers have to help students learn the language of the content of their subject because it is through language that content meaning is expressed (Halliday, 1993, 1998). Learning

new content, therefore, brings about new language learning and language learning is a part of new content learning. The teaching of the language of the content is particularly significant in an immersion context, where teachers cannot take for granted a great deal of the underlying language proficiency which is assumed in a first language context and where they are, at the same time, responsible for helping students to acquire that language and learn the content through it. The greater prominence which language has in immersion content teaching and the correspondingly greater attention it demands from teachers suggests that the degree of awareness which teachers have of the role of language in learning may be significant in their effectiveness in bringing about learning of content and language among immersion students. The study reported here investigates this claim and considers the implications for teacher education.

This awareness is referred to in this paper as “language awareness.” It is similar to the more conventional view of language awareness described by, for example, Van Lier (2001) though it is not the same. It refers more to an awareness of the role of language in learning than to an awareness of the systems and functions of language. Language awareness is seen as a continuum and teachers can, therefore, be considered to be strongly language aware or weakly language aware.

The need for specialist teacher education for immersion teachers has been widely reported (e.g., Hoare & Kong, 2001; Swain & Johnson, 1997). If language awareness is a significant factor in the effectiveness of late immersion teachers, then it is important that its nature should be better understood so that it can form a part of immersion teacher education. It is an aim of this paper to contribute to consideration of how this might be brought about.

Halliday (1993, 1998) explains how “technical” terminology is a feature of the language of science. Technical terminology, Halliday asserts, is distinguished from “folk” terminology by its greater abstraction and precision, allowing scientists to generalise. Students learning science have to acquire this technical vocabulary and construct the specialist meanings by connecting new learning to their previous learning and knowledge of the world. Halliday points out that one aspect of this entails learning the distinctions between their existing folk concepts and the specialist meanings. Sutton (1992), Wellington (2000), and Wellington and Osborne (2001) also stress the importance of helping students to construct the meaning of science terminology and to distinguish specialist meanings in science from everyday meanings. Halliday (1993, 1998) also explains how, as it has developed, the English of science has compacted the meanings of clauses into noun phrases. He refers to this phenomenon as grammatical metaphor. This implies a change in the way scientists see the world—from a world of happenings to a world made out of things. Halliday points out that

noun phrases such as *neutralisation*, for example, carry complex meanings which need to be “unpacked” if students are to understand them fully and begin to see the world as scientists do.

Technical vocabulary in the learning of science, because of the meaning it carries, is frequently “content obligatory” language (Snow, Met, & Genesee, 1989) and is then essential language for students to acquire if they are to understand the science and use the language of the science for further learning. The identification and prioritisation of content obligatory vocabulary is, therefore, an essential feature of effective content teaching and so an important aspect of an immersion teacher’s language awareness. Teachers do not have time to treat all of the vocabulary which occurs in a lesson equally and students do not have the capacity or, arguably, the need to acquire it (Schmidt, 2000).

In the study reported in this paper, I compare how two teachers with different levels of language awareness help their students understand new and complex science content through the teaching of content obligatory content vocabulary and how one teacher’s language awareness contributes to her ability to achieve this. Specifically, I compare the following three aspects of the teaching of these two teachers:

1. How content obligatory technical vocabulary is identified and prioritised.
2. How complex science meanings, packed in technical vocabulary, are “unpacked.”
3. How opportunities are provided for the students to construct the meanings of new content obligatory technical terms by relating them to the students’ existing “folk” concepts and to other learning.

These three aspects are fully discussed in three sections in the paper. Before that, the backgrounds of the teachers and students participating in the study are described, together with the methods of data collection and analysis.

The Study

In order to explore the relationship between language awareness and immersion content teaching, the study compares the teaching of content obligatory technical vocabulary of two Hong Kong Chinese late immersion teachers of science, who I will call Alice and Sally. Both teach integrated science in different Hong Kong English medium schools. Sally’s school was a girls’ school, Alice’s was coeducational. Both teachers are qualified and experienced teachers of science, in their late twenties, with between five and eight years of teaching experience. About 25% of Hong Kong secondary students are educated through the medium of English and the allocation to English medium schools is made largely according to academic ability. The students of both

teachers were, therefore, roughly comparable in terms of academic ability. The students' language backgrounds were also comparable. In common with most Hong Kong students, they had all undertaken primary education through their first language, Chinese, and had learnt English as a primary school subject. Each of the classes observed was of almost 40 students, which is typical for a Hong Kong school. The lessons took place in a laboratory and included demonstrations and experiments as well as teacher explanations. Typically of Hong Kong, lessons were heavily teacher-centred and the students generally did not respond at length to their teachers' questions. Alice's class was somewhat more lively than Sally's but would still be considered quiet and unresponsive by comparison with European or North American students. In neither class did the students initiate interaction by asking questions or expressing opinions without the teacher's encouragement.

Alice is classified as a strongly language aware teacher, Sally as weakly language aware. The classification of Alice as strongly language aware was based on her successful completion of a substantial in-service course for teachers, which Sally had not attended. The classification was confirmed by the responses of both teachers to a questionnaire about their beliefs and their classroom practice in the area of language and science teaching. In her four month in-service course, Alice studied the rationale for immersion education and explored the planning and teaching of her own subject, integrated science, through English, which is her second language and the immersion language. She also studied English in order to enhance her own proficiency. The two teachers were not, therefore, randomly selected but were identified so that the differences between the practice of teachers with different levels of language awareness could be investigated.

The recorded lessons formed part of the teachers' prescribed syllabus and were not specially planned for this study. The recordings were transcribed for closer study of the interaction. The teachers and some of their students were also interviewed to find out whether the strategies observed were typical of those they use in their teaching and to explore in greater depth the teachers' beliefs about science teaching and learning through a second language.

The analysis of the classroom data was undertaken with no expectations or preconceptions of what features of classroom practice might emerge to differentiate the teachers. The literature reviewed above gives few indications of how teachers might make aspects of the language of science accessible to students. Features in the recorded lessons which appeared to distinguish the science teaching of either Alice or Sally in one lesson were checked across the other lessons and in the teaching of the other teacher before being considered significant. This was done in order to determine whether they were unique events or formed part of the pattern of the teaching of that teacher. Particular attention was paid to aspects of the teachers' explanations and the classroom

interaction which might have contributed to changes in students' understanding of science. Examples from the data are numbered sequentially throughout the following sections. The examples under each topic are then followed by a discussion.¹

The Identification and Prioritisation of Content Obligatory Technical Vocabulary

Both teachers give prominence to content obligatory technical vocabulary in their teaching. They identify the vocabulary and teach it differently from that which carries less fundamental content meaning. Alice, unlike Sally, is able to articulate this prioritisation and is more aware of the distinctions she makes.

Example 1: Alice's Introduction of Neutral

T: ² Actually number seven—distilled water. Sodium chloride solution that is salt solution. That means, hm, we use salt at home and this is sodium chloride solution. And sugar solution...they are *neutral* substances. And actually they have the *pH of seven*....There are substances that are *not acids* and *not alkalis*. And we call these *neutral*, neutral, neutral substances, just like water. What is the *pH value* of water?

S: Seven

T: Seven. What is the pH value of salt solution?

S: Salt solution...salt

T: Salt....It should be seven. And also sugar solution, OK....If a substance has a *pH of seven*, we call it *neutral*. [Writes Neutral: pH7]

S: *Neutral* [students repeat the word]

T: Neutral.

S: *Neutral* [students repeat the word]

T:When the pH number, the pH value is very small, it is said to be strongly acidic. When it is more or less seven, we call it *neutral*. When it is very great, in your scale maybe eleven, we call it strongly alkaline....OK?

These utterances, with seven repetitions of the word, *neutral*, all occur within a short space of time while the students are sharing the results of testing a number of substances to establish their pH value. *Neutral* is not a difficult concept to establish if it is defined with reference to acid and alkali (neither one nor the other) and by its pH value (seven). Alice prioritises the term and returns to it a number of times within a few minutes.

Alice's introduction of the term *neutral* is structured thus:

1. Mentions the term and exemplar substances and gives the pH value.
2. Contrasts the term with acid and alkali, reintroduces examples, and elicits the pH value.
3. Reintroduces the term with its pH value, writes on the board, and has students repeat the pronunciation.
4. Reintroduces the term with its pH value.

The term is again reintroduced, with reminders of the meaning, later in the lesson and in the succeeding lessons. There is a very distinct contrast between Alice's introduction of this term and her introduction of some unessential vocabulary which is required by the teaching context, as shown in the following two examples.

Example 2: Alice's Introduction of Milk of Magnesia in Connection with Neutralisation of Acid in the Stomach

T: OK this is one of the tablets. We call it milk of magnesia. It comes from the word magnesium. It comes from a metal magnesium. Milk of magnesia is one kind of [antacid] tablet. I can let you have a look.

Example 3: Alice's Introduction of Swollen in Connection with Neutralisation of an Insect Bite

T: Do you know what swollen is? Just like a small mountain here [points to her arm]. It is swollen.

Alice identifies *milk of magnesia* and *swollen* as possibly unknown to the students and provides a quick and efficient explanation. She does not return to them, she gives no examples of use and she does not ask the students to repeat the words or use them in an original sentence. In the interview, Alice reveals the priority she places on content obligatory vocabulary:

I think I will deal with the vocabulary that are important for the key concepts. I will teach them and put emphasis on them. But the others...for example, some of the applications of the acids and alkali, I give as an example, since they understand that's OK. But for the key words and key concepts, [so] I think I will put emphasis on that. The others I will just read it. (Personal communication, April 2000)

She also emphasises that she explicitly teaches her students how to say new words because she regards knowing the pronunciation as part of knowing a word "even in science lesson."

Interviewer: Why do you want [the students] to repeat words?

Alice: Because they also have to know the pronunciation of the words.

Interviewer: Why?

Alice: ...I think that we learn a word not only the spelling, the meaning but also how to say it, the pronunciation of the word so I think that they should know the pronunciation, even though they may not know exactly what it is after this lesson. But actually they may come across it and know, oh this word. Sometimes they may listen to me they know, oh this means that so I think pronunciation is also one of the important parts when they learn even in science lesson. (Personal communication, April 2000)

In contrast, Sally's introduction of *neutral* is less comprehensive and emphatic, as shown in Example 4.

Example 4: Sally's Introduction of Neutral

T: Why do I ask you whether it is greater or smaller than seven? So there is some special meaning of pH value seven. If it is pH seven, then the solution given to you will be neither an acid nor an alkali. So if it is neither acid nor alkali, we say that it is neutral....Neutral___[translates neutral]....Some liquids are neither acidic nor alkaline. They are neutral.

The structure of Sally's introduction of *neutral*, therefore (a) mentions a defining characteristic, (b) contrasts this characteristic with acids and alkalis, (c) introduces the term, (d) repeats and translates, and (e) repeats contrasts. The limitations of this introduction are apparent. *Neutral* is accurately defined but with little emphasis. There is no student involvement (so there is no pronunciation practice), no examples are provided at this stage and no written version is provided. Yet this is one of the most important concepts and hence one of the most important items of lexis which Sally introduces in the entire topic. Not all of Sally's introductions of content obligatory vocabulary are as limited as this example but the example illustrates the unevenness of her prioritisation. The following two examples illustrate Sally's introductions of unessential vocabulary.

Example 5: Sally's Introduction of Red Cabbage

T: One of them is purple...cabbage...leaves. Do you know what cabbage is?...These are cabbage [leaves]. Have you eaten [this] before?...Cabbage.___, ___ [red cabbage, same as cabbage].

Example 6: Sally's Introduction of Pollutant

T: There are a lot of pollutants in this world. Do you know what pollutants are? Now you know the word pollution, how about pollutant? Pollutant is something,

some substance that causes pollution...pollutants. In the air there are a lot of pollutants like gas coming out from cars.

Sally's introductions of unessential vocabulary are quick and efficient. She does not ignore the difficulties she believes students will have with new vocabulary and she generally either provides or elicits a translation. In many cases, however, translation is the only strategy she uses. Only in the second of these examples does she provide an example and a definition to support the translation.

Sally does not articulate a clear planning strategy for teaching new vocabulary. She says, "Some of them maybe I find when I prepare my lesson, I'll find that they are difficult, then I'll keep in mind that I have to tell them [the students] the meaning" (personal communication, June 2000). She appears to classify vocabulary as "difficult" rather than carrying essential science meaning. As reported in the interview, she does not have a coherent planning strategy which identifies content obligatory vocabulary in advance of the lesson and is, therefore, reliant on responding to students' lack of comprehension rather than being proactive in her teaching. Sally says, "Sometimes I'll look at their expression, their facial expression and find that they have a doubt about this one. Then I'll tell them what this one is" (personal communication, June 2000). On the other hand, Alice's awareness of the importance of the language of science to her students results in her using language-related strategies to help them acquire the vocabulary. She identifies the content obligatory vocabulary in her planning and prioritises it in her teaching. She gives it prominence in her teaching by repetition and by relating it immediately to several other aspects of science within the students' existing framework of science knowledge. She also asks the students to repeat the word to help them to memorise it and to give them the confidence to use the word in their own science talk. These are recognised as contributions to effective learning of vocabulary (Nation, 2002).

Sally, on the other hand, identifies new technical terms as "difficult" in her planning rather than as important in carrying essential science meaning. Her introductions are less intensive than Alice's and she uses fewer techniques to make the word accessible to students. This is unlikely to be the result of any lack of technical command of these techniques as they only include such examples as asking students to repeat the word and writing the word on the blackboard. It can only be that she is not aware that students need these forms of support to access and reinforce the meaning and has not, therefore, integrated these strategies into her own belief system and teaching repertoire.

Alice articulates a rationale for the strategies she uses in her teaching of science vocabulary as representing "key concepts," Sally does not. Alice's distinct approaches to content obligatory

vocabulary and unessential vocabulary are consistent and differentiate the two categories clearly. Sally sometimes prioritises content obligatory vocabulary but does not do so consistently.

The precise strategies used to teach this vocabulary are not always significant. Given the quantity of new vocabulary to which students can be exposed in the course of immersion study across the curriculum, the limits on vocabulary learning (Schmidt, 2000), and the need for the students to focus on essential science meanings, the significance lies in an awareness on the teacher's part of the need to carefully prioritise content obligatory above less essential vocabulary and the subsequent selection and use of appropriate explicit teaching strategies (Hunt & Beglar, 2002).

The “Unpacking” of Complex Science Meanings Packed in Technical Vocabulary

Some technical terms in science encompass especially complex meanings, often represented by grammatical metaphors such as nominalised forms (Halliday, 1993). These technical terms, therefore, demand careful and comprehensive teaching. In the example that follows, Alice provides a comprehensive unpacking of the content obligatory nominalised form *neutralisation*. She makes the antecedents of the term explicit by manipulating the language so that students can see, for example, how the meaning of *neutralisation* encompasses that of *neutral* and *neutralise*. Sally's introduction is less comprehensive and different in its essential features.

Example 7: Alice's Unpacking of Neutralisation

As part of a review of her students' learning about neutralisation, Alice puts the following paragraph on a transparency and asks the students to provide the missing words (underlined words are blanks which were filled by students' answers).

Neutralisation is a process by which an acid is added to an alkali or an alkali is added to an acid until the resulting solution becomes neutral. The products are salt and water. The acid neutralises the alkali. The alkali is neutralised by the acid. The alkali can also neutralise the acid. The acid is neutralised by the alkali.

T: The verb for neutralisation will be...

S: Neutralise. [Students repeat together.]

T: Ah, you can find this at the bottom...OK, I want you to know the noun form, the verb form of this word neutralise. OK, the acid neutralises the alkali and the alkali is...?

S: Neutralised.

T: Yes, neutralised. E D at the end. By the acid. OK, the other way around is also correct. The alkali can also...?

S: Neutralise.

T: Ah.

S: Neutralise.

T: Neutralise. Is there an S at the end?

S: Yes.

T: Yes or no.

S: Yes.

T: Think about it carefully.

S: No / yes.

T: OK, the alkali, the alkali can also neutralise the acid, OK. This is the verb form of neutralisation. And the acid is...

S: Neutralised.

T: Yes. It is neutralised by the alkali, OK.

Prior to this, the students have undertaken experiments with acids and alkalis and have produced a neutral product from an acid and an alkali. They have also been introduced to *neutralisation* as the name of the process and to the words *neutral* and *neutralise*. The purpose of Alice's review is to consolidate what they have learnt.

The extract shows how Alice very explicitly defines the grammatical metaphor *neutralisation* by means of the verb and the adjective and the participants in the neutralisation process. The unpacking of the meaning of *neutralisation* demands that this relationship between acid, alkali and the neutral product be made explicit. She reinforces the written definition by reminding the students through elicitation how the forms of the words relate to one another. In doing so, she also exploits the metalanguage, which the students will already know from their English lessons, and reminds the students of the form of the words they are using ("E D at the end").

All of this reinforcement is in the context of the chemistry the students are learning. The language is the content—*neutralisation* is quite evidently both a new word to be learnt and a science process to be understood—and Alice is ensuring that the students learn the science as the

language of the science. She wants them to learn to “talk science” (Lemke, 1990). Sally’s unpacking of the grammatical metaphor contrasts with this, as Example 8 illustrates.

Example 8: Sally’s Unpacking of Neutralisation

Sally first introduces neutralisation in this way:

T: This topic is about neutralisation. [Writes *neutralisation* on blackboard.] Neutralisation. [Translates in Chinese]. That is the process in which an acid and alkali mix together. When acid and alkali mix together [Writes acid + alkali → neutral], they [produce] a product which is neither acid nor alkali, but becomes neutral. So that means the pH will be become seven. [Writes $pH = 7$ under *neutral*] OK so acid plus alkali when they mix together, they [produce] a neutral solution. Look at the paragraph [in your book]. You can see the word neutralise. Neutralise is the verb, the verb for the word neutralisation, OK.

This episode occurs towards the end of the lesson in which Example 4 occurs and the students could, therefore, be expected to be familiar with the adjective *neutral*. Sally describes *neutralisation* as a process of mixing acid and alkali in which the products “become neutral” but the nature of neutralisation as a process in which acid neutralises alkali, with the nominalised form being juxtaposed with the verb to reveal the relationship between the two words, is not made explicit. She does not bring to the fore the form-meaning relationships by expressing her meaning in different ways by using other word classes.

In fact, after the introduction of the term *neutralisation*, Sally switches her focus to the mixing of acid and alkali and away from neutralisation as a process. This is a subtle shift, but it is important. She is no longer explaining neutralisation as a named and defined phenomenon, she is explaining what happens when an acid and an alkali are mixed. She tells the students that *neutralise* is the verb but does not use it in her explanation, leaving the students to see it in their textbook only: “So you can see the word neutralise [in the textbook]. Neutralise is the verb, the verb for the word neutralisation, OK.” When she returns to the explanation later in the lesson, she adds nothing further except to include the products in her account, this time using the verb but not the noun:

T: When acid is neutralised by, sorry, when an alkali is neutralised by an acid, or vice versa. Vice versa means the opposite. That means neutralise the acid with the alkali, or the alkali with acid, OK, salt and water are formed.

This is, however, a description of the formation of the product rather than any further unpacking of the grammatical metaphor.

Complex terms, particularly a grammatical metaphor such as *neutralisation*, have to be unpacked to reveal the full complexity of their meaning. This demands an awareness on the part of

the teacher of this complexity—an awareness that, in this case, the noun phrase is replacing at least one clause and perhaps more than one. If the complexity is to be revealed to students, therefore, the meaning needs to be expressed at greater length and using different forms of words.

The distinctions between Alice's explanation and Sally's are very striking. Alice's explanation focuses very strongly on helping the students talk science to express the meaning of *neutralisation* by using other, related words. She shows the relationship between the noun (i.e., the process), the verb (i.e., the action which constitutes the process) and the adjective (i.e., the defining characteristic of the product of the process) and she shows how all of the participants in the process, acid, alkali, and so forth, relate to one another.

Sally, on the other hand, defines *neutralisation*, the noun, as a process and then switches focus to the acid and alkali. Her explanation becomes at that point a description of the product of mixing substances rather than a breaking down of the meaning of the noun phrase and an explanation of what happens during the process. Her failure to use the verb *neutralise* means that she cannot, in fact, provide this explanation. In terms of the students' learning of the language of science and being able to use that language as a means of exploring science further, this is a significant difference. Sally does not explain the process as an action of one substance on another but as "mixing."

The awareness shown by Alice is different from that of Sally, who does not appear to recognise the nature of the complex meanings packed into the term *neutralisation* and does not help her students to unpack these meanings. Alice makes it clear in her interview that the identification and explicit teaching of content obligatory vocabulary is part of her normal classroom practice: "I will deal with the vocabulary that are important for the key concepts. I will teach them and put emphasis on them" (personal communication, April 2000, see the more fully quoted extract accompanying Example 3). The examples illustrate that this teaching includes detail of the science meaning and form-meaning relationship.

Alice's awareness of the role language plays in learning influences her choices of planning and teaching strategies. If Halliday (1998) is right in asserting that the use of grammatical metaphor represents a reconstruing of experience and that enabling students to understand it is a necessary part of their seeing the world as scientists see it, then we can say that Alice provides opportunities for students to reconstrue the experience and to begin to see the world as seen by scientists and Sally does not.

Constructing the Meanings of New Technical Terms by Relating Them to Their Existing Folk Concepts and to Other Learning

So far we have looked at how the two teachers prioritise and introduce content obligatory vocabulary and how they help students to unpack complex meanings. It is important that students continue to construct the meanings of content obligatory vocabulary, however, after the introduction and initial teaching. The meaning of technical terms can rarely be acquired through only one introduction. Meaning has to be constructed over time as more and wider connections are made with other aspects of knowledge of the world and with new content learning (Ogborn, Kress, Martins, & McGillicuddy, 1996; Nation, 2002). In order for students to acquire a more complete understanding of content obligatory vocabulary, the teacher needs to recognise this need to provide opportunities for such connections to be made and strengthened. The following examples illustrate how the two teachers support students' construction of more complete meanings of technical terms.

Example 9: Alice's Construction of Salt

Alice constructs new science terminology with the students by helping them to build on their existing knowledge of the world. New and more precise scientific meanings are developed and contrasts between folk and scientific terms are established by making more and stronger links with other learning and knowledge of the world. For example, over the course of three lessons, she constructs the meaning of *salt*, extending it from a household food substance to a laboratory chemical with a variety of scientific meanings and connections. She, therefore, helps the students to create a technical term.

Salt is important in the teaching of neutralisation as it is—as sodium chloride or common salt—the product of a common laboratory experiment demonstrating neutralisation and also the generic term for such products. The folk term *salt* is, of course, also well-known to students as a household substance. The teacher has to help students construct these new meanings and distinguish the technical term from the folk term. The list below shows how Alice helps her students construct the meaning of *salt* as the topic proceeds over several lessons. Each point in the list refers to a reintroduction of *salt* and shows an additional stage in the growth of meaning of the term. The list shows how she makes wider associations between *salt* and other science concepts as the lessons proceed. The additional associations are built on to those made previously so that the web of meaning grows ever wider and more complex:

1. Table salt: household substance associated with food (before the topic).

2. A neutral substance (pH7); sodium chloride.
3. A product of adding acid to an alkali.
4. Some white solids resulting from evaporating the product of neutralisation, which cannot be confirmed as salt until they have been checked.
5. Sodium chloride, the product of combining hydrochloric acid and sodium hydroxide.
6. One salt from a class of neutral salts.
7. A combination of sodium atoms and chlorine atoms from hydrochloric acid and sodium hydroxide during neutralisation.

As a part of her joint construction of the meaning of terms, Alice also uses strategies which explicitly build on her students' personal experience and knowledge of the world. This opens the "semantic space" wider (Tsui, 2002) and makes the students' learning more effective. For example, when explaining how sodium chloride is formed from hydrochloric acid (HCl) and sodium hydroxide (NaOH) during the neutralisation process, she uses an analogy of dancing partners to illustrate how the elements recombine. Alice points to the chemical formula ($\text{HCl} + \text{NaOH} \rightarrow \text{H}_2\text{O} + \text{NaCl}$) and says:

When neutralisation happens, what happen to the elements, to the atoms, is that they change partner? Can you see? They change partner... Just like when you are dancing, after you have gone through one cycle maybe, then you change partner, with another partner to dance with you, OK. They change partner.

As the following examples show, the opportunities which Sally provides for students to elaborate the meaning of *salt* are fewer and do not make the links with new or existing knowledge as explicitly.

Example 10: Sally's Construction of Salt

Sally reintroduces *salt/sodium chloride* on five separate occasions:

1. Table salt: household substance associated with food (assumed before the topic)
2. A neutral substance, sodium chloride (pH7)
3. A product of adding acid to an alkali (neutralisation)
4. Some white solids which result from evaporating the product of neutralisation
5. Sodium chloride, the product of combining hydrochloric acid and sodium hydroxide

Sally does not explain that *salt* is a generic term for a product of neutralisation and that *salt* (as sodium chloride) is, therefore, one salt from a class of salts. This is an important level of generalisation which she appears to take for granted.

Furthermore, in her teacher talk Sally does not juxtapose the different terms she uses for *salt*. These juxtapositions can help students construct meanings by showing them how the different ways in which the teacher refers to the new term relate to one another. If different terms are used separately but are rarely collocated, students have to search for these relationships themselves. The limitations of the juxtapositions Sally introduces are shown in Table 1. Sally refers to *salt* in four different ways apart from as *salt* itself, shown in the top line of the table. Each cell shows the other terms used for *salt* in juxtaposition with the newly introduced term.

Table 1. Juxtapositions of terms for salt in Sally’s classroom discourse

Terms used for salt	Sodium chloride	Product/neutral solution	White powder	White solid
Occurrence 1	Salt = sodium chloride			
Occurrence 2		Product = neutral solution (salt not mentioned)		
Occurrence 3		Product = neutral solution (salt not mentioned)		
Occurrence 4		Product = neutral solution = salt and water		
Occurrence 5			(Reside on watch glass) = salt = powder = white	
Occurrence 6				White solid (salt not mentioned)
Occurrence 7		Salt and water = neutral		
Occurrence 8		Product = salt solution		White solid = salt
Occurrence 9	Sodium chloride = salt	Product = salt		White solid = salt

Only twice, at the very end (occurrences 8 and 9), does Sally juxtapose two or more different references for salt in a single utterance.

Example 11: Alice's Explanation of the Use of Toothpaste as an Application of Neutralisation

When Alice discusses the everyday applications of neutralisation, such as remedies for acidic or alkaline insect bites or why toothpaste is alkaline, she refers directly to students' everyday lives and elicits aspects of their own experience to illustrate her explanation. In doing so she makes rich connections between the science of the school laboratory and the students' home life and experience of the world and elaborates their understanding of *neutralisation* as a technical term. For example, when she discusses the use of toothpaste, she spends a considerable time relating the students' eating habits to the problem of tooth decay and then to the use of toothpaste. She brings a tube of toothpaste into the classroom to show the students and asks which brand they use, she elicits from the class when they clean their teeth and whether they eat candies in class, and relates the part toothpaste plays in the cleaning process to the concept of *neutralisation*.

T: But do you know why you have to brush your teeth every morning, every night?

S: Because my teeth is dirty

T: Why is your teeth dirty?...What happen when we have [eaten] something?...what happen to our teeth? The food in our mouth will produce some...acid. And then we have the, an acid will make our teeth decay. So we have to use, hm, we have to use something. I have some. We have to use something to brush our teeth. Do you know what this is? [Holds up a tube of toothpaste.]

S: Toothpaste

T: Yes, toothpaste. Do you like to use this one?

S: No.

T: Ah, you use another brand. [Students laugh.] Same for me, I don't use this one. OK, why do we have to use this? Because this, all toothpaste is a little bit alkaline. And [after] we have taken the food...our mouth is a little bit acidic. In order not to make our, ar, teeth bad, you know when we have taken some sugar, some candies. You like to have this during the lesson when the teacher is not looking at you, you put something into your mouth. You enjoy chewing something. Have you done this?

S: No

T: I am not sure. Maybe if you put something into your mouth, and pretending you are looking at me and then you have eaten some sugar. The acid will make our teeth decay, OK...So we have to brush our teeth. Actually it's better after every meal but because we can't take our, ah, toothpaste, and brushes into school and brush our teeth after every meal, we will brush our teeth in the morning and before we go to bed, right? And this toothpaste has alkali in it...When we have this

toothpaste, it will, ah, neutralise the acid in our mouth to keep our teeth healthy, OK. So this is the application...The first one is to neutralise. This is the word, neutralise the acid in our mouth...to prevent, that means to stop, tooth decay, OK. This is the first thing. And we use this very often, why? Can anyone tell me why we can use this, because this one is...?

T: Alkaline

T: Alkaline. And it will neutralise the acid in our mouth, OK.

As we have seen in Example 9, at other times she also uses analogies and other devices to enrich her explanations and help her students to construct more extended meanings.

Example 12: Sally's Explanation of the Use of Toothpaste as an Application of Neutralisation

Sally's classroom talk is more limited in scope. She uses no analogies or metaphors in her explanations and draws little on her students' experience of science in the world to enrich her explanations and, thereby, the students' learning. In the extract below, she helps students to recall the pH value of toothpaste, which they have measured in a previous lesson on acidity and alkalinity. She does not, however, bring neutralisation into the students' lives in the way that Alice does.

T: A lot of bacteria can be found in your mouth. These bacteria will act on the sugar you have eaten. And then they will produce some acid again, produce some acid again. So after each meal, you'd better to, better to brush your teeth. But you should use toothpaste because toothpaste. What is the pH of toothpaste? You have tested it last time. Can you tell me the pH, ar, of toothpaste on page one six seven?

The construction of a more complete meaning of a technical term demands that new meaning is built on the students' existing knowledge and that steadily more connections are made with existing knowledge and other new learning (Ogborn, et al., 1996). This requires an awareness, perhaps tacit, of how students construct meanings and of how the technical terms can be differentiated from the folk terms, for example, how *salt* or *sodium chloride* are related to *salt* as "common salt" (i.e., they are related to it but they are not the same).

While both teachers plainly understand the science, Alice demonstrates a much clearer understanding of how students can be helped to learn through English. Again, it is impossible to say that specific classroom strategies are essential to her success. What seems to be relevant, however, is the provision of ample opportunities to construct meaning, by whatever means.

Alice refers to the new term frequently and regularly throughout her teaching, providing a greater number of different contexts within which students experience the use of the term and, consequently, more opportunities from which they can construct the meaning. She uses a wide

range of ways of referring to the technical term, thus multiplying the associations which students can make with it. Each time she mentions the new term, she relates it explicitly, often by juxtaposing the references, to other terms, creating an increasingly complex but supportive semantic web. These contexts include such devices as analogy and metaphor and elicitation of the students' everyday experience to enhance learning.

Sally, in contrast, reintroduces the new term less frequently and, as importantly, uses fewer new ways of referring to the term, therefore providing fewer opportunities for the ongoing construction of meaning. She rarely explicitly juxtaposes the term with other related terms. The contexts in which she uses the term or introduces more complex meanings are restricted to the laboratory context and she does not exploit the students' personal experiences or knowledge of the world. She does not use stories, anecdotes or analogies to enrich learning and open a wider semantic space.

Taken in isolation, none of these strategies, or their omission, might be significant. It is the accumulation of opportunities to construct steadily richer meanings which leads to better science learning. It is the awareness that this accumulation is needed to support students' construction of meaning that represents the difference between the two teachers.

Implications for Teacher Education

The study reported above suggests that language awareness, in the sense of an awareness of the role of language in learning, is an important factor in the effectiveness of late immersion teachers of science. It is reasonable to assume that it also plays a part in the effectiveness of teachers of other school subjects though exactly how this occurs awaits further research.

As this study shows, the awareness of the role of language in learning involves an awareness of language-content relationships. If teachers are to make these language and content relationships explicit to students, they first need an increased awareness of the relationships themselves. They then need to develop planning and classroom strategies appropriate to their own educational context and to the age of their students. This needs to form a part of teacher education for late immersion teachers, which presents a challenge to teacher educators in both subject areas and the second language.

It is apparent from the results of the study described previously that some aspects of language awareness are both subject specific and language specific albeit with considerable overlap across subjects. The relationship between the subject and the language of instruction is one area where there are significant differences between subject areas (Eggins, Wignell, & Martin, 1993;

Martin, 1993). The development among subject teachers of an awareness of how meaning in their subject is manifested in a second language makes considerable demands on teacher educators and calls for cross-disciplinary collaboration. Other related aspects of language awareness for immersion teachers indicated by the study reported in this paper include an awareness of the particular challenges which students face in learning a school subject through a second language and how this learning can be supported. This implies some knowledge about the immersion language and of how second languages are learnt. Rather than making a science teacher into a language teacher, however, this knowledge needs to lead to a sensitivity towards the language and language learning within the subject classroom context. Sensitivity to the difficulties students may face with pronunciation as a part of vocabulary learning and the value of language support for pronunciation can give, as displayed by Alice in this study, examples of this language awareness. An awareness of how to facilitate the growth of meaning through the reintroduction of vocabulary in new contexts is another issue (Hunt & Beglar, 2002).

While elements of this awareness are common to that expected of second language teachers, the aim for a late immersion teacher will be to bring about the learning of content through the second language and second language learning through the content rather than of the second language alone. This understanding is another element of teacher education for late immersion teachers.

Conclusion

The study reported in this paper suggests that language awareness, in the sense of an awareness of the role of language in learning, is a major influence in Hong Kong late immersion science teachers' classroom practice. This awareness enables some teachers to select and deploy teaching strategies which provide opportunities for high quality integrated learning of language and subject content. The strategies themselves are not complex and are not, in most cases, specific to immersion classrooms. Arguably, language awareness itself is a quality also required by first language content teachers. But given the dual objectives of immersion education and the special demands these make on subject teachers and students, it is of particular importance in immersion.

This language awareness cannot be taken for granted. Teachers of non-language subjects are generally not inclined to take a great deal of interest in language, despite the literature indicating its importance in all areas of the curriculum. It is incumbent on teacher educators of immersion teachers, then, to ensure that teachers acquire this. Finally, we should not make the mistake of assuming that helping a teacher of science or history or mathematics to become language aware is

the same as making her a language teacher. The critical need for these teachers is a recognition of the part language plays in learning their subject content because only then will they be prepared to recognise it as important in their own teaching.

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Notes

¹ Alice's highlighted lessons were observed and videotaped in March and April 2000; Sally's featured lessons were observed and videotaped in May 2000.

² In all transcribed data, "T" refers to "Teacher", "S" to "Student." Round brackets () indicate teacher or student action; Square brackets indicate omitted speech [...] or inserted words [antacid].

Language Teachers' Experiences of Language Learning and Their Effect on Practice

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Ways of Knowing the World

This paper will commence by outlining how our ways of knowing the world influence our research and teaching. Then 2 illustrations will be provided of what could be problematic in research and pedagogy in second language education at the moment. This will lead into a discussion of possibilities of different ways of doing research into the learning of second languages, and what my research has revealed. The main part of the paper will involve a discussion of the influence of teachers' direct experience of learning a new language on their beliefs about language pedagogy.

Freeman and Richards, in the prologue to their edited volume, *Teacher Learning in Language Teaching* (1996) note that we operate in “a landscape of uncritical assumptions and myths about language teaching and language teachers,” and that “in order to better understand language teaching, we need to know more about language teachers: what they do, how they think, what they know, and how they learn” (p. 2). An earlier observation on this topic was made by Cumming (1989) who found that “the kinds of practical knowledge which teachers use in teaching, appear to exist largely in very personalised terms, based on unique experiences, individual conceptions, and their interactions with local contexts. It tends to have a personal significance for the teacher, which differs from prescribed models of educational theory” (pp. 46-47).

Like Freeman and Richards (1996), Gough (1989), from the discipline of environmental education, uses the metaphor of “stories” to refer to teachers' knowledge. He compares teachers' pedagogical beliefs to “stories that embed individual experiences in a larger framework of shared values, meanings and purposes and that persist in a culture over relatively long periods of time” (p. 226).

As researchers and teachers, we have particular beliefs about the world and how it works, and about classrooms and how they work. Borg (2001), in her summary of key understandings relating to teacher beliefs, notes that “a belief is a proposition which may be consciously or unconsciously held, is evaluative in that it is accepted as true by the individual, and is therefore imbued with emotive commitment; further, it serves as a guide to thought and behaviour” (p.

186). Furthermore, she notes that “beliefs colour memories with their evaluation and judgment, and serve to frame our understanding of events” (p. 187).

The philosopher Habermas (1971) defined three themes which could be used to describe our ways of looking at the world—the empirical-analytical, the situation-interpretive and the critical-reflective. In 1979, Aoki applied Habermas’ themes to understanding the orientations of educational theory. Reference to these well-worn theories is being used here in order to make the point that merely describing research as “quantitative” or “qualitative” clouds the complexities of the researcher’s stance and interest (see Cumming, 1994; Lazaraton, 2000). As Jacknicke and Rowell (1987) state, “knowledge cannot be separated from human interests, and therefore the underlying assumptions which we hold determine how we come to know the world” (pp. 62-63). Freeman (1996), in relation to language teacher education notes that, “how one observes and collects data shapes what one sees” (p. 365).

These ideas of paradigms or orientations are applied to knowledge and research in general. But how can we consider research conducted into the learning of language in classrooms, and the formation of language teachers?

Burns (1992) notes that “decisions made about classroom materials, methodology and resources will inevitably rest on implicit theories about the nature of language and learning” (p. 57). It is also important to remember the “vital role of imitation” (Smith, 2001, p. 222). Smith also notes that “teachers are novices at learning and teaching language as a social entity” and thus, to the eternal frustration of language teacher educators, “when they encounter the pressures of the classroom for the first time” they will teach as they were taught, not as they were taught to teach (p. 222). Other authors (e.g., Lortie, 1975) conclude that what teachers recollect about their own experiences as students is the greatest single predictor of how they will teach.

Also, teachers have sometimes been insultingly accused of being “allergic to theory” (Kourouago cited by Burns, 1992, p. 64). MacDonald, Badger and White (2001) also note the small amount of uptake of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theory by their teachers in training. Could the rejection of theory by language teachers that Krashen has lamented (MacDonald et al.) stem from a difference between the way research into language acquisition is conducted, and the day-to-day realities of the language classroom? For instance, of 50 SLA studies surveyed by Nunan in 1991, only 15 were actually carried out in a real classroom (MacDonald et al.). A recent survey by Chaudron (2000) has revealed this to be a continuing trend in some strands of SLA research. Does SLA research need to be more explicitly grounded in the real world? The real world, for

language teachers, is the language classroom. How is the language classroom viewed in SLA research?

Problems in Research and Pedagogy

Most of the currently available research literature on the learning of second languages takes one of two views of the language classroom either as laboratory or as discourse. The view of the classroom as laboratory is seen when aspects of a classroom's environment or processes are deliberately manipulated for the purposes of research. Breen (1985) believes that this orientation "reduces the act or experience of learning a language to linguistic or behavioural conditioning somehow independent of the learner's social reality" (p. 138).

A smaller number of studies see the classroom as *discourse*. If using this metaphor of the classroom, "the researcher explores the classroom as a text" (Breen, 1985, p. 139). Features of the interactions between learners and teachers, such as error correction, question types, and student participation are examined. Kumaravadivelu (1999) notes that the "theoretical foundation governing classroom interaction analysis can be traced to behaviouristic psychology, which emphasises the objective analysis of observable behavior" (p. 455).

A Possible Way Forward

Breen (1985) claims that we need a conception of the classroom as a research site that will "encompass both cognitive and social variables" (p. 141). He proposes that researchers should base their explorations into language learning on "the classroom as coral gardens." This metaphor is an allusion to *Coral Gardens and Their Magic*, written by the anthropologist Malinowski (1935) about the Trobriand Islands near New Guinea (see also Burns, 1992 and Kumaravadivelu, 1999, who have also used this metaphor to frame their research).

Using the "coral gardens" metaphor involves approaching the classroom as an ethnographer would approach an exotic culture to be explored. We need to pretend we have not already served our thousands of hours of "apprenticeship of observation" (Bailey et al., 1996) in classrooms and ask the classic ethnographer's questions of "what is going on here?" and "what does this mean?"

Introducing the Setting

The contexts in which the data for this paper were collected were a little unusual in language teaching research. The learners under discussion in this paper were also teachers, many of them experienced language teachers. All were studying at an Australian university for a

postgraduate diploma in Applied Linguistics (Second Language Teaching), which was the minimum qualification required for certification to teach adult ESL (English as a Second Language). Some students were also undertaking it as an advanced qualification for language teachers.

One of the course requirements was a subject called “Language Learning Case Study.” For this, the teachers had to take a ten week course, with a three hour class each week, where they would learn a new language, either Italian or Chinese. They would keep a language learning diary over the ten weeks, and then, at the end, submit a language learning case study on themselves where they related their experiences to what they had studied in their SLA course and how what they learned would affect their teaching practice. This reflection was facilitated after the course when the class met for two additional weeks to discuss their experiences as language learners in a group seminar presentation.

The first three cohorts undertook the usual ten week evening course. The first cohort consisted of myself and my peers when we were studying for our diploma. The fourth cohort, rather than doing the traditional ten-week, language-focused evening course, were doing their course as an immersion study. They undertook their language learning both in-country in China, either in Wuhan or in Shanghai, then in an immersion program on their return, with half of the content being delivered in Chinese and the other half in English.

The Participants

The data on which this paper will draw come from 12 participants in four of the cohorts (year groups) who chose to learn Chinese. Table 1 introduces those participants who gave permission for their data to be used by the researcher, showing which cohort they belonged to. All names (except for my own) have been replaced by pseudonyms. It is also noted which languages the participants had previously studied or learnt before commencing their study of Chinese, in order of proficiency.

Table 1: Participants

Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 3	Cohort 4
Chinese 10 weeks	Chinese 10 weeks	Chinese 10 weeks	Chinese immersion
2 students from a class of 7	1 student from a class of 6	The entire class of 5 The “Chinese puzzle” group	4 students from a class of 13
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michèle (<i>the author</i>) <i>English, French, Italian, German</i> • Viv <i>English, “schoolgirl French”</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emily <i>English</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rosanna <i>Italian, English</i> • Felicia <i>Italian, English</i> • Donna <i>English, Norwegian</i> • Susanna <i>Croatian, Italian, English</i> • Bob <i>English, Thai</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jane <i>English</i> • Patrick <i>English, Latin</i> • Tamara <i>English</i> • Norman <i>English</i>

The Data

For the first two cohorts¹ the database consists of diaries and case studies provided by participants in the courses. For the third cohort of learners, the author’s role for the ten weeks of classes was that of a participant observer, and permission to use the learners’ diaries and case studies and tape the final seminar was also granted. For the fourth cohort, the immersion group, interviews, videoing of classroom interaction, stimulated recall interviews and think aloud protocols were added to the data collection tools piloted with the third cohort.

The data from the Chinese learners and classrooms were originally collected in order to study the processes of learning Chinese as a second language, and results on this topic were published in de Courcy (1992, 1995, 2002). However, on re-reading the case studies and diaries, rich data emerged about the effect of the language learning experience on these teachers’ pedagogical beliefs. Therefore the entire data set was reexamined, using a content analysis of the diaries, case studies, and end of course group seminars, focusing on the ways in which teachers who were language learners were connecting what they learn and live to their knowledge about SLA and eventually their own practice.

Typical Classroom “Scripts”

In the orientation chosen by the author, a consideration of context is of major importance, therefore some classroom extracts are included here, in order to ground the discussion of the results.

Extracts 1, 2, and 3 are examples of typical classroom interaction in the ten week courses.² They come from field notes of several different lessons observed over each of the ten week courses. The textbook being used was called *Chinese 90 Sentences* (which gives a clue to the pedagogical orientation of the teacher) and the teacher’s usual initiation pattern was to call out the number of the dialogue to be practised. Students were observed to “chip in” and help each other to perform the tasks set by the teacher, as in the following examples. Translations are provided in parentheses:

Extract 1:

Felicia to Rosanna: Have I got a “please” here? I know I’ve got one somewhere!

Rosanna to Felicia: It’s the one with the antenna on the top.

Donna: in airen- er, the word for also (airen = spouse)

Susanna: ye (ye = also)

Sometimes a student would directly ask another for help, as in the following example:

Extract 2:

Mr. Wu: san shi ba ([dialogue number] thirty-eight)

Rosanna: itong (all together)

[Asking Susanna]—Oh, what’s that? [pointing to duo]

Susanna: duo (how)

Donna: duo (how)

Mr. Wu: shao (much)

Donna: duo shao qian (how much money?)

At other times, the students would simply work together to provide an answer, without asking one another for assistance, as in this example:

Extract 3:

Felicia: ni (you)

Susanna: jie hun (marriage)

Felicia: le ma? (have had?) (completion and question particles)

Donna's name for this pattern of behavior was "the old puzzle trick," and she described it during the group seminar:

One of us would recognize a character here and we'd sort of look at the context and somebody else would contribute something else and between us we sort of worked out partly what it was and somebody would guess it right.

Extract 4 comes from my field notes relating to the Chinese immersion classroom.³ This lesson is presented here as an example of typical interaction observed in the Chinese immersion classroom. The lesson was in the Sociocultural Discussion section of the Applied Linguistics and Materials Development course and dealt with the period of Chinese history when Kublai Khan was ruler.

Extract 4: The Kublai Khan Lesson

The lesson began with the teacher outlining what they would do that day, writing characters on the board as he did so. Once the students perceived that he was dealing with racial groups in China they started to call out suggestions of other groups the teacher might write up on the board.

During his explanations in Chinese, when the teacher used a new word, he wrote the character(s) on the board and provided an English translation of the word.

The lesson continued in this manner, with the students largely passive, listening and trying to understand the thread of the lesson. When students obviously did not understand, the teacher would translate into English. The only teaching aids used were a map of China, to which the teacher would occasionally point, and the whiteboard on which characters were written.

The experiences of these learners will now be examined from two perspectives: first, the teachers as learners; second, the learners as teachers.

The Teachers as Learners

It was stated earlier in this paper that the view of the "classroom as coral gardens" had been adopted for this research. This view of the classroom asserts a number of propositions about

research in language classrooms. The propositions will now be outlined and details of the aspects of language learning which have been uncovered from the four cohorts will be presented.

Patterns of Interactions

The researcher cannot assume that the patterns of interactions that seem significant for an outsider have the same significance for the participants (Breen, 1985). An example of this was found with the Chinese immersion lesson presented in Extract 4. In the stimulated recall session with the participants it emerged that while the researcher/observer thought that the Chinese teacher was teaching history, the students insisted that the focus was on vocabulary and grammar.

Individual responses

Each learner responds differently to the situation: “although the language class may be one social situation, it is a different social context for all those who participate in it” (Breen, 1985, p. 144). Although the learners from each cohort were in the same class, with the same teacher(s), following the same program, their responses to the situation and the strategies they adopted were quite varied. This is again illustrated in the Kublai Khan lesson from Extract 4, where some learners were following calmly, but others were completely lost and had given up trying to follow.

Group Dynamics

The personality of the group is not a composite of all the members of the group. A group can almost take on a personality of its own, which may differ from the personalities of individual group members (Breen, 1985; de Courcy, 2002). This was again particularly evident in the Chinese immersion group, which developed a reputation among the lecturing staff as a “difficult, demanding” group, even though individual members did not fit this stereotype.

Peer Evaluation

Participation in the language classroom involves the individual participants being evaluated against certain criteria, overt and covert, group and individual (Breen, 1985). For example, Norman noted in an interview that “we all sort of listen to each other’s tonal intonations...and we—if we think WE’RE saying it the wrong way we’ll say ‘oh, I thought it might have been said this way’.” Val noted in her diary that, “situational anxiety was an almost constant companion during this course—anxiety about meeting my own, and the teacher’s expectations, about my own ability, and about the amount of time needed.”

Sub-Groups

Within the class, there are various sub-groups, which express different roles and identities (Breen, 1985). These may be defined by such things as gender, out-of-class interests, or language proficiency. In the Chinese immersion group, there was the “Wuhan group” and the “Shanghai group,” which felt their identities quite strongly. Patrick, of the Wuhan group, felt the difference was because of people’s reasons for joining the program. His group had joined for cultural enrichment, whereas the Shanghai group had wanted to become teachers of Chinese. Tamara insisted that she was “in that class, not in that group” indicating her different orientation to learning from those in the Wuhan group (see de Courcy, 2002, pp. 60-61). In the Chinese puzzle classroom, the groups may have been defined by gender. For example, the one male class member chose to sit by himself, away from the four women, who worked together as a cooperative group. However, this may have been a personality or learning style preference, as much as a gender difference.

Rules and Routines

There are rules and routines, which must be followed by participants in the class, and each new class reinvents these rules and constructs new routines (Breen, 1985; de Courcy, 2002; Tardif & Weber, 1987). One rule which was found with the immersion class was that the teacher must speak in the target language and not code switch, unless, as in the lesson extract provided, communication had completely broken down. Students were allowed to use English to answer a question, but the teacher’s job was to move them back into the new language, “bridging” between the first and second languages. Students were highly critical of teachers who broke this rule. The Chinese puzzle classroom followed almost the same routine or pattern every week, which helped the students to follow and understand in Chinese.

Cooperative Learning

The culture of the classroom is jointly constructed: Breen (1985) says that “What someone learns in a classroom will be a dynamic synthesis of individual and collective experience” (p. 148). According to Tardif and Weber (1987), “making sense of what is going on in the classroom is often very much a collective process” (p. 4). The importance of one’s fellow students in language learning was emphasized by the participants, both in terms of cooperation to aid understanding in the classroom itself, as in “the old puzzle trick,” and in the help students gave to one another outside the classroom to complete set work.

Importance of Asking the Learner

The final proposition is that what can be overtly observed is a reduction of classroom reality: Breen (1985) states that “How things are done and why things are done have particular psychological significance for the individual and the group” (p. 149). Had I relied on observation data alone, and not asked the learners about what was going on, I would have obtained only a partial picture of how they learned in Chinese classrooms.

So, in summary, the research about these teachers as learners found information about patterns of interactions, individuals’ responses to the learning situation, group dynamics, peer evaluation, routines, and the role of cooperation.

The Learners as Teachers

I believe that language teachers need empathy through direct experience of second language learning and reflection on that experience; and an understanding of bilingualism, leading to support for first languages and new pedagogical strategies. As Pennycook (1994) says, we need “a pedagogy that starts with the concerns of the students, an exploration of students’ histories and cultural locations, of the limitations and possibilities presented by languages and discourses” (p. 311). It is therefore important to explore the histories and experiences of teachers in training, as well as those of the students they will eventually teach. A feature of these histories, which has become evident over the years in the classes I have taught, is that people studying for a post-graduate or in-service certification in TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) often have little or no experience of language learning or acquisition. Emily seems typical in her observation in her case study that “in spite of aspirations to ‘have’ a second language, all my language learning efforts waned before any degree of proficiency was reached.”

In the first part of this paper, the results of the analysis of the data in terms of the teachers as learners, has been presented. In order to prepare this paper, the whole data set from the four cohorts has been reanalyzed in terms of the learners as teachers. Did they write in their journals and case studies or say in the end-of-course group seminar anything that indicated that their language learning experience had an impact on their beliefs about language pedagogy? It is tempting to say that it had changed their practice, but this cannot be stated without direct evidence, in spite of Woods’ idea that “changes in teachers’ belief systems can also lead to changes in their perceptual/procedural systems, which in turn produces outcomes in terms of classroom practice” (cited by MacDonald et al., 2001, p. 960).

The themes which emerged from the reanalysis of the data from the four cohorts will now be presented. When a quote is presented as something the learner/teacher “wrote,” this comes from a case study or diary. When “said” is used, the quote comes from a group seminar. The first theme to be dealt with is the importance of silence.

Silence

The teacher/learners discovered that listening is hard—nearly all of them wrote or spoke about their desire to be able to just listen to the sounds of the language, to not be forced to respond, when they were just beginning. Jane wrote, “One problem which I encountered was that I was brand new fresh to Chinese and would have liked more time initially to listen to sounds and the language instead of performing.” Rosanna said, “I would really like a period of time to just listen to the language and listen to the sounds that were being made.” And later she added, “I would just like to have more time just to LISTEN to it um in a silent period where I didn’t have to produce anything but where I could listen to the, I suppose patterns of the words and things like that.” The most vivid example came from Viv, who wrote that:

I was unprepared for the intensity of concentration needed for this aspect of language learning, and found it exhausting—to the point of desperately wishing for spells of silence so that I might catch up and relax for one moment. I would not have found such silence uncomfortable—yet know that as a teacher I would probably find it so. I review my early lessons with my Japanese student with some dismay—I know that I always filled silences with talk—and he must have felt a continual bombardment of words. My experience as a learner should improve this aspect of my teaching.

Group Dynamics

The next theme on which many students also commented was what they called “group dynamics.” Several of them also drew implications for their own teaching from their experience of it. As Jane of the immersion group wrote in her diary:

I would not have found the year as interesting without the dynamics and support of the group. Friendship needs to be constantly reinforced with learning situation—means including activities within a lesson which encourage group solidarity and a highly supportive atmosphere.⁴

In my own diary I noted my consciousness of trying to change my usual “language class” behavior of “helping the teacher out” by not making him wait too long for an answer, because I knew from experience the bad effect that my leaping in too quickly would have on the other students’ motivation. My later reading of Viv’s description of driving home after the first class

“exhausted [and] dispirited” at feeling she “was even starting behind the others” was salutary for me. I wrote in my case study that “implications for teaching are that there should not be too wide a range of proficiency or competence levels within the one group, in order for the group dynamics to aid the learning process.”

Related to this point, I also wrote in my diary about a stranger who already knew some Chinese and was highly competitive who arrived part way through the course. She did all the things I had been trying not to do, and several of my peers lost confidence in the progress they had made. I wrote that “implications for teaching are that once a class has built up what Savignon (1983) calls a community—or environment of trust and mutual confidence (p. 122) it could be detrimental to language learning to alter this before the end of the course.” The lecturer noted on my paper: “At least the teacher needs to be aware of the possible detrimental effects and should take steps to minimise this.”

Feelings about “group dynamics” in Cohort 3, the puzzle class, in contrast, were nearly all positive. As Felicia said, “We all got on really well and I never felt threatened, I didn’t feel like we were in a competitive environment...and if I made a mistake in class...I don’t think anyone ever felt like an idiot or anything like that.”

Attitude and Motivation

Another implication for teaching that the learners discovered was that attitude or motivation is important, and that it was not stable throughout the course. Some students started with a positive attitude and maintained it, others started with a negative attitude and maintained it, while others started with either a negative or positive attitude, and found it changing as the course progressed.

Some of the learners were led to question the truism that intrinsic motivation was best. For example, Susanna said that her motivation was mainly intrinsic: “I just was interested in the language and in the culture. So, that fact sort of made me think about at the end of the course whether different motivations achieved different rates of success because despite the fact that my motivation was intrinsic I felt that—what I achieved was lower than what I expected so I wonder if somebody has an instrumental motivation...if that is STRONGER than an intrinsic motivation?” Emily wrote that “motivation...was instrumental for all of us—it was basically an opportunity to examine our own language learning, and one more unit.”

Another type of motivation, associated with the small size of most of the classes was that of not letting others down. Rosanna, for example, though not interested in learning Chinese, said that

one week she really didn't want to go to class, but when it got to about half an hour before class she thought "oh gosh, I'd better go or else there'll only be four of you!" Emily wrote, "The reduced class size had two implications for me. Provided I attended the classes, my participation had to increase; secondly, my awareness of the teacher's situation...made me feel that it was incumbent on me to compensate somehow for the declining attendance by increase effort in class."

Many of the other participants had no motivation for studying Chinese; there were only two languages offered, so if one already spoke Italian, then Chinese was the only choice. As Felicia said: "the reason for studying Chinese was THRUST upon me, I had no intention of learning Chinese; I had no desire at ANY point in my life to learn any Chinese." Donna also said that she was not intrinsically motivated but in the group seminar said that, "having accepted my fate sort of thing and then I did put the work into it and try to understand it and then the success that I had in the classroom was enough to motivate ME."

Importance of the Teacher

A surprise for many of the participants was that motivation was not just internal to the learner—it could also come from the teacher. Both of the Chinese teachers provoked a positive response from their students. People wanted to learn in order to please the teachers—because they were so nice, to not let them down, and because their small successes seemed to give the teachers such pleasure. This was something that none of them had been expecting, and it made them think about the importance of the teacher's personality and their relationship with their own students. Emily wrote that she "was aware of wanting to please the teacher, who seemed so keen to introduce us to his language." Later she noted that, "receiving some positive reinforcement from the teacher in an early session gave me the feeling that I was noticed as an individual student; my response was to try to be more alert in spite of tiredness in that session." She refers to Rebecca Oxford noting how motivation and attitude "determine(s) the extent of active personal involvement in language learning" (cited by Emily) and adds, "aspects of my recent language learning experience...put me in agreement with her, but I suspect that the student/teacher interaction must also contribute." Then, referring to Gardner's 1985 publication on motivation, she writes that:

... teachers can reinforce highly motivated students and develop the motivation of other students lacking it. In my case, the teacher may not have had to try very hard, but as Gardner's article reinforces a view I held about the importance of my relationship with my students, the implications for my teaching are very strong. From the Chinese puzzle group's seminar came the observation by Susanna that he really wanted to—for us to get an appreciation of Chinese language and he really

tried to show us the beauty of the characters, the meaning of the characters, It was really his love for Chinese and China that he was trying to—to transmit.

Felicia added, “he’s a lovely teacher...he didn’t ever show anyone up or...he was always really encouraging and supportive and saying ‘dui dui’ that’s really good, you know.” This particular teacher was able to foster an environment which Donna described in her diary as follows: “It’s comfortable, the group. There isn’t really any pressure put on us as individuals. I don’t feel pressured by Wu, the other students or any personal external factors.” In a later entry she wrote that “he is so likeable that one wants to achieve for his sake.” This relates to the next point—it did not matter that the ten-week Chinese courses weren’t “communicative.” In fact, many students said that it being not communicative made it less stressful for them as beginners.

Methodology

Emily wrote in her case study that, “the course methodology was not strongly communicative, and did not make demands I could not meet.” Later she returned to this theme—that even though the approach was not communicative:

I was able to manage most tasks, was not threatened or overwhelmed by the learning situations, and was regarded by my colleagues and the teacher as ‘quite good/above average’ in the lessons. The fact that in my own teaching I espouse and try to adopt a much more communicative approach might have signified dissatisfaction—yet now that I was in the role of learner, and relatively comfortable learner at that, I was quite satisfied with the status quo.

One theme that emerged in the transcripts of the group seminars was that the lecturer kept trying to push the communicative language teaching “party line” on which the students had been doing so much reading over the previous two years. A lot of what people felt and experienced in their Chinese classrooms made them now resistant to a strong version of the communicative approach, at least for beginners, and many of them had changed their beliefs. Their experiences as a beginner language learner seemed to have had a stronger influence on their beliefs than all the reading they had done.

An example of the sort of argument that ensued in the seminar is seen in this extract from an end-of-course seminar, where the students were talking about how occasional translation of words into English by the teacher helped them.

Felicia: I suppose if there had not been any translation it would have taken us just a jolly lot longer to have understood it just like the instructions.

Lecturer: ...but then again, you might have been more engaged in the whole

process and it might have been more permanent learning that went on...[talks about immersion] It may be that *because* people have to struggle with meaning and negotiate meaning that that is part of the strength of the learning process.

Felicia: I think that would have just overwhelmed us and killed our confidence.

Donna: Yes, I needed to translate in my head what it was...and then I was right then, I could understand it, but I did have to translate it, otherwise it's just a lot of sounds...

Lecturer: I think...

Felicia: ...I did a lot of translation too.

Stress and Anxiety

Stress and anxiety were also features of the diaries—people often wrote about the pressure to perform, or panic when they were unable to retrieve a word when listening or speaking. As Viv wrote:

...if this happened when being directly questioned...I needed to rely heavily on the teacher's repetitions and/or slower rate to catch up again. I will need to make a very real effort to slow down speech addressed to students, in a classroom setting.

The experience of being an adult beginner led Emily to write:

Prior study...has led me to be more favourably disposed, theoretically at least, towards natural settings as providing the most comprehensible input. This classroom L2 [second language] experience, however, has prompted me to rethink that position, for it appeared that almost all of the input was comprehensible, selected and sequenced appropriately for a beginning learner.... While not ready to reject my views regarding the possibilities of SLA in a naturalistic setting, I am reappraising the potential of classroom settings for L2 instruction for beginners.

The Chinese puzzle students reacted particularly badly to an experiment in communicative language teaching that their teacher had tried, where advanced students of Chinese made telephone calls to the beginners who were gathered in the lecturer's office. An enormous sense of loss of control comes through in the diary entries and group discussion. Donna wrote in her case study about the "body-knotting fear of being up front [causing] mental blackout...I could remember nothing and read nothing on the papers in my hand." Bob said in the group discussion that this experience was "scary as hell!" Rosanna added that *she* had been expecting to ask questions, but then "*they* started firing all the questions at *me*, and I wasn't, I wasn't ready for that, I was ready to read out my questions, and that really got me quite nervous and I was just lost." The others were surprised by this reaction, as they had interpreted being asked the questions as being "let off the

hook,” but Rosanna explained that “when I was asking the questions it didn’t really matter if I didn’t understand the answer or not, really they wouldn’t know!” Rosanna actually decided to try the activity as she felt it should be done with her own students. This is one example where it could be said there was a direct effect on practice. She explained her procedure as follows:

With my class, what we did was we role played and we did it in a really structured way, we role played and made sure that they—I also went through the sort of speech where they can repeat things like “can you say that again please?” “Can you speak slowly please?”

Learning Styles and Strategies

Another theme that comes through in the diaries is the need for language teachers to attend to different learning styles. Many diaries and case studies contained entries about the mismatch between the preferred learning style of the learner and the teacher. The immersion group’s experience with this has been discussed extensively in de Courcy (2002), so will not be covered here. I will concentrate on the experiences of the other cohorts, which have not been reported.

Several diarists wrote about the stress of not having their learning needs met or their interests catered to. This made many diarists write of their determination to vary their teaching styles in order to cater to their own learners’ different needs. I, for example, wrote that:

This mindset [not questioning the teacher] was very hard to maintain for the whole ten weeks, and I broke out of it in the last couple of classes, where I demanded to be taught things that I wanted to learn, or [else] became very naughty...the course was nearly over and I still hadn’t been consulted.

...Based on our experiences in this class, I feel that...we, as language teachers should try to use as many different teaching styles and activities as we reasonably can, in order to cater for the different people that we have in our classes.

I returned to this theme later in the case study where I wrote that “one of the most valuable lessons I have learned about language teaching is the necessity of consulting the learners and trying to adapt one’s teaching style to their learning style and pace.”

Learner/teachers also learnt about their own use of learning (and cover and avoidance) strategies, and teaching strategies (like visual support and writing on the board) that assisted them. For example, Emily wrote:

I soon developed the strategy of scanning for words I recognised, and guessing from there...correct guessing brought acknowledgment from the teacher, who probably thought I had “read” the sentences accurately, from which it would be assumed that I did not need further explanation or revision. My bluffing did not assist my learning, for that was the end of the interaction.

She later wrote about how the language learning experience impacted on her pedagogical beliefs:

Perhaps more than anything else, this language learning case study has illustrated to me the value—indeed the necessity—of active reflection on the language learning process. The importance of effective strategy use has been highlighted in a way in which no amount of theoretical study could achieve; furthermore, my teaching role in this process is emphasised. I am now convinced that for my students, recognition of strategies and development of effective ones is not something they can do automatically or immediately.

Discussion and Conclusion

It was very interesting to find, when the reanalysis was complete, that the themes relating to the learners as teachers, identified through my content analysis, were similar in some cases to those found by Kathleen Bailey and her student co-authors (1996) in Massachusetts in their autobiographical study. The themes identified by Bailey and colleagues were: (a) teacher personality and style versus methods and/or materials, (b) teachers' high expectations for students' success and/or teachers' friendly/supportive attitude, (c) our concepts about good and bad teaching, (d) teachers' respect for learners and learners' respect for teachers, (e) students' responsibilities for maintaining their motivation and their teachers' responsibilities for supporting the students' motivation, and (f) comparison of the atmosphere in formal instructional settings versus naturalistic acquisition.

There are some common themes, in particular, those relating to the important role(s) of the teacher, and those relating to attitudes, motivation, and learning styles. However, what for one author were sub themes, were a whole theme for the other, and vice versa. There were also some themes that were highlighted in one data set and not the other. Perhaps the immediacy of the Australian students' language learning experience led to some different themes being highlighted in their data? For example, the findings relating to silence and group dynamics and details of strategies used are perhaps not things one remembers about a more distant learning experience, or perhaps there were particularities of the contexts in which these participants learnt Chinese that influenced what they wrote and talked about.

Was evidence found that would support a belief in the importance for language teachers of experiencing language learning? I acknowledge the influence of Dewey, who believed that "direct experience was the key to learning" (Smith, 2001, p. 222). Smith also argues that "new paradigms cannot be created by information alone. Teachers need to experience socially-constructed learning directly" (p. 222). Smith proposed that "the ideal direct experience for TESOL Master's students and teachers in training would seem to be the practicum" (p. 223). She also proposed integrating

constructivist type activities such as portfolio assessment and cooperative learning in the postgraduate program. Even though the practicum is important, I do not believe it is enough.

My reanalysis of the case studies discussed in this paper has led me to retain my belief in the direct experience of language learning being essential in order for language teachers to have empathy with their learners and an understanding of language learning processes. This understanding cannot, I believe, come about through reading of theory alone, or even through the equally crucial practice teaching experience. On visiting my current TESOL students on their practice teaching rounds, I am struck by the ability of those with recent experience of language learning to be *silent*, allowing students time to read silently or prepare alone or in groups for an oral presentation. In contrast, the monolingual teachers can seem uncomfortable with silence, and fill the spaces with words.

While valuable, I feel that an experience of language learning in the remote past does not have the same power to inform practice even when teachers engage in focused reflective writing about the experience. This study has also reinforced my confidence in the power of critical classroom discourse analysis, approaching the “classroom as coral gardens,” to find the meanings participants placed on classroom events and behaviors and how they relate to language learning and teaching.

What does this mean for language teacher education? It is recognized that fitting in a language learning experience is a practical difficulty faced by teacher educators, with our curricula crowded with elements deemed essential by the employing or accrediting authorities. What can be done, though, is use the approach taken by Bailey et al. (1996), and have our studies of language teaching methodology informed by students’ autobiographical writing about their language learning experiences. So that all can have at least a taste of the experience, we could ask a colleague to teach our teacher/learners a few lessons in a new language during one of our units, and we could also encourage those students who continue into the Masters program to take a language subject as one of their electives.

Now I will leave the final word to Viv, who wrote: “Thank you for the view—I hope that it will always inform my own teaching and the way I view future students.”

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Notes

¹ I have included my own case study from when I was enrolled in the subject as a graduate student.

² The extracts were first published in de Courcy (1995).

³ This is a shortened version of an extract initially published in de Courcy (2002, p. 40).

⁴ Experiences of the immersion group were not always positive, though, and are dealt with in more detail in chapter three of de Courcy (2002).

Course Design and Instruction in Online and On-Campus English as a Second Language Teacher Education: A Preliminary Quality Comparison

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Hamline University's Graduate School of Education Online ESL Teacher Education Program

The location of our teacher education program, Minnesota, is fairly typical of the country as a whole, with an immigrant-growth rate of 121% between 1991 and 2002 (United States Department of Education, National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition & Language Instruction Educational Programs, 2003b). Minnesota has several ESL teacher education programs, but most are located in the Twin Cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis, and are not accessible to many teachers in the rural areas that have also seen a high influx of ELLs. With this need in mind, Hamline University's Center for Second Language Teaching and Learning decided to develop a program that would duplicate the accredited, on-campus program as closely as possible, but make it accessible to teachers who live outside the metropolitan area. Most of the teachers who participate in our courses, both on campus and online, are already working in ESL or bilingual positions in schools, but are not certified in ESL by the state. The online program has been in operation since 1997, and serves graduate students almost exclusively. Although the online program was developed with rural teachers in mind, students in the courses include those who live in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, rural Minnesota, and in a variety of other states and countries.

Outcomes for ESL teacher licensure in Minnesota are prescribed by the Board of Teaching. Hamline University has incorporated the outcomes into the following series of courses that are taken in addition to general education courses completed by all teachers. All courses balance theory and practice, and endeavor to make the content applicable to K-12 classrooms. Since the publication of the TESOL P-12 Teacher Education Standards (2003), we have also reviewed the coursework to ensure inclusion of those standards. We strive to maintain a student-centered, constructivist (Mezirow, 2000) style of education for all classes and programs, whether they meet on campus or online. The following required courses for licensure are offered online: (a) Linguistics for Language Teachers, 4 semester credits; (b) Basics of Modern English (grammar), 4 credits; (c) History of English, 1 credit; (d) Second Language Acquisition, 3 credits; (e) Testing and Evaluation of ESL Students (assessment), 2 credits; (f) Language and Society (sociolinguistics), 4 credits; and (g) Development of Literacy Skill with ESL Students, 3 credits. The parts of the program that have

not been available online, ESL Methods, and the practicum, have been provided to teachers in person in rural locations by Hamline faculty as well as during summer school, when some teachers are able to come to the Twin Cities.

The online courses are not independent studies. Each class has an active professor with an active group of students and is as interactive as the available software, Blackboard, will allow. There is a start and end date to the course, and although the course is asynchronous (meaning that students do not have to be online at the same time), the students have to keep up with the coursework in a prescribed way by logging on at least three times a week.

Transfer to the Web

Communication is central to teaching and learning (Hymes, 1972; Urmston Philips, 1983), and courses can be viewed as communicative situations. Communication and interactiveness is central to our teaching at Hamline University, whether we are teaching on campus or online. What follows is a short description of the procedures we followed to move an interactive, student-centered classroom experience to the web. A longer version is available elsewhere (Schramm, 2004).

In the case of traditional face-to-face teaching, courses take place in a physical setting while online courses use communication differently. To understand the nature of communication in our face-to-face courses, we conducted an ethnographic analysis of one of our traditional courses, focusing on communication. When we examined the *setting and its participants*, three major categories of communication were identified: public/private, student/instructor, student/student. Next, a focus on *classroom events* showed the following communicative events: small and large group discussions, lectures, and informal exchanges. Finally, the category *forms and topics* of course communication produced instructional language, content topics, humor, and visuals as communicative elements. An additional communicative element that appeared outside of these three categories is access to study resources such as course readers and library materials. This ethnographic analysis provided a communicative template that applies independent of the teaching setting. With this template, we tried to recreate most of the components of communication from the traditional courses in the online courses.

In this paper we assess whether our transfer to the web has been successful in terms of retaining the key features of interaction in our classes that ensure course quality. Is it possible to maintain the same instruction and course design quality in an introductory linguistics and an ESL

assessment course when courses are moved from the traditional on-campus setting to an online format? In the next section, we will review the relevant literature about online instruction.

Literature Review

Comparison Between Settings

The relationship between online and face-to-face courses has been debated extensively in the literature (e.g., Brumfit, Phillips, & Skehan, 1985; Mason & Kaye, 1989; Warschauer, 1999). There is agreement that major differences exist between these two types of courses: type of access, language medium, amount of interaction, learner control, and interactivity to name but a few (Herring, 1996; Warschauer, 1995a, 1995b; Warschauer, Shetzer, & Meloni, 2000). Online students minimally need a modem and a computer to conduct their learning, but they do not have to physically congregate in real-time. Traditional students in face-to-face courses must transport themselves to some kind of classroom at a given time. They conduct much of their interaction with each other orally, while online students receive most course information as text but with the potential of using more multi-media options than most face-to-face courses can offer. In online classes, course materials and tools such as instructor and peer input, group discussions, as well as audio and video presentations can be accessed by participants around the clock. Such access by traditional students is generally limited to class time. The world-wide web affords much more control to the online learner since there are almost unlimited resources in terms of scholarly articles and websites related to the discussion topics at the online learners' disposal. Finally, there is much higher interactivity online. Tools permit every learner to connect with all the others, thus providing much more equal contact options in online courses. While it is possible for some students to opt out of a face-to-face whole class discussion, this is not possible in online classes.

Additional characteristics particular to online learning and teaching have been pointed out. Most students say that they prefer not to learn at a distance (Simonson, Smaldino, Albright & Zvacek, 2000). Therefore, instructors need special skills and strategies to translate their successful on-campus courses into web courses (Cyr, 1997), and web courses require extensive planning and clear organization (Egan & Gibb, 1997).

Yet, there are also clear parallels between traditional and online courses in several respects (e.g., Brumfit et al., 1985; Herring, 1996; Mason & Kaye, 1989). Participants are motivated to learn; in fact, it is often reported that motivation of distance learners actually is higher (Simonson et al., 2000). The setting, be it face-to-face or online, is designed for learning. Learners communicate through multiple channels which can be oral, visual, or tactile. Class topics can be

the same, but do not have to be, and familiar learning activities may be employed in either setting. Students will develop social relationships as they interact with each other whether they meet in person or not. Given these similarities and differences, online learners can fall back on some of their old skills and competencies, but clearly have to develop a new set of skills and learn new online competencies as well.

In order to compare the quality of teacher education in the traditional and the online setting, assessment measures have to be selected that are sensitive enough to detect quality differences that may be due to the above similarities and differences. This raises the question of what standards to use for assessing whether a traditional course has been reproduced successfully in a web-based setting.

Assessment Standards

Assessment of course quality is not a straightforward endeavor. As all courses, web-based courses are complex entities embedded in complex contexts. It is therefore no surprise that evidence demonstrating that there are significant differences in quality between web-based and traditional courses and that such differences do not exist is inconclusive. Furthermore, while more studies citing significant differences between traditional and web-based courses report advantages of web-based learning over traditional learning, there are some reports that students in traditional settings performed better than their web colleagues.

These inconsistencies in relation to the evaluation of the quality of web-based courses can be traced back to the lack of an agreed-upon set of standards for web-based courses (Frydenberg, 2002). There are many variables to consider and control when assessing course quality. Among the variables that may make a difference in course quality assessment are learner population, subject matter, ability level, or amount and type of technology used. Given this complexity, a large, consistent set of standards for the assessment of successful online course experiences will be required.

Traditionally, standards in the United States have been developed by (a) professional faculty associations, (b) regional accrediting agencies, and (c) university faculty and administrators (Frydenberg, 2002). Nine domains of quality have emerged as the basis for setting course standards. They are: executive commitment, technological infrastructure, student services, design and development, instruction and instructor services, program delivery, financial health, legal and regulatory requirements, and program evaluation. The current study, being preliminary in nature,

will take a narrow perspective on course quality and will only look at quality as it concerns and can be controlled by the instructor.

The two quality domains that can be controlled by the instructor are instructional design/course development and instruction/instructors. The first domain features two requirements: (a) the design must be guided by the course objectives and (b) it must enable interactivity. In this study, both requirements will be assessed. Attention will be paid to indications whether there is a difference in design quality online and face-to-face. Similarly, evidence will be reviewed as to how interactivity compares in the two settings.

The second domain is taken to address the instructional relationship between instructor and students and the didactic approach to instruction. In particular, quality assessment will focus on one of the core concerns in web-based, and in all distance instruction, namely, that the distributed learner tends to study in isolation. It therefore has to be assessed whether this way of learning affects instructional quality. Specifically, student achievement information will be compared regarding students learning in groups and students interacting with the instructor.

It is clear that the two domains, interactivity from the design domain and group-orientedness from the instruction domain are intimately linked. A student-centered learning experience, web-based or traditional, cannot be achieved without student interactivity. An attempt will nevertheless be made to collect and compare relevant evidence separately during the current quality assessment. In the end we hope to provide at least a partial answer to the question: Can an interactive, student-centered classroom experience for language teachers be moved to the web without compromising course design or quality of instruction?

Methodology

Research Question

Is it possible to maintain the same instruction and course design quality in an introductory linguistics and an ESL assessment course when courses are moved from the traditional on-campus setting to an online format? Quality will be measured by student performance and student satisfaction indicators.

Design of the Study

To begin the exploration of quality of online ESL teacher education courses, we decided to study student performance and student evaluation of course quality in two of the courses, Linguistics for Language Teachers and Testing and Evaluation. Both sections of Linguistics for

Language Teachers were taught by the same instructor in the spring of 2002, and both sections of Testing and Evaluation were taught by the same instructor in the summer of 2002. Both instructors had several years of experience teaching the on-campus course before moving it to an online format, and both instructors worked to teach the classes the same way in both formats.

We decided to make comparisons between the two modes of delivery by examining three quality indicators:

1. Quality of instruction as measured by student evaluations.
2. Quality of course design as measured by student evaluations.
3. Student performance as demonstrated on assignment and test scores and course dropout rates.

First we will discuss student evaluations and then student performance.

Course Evaluation

Hamline University Graduate School of Education has a standard course evaluation form that consists of a fully-anchored rating scale measuring the quality of the course and the quality of the instructor, followed by open-ended questions. Both on-campus and online courses use the same evaluation form.

The fully-anchored rating scale consists of the following options: 1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=neutral, 4=disagree, 5=strongly disagree; “not applicable” is a sixth option. Statistical analyses were all done using Pearson Chi-Square and evaluated at the .05 level. To evaluate the responses to the open-ended questions, both authors coded the questions according to topic of comment, as well as whether the response was a negative or a positive one, following common practice in qualitative research (Brown & Rodgers, 2002; Nunan, 1992). After agreement about the coding was reached, we related the responses to course design and quality of instruction.

Student Performance

To our thinking, student performance straddles the two quality domains of “course design” and “instruction” as a more generic indicator. In using it, we are making the assumption that students’ performance would change if course design and instruction were affected negatively while recreating a course on the Web. To make this generic indicator transparent and testable, we will therefore next provide information on course outcomes and assignments for each of the two courses. For a sample assignment rubric for the linguistics course, see Appendix A.

Testing and Evaluation of ESL Students.

The course entitled “Testing and Evaluation of ESL Students” is a two-semester credit course on assessment issues related to ESL. The course assumes that participants have had some exposure to assessment in education before, most likely through a teacher education program. This course comes towards the end of the sequence for students, and thus they have a fairly strong grounding in ESL before the class starts. Most of the students also have experience teaching English or another language. The on-campus and online versions of the class have the same outcomes associated with them, as well as the same assignments and criteria for grading.

The outcomes for the Testing and Evaluation class are:

1. A basic understanding of psychometric concepts and how to evaluate testing instruments that are commonly used with ESL students.
2. An understanding of the characteristics of English proficiency tests that are commonly accepted by the profession.
3. Familiarity with formal and informal testing instruments currently used with ESL students and how they are used to determine eligibility for ESL programs.
4. The use of portfolio assessment to integrate assessment and instruction.
5. A familiarity with ESL testing issues in relation to special education and gifted and talented assessment.
6. Familiarity with Minnesota high school graduation requirements and their implications for ESL students.

Assignments and the percentage each assignment contributes to the final grade are as follows:

1. Written reflections on readings dealing with psychometric concepts and formal and informal assessment, academic and language proficiency assessment, the integration of instruction and assessment, grading, special education, gifted and talented education. (16%)
2. An internet research project to find ESL assessment-related resources. (4%)
3. A final exam which requires students to develop a comprehensive academic and language portfolio assessment system for a school. (80%)

Linguistics for Language Teachers.

“Linguistics for Language Teachers” is a four-semester credit course on core linguistic concepts and analytical procedures. The course assumes that participants have had no prior exposure to linguistics or grammar. The course is typically one of the first in the course sequence

for students. They have had little formal training in ESL or language. The campus and online versions have the same outcomes and assignments. Criteria of grading are almost identical as well, except for a participation score in the online version.

The outcomes for Linguistics for Language Teachers are:

1. The ability to detect regional, social, ethnic, and gender related language variation encountered in schools and society.
2. The ability to develop strategies for dealing with language variation.
3. The ability to detect the effects of language variation on communication patterns and outcomes.
4. The ability to understand that teachers are classroom researchers and be able to answer the linguistic questions that language teachers constantly face.
5. The ability to apply newly acquired linguistic knowledge and investigative strategies to research the issues that constantly come up in ESL classrooms.
6. The ability to identify all core areas of linguistics with an understanding of how they are relevant to teaching language.
7. The ability to research ESL literature, ESL data sources, and to tap into ESL resources on the Internet.
8. The ability to give written summary of ESL-related research project to course mates.
9. The ability to present one linguistic issue in depth that is relevant to a Limited-English-Proficiency issue.
10. The ability to treat linguistic issues by presenting analyzed language data from which one can generalize.
11. The ability to formulate topic, question, and rationale for linguistic issue.

Assignments for Linguistics for Language Teachers included the following:

1. Homework assignments (40%)
 - a. Linguistic levels analysis based on pragmatically unusual text
 - b. Linguistic argumentation based on sociolinguistic sample text
 - c. Essay synthesizing linguistic facts
 - d. Syntactic analysis of ambiguous newspaper headlines

- e. IPA transliteration of short text
 - f. IPA dictation
 - g. Paper topic statement structured as topic-question-rationale
2. Midterm take-home exam (20%)
 3. Final paper on linguistic topic of choice (30%) (see Appendix A for the final paper scoring rubric)
 4. Journal of course readings identifying familiar, new, unclear information (20%)

Students in both courses are expected to meet the outcomes listed above by passing the same assignments. The only difference is in the weighting of homework scores and a participation grade component in the online course to ensure interactivity. In the face-to-face course, homework assignments are worth 40%, and there is no participation grade. Homework assignments account for 30% of the grade online while 10% of the grade goes towards participation. The participation portion of the grade is fulfilled successfully when students contribute to online group discussions a minimum of three times per week. This difference between the two courses could affect the quality comparison we are conducting here, but it turns out that there is a close relationship between homework and participation scores in the online course. The average homework score was 90%, and the average participation score was 91%. A t-test reveals that there was no statistically significant difference so that the online participation score can be considered part of the homework score, thus allowing for a direct comparison between homework-plus-participation scores online and homework scores on campus.

To calculate an overall course grade, scores from the assignments are weighted according to the percentages given in parentheses. The same transparent, measurable grading process, based on the same course outcomes, leads to students' course grades. Therefore, student performance as evidenced by the scores from the above assignments and tests provides a solid quality indicator for the comparison of online and face-to-face courses.

Results

Academic Performance as Indicated by Course Grades

Academic performance as indicated by the final grade in the courses shows no significant difference for either the Linguistics for Language Teachers course or the Testing and Evaluation Course. In both online and on campus courses, students receiving below a B- on any assignment are

required to redo the assignment, which is why grade averages are relatively high. Redone assignments did not affect the quality comparison as rates in the two courses were comparable. In the linguistics course, 8% of homework assignments online and 9% on campus had to be redone. Only one out of 22 papers was redone online, and three out of 26 papers in the on-campus course needed to be rewritten. Both numbers are low, and, if anything, indicate higher quality of papers in the online course. There were no other redo requests in the linguistics course. For the Testing and Evaluation classes in this study, only one student was required to redo an assignment, in this case the final exam for class. The student was in the on-campus class.

Only the redone assignment is considered in the grade for the course. Final grade averages for the two courses can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1: Final Grade for Testing and Evaluation Class

Mode	Number of students	Average grade (4 point scale)
On campus	31	3.8065
Online	19	3.7737

Table 2: Grade for Linguistics for Language Teachers

Mode	Number of students	Average grade (4 point scale)
On campus	28	3.711
Online	22	3.836

Note. Statistical analyses show no significant difference. All results were evaluated at the .05 level using Pearson Chi-Square.

Academic Performance as Indicated by Dropout Rate

We calculated the dropout rate for the Linguistics for Language Teachers class only, as we did not track it for the other class. In the spring of 2001, the results are: (a) 16%, or 5 out of 32, on campus students, and (b) 17%, or 6 out of 35, online students.

Again, the difference is not significant. Based on the grade point average and dropout rates, indications are that student performance is comparable in the two modes of instruction. We have not yet formally or systematically asked students why they drop out of class. Anecdotally, we gather that both online and on campus students drop out because they have not allocated enough time to take the class, or for personal reasons such as a family crisis or illness.

Quality of Course Design and Instruction as Indicated by Course Evaluation

The questions on the course evaluation are as follows:

Course Evaluation Questions Related to Course Design

1. The course challenged me intellectually.
2. The course was well-organized.
3. Assignments contributed to my understanding of the course.
4. Assignments helped me transfer theory into practice.
5. Students had the opportunity to ask questions.
6. I have become more competent in this area due to this class.
7. Work outside the class was appropriate for the credit granted.
8. Handouts were appropriate and informative
9. Overall, I am glad I took this course.
10. I would encourage others to take this course.

Course Evaluation Questions Related to Instruction

1. Instructor encouraged reflection on my practices using course concepts.
2. Instructor demonstrated competency in his/her area.
3. Instructor had good rapport with class participants.
4. Instructor was clear in presenting or discussing concepts.

The on-campus and online course evaluation results were tested for significant differences using Pearson Chi-Square at the .05 level.

In the area of quality of course design, there were no significant differences for the Testing course. For the Linguistics course, the online course performed significantly better on two items: the course was well-organized and handouts were appropriate and informative. The data indicate that students deem the modes, online and on campus, to be comparable overall in course design, with an edge for the online Linguistics course.

In the area of quality of instruction, both the on-campus Testing and Linguistic courses were rated significantly better by students on one item: instructor had good rapport with class

participants. The rapport that the professor has with students is clearly an issue for online instruction. For the item dealing with the competence of the instructor, the online Linguistics students rated the course higher than the on-campus students.

Results from Open-ended Course Evaluation Questions

The standard Graduate School of Education course evaluation includes some open-ended questions. They are: (a) Specifically, what was the best part of this course? (b) describe one aspect of this course that needs improvement; and (c) What else would you like us to know about this course or program? To evaluate the responses to the open-ended questions, we coded the questions according to the topic of the comment, as well as whether the response was a negative or a positive one. Then we related the responses to course design and quality of instruction. The comments that students made related to course design fell into the following categories: (a) content, (b) organization, and (c) technology/online format.

For this paper, we will highlight and summarize some of the evaluation comments that complement other parts of this study rather than reporting on all data that we gathered.

The answers to the open-ended questions show some frustration with the course content, especially for the Linguistics course. However, the same frustrations were expressed by students in the online and on-campus formats. One on-campus student stated, “My biggest frustration was feeling frustrated with a concept, trying to ‘get it.’ I’d ask a question and either it wasn’t answered or I was ignored completely!” This comment is similar to a frustration expressed by an online student, who said, “It contained too much material to grasp it, the concepts, well. Cut down on the online assignments!”

As already indicated in the quantitative data, the organization of the Linguistics course, was rated better by the online students than the on-campus students. One on-campus student stated, “I would like to see more adherence to a schedule. Organization [needs to be improved].” Comments from the online course, on the other hand, praised the course for being “well-organized.”

Many students made comments about the course technology/online format. What they appreciated most was the convenience of taking an online course. A typical comment was, “I would like to see all the courses online if possible. It is very convenient for people who work and do not live close to the university.” They also appreciated the easily accessible embedded links to other sources of information. The online course technology was also appreciated by on-campus students, who had access to the online version of the class for preview or review purposes.

The comments that students made related to instruction fell into the categories of: (a) competence of the instructor, (b) communication with instructor, and (c) communication with other students.

Competence of the instructor was an area where students often commented. The Linguistics course received equally positive comments from both online and on-campus students. Comments such as “[the] instructor was astute and informed of the latest research, etc.” came from on-campus students, while online students described the instructor as “very well-informed.” However, the instructor for the Testing class received positive comments from the on-campus class such as, “[the] instructor’s knowledge was [the] best part of the course,” but received no comments, positive or negative, related to instructor performance on the open-ended questions from the online class.

A lack of perceived rapport between instructor and students for online classes was already evident from the quantitative data (Instructor Question # 3: Instructor had good rapport with participants) and is further underscored by comments made by students concerning communication with the instructor. For the Testing class, online students appreciated their one-on-one communication with the professor (“I liked the quick responses from instructor”), but they were less happy about the instructor’s involvement in their discussions. Typical of several (three out of eight) comments on the evaluations was this: “Need more indications that we were or weren’t on the right track, that our discussions were good or not.” Although on-campus professors also do not tend to monitor small groups discussions closely, online students evidently need a more obvious presence from their professors in their discussions to feel a rapport and be assured that their discussions are on track.

On the other hand, online students did not perceive a lack of rapport or communication with their fellow students. By far, the largest number of comments for both the on-campus and online Linguistics and Testing courses related to student interaction. Typical comments for on-campus classes included: “The best part of the course were the discussions,” and “talking with everyone about issues, hearing about how others are handling things.” Online courses had similar comments: “The best part of the course was discussion groups generated by the professor,” and “I liked how each lesson had several parts with the opportunity for discussion/reflection afterwards.”

The qualitative data in this study complement the quantitative data. It appears that for these two courses at least, there were very few differences between the online and on-campus versions of the course that related to the study’s measure of course design and quality of instruction. The one characteristic that we have decided to try to address with online courses as a result of this study is the lack of rapport that students feel with their online professors. Because the

design of the course and the online software allow students to feel a great deal of rapport with one another, it should be possible for the professors to build more bridges with students to give them the feeling that their professor is really there, facilitating their learning, as the course progresses.

General Discussion

In the years to come, online education in all professional fields is likely to grow. In teacher education, it is imperative that such programs do not sacrifice quality for the sake of convenience even when the needs of the public schools for ESL professionals are outstripping the ability of traditional on-campus education programs to meet them. In designing our ESL teacher education program, we strove to maintain the same quality as our on-campus programs. With this study, we are beginning to formalize the program evaluation of the online program.

We selected student performance as demonstrated in grades and dropout rates as a good overall measure of course quality. Because assessments and scoring rubrics for both courses were identical, an inferior course should result in lower grades and/or dropout rates. For the two courses in this study, we found no difference and view the lack of difference as an indicator that students learned equally well in both formats.

At the same time, there were some differences in our qualitative data. Since there were also distinct differences between the design and instruction of the two on-campus and two online courses, we will next discuss possible connections between these data and the differences in design and instruction between the two compared course types. Several conclusions can be drawn, and they will be presented in terms of strengths and weaknesses of one type of course versus the other.

Strengths and Weaknesses in Design and Instruction

In web courses, discussions and lectures are automatically archived, and materials are presented in a planned, fixed order. Both of these differences seem to have a positive impact on course quality. Students report that course materials are more organized, handouts are more appropriate, and the instructor has higher competence. In the traditional campus setting, discussions of questions may occur more spontaneously in response to student needs, but answers to questions may be perceived as “digressions” or as “tangential.” In the online setting, questions are answered and side discussions take place in a bulletin board that is separate in time and space from the lesson material. It is only after the lesson material has been worked through uninterrupted by students that the discussions and questions occur; which is less spontaneous but also less disruptive. This design difference is likely responsible for the differences in the Linguistics course quality data.

Discussions in web courses seem to constitute both a weakness and a strength. On the one hand, students often, but not always, wish for more professor involvement and more feedback on the direction of their discussions. On the other hand, they appreciate and enjoy discussion groups and interaction with one another. On campus, they sometimes resent digressions, which are clearly the result of professor accessibility and involvement. So there can be too much faculty involvement for some. Yet they likewise appreciate and enjoy group discussions and interaction.

An important advantage in course quality may be that online students self-select when they interact with each other and the professor. They access the courseware on their own accord and for however much time seems appropriate for them. The ongoing class interaction does not dictate their learning pace, and session length does not stretch their cognitive capacity limits. The convenience of online learning is very much appreciated and appears to be a strength of online courses. Students prefer not to have to meet in real time because of constraints in their schedule or geographical location. On the downside, there is clear evidence that some students miss the face-to-face contact in discussions and group exercises. Web discussions are perceived as socially “flat,” and students wish for some face-to-face contact and interaction with real people.

Having focused only on the two quality domains of instruction and design, we acknowledge that all domains of quality affect a comparison such as the current one. For a full, comprehensive comparison of course quality online and face-to-face, it will be necessary to consider all quality domains. At this time, there are at least two major reasons why such a comparison may be problematic. First, as was discussed earlier, one is comparing “apples and oranges” because traditional and web courses are different entities that happen to serve a common purpose. Second, web courses are still relatively new and many of the surrounding support structures and policies related to overall program support are still evolving. For example, at our institution the following concerns, as noted by Frydenberg (2002), can be found:

1. The executive commitment of the institution is different (e.g., the administration of the university is not as focused on the online student needs as it is on traditional student needs).
2. The infrastructure (e.g., technology, interactivity, material access) is not comparable.
3. Only a rudimentary virtual campus (e.g., student services) is available.
4. Program delivery (e.g., policies, procedures, responsibilities) and administration (e.g., communication, management) are lagging.
5. Program evaluation is unequal (e.g., course evaluations are not specifically designed for online courses).

These differences between traditional and web courses may have affected our limited comparison as well. When all domains affected by quality assessment have been developed, it will be necessary to conduct another, more comprehensive comparison. At that point, web courses may be of better quality in more domains than they are currently. As the infrastructure to support online learning evolves, we will be able to continue to improve services to all ESL teachers.

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Appendix

Sample Assignment and Rubric: Language Feature Research Paper

In a 5 page paper, discuss the literature you found and its relevance to the topic. Then explain your linguistic feature/set of features and its/their significance for your content topic chosen in 1. above by summarizing the literature you read. The audience are your peers in this course (not your instructor); please adjust your style and assumptions of prior knowledge accordingly. Make sure to apply the terminology and concepts encountered in this course. The main focus in your paper is on linguistics and your linguistic feature(s), **not** on your content topic or how to teach this content topic. Include as well why your linguistic feature might be problematic for non-native speakers. Your paper must have a reference section, and sources must be cited properly in the body of the paper using APA format, the standard in our department. The APA manual can be found online using Hamline's Bush Library Web resources. Here is a possible outline for the structure/contents of your paper:

Introduction:

- Purpose/Topic (identify linguistic feature(s) and lesson context)
- Thesis/Objective

Background/Theory:

- Background (non-native speaker link, motivation for topic)
- Literature Review of Linguistic Feature(s) (demonstrate, explain, discuss)

Discussion:

- Summary/Synthesis of linguistic feature information
- Link/relevance of feature(s) to lesson contents

Conclusion:

- Summary

Grading Criteria for Final Paper

Paper Structure: contains title page, introduction, background/theory, discussion, conclusion, references _____/20

Paper Contents: explains linguistic feature(s) and its significance for teaching content topic; gives reason why feature is problematic for ELL _____/65

Writing Concerns: consists of coherent paragraphs, shows audience awareness, is spell-checked, has correct punctuation _____/20

Total: _____/105

For additional assignment and rubrics, contact the authors.

Attitudinal Outcomes of an Exploration of Second Language Teaching Course

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College students who decide to major in teaching bring with them a variety of expectations concerning the profession, which may or may not correspond to the realities they later encounter in the classroom. Numerous students choose teaching as a career because they expect to find enjoyment working with young people and make a difference in society (DeLong, 1987; Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000), and many find fulfillment of these expectations. Some students, however, declare a teaching major without an adequate understanding of the challenges that teachers face, including limited salaries, low prestige, discipline problems, and student apathy (Lasley, 1980). As these individuals encounter such challenges during their practica or their first years of teaching, many end up changing their mind about their chosen profession. With respect to teacher education programs in world languages, some students have unrealistic ideas about how languages are learned and how they should be taught, which may later affect their success as language teachers (Horwitz, 1985). These realities suggest that individuals who are considering language teaching as a profession need access early on to information that will allow them to make an informed decision about pursuing this career.

This article reports on the outcomes of a course designed to provide such information. The course, entitled “Exploration of Foreign Language Teaching,” was instituted at Brigham Young University in order to help students determine whether or not their decision to become language teachers was a good choice for them personally, before becoming heavily invested in pedagogical coursework and student teaching.

The course is comprised of both theoretical and practical components. Theoretical issues related to language teaching and learning are addressed through readings from Alice Omaggio Hadley’s *Teaching Language in Context* (2001), with accompanying classroom discussions. Students are introduced to practical aspects of teaching in four ways: (a) reading selections from Hartman’s *Stories Teachers Tell* (1998), a Northwest Conference volume of autobiographical vignettes written by practicing foreign language teachers; (b) researching and reporting on newspaper articles about current issues related to public education; (c) listening and writing reactions to a series of guest speakers who are experienced foreign language teachers; and (d) spending approximately 50 hours observing foreign language and ESL (English as a Second Language) classes in local high schools, junior high/middle schools, and elementary schools.

After teaching the course for the first time in Fall of 2002, I began to wonder to what extent it was accomplishing its intended purpose, and what effect it actually had on students' beliefs and attitudes toward language teaching. A review of the literature revealed limited research on the effects of exploratory courses on teaching on students' attitudes and beliefs. Recent research with preservice teachers has tended to emphasize their attitudes toward specific topics such as diversity (Taylor & Sobel, 2001), multicultural education (Moore & Reeves-Kazelskis, 1992), or integrated teaching (Reinke & Moseley, 2002), rather than toward the teaching profession in general. Another group of studies has focused on students' perceptions of the characteristics of effective teachers (e.g., Minor, Onwuegbuzie, & Witcher, 2000; Miner, Onwuegbuzie, Witcher, & James, 2001) or on their reasons for entering the teaching profession (DeLong, 1987; Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000; Page, 1982). Of these studies, few have assessed the effects of a specific exploratory course on preservice teachers' attitudes and beliefs, and even fewer have been conducted in reference to teaching second languages. One exception is the work of Horwitz (1985, 1996), which focused on preservice teachers' beliefs about language learning and their emotional concerns as developing language teachers. Horwitz's research, however, was not conducted with reference to students' development in a specific introductory course. The present study was conducted in order to help fill this void.

Method

Research Questions

The research questions for the study were as follows: (a) What perceptions and attitudes do students who are considering a career as language teachers have regarding the teaching profession in general, and specifically toward teaching second languages? (b) Do these perceptions and attitudes develop and change during an exploratory course on language teaching, and if so, in what ways?

Participants and Sources of Information

The participants in the study were the 18 students enrolled in the Exploration of Foreign Language Teaching course during Winter Semester 2003. All of the students were undergraduates; ten were female and eight male. Twelve of the students planned to teach Spanish, three French, two German, and one Russian. In addition, several of the students were interested in teaching English as a Second Language, which the university offers only as a teaching minor. At the beginning of the

course the students were invited to sign a consent form to participate in the study, and all agreed to participate.

Data for the study were obtained from two sources. The first was a questionnaire on students' attitudes and beliefs about teaching and learning second languages and about the teaching profession in general, which consisted of 29 Likert scale items ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree* (see Appendix). Students completed this questionnaire on the second day of class and again on the last day of class. The second source of data was the students' final paper for the course, in which they were asked to identify the five most important things they learned about language teaching during the course. They were asked to summarize each point in a single sentence and then to elaborate on it in one or more paragraphs.

Data Analysis

Responses to the Likert scale items on the pre- and post-questionnaires were converted to numerical equivalents ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*); responses of *undecided / no opinion*, which constituted less than 3% of the total number of responses, were not included in the analysis. Students' responses on the pre- and post-questionnaire items were then compared using a two-tailed paired t test ($\alpha = .05$). Frequencies, means, and standard deviations were also examined for each item. The qualitative data were analyzed by entering an electronic copy of students' final papers into a database using NVivo software. Forty-five unique topics were identified, based on students' summary sentences for each topic that they addressed. The topics in each paper were then coded electronically so that they could be examined topically in the database. Finally, the topics were grouped together with other topics with which they appeared to share common characteristics. Five topical groups were ultimately identified: (a) issues related specifically to language teaching and learning; (b) characteristics of good teachers; (c) learner-related issues; (d) teaching as a career; and (e) overall comments about the course.

Results

As was hoped, the course did have an influence on students' attitudes and beliefs about language teaching, as indicated by both quantitative and qualitative data. It should be pointed out that the specific ways in which students' attitudes and beliefs changed were, in most cases, directly related to the content of the course, including the readings, guest speakers, and attitudes and beliefs of the instructor, as well as students' own experiences in public school classrooms. Consequently, any future replications of this study may not yield identical results.

Analysis of the pre-post questionnaire data revealed 13 items in which the mean of students' responses changed significantly ($p < .05$) during the course (see Table 1).

Table 1: Items with Significant Differences Between the Pre- and Post-Questionnaire

Item	Pre	Post	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
3. Students can successfully learn to communicate in a foreign language even though they may have little or no knowledge about the target culture.	<i>M</i> = 3.76 <i>SD</i> = .90	<i>M</i> = 3.00 <i>SD</i> = .94	2.75	.014
4. Teachers of first-year classes should avoid using the target language excessively, since this can lead to student frustration.	<i>M</i> = 3.05 <i>SD</i> = 1.64	<i>M</i> = 1.76 <i>SD</i> = .97	4.07	.001
6. Students should be required to produce their own utterances in the language only when they are ready, even if it takes several weeks or months.	<i>M</i> = 1.81 <i>SD</i> = .75	<i>M</i> = 2.94 <i>SD</i> = 1.20	-3.58	.003
7. Teachers should avoid correcting students' errors when they speak the language, since this can lead to frustration and anxiety.	<i>M</i> = 2.35 <i>SD</i> = .93	<i>M</i> = 3.18 <i>SD</i> = 1.01	-2.75	.014
10. Testing students' knowledge of culture is as important as testing their linguistic skills.	<i>M</i> = 3.82 <i>SD</i> = 1.19	<i>M</i> = 4.71 <i>SD</i> = .99	-3.27	.005
11. Most class time should be devoted to learning grammar and vocabulary, since these are the building blocks of language.	<i>M</i> = 3.47 <i>SD</i> = 1.28	<i>M</i> = 3.00 <i>SD</i> = 1.10	2.41	.030
12. Language instruction should be kept separate from instruction in subject matter (science, math, etc.), as it is generally not effective to try to teach these subjects in a second language.	<i>M</i> = 3.56 <i>SD</i> = 1.26	<i>M</i> = 2.59 <i>SD</i> = .94	4.39	.001
15. Research on language teaching should focus on finding the ideal methodology that will help all students learn languages most effectively.	<i>M</i> = 4.67 <i>SD</i> = 1.45	<i>M</i> = 3.40 <i>SD</i> = 1.59	3.00	.010
17. Assessment procedures should reflect the way students are taught.	<i>M</i> = 4.60 <i>SD</i> = .91	<i>M</i> = 5.56 <i>SD</i> = .81	-3.74	.003
18. To teach reading and listening comprehension, it is best to use pedagogically simplified materials rather than authentic materials written for native speakers.	<i>M</i> = 3.57 <i>SD</i> = 1.65	<i>M</i> = 2.47 <i>SD</i> = 1.07	2.32	.040
19. The development of linguistic accuracy should be encouraged from the outset of language study.	<i>M</i> = 4.88 <i>SD</i> = .70	<i>M</i> = 4.07 <i>SD</i> = .80	3.67	.003
30. I am concerned that my income as a teacher may not be adequate to meet my needs and those of my family.	<i>M</i> = 3.44 <i>SD</i> = 1.41	<i>M</i> = 4.18 <i>SD</i> = 1.24	-3.87	.002
36. I am considering teaching in Utah.	<i>M</i> = 2.62 <i>SD</i> = 1.45	<i>M</i> = 1.93 <i>SD</i> = 1.16	2.28	.044

Note. 1 = strongly disagree; 6 = strongly agree.

Nearly all of these items were mentioned by students in their final papers (see Table 2). Therefore, rather than discussing the quantitative and qualitative data separately, I have chosen to address them together, with the discussion organized according to the five themes that emerged from students' final papers.

Table 2: Topics from Final Paper Mentioned by Two or More Students

Topic	n (of 18)
Issues Related Specifically to Language Teaching and Learning	
Importance of speaking the target language in the classroom	7
Importance of using a variety of creative activities	6
Exposure to new and effective teaching techniques	4
Importance of teaching culture along with language	4
Importance of creating a low-anxiety environment	3
Importance of emphasizing communicative activities rather than just grammar	2
Importance of contextualizing information and relating it to previous knowledge	2
Success of immersion programs and content-based language teaching	2
Importance of building a successful foreign language program	2
Characteristics of Good Teachers	
Building a caring relationship with each individual student	9
Preparing adequately for each lesson	4
Establishing discipline / good classroom management policies	3
Using fair and accurate testing procedures	3
Adapting to students' needs	2
Being yourself / finding your teaching persona	2
Learner-Related Issues	
Non-native speakers of English need to continue to develop in their L1 ¹	6
Teaching as a Career	
People should go into teaching for the right reason	7
Becoming a teacher is a lifelong process	5
Teaching is harder than I thought / Teachers must play many different roles	4
Teachers need to be involved in politics	2
Teaching can be very rewarding	2

Issues Related Specifically to Language Teaching and Learning

Importance of speaking the target language in the classroom.

At the end of the course, the participants² reported an increased belief in the importance of using the target language for classroom communication. This outcome was reflected in their responses to the questionnaire item “Teachers of first-year classes should avoid using the target language excessively, since this can lead to student frustration,” with which they disagreed significantly more on the post-questionnaire than on the pre-questionnaire ($t(16) = 4.07, p = .001$). Seven participants mentioned in their final paper that they were surprised to see the extent to which the target language can be used in the classroom. The following quote is representative of their comments:³

One of the most important things I realized in this class was that it is possible to speak 100% of the time in the target language. It was something I had not considered because I did not think it was feasible or practical. After observing quite a few Spanish classes at high school and junior high levels, I came to realize that having an aim of teaching the entire class period in Spanish was neither outrageous nor impossible. However, I realize that it would be difficult. It requires a lot of discipline on my part.

Importance of using a variety of creative activities.

Six participants reported becoming convinced of the importance of using creative activities that involve learners. Participants witnessed a variety of activities in their classroom observations, including songs, scary stories, soap operas, and games of Battleship. One individual made the following remark about a class that he observed:

It was very evident that every single kid was enjoying the lesson and participating. [The teacher] allowed the kids to work in groups, work orally, direct class, watch helpful videos, and so forth. I learned a ton and could tell that the kids were learning at the same time. I could see the kids progressing in a week and they did it while they were having fun. I think that this is a lesson that teachers are beginning to learn more and more.

Exposure to new and effective teaching techniques.

Four participants reported learning new teaching techniques that they were excited to try out. Three of these individuals specifically mentioned Total Physical Response (TPR), which they had seen demonstrated in French by a guest speaker. Perhaps it was this exposure to a variety of teaching techniques, in conjunction with a classroom discussion on the evolution of language

teaching methods, that caused participants to disagree more with the item “Research on language teaching should focus on finding the ideal methodology that will help all students learn languages most effectively” on the post-questionnaire than on the pre-questionnaire ($t(13) = 3.0, p = .01$). At the end of the course, participants seemed inclined to draw from any teaching method that they felt would be effective. As one participant put it, “no one method works the best. So, if a teacher has as many methods as possible at his disposal, he can more effectively choose something that will work the best with the lesson being taught.”

Importance of teaching culture along with language.

Another reported outcome was an increased conviction of the importance of teaching culture in the foreign language class. Two questionnaire items addressing the teaching of culture showed significant pre-post changes. Participants disagreed more with the statement “Students can successfully learn to communicate in a foreign language even though they have little or no knowledge about the target culture” ($t(16) = 2.75, p = .014$). Conversely, they agreed more with the statement “Testing students’ knowledge of culture is as important as testing their language skills” ($t(16) = -3.27, p = .005$). The importance of culture learning was also mentioned by four participants in their final papers. The following is representative of their comments:

A fourth idea that I encountered though this course is that teaching culture is just as important as teaching the language to students. Language and culture truly go hand in hand in this world and the classroom experience should be no exception. If youth do not become acquainted with the culture[s] whose language they are learning, the understanding, respect, appreciation, and acceptance of both the language and culture may never fully come.

Importance of creating a low-anxiety environment.

Another topic emphasized by participants was the importance of creating a comfortable atmosphere in which learners are not afraid to make mistakes. This topic was apparently influenced both by readings on Krashen’s affective filter hypothesis (Krashen, 1982; cited in Hadley, 2001) and by students’ classroom observations. One individual made the following insightful comment:

In the same German class...the students and instructor laughed at students’ mistakes and rarely hesitated to put someone down for improper pronunciation or grammatical errors. “Du bist dumm! Du Idiot,” were phrases I heard more than once. None of the insults, I hope, were meant seriously, but I noticed myself [a German student of 7 years who spent a year living in a German speaking country] become very nervous when asked to speak in front of the class.

The issue of avoiding learner anxiety was also apparent in participants' responses to three questionnaire items. The first two items were designed to address the issue of linguistic accuracy: "Teachers should avoid correcting students' errors when they speak the language, since this can lead to frustration and anxiety" (participants agreed more on the post-questionnaire, $t(16) = -2.75, p = .014$); and "The development of linguistic accuracy should be encouraged from the outset of language study" (participants disagreed more on the post-questionnaire, $t(14) = 3.67, p = .003$). Although the post-questionnaire responses continue to reflect a concern for accuracy, the shift away from an emphasis on error correction seems to indicate a desire to avoid raising learners' anxiety. Responses to the third item, "Students should be required to produce their own utterances in the language only when they are ready, even if it takes several weeks or months," reflected this same trend. Although most participants disagreed with this statement, the trend toward greater agreement on the post-questionnaire ($t(15) = -3.58, p = .003$) again seems to reflect a desire to create a low-anxiety classroom environment.

Other issues.

Other issues related to language teaching and learning that surfaced on the post-questionnaire were an increased belief in the importance of emphasizing communicative activities rather than just grammar; increased support for immersion programs and content-based instruction; and increased support for using authentic materials to teach reading and listening comprehension (see Table 1, questionnaire items 11, 12, 18).

Characteristics of Good Teachers

Building a caring relationship with each student.

The characteristic of good teachers that was most often mentioned was the importance of building a caring and trusting relationship with each individual student. This topic received nine mentions in participants' final papers, more than any other topic. The following two quotes are representative of students' comments:

In one of the Hartman stories that I read this semester, a teacher made an interesting observation. She witnessed the change that came into a student's life when that student was shown a little personal attention. I feel that this is the key to successfully reaching a student's heart. There is a line of course, between professionalism and being too personal, but from personal experience, the teachers I respected most and learned the most from were the ones who took a personal interest in me.

In all the stories I read and in all the classes that I saw, the successful teachers were the ones who bonded in some way with their students. If the students feel comfortable and feel as if the teacher really cares about them then they will be more likely to perform well and try to succeed. It is in this way that a teacher can really touch the life of a person.

Preparing adequately for each lesson.

Four participants stressed the importance of preparing adequately for lessons. They concluded that teacher preparation accounted for much of the success or failure in the classrooms they observed:

I've learned the hard way that if you don't prepare for things that you have to do, they usually turn out very poorly. The teachers I saw that were effective had planned quite well. They knew what they were going to do and when they were going to do it. They never seemed to run out of things to do and there were always back-up plans.

The Spanish teachers [at the high school I observed] were just unprepared, had boring activities for the students to work on, and had poor student progress...Teacher laziness is the only reason that at least some measure of interested student involvement should not be integrated into the classroom.

Establishing discipline.

Three participants mentioned establishing discipline and effective classroom management procedures as one of the most important things they learned in the course. Their comments were based directly on classroom observations:

Discipline could very well be the most important thing to focus on in the middle/high school years...In the [junior high ESL] class that I visited the kids ran around and did pretty much what they wanted at any time. I began to think that all my visits would be like this...But after visiting [a high school ESL class] and seeing the kids being perfectly respectful I learned that discipline was possible...Without discipline kids will go until you kill yourself or the bell rings, whichever comes first.

In one particular class I was observing the teacher did not have a strong authoritative presence in the class and things frequently got out of hand. In another class the teacher must have shown that he was in control early on in the year and *never* lost control of the class. They respected his authority and always did as he asked without hesitation or needing to be told twice. The teacher had control over the class, but it didn't feel like he was ordering them around—it was obvious that he respected the students and they in turn gave him the same respect.

Using fair and accurate testing procedures.

Three participants commented on the importance of using testing procedures that parallel the way students were taught and that measure real-life language use. One of the guest speakers had commented on the issue of testing, and apparently it struck a chord with these individuals:

The fourth principle that became important to me was the importance of good testing. I find nothing more frustrating than going into a test having no idea what the teacher is going to test me on and then finding that the test is on minute points of the teacher's course that have nothing to do with the reality or application of the subject....It is important to test students on points that are relevant to the reality of communication in the target language, and to test them on things that you have practiced and prepared for in class.

The same issues were also addressed in the questionnaire item "Assessment procedures should reflect the way students are taught." Participants agreed with this statement significantly more on the post-questionnaire than they had on the pre-questionnaire ($t(13) = -3.74, p = .003$).

Learner-Related Issues

Non-native speakers of English need to continue to develop in their L1.

Of the various learner-related topics mentioned in participants' final papers, only one topic received more than one mention: the issue of bilingual education. Six participants reported learning the importance of allowing non-native speakers of English to continue to develop academic skills in their native language. This issue was raised during a classroom discussion of an article by Virginia Collier (1989) and later by a guest speaker, and was commented on repeatedly by participants after their visits to ESL classes. The following quote is representative of their comments:

I learned what my opinion is on bilingual education. I don't think I had even considered it before because I didn't know anything about it. However, after reading the article by Collier and hearing the presentation by [the guest speaker], I feel like I have a greater understanding of the importance of funding bilingual education programs. I fail to understand how people continue to be against it....If the goal were to help [non-native speakers] learn English and become integrated into the American society, you would think we would do what is most effective in the long run.

Teaching as a Career

People should go into teaching for the right reasons.

A point that participants emphasized was that people need to go into teaching for the right reasons. Seven participants mentioned this topic. In the words of one participant, "if you are going

into teaching for the money, you're in for a surprise." The right reasons, according to another participant, are a "sincere love for people and for learning":

Teachers have an incredible task in their profession: to serve a roomful of people, knowing each one well enough to cater according to their needs. Much of this service goes unappreciated, so it kills teachers to work hard and not receive a just reward [the guest speakers made it clear that the monetary rewards for teaching are awfully minimal], unless of course they are serving out of love for those whom they serve. The Hartman stories all seemed to echo the idea that loving the students gave them the motivation to problem solve, to be patient, to spend extra time and inner power wrestling to find the best way to help another little person.

Becoming a good teacher is a lifelong process.

Five participants mentioned learning that becoming a good teacher is a process, not necessarily a destination. One individual compared this process to climbing a mountain:

One idea that was continually brought up by guest speakers and teachers alike was the idea of never actually reaching the top of the teaching mountain. In other words, it is impossible to ever reach the status of "great teacher." It is a process. The way one can be known as a great teacher is to be constantly experimenting, constantly trying new methodologies. If one is continually putting forth the effort to become a great teacher, he or she is defined as such.

Another participant made the following insightful observation after visiting a high school German class:

Despite the frequent target language instruction and ideal class size, students were not learning much, and that which they did learn was extremely outdated and of no use... Furthermore, "new" teaching concepts, such as TPR and the communicative approach, were ignored as students repeated incomprehensible sounds they did not understand over and over again. It was as if the instructor had locked himself in his classroom for last 40 years as the rest of the teaching world explored more effective teaching methods and techniques. As a future teacher, I began to understand the importance of communicating and sharing ideas with others in the teaching profession, attending conferences, and staying in contact with the German teaching world, on a much deeper level. Learning to teach never ends.

Teaching is harder than I thought; teachers must play many different roles.

Four participants expressed surprise at the multiple roles teachers must play, and remarked that teaching was harder than they had imagined. One person commented:

When I observed some of the teachers, I noticed the stress they had. I noticed that they were frustrated at times. Often they were not treated the way they deserved to be treated. There is a rather large lack of appreciation in the teaching profession. I really want to give back to my community and become a teacher, but I don't want

to go through all of that stress they go through. I am now aware and more cautious about making the decision. Almost every guest speaker we had mentioned the pay. I also noticed that they mentioned the fact that this is the profession where every other profession comes from! That is amazing to me. People do not even realize that.

Teachers need to be involved in politics.

Two participants concluded that teachers need to become involved in the political process in order to improve legislation and educational policy:

I learned that being a teacher means being involved in politics at some level. I guess not all teachers get involved but there is so much legislation that affects schools and the educational system that I can't imagine not becoming a part of it.

A teacher should have an understanding of the political and administrative issues of the day, accompanied by the determination to go forward anyway.

Teaching can be very rewarding.

A final observation made by three participants was the rewards of being a teacher. One individual observed:

That feeling that you are helping children to learn and make something of them is hard to find anywhere else in the work force...I can only imagine how good it must feel to get at least one child to learn something and go on to make a difference in the lives of others like you were able to make in their life...I think that teaching is a very unselfish and exciting profession to go into.

Another participant made the following comment:

Reading the Hartman stories gave me a lot of hope. Having six-year olds ask me to come back to their class the next day made me know that I can touch someone else for good, and even if the rest of their life is a wreck, I can provide peace and success in one little corner of it. My teachers, past and present, have helped me in so many ways; they mean so much to me. It is exciting to me to think that I can help others too.

A third participant offered what was perhaps the best summary of this topic: "I learned that despite some of the challenges, I still want to become a teacher."

Overall Comments about the Course

Participants' overall comments about the course were quite positive. One individual observed that the course added a real-life dimension to his knowledge about teaching:

Overall, this class has helped me to see some of the realities of the teaching profession. While I had learned many of the concepts previously, reviewing them as I observed real classrooms has helped me to better understand them.

Another participant was pleasantly surprised by what he learned in the course:

When I signed up for this class, I was upset because it was a four-hour block class and it would be pretty tough with my other classes and my pregnant wife. I thought it was a class that just wasn't necessary and that it was just a class to weed people out. This class has proved the opposite. I've learned a lot that has really opened my eyes and excited me even more about being a teacher.

Not all of the course participants decided to go into teaching, however. As the teacher of the course, I was especially moved by the comments of one individual:

I have seen personally...that it takes a lot to be a teacher. From all of the teachers that I have met and most of the people in our class who are trying to be teachers I realized that they have a certain something that I don't have. They seem different from me and I would not feel comfortable having them as my colleagues for the rest of my life...

Overall this class did exactly what it is supposed to do, it helped me to decide if this is what I really want to do. After forty-five hours of observation time and countless of learning and listening to speakers in class I have come to a decision. I do not think that it would be worth the extra year of college that it would take for me to get my teaching certificate...Before, I thought that I would get my teaching certificate as a safety net in case I could not find any other job after college or if I still did not know what I wanted to do with my life. I now know that this is the wrong reason to go into teaching. I feel like if I did this I would deprive students of a teacher who went into teaching because it is something that they really enjoyed and loved to do, not just something that they did as a backup plan.

Although this decision must have involved some poignant introspection on the student's part, in the long run it will undoubtedly benefit him as he explores other careers.

Conclusions

In summary, the "Exploration of Foreign Language Teaching" course appears to be fulfilling its intended purpose: to help college students make an informed decision about pursuing a career as a language teacher. Participants in the course reported gaining a variety of insights on teaching and learning foreign languages, and on teaching as a profession. In addition, questionnaire results indicate a variety of areas in which the participants' attitudes and beliefs about language teaching changed during the course. The strength of these outcomes is that they are based on students' own observation and experiences, and are thus ostensibly a good indicator of the participants' future satisfaction with their chosen career. It is hoped that exploratory courses such as this will become

more widely available in the future, and that they will serve both the college community and the education community in general, in helping to develop teachers that are well-prepared and well-informed about their chosen profession.

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Appendix

Attitudes and Beliefs About Language Teaching Questionnaire

Instructions: The purpose of this questionnaire is to help you reflect on your attitudes and beliefs about language teaching and learning, the language teaching profession, and yourself as a language teacher. After reading each item, please indicate your response by circling the appropriate [letter]:

Table 3: Beliefs about Language Teaching and Learning

Statement	Response Rating						
	SD	D	d	a	A	SA	U
1. Many students can become proficient in a foreign language without consciously studying the rules of that language.	SD	D	d	a	A	SA	U
2. All four language skills—speaking, listening, reading, and writing—should be emphasized from the outset of language instruction.	SD	D	d	a	A	SA	U
3. Students can successfully learn to communicate in a foreign language even though they may have little or no knowledge about the target culture.	SD	D	d	a	A	SA	U
4. Teachers of first-year classes should avoid using the target language excessively, since this can lead to student frustration.	SD	D	d	a	A	SA	U
5. Learning a foreign language is primarily a matter of learning new vocabulary words.	SD	D	d	a	A	SA	U
6. Students should be required to produce their own utterances in the language only when they are ready, even if it takes several weeks or months.	SD	D	d	a	A	SA	U
7. Teachers should avoid correcting students' errors when they speak the language, since this can lead to frustration and anxiety.	SD	D	d	a	A	SA	U
8. Since language is a tool for communication, the majority of class time should be devoted to using the language for real communication (speaking, listening, reading, and writing).	SD	D	d	a	A	SA	U
9. Given adequate input in the target language, students will usually develop acceptable pronunciation without the teacher focusing explicitly on pronunciation rules.	SD	D	d	a	A	SA	U
10. Testing students' knowledge of culture is as important as testing their linguistic skills.	SD	D	d	a	A	SA	U
11. Most class time should be devoted to learning grammar and vocabulary, since these are the building blocks of language.	SD	D	d	a	A	SA	U
12. Language instruction should be kept separate from instruction in subject matter (science, math, etc.), as it is generally not effective to try to teach these subjects in a second language.	SD	D	d	a	A	SA	U
13. Speaking and writing should be avoided on tests, since it is difficult to evaluate these skills objectively.	SD	D	d	a	A	SA	U

Statement	Response Rating						
14. As much as possible, classroom activities should provide opportunities for students to use the language for real-life purposes and situations.	SD	D	d	a	A	SA	U
15. Research on language teaching should focus on finding the ideal methodology that will help all students learn languages most effectively.	SD	D	d	a	A	SA	U
16. Teachers should avoid having students express their own meanings in the target language until they have mastered its basic structures, since this can lead to incorrect habits.	SD	D	d	a	A	SA	U
17. Assessment procedures should reflect the way students are taught.	SD	D	d	a	A	SA	U
18. To teach reading and listening comprehension, it is best to use pedagogically simplified materials rather than authentic materials written for native speakers.	SD	D	d	a	A	SA	U
19. The development of linguistic accuracy should be encouraged from the outset of language study.	SD	D	d	a	A	SA	U
20. One of the roles of a foreign language teacher is to promote positive student attitudes toward the target culture and a desire to interact with members of that culture.	SD	D	d	a	A	SA	U
21. I am confident that my speaking ability and knowledge of the target language are adequate to function well as a language teacher.	SD	D	d	a	A	SA	U
22. I am worried about having a successful student teaching experience.	SD	D	d	a	A	SA	U
23. I am confident that I will be able to handle discipline issues and maintain control of the classes that I teach.	SD	D	d	a	A	SA	U
24. I feel confident about my ability to build rapport with my students.	SD	D	d	a	A	SA	U
25. I am afraid I might not have the knowledge and skills necessary to plan effective lessons.	SD	D	d	a	A	SA	U
26. I am confident in my ability to assess students' mastery of course material and identify areas where students need further work.	SD	D	d	a	A	SA	U
27. I am confident in my ability to build rapport and communicate effectively with my supervisors and colleagues.	SD	D	d	a	A	SA	U
28. I believe that I have what it takes to be a successful language teacher.	SD	D	d	a	A	SA	U
29. I believe that language teaching will be a rewarding and fulfilling career for me.	SD	D	d	a	A	SA	U
30. I am concerned that my income as a teacher may not be adequate to meet my needs and those of my family.	SD	D	d	a	A	SA	U

Statement	Response Rating						
31. For me, the monetary rewards of teaching are not as important as the intangible rewards.	SD	D	d	a	A	SA	U
32. Teachers should be concerned about support for public education in our society.	SD	D	d	a	A	SA	U
33. Teachers should become involved in the political process to garner support for public education.	SD	D	d	a	A	SA	U
34. Teachers should write letters to legislators in support of specific issues related to public education.	SD	D	d	a	A	SA	U
35. Teachers should become advocates for minority students in public schools.	SD	D	d	a	A	SA	U
36. I am considering teaching in Utah.	SD	D	d	a	A	SA	U
37. I believe that the teacher education program at this university will adequately prepare me to be an effective language teacher.	SD	D	d	a	A	SA	U
38. I definitely plan on pursuing a career as a language teacher.	SD	D	d	a	A	SA	U
39. I am considering teaching English as a Second Language.	SD	D	d	a	A	SA	U

Note. SD = Strongly disagree; D = Disagree; d = Somewhat disagree; a = Somewhat agree; A = Agree; SA = Strongly agree; U = Undecided/No opinion

Notes

¹ L1 refers to an individual's first language.

² In order to avoid confusion between students who participated in the study and the students referred to in the questionnaire items, I will henceforth refer to those who took part in the study as participants.

³ All quotes are from students' final papers.

Opportunities for Full Participation in a Global Community of Practice: The UMBC Egyptian Teacher-Leader Program

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Introduction

Stimulating thoughtful and purposeful change in education is not an easy task. Involving teachers in the process is essential to making substantial change. Helping teachers develop and implement new ideas while respecting their individual needs and situations is a challenge for programs that provide professional development. This is especially true for programs that serve teachers from other countries. This paper describes an international teacher development program based at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) which was in existence from 1994-2001. The program was designed for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers. The mission of the Egyptian Teacher-Leader Program, hereafter referred to as ETLP, was “to create a vision of excellence for the diverse and dynamic world” and “to promote excellence in teaching and learning” (Blunck & Bickel, 2000, p. 1). The program was designed to bring American and Egyptian teachers together to work collaboratively to improve EFL teaching. This paper discusses the major components and activities of the ETLP model, which are rooted in the thinking of a variety of researchers, including Lave and Wenger (1991), Richards (1998), Freeman and Johnson (1998), Freeman and Richards (1993) and Gonzalez and Darling-Hammond (1997). The primary goal of the program was to provide teacher-leaders with authentic learning experiences geared towards creating opportunities for full participation in the international community of practice.

Since the events of September 11, the ETLP has undergone changes. Up until September 2001, cohorts of 90 Egyptian English, science and mathematics teachers were coming to UMBC each semester to participate in the five-month, ETLP campus-based program. This article will describe the experiences of the EFL teachers in the program. New visa restrictions for international students and visitors have made it increasingly difficult to bring teachers to campus. This situation has presented new challenges for UMBC in its efforts to develop international partnerships. The ETLP model is currently being transformed into an online/distance, non-degree model. The first online course: *ELC600: Educational Technology for EFL Contexts* was successfully piloted in fall 2003 with seventy EFL teachers in six Latin American countries. This new delivery model holds promise for reaching a larger number of EFL teachers in international venues while respecting the approach

to teacher training employed by the ETLP. The new online model is built upon the conceptual and theoretical framework of the campus-based ETLP model. The new model strives to provide similar experiences for the teacher-leaders in an online venue.

The ETLP Model

Blunck and Bickel (2000) describe the ETLP as follows:

The UMBC ETLP is sponsored by the Egyptian Ministry of Education for the purpose of developing cohorts of teachers to lead modernization reforms in Egyptian schools. The program focuses on developing the skills and knowledge of each teacher as well as on building capacity among teachers to lead their colleagues upon their return to Egypt. While at UMBC, teachers study the most current research and promising practices in the field, visit local public schools/classrooms, work with US colleagues, and reflect on their own teaching practices (p. 2).

The goals of the ELPT program were to:

1. Introduce Egyptian teachers to innovative instructional methodologies, especially technology-based methodologies, while improving their English language communication skills.
2. Help Egyptian teachers align ideas learned through the program with curriculum and circumstances in Egyptian schools.
3. Empower Egyptian teachers to share their ideas with others when they return to Egypt.

The ETLP model was developed considering the current trends in teacher professional development that promote a participant-oriented approach (Gonzalez & Darling-Hammond, 1997). Activities were designed to be authentic and meaningful for teachers requiring them to analyze how to adapt ideas to meet their own professional goals. Thus, the ETLP model considered the ways teachers understood teaching practices in Egypt and used these understandings to build activities from the program experiences. The participants were required to adapt western methodologies to meet their needs rather than purely adopt them. The ETLP model was built upon the following tenets related to excellence in professional development:

1. Teaching and learning processes are developed collaboratively between program faculty and teacher-leader participants based on the needs of the participants.
2. An emphasis on continuous improvement is built into the program as faculty strive to refine and adapt instruction based on a variety of feedback mechanisms. Assessment is negotiated, relevant, and continuous.

3. Instructional approaches are linked to and supportive of the ways teachers learn, empowering teacher-leaders through use of democratic and collaborative decision making practices and by involving them in authentic professional challenges.

Connecting to the Social and Personal Contexts of Teaching

The ETLP embraced Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of situated learning as part of its theoretical beliefs which supports the notion that cognition is motivated largely by interaction. This theory of learning is defined as "a dimension of social practice" by Lave & Wenger (1991, p. 47). Other research values this theory in preparation of EFL teachers. For example, Govardhan, Nayar and Ravi (1999) suggest that programs that prepare EFL teachers should enable them to "assess the propriety, feasibility, applicability, and practicality of any or all of the methods against a certain set of political, socio-cultural, and pedagogic situations that they are going to be working in" (p. 123). Other researchers also stress the importance of the contextual factors in shaping teachers' understanding of teaching methodology. Richards (1988) notes "an important component of a language teacher's knowledge is an understanding of how the practice of language teaching is shaped by the contexts in which it takes place, and the role of societal, community, and institutional factors in language teaching" (p. 12).

It is in recognition of the need for all professional development programs to honor and consider the cultural background of all teachers that the ETLP assisted Egyptian teachers in adapting the ideas learned in the program to their own curriculum and classroom contexts. Through classroom projects and seminars, the ETLP required the program participants to discuss, evaluate, and adapt instructional strategies to work best in their schools in Egypt.

ETLP courses and activities encompassed techniques and strategies geared towards making the program content, goals, and activities relevant and authentic to the program participants. ETLP courses were designed using information provided by the Egyptian Ministry of Education, as well as professional needs gathered via feedback from ETLP participants. The ETLP curriculum consisted of the following courses (adapted from Blunck & Bickel, 2000):

1. **Professional Development:** The Professional Development course is concerned with helping program participants strengthen and develop themselves in their professional environment. Teacher-leaders are encouraged to develop awareness of their own teaching practices as well as those of their colleagues. The course focuses on promoting the internal growth of the teachers with a reflective examination of classroom practices and principles connected to a series of classroom observations.
2. **Cross-cultural Communication:** This course is designed to allow teacher-leaders to explore the nature of contemporary American society through examination of its

fundamental beliefs and values. Investigation of current trends and attributes of American society through readings, field trips, and multi-media presentations are included to encourage program participants to expand their understanding of not only the essence of American culture but also of their own cultural identity. The course is also designed to foster appreciation and understanding of the elements that constitute culture. It seeks to identify the values that underpin cultural practices and, most importantly, to respect those various practices.

3. Educational Technology: This course is designed to help teacher-leaders learn how to use PowerPoint for class handouts and professional presentations and how to navigate the Internet for online research. Program participants evaluate Web resources such as ERIC and TESOL on line for educational and research purposes. With the purpose of putting the theory into practice, participants are encouraged to create teaching and professional projects requiring use of technology in Egypt. Teacher-leaders work on three major projects geared to achieving this goal: 1) a technology-enhanced EFL unit, 2) a Web activities portfolio, and 3) two PowerPoint presentations (for the unit and the portfolio).
4. Methodology for teaching ESL/EFL—The Communicative Classroom: This course is designed to provide the teacher-leaders with the opportunity to reflect on their teaching practices and on the current teaching methodologies that the course introduces. The course provides teacher-leaders with opportunities to adapt materials and lessons that they can use in their classrooms in Egypt. The Egyptian teacher-leaders build a portfolio of classroom techniques that are based on a variety of clear, interactive principles of language learning and teaching in order to increase their students' communicative competence in the English language. These courses are currently being transformed into an online curriculum.

In addition to these core courses, participants attended interactive workshops and lectures developed from teacher-leader personal interests. Popular interactive workshops were “Strategies for Teaching Large Classes” and “Authentic Assessment.” Egyptian teacher-leaders adapted practices they were learning to their own needs. ETLP participants organized an academic symposium, where they had the opportunity to share their expertise, new ideas related to practice and action plans for implementing and disseminating the methodologies learned through the ETLP experiences. Discussions within courses helped Egyptian teachers assess the relevance of these methodologies as they applied to their own teaching context.

In addition to these activities, Egyptian teachers also participated in cultural and academic field trips. ETLP participants visited the U.S. Department of State Office of English Language Programs, where they talked to the editors of the journal *English Language Teaching Forum* and learned about opportunities for publication and availability of teaching resources. The primary aim of the program was to empower the teachers to use and share the ideas they gained through the experience.

The ETLP approach to training enabled the Egyptian teachers to develop materials that they could use either to teach students or to train other teachers in Egypt. For example, in the Educational Technology course the Egyptian teachers were asked to assess the applicability of Internet sites and analyze how the activities presented on the Web sites could be adapted to fit into the Egyptian context (Avendaño, 2003). The ETLP offered these teachers ideas that they could use in their own educational settings. Teacher-leaders came to realize that instructional methodologies must be crafted to work with local goals and contexts to be most effective (Govardhan et al., 1999). These notions are in agreement with research that clamors for approaches that respect EFL teachers' contexts, experience, and knowledge (Govardhan et al., 1999; Liu, 1999).

Authentic Activities Situated in Meaningful Contexts

The ETLP designed activities in which the Egyptian teachers were engaged in authentic and contextualized experiences that provided them the opportunity to interact and share knowledge within a variety of authentic contexts for very specific purposes. The faculty designed and coordinated course experiences cooperatively during weekly meetings in order to provide rich and authentic experiences for the teachers. Faculty worked to use integrated vocabulary, assignments, and projects to build deeper understandings of content and stronger English skills. They also worked as a team to design and deliver the special workshops included in the program.

Additional interactions outside of courses involved many different professionals. By design, the program provided the participants with opportunities to interact with individuals such as professors, English and content teachers in area schools, UMBC students, and other professionals they met at conferences. Program participants shared their ETLP experiences in American classrooms with the teachers they visited and with each other in order to reflect on the experiences as they were happening. As Gonzalez and Darling-Hammond (1997) suggest,

To serve teachers' needs, professional development programs must provide a range of opportunities that allow teachers and others to share with each other what they know and what they want to learn, and to connect their learning needs to the context of their own teaching environment (p. 59).

At the beginning of the program, teacher-leaders participated in a regional colloquium where they were organized in geographic regional groups. The colloquium brought the teachers together to discuss the educational challenges that they perceived existed within their geographic region, to think about what they needed to know while they were here, and to develop strategies for disseminating ideas they learned when they returned to Egypt. Even though teacher-leaders

came from the same region, most of them did not know each other before coming to UMBC. The colloquium further helped the teacher-leaders get to know one another.

Feedback from the colloquium guided design of program activities that were more personal, local, and relevant for the Egyptian teachers. One of the activities that the teacher-leaders found most meaningful was visiting teachers and students in K-16 settings. These day-long visits, once each week, provided opportunities for teachers to connect to discuss questions and ideas related to implementing promising practices in their classrooms. K-12 teachers learned about the educational practices in Egypt and ETLP participants learned about the practices of the K-12 teachers. Special seminars and discussion groups were organized during the semester to allow for this kind of interaction and discussion about the school visits. Current research on teacher professional development suggests that teachers “need a better understanding of the many ways there are to teach and to learn” (Gonzalez & Darling-Hammond, 1997, p. 32). The school visits provided the ETLP participants with opportunities to gain this understanding.

Realizing how important it was to understand and connect in context with the socio-political realities in Egypt, the program added follow-up conferences with former ETLP cohorts via digital and tele-conferences. Participants shared what they had learned from the ETLP with teachers from other regions in Egypt who had been ETLP participants in previous years. This maintained authentic professional connections alive and provided teachers with the opportunity to share their expertise. Research shows that these practices empower teachers to find more significant meaning and purposes in the ideas they are learning and prepare them to develop “the ability to identify and understand relevant contextual factors in their own teaching situations” (Richards, 1998, p. 13).

In addition to organizing these video conferences, the ETLP directors traveled to Egypt to visit Egyptian classrooms and work in the professional development centers. Lessons learned through these interactions improved curricula for the ETLP program and increased interest and understanding of Egyptian teaching practices. The experience also helped shape ideas shared in an article about teaching English in Egypt, which was co-authored by two ETLP faculty members and two former ETLP participants (Abdul Monem et al., 2001).

Analyzing the socio-cultural aspects of Egyptian teaching first hand resulted in more visits to U.S. schools, additional meetings with U.S. classroom teachers, and inclusion of a wider variety of guest speakers. Learning about the Egyptian teaching context was important because it reinforced the notion that the teaching and learning of English in the United States differs greatly from the ways teaching and learning English are conceived in non-English speaking countries (Govardhan et al., 1999; Liu, 1999). While in an EFL setting such as Egypt, English is studied as

any other class in schools and students all share the same cultural context and literacy skills, in the United States, English is studied to be able to succeed in other courses and life experiences (Abdul Monem et al., 2001; Liu, 1999).

The program recognizes that the Egyptian teachers came to the ETLP with a wealth of experiences and strong teaching backgrounds. The ELTP took on the responsibility of building on those experiences. Current research on language teacher education and teacher knowledge indicates that teachers develop conceptions of teaching and learning as learners themselves and that these conceptions are founded in the social context in which the teachers interact (Govardhan et al., 1999; Freeman & Richards, 1993; Richards, 1998). These ideas are reinforced by the work of Freeman and Johnson (1998), who assert that:

What teachers know about teaching is largely socially constructed out of the experiences and classrooms from which teachers have come...how teachers actually use their knowledge in classrooms is highly interpretive, socially negotiated, and continually restructured within the classrooms and schools where teachers work. (p. 400)

This notion is also supported by the work of Govardhan et al. (1999), Liu, (1999), Golombek (1998), and Richards (1998), who claim that teaching is personally and contextually interpreted by teachers. The emphasis of English teaching in the United States, for instance, is on the acquisition of language, while in Egypt the emphasis is on students passing a national test (Abdul Monem et al., 2001).

The ETLP encouraged teachers to examine their practices within the Egyptian community of English language practitioners. Freeman and Johnson (1998) argue that teachers' knowledge "is built out of and through experiences in social contexts, as learners in classrooms and schools, and later as participants in professional programs" (p. 401). The ETLP used these ideas from research to engineer the program. As Blunck and Bickel (2000) explain:

Learning is integrated and fluid with attention being focused on creating interfaces between courses. It is a cohesive program as opposed to merely a set of individual courses. Teaching and learning processes are developed collaboratively between program faculty and teacher-leader participants based on the needs of the participants. (p. 3)

Egyptian teachers were given opportunities to discuss the ways their Ministry of Education required to plan lessons, to deliver instruction, and to perform other activities related to the teaching of EFL. Because teaching practices in Egypt greatly differ from the teaching practices the ETLP participants observed in American schools (Abdul Monem et al., 2001), the program helped participants in their adjustment to their new role as newcomers to the community of teaching and

professional leadership and training in an American context. The Egyptian scholars came to UMBC for further training in language teaching methodology and in language teacher professional development. At the same time, they enhanced their English language skills and experienced first-hand academic life in the United States. The goal of the Egyptian Ministry of Education was that these teachers would bring back ideas to and build leadership in their educational system. Upon their return to Egypt, the ETLP participants were expected to promote change, improvement, and innovation in their school systems. Reflecting on their own practices gave the Egyptian teachers the opportunity to prepare for the new challenges presented to them by the Egyptian Ministry of Education.

Conclusion and Implications for Teacher Training Programs

Lave and Wenger's (1991) analysis of learning through participation and interaction provides teacher educators with an excellent basis for understanding the importance of actual collaborative and reflective experiences among teachers. The understanding of legitimate peripheral participation could "draw attention to key aspects of learning experience that may be overlooked" (p. 41). Furthermore, teacher educators will understand that "activities, tasks, functions, and understandings do not exist in isolation; they are part of broader systems of relations in which they have meaning" (Lave & Wenger, 1998, p. 53) as has been illustrated in the earlier discussion of the ETLP model. Lave and Wenger's theory of legitimate peripheral participation makes the case for teacher educators to provide program participants with authentic activities that engage teachers in situations very similar to those they will encounter in the real teaching world.

Professional development programs should provide participants with venues for reflection and discussion, as well as with opportunities for participants to practice and experiment with whatever artifact or mode of teaching that is being presented. The periphery, the core, and the legitimacy of participation in the learning process should all be elements encompassed by a teacher-training program. Promoting change and innovation in education is not an easy task because the ways teachers understand training are not necessarily the same as those perceived and conceived by teacher-training programs or teacher educators (Richards, 1998). Teachers bring their own ideas that they have learned through experience in their social context where they function (Govardhan et al., 1999; Freeman & Richards, 1993; Richards, 1998).

The experience of the ETLP can inform other teacher training programs about promising practices for helping EFL teachers implement changes and innovations in their own school settings. The experiences embedded in the ETLP respect the theoretical notion that teachers bring pre-

conceived ideas about teaching to teacher training programs. Professional development programs need to understand the social context in which teachers develop in order to better serve these teachers. The ETLP model may be used by other programs to provide teachers with opportunities for sharing their experiences and for interacting in authentic activities that allow them to become full members of a global community of practice.

The current international situation and the insights gained through the ETLP have spurred the creation of a new online delivery model. Research connected with the development of this model explores issues related to building communities of practice and providing authentic professional development opportunities to teachers in online contexts.

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