Research on Second Language Teacher Education

A Sociocultural Perspective on Professional Development

Edited by
Karen E. Johnson and
Paula R. Golombek



ESL & Applied Linguistics Professional Series

Research on Second Language Teacher Education

Embracing a sociocultural theoretical perspective on human cognition and employing an array of methodological tools for data collection and analysis, this volume documents the complexities of second language (L2) teachers' professional development in diverse L2 teacher education programs around the world, including Asia, South America, Europe, and North America, and traces that development both over time and within the broader cultural, historical, and institutional settings and circumstances of teachers' work.

This systematic examination of teacher professional development illuminates in multiple ways the discursive practices that shape teachers' knowing, thinking, and doing and provides a window into how alternative mediational means can create opportunities for teachers to move toward more theoretically and pedagogically sound instructional practices within the settings and circumstances of their work.

The chapters represent both native and nonnative English speaking pre-service and in-service L2 teachers at all levels from K-12 through higher education, and examine significant challenges that are present in L2 teacher education programs, namely top–down implementation of educational policies and mandated curricular reforms, the creation and impact of inquiry-based professional development programs, the fostering of concept development in L2 teacher education programs, the enactment of culturally responsive pedagogy, the mentoring of novice teachers through their initial teaching experiences, and the development of constructive teacher identities. The implications of the studies in this volume are relevant for language teachers, teacher educators, program administrators, researchers, and educational policy makers.

Karen E. Johnson is Kirby Professor in Language Learning and Applied Linguistics, The Pennsylvania State University.

Paula R. Golombek is Clinical Associate Professor, Linguistics, University of Florida.

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To Glenn, Elizabeth, and Lillian
To Michael, Alex, and Anya

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Preface

As teacher educators, we believe the central mission of second language teacher education (SLTE) is to support and enhance the professional development of language teachers. Teacher professional development, it is commonly argued, is key to improving the quality of student learning, the ultimate goal of any educational enterprise. While over three decades of educational research now conceptualize teacher learning as a long-term, developmental process that emerges out of participation in the social practices and contexts associated with teaching and learning, much remains hidden about what teacher professional development actually looks like as it is the process of formation, how to best support teacher professional development, or the relationship between teacher professional development on the one hand and the cultural, institutional, and historical situations in which that development occurs on the other. We posit that a Vygotskian sociocultural theoretical perspective[1] offers tremendous explanatory power to both capture this elusive process and articulate sound ways to support and enhance teacher professional development within SLTE programs.

As teacher educators, we recognize teacher professional development as a complicated, prolonged, highly situated, and deeply personal process that has no start or end point. A novice teacher entering the classroom for the very first time is involved in professional development; a pre-service teacher taking academic coursework in a teacher education program is involved in professional development; an in-service teacher participating in a workshop is involved in professional development; an experienced teacher attempting to understand and overcome a persistent classroom dilemma is involved in professional development. For us, understanding, supporting, and enhancing teacher professional development for all teachers, at all points in their careers, constitutes the essence of our scholarly and professional work.

In this edited collection, we present fourteen empirical research studies that embrace a sociocultural theoretical perspective in order to systematically examine teacher professional development within the context of diverse SLTE programs. Of key importance in this research effort is the comprehensive examination of the quality and character of the mediational means designed to support teacher professional development and the subsequent tracing of that development both over time and within the broader cultural, historical and institutional settings in

which teachers live and work. Such research, we believe, has the potential to expose the discursive practices that shape teachers' knowing, thinking, and doing and provide us with a window into how the use of deliberate and strategic mediational means can help to create opportunities for teachers to move toward more theoretically and pedagogically sound instructional practices within the settings and circumstances of their work.

The research studies in this collection are situated in diverse geographic regions and represent the professional development of various categorizations of both native and non-native English speaking L2 teachers, including pre-service, in-service, ESL, EFL, K-12, and higher education. Additionally, they examine significant challenges that are present in SLTE programs; namely top–down implementation of educational policies and mandated curricular reforms, the creation and impact of inquiry-based professional development programs, fostering concept development in SLTE programs, the enactment of culturally responsive pedagogy, the mentoring of novice teachers through their initial teaching experiences, and the development of constructive teacher identities. The contributing authors employ an array of methodological tools for data collection and analysis and offer implications that are relevant to a range of stakeholders; including, language teachers, teacher educators, program administrators, researchers, and educational policy makers.

Note

1. See Cole, 1996; John-Steiner, 1997; Johnson, 2009; Kozulin, 1998; Lantolf, 2000; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Rogoff, 2003; Vygotsky, 1934/1963, 1978; Wertsch, 1991.

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We would like to acknowledge the contributing authors in this edited collection for their passion for looking at the world of teacher professional development through a sociocultural theoretical lens, their openness to our many queries and suggestions as they crafted their chapters, and their willingness to share their empirical research with us and the L2 teacher education professional community. As co-editors, we believe their contributions to this edited collection make a compelling argument for the power of a sociocultural theoretical perspective for understanding, supporting and enhancing L2 teacher professional development. We would also like to thank the acquisitions editor Naomi Silverman and series editor Eli Hinkel for recognizing this edited collection's potential contribution to the ESL & Applied Linguistics Professional Series.

Chapter 1

A Sociocultural Theoretical Perspective on Teacher Professional Development

Karen E. Johnson and Paula R. Golombek
The Pennsylvania State University
University of Florida

In this introductory chapter we argue that a sociocultural theoretical perspective, as a psychological *theory of mind*, has the potential to explicate the origins, mechanisms, nature, and consequences of teacher professional development at all phases of teachers' careers and in all contexts where they live, learn, and work. In explaining the epistemological underpinnings of this perspective, most Vygotskian scholars start at its core: human cognition originates in and emerges out of participation in social activities. In stating "any higher mental function was external and social before it was internal" Vygotsky (1960/1997, p. 67) argued for the inherent interconnectedness of the cognitive and social, a more radical stance where behavior and consciousness are a single integral system. Readers of Vygotsky sometimes fail to recognize the significance of this stance. Without denying biological maturation that unfolds with time, Vygotsky (1978) clearly distinguished biological from sociocultural forms of development, suggesting instead that all higher-level cognition is inherently social. Put bluntly, it "is not that social activity influences cognition" as is argued by many social learning theorists "but that social activity is the process through which human cognition is formed" (Lantolf & Johnson, 2007, p. 878). This is significant because when human cognition is understood as inherently social, the critical question becomes how do external forms of social interaction become internalized psychological tools for thinking. Vygotsky (1978) proposed that this transformation, from external (*interpsychological*) to internal (*intrapsychological*), is not direct but mediated. Human cognition is mediated by virtue of being situated in a cultural environment and it is from this cultural environment that we acquire the representational systems, most notably language, that ultimately become the medium, mediator, and tools of thought. Consequently, cognitive development is understood as an interactive process, mediated by culture, context, language, and social interaction.

If we consider this stance within second language teacher education (SLTE), we know that teachers typically ground their understandings of teaching and learning as well as their notions about how to teach in their own instructional histories as learners (Lortie, 1975). They thus enter the profession with largely unarticulated, yet deeply ingrained, notions about what language is, how it is learned, and how it should be taught (Freeman, 2002). Such notions, or *everyday concepts*, are formed during extended periods of concrete practical experiences as students and learners

of language in which we are situated in the cultural environment of schooling and/or language learning experiences in the everyday world. But these everyday concepts are limiting in that they are based solely on observations and/or generalizations gleaned from a surface-level understanding of what language learning and teaching is all about. This kind of *empirical learning*, resulting in everyday concepts, often leads to misconceptions about language learning and language teaching. Experiential knowledge is insufficient, even detrimental, in the development of teachers' expertise, and this then is why SLTE programs can and must play a key role in supporting and enhancing teachers' professional development.

When teachers enter SLTE programs, they are exposed to the *scientific concepts* that represent the up-to-date research and theorizing generated in various academic and professional disciplines. Such scientific concepts are based on systematic observations and theoretical investigations, and function as explanatory of, albeit abstract from, concrete everyday experiences. Vygotsky's distinction between *everyday concepts* and *scientific concepts* has direct implications for SLTE in that to establish themselves as professionals, teachers must move beyond their everyday experiences toward more theoretically and pedagogically sound instructional practices. Formal schooling, from a sociocultural theoretical perspective, is an exemplary context in which concept development emerges out of instruction that links everyday experiences with scientific concepts and thus enables learners to move beyond the limitations of their everyday experiences so that they can function appropriately in a wide range of alternative circumstances and contexts. This kind of *theoretical learning* is what we should promote in SLTE, but it should not be confused with decontextualized lecturing about and rote memorization of abstract concepts. The responsibility of SLTE then is to present relevant scientific concepts to teachers but to do so in ways that bring these concepts to bear on concrete practical activity, connecting them to their everyday knowledge and the goal-directed activities of teaching.

Within SLTE, achieving this goal remains a major challenge due to the persistent theory/practice divide where the scientific concepts to which teachers are exposed in their SLTE programs are often disconnected in any substantive way from the practical goal-directed activities of actual teaching. The institutional separation of *subject matter knowledge* (what to teach) from *pedagogical knowledge* (how to teach) epitomizes a longstanding quandary in SLTE in which what teachers learn about language, second language acquisition, and language use and users in academic coursework remains separate from the pedagogical concepts, procedures, and activities that constitute the activity of actual teaching. This results in teachers, especially novice teachers, knowing the subject matter knowledge but not having the essential procedural knowledge to confront the realities of the classroom. For example, a teacher may know the form and rules for using the present perfect tense in English but lack the ability to explain it in ways that students can make sense of and use intentionally. Or when met by a student's query as to why Americans frequently leave out the *have* auxiliary in spoken language, the teacher may give an uninformative response ("It's just what we do.") or an incorrect one ("We sometimes speak ungrammatically."). It is hardly surprising that teacher candidates

are often left with *empty verbalism*, where they can name the scientific concepts that are relevant to SLTE but have not internalized these concepts in such a way that they become psychological tools for thinking. Vygotsky recognized this fact, that "scientific concepts . . . just start their development, rather than finish it, at a moment when the child learns the term or word-meaning denoting a new concept" (1934/1963, p. 159).

Within general educational research, distinctions have been made between the accepted subject matter knowledge of a particular field, the general pedagogical knowledge of classroom processes, and the *pedagogical content knowledge* that teachers use to make the content of their instruction relevant and accessible to students (Ball, 2000; Shulman, 1987). However, from a sociocultural theoretical perspective this separation of types of *knowledge for teaching* is not only counter-productive, it is contrary to the fundamental principles of Vygotsky's theory of cognitive development. From a sociocultural perspective, human cognition is understood as originating in and fundamentally shaped by engagement in social activities and, therefore, it follows that *what is taught*, is fundamentally shaped by *how it is taught*, and vice versa. Likewise, *what is learned*, is fundamentally shaped by *how it is learned*, and vice versa. Cognition cannot be removed from activity since it originates in and is framed by the very nature of that activity. From this stance, *knowledge for teaching* must be understood holistically, and the interdependence between *what is taught* and *how it is taught* becomes crucial to both the processes of learning-to-teach as well as the development of teaching expertise.

If SLTE programs adopt the central premise that individual cognition emerges through socioculturally mediated activity, this should cause teacher educators to take stock of how we are expecting teachers to develop teaching expertise. We should be asking ourselves: What is the nature of the activities embedded in our teacher education programs? What are we collectively attempting to accomplish in these activities? What sort of assistance are we providing for teachers as they engage in these activities? And how does participation in these activities support and enhance the development of teaching expertise? Asking such questions requires that we look critically at the social practices and situated contexts from which teachers have come, within which teachers are teaching, and through which teachers are engaged in professional development as these practices and contexts will shed light on the social interactions that Vygotsky viewed as central to the development of new forms of thinking. Within SLTE, these new forms of thinking will ultimately lay the foundation for the development of teaching expertise.

Mediation

Recognizing the inherent complexities in cognitive development, it is clear that *internalization*, or the transformation from external to internal does not happen independently or automatically. Instead, it takes prolonged and sustained participation in social activities that have a clear purpose (*goal-directed activities*) within specific social contexts. Yet, formal instruction does not lead directly to conceptual development in a straightforward manner; rather, conceptual

development emerges over time and depends on the agency of the learner and the affordances and constraints of the learning environment. And this is why *mediation* is paramount.

Mediation is a central albeit complicated construct within Vygotskian sociocultural theory that underlies the transformative process of internalization (from external-social to internal-psychological). Humans do not act directly with their environments, but use, Vygotsky argued, various *tools* to mediate their activities. Adults teach these tools to children through their joint activities, and these tools serve simultaneously to regulate the child's behavior and to make available various means of self-regulation to the child. These tools, or *mediational means*, represent cultural artifacts and activities, concepts, and our social relations with others.

Cultural artifacts and activities have been described as "simultaneously material and conceptual (or ideal) aspects of human goal-directed activity that are not only incorporated into the activity, but are constitutive of it" (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, p. 62). For example, Poehner (Chapter 12) describes the experiences of a second grade teacher who participated in an inquiry-based professional development approach known as Critical Friends Groups (CFG). Within CFGs different protocols (*cultural artifact*), or sets of procedures, questions, and time-frames, are used to guide the activity of the participating teachers as they collectively engage in critical examinations of pedagogical dilemmas that they have identified as present in their work. While CFG protocols function as material tools that are used to direct teachers' thinking through social interaction in a systematic fashion, they also function as conceptual tools in that the kinds of questions used to direct teachers' thinking are initially in the CFG protocol facilitator's mind. In this sense, CFG protocols were not only used in the activities of the CFG, they made up that activity. And while CFG protocols can also be viewed as symbolic (i.e., reflective teaching represents good teaching) given their social, historical and cultural value of supporting teacher professional development, they can also become psychological tools, as was the case for Poehner's focal teacher who adapted the reflective and evaluative qualities of a particular CFG protocol for her own elementary students as a way to engage them in peer reviews during writing workshops. Similarly, Verity (Chapter 10) uses a variety of *cultural artifacts* in her MA Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) pedagogical grammar course to challenge Japanese English language teachers' normative characterizations of grammar as an abstract formal system. Tools, such as crossword puzzles, cartoons, journals, and tree diagramming, are transformed from products containing correct answers to processes that mediate teachers' understanding of grammatical concepts. So, while the physicality of these tools matters, since they are material objects that exist in her course, it is their sociality, or how they are used to organize the activities of pedagogical grammar instruction, that matters more.

Concepts, both everyday and scientific, as discussed above, also mediate the transformative process of internalization. In SLTE, *scientific concepts* are presented to teachers in order to restructure and transform their *everyday concepts* so that they are no longer constrained by their *apprenticeship of observation* (Lortie, 1975),

but instead are able to use scientific concepts as psychological tools (*thinking in concepts*) to further problem solve across instructional contexts and activities. However, it is only through explicit and systematic instruction that the mastery of scientific concepts will lead to a deeper understanding of and control over the object of study. Formal instruction, for Vygotsky, "is the systematically organized experience of ascending from the abstract to the concrete" (Lantolf & Poehner, 2008, p. 12). In Allen (Chapter 6) and Nauman (Chapter 7) the *scientific concept* of "literacy" as defined by Kern (2000) was explicitly taught and collectively explored through various professional development activities in an attempt to enable teachers to reconceptualize literacy as more than a set of mental processes that go on inside the head of the reader or writer, but as means of human communication involving interconnected linguistic, cognitive, and sociocultural dimensions. Throughout their respective professional development programs both Allen and Nauman trace the uneven path of cognitive development as their teachers' everyday notions about literacy were exposed, challenged, and restructured as they begin to internalize Kern's conceptualization of literacy as dynamic, variable within and across discourse communities and contexts, and involving "the use of socially-, historically-, and culturally-situated practices of creating and interpreting meaning through texts" (p. 16). In both studies, teachers' conceptual development was not the straightforward appropriation of Kern's conceptualization of literacy from the outside in, but a dialogic process of transformation of self and activity (Valsiner & van der Veer, 2000). In fact, critical to the uneven and rather idiosyncratic nature of their conceptual development was their own learning and teaching histories, the institutional and cultural contexts in which they were situated, and the nature of their engagement in the professional development experiences provided by their respective professional development programs.

Social relations, or human mediation, are also central to understanding how the network of our external social interactions mediates the transformative process of internalization. The *social* here is the centuries old historical and sociocultural legacy into which we are born. From birth, a child is involved in dialogic interactions in which caregivers use language to regulate the child. For Vygotsky, the child's social speech, originally intended to regulate others, transforms eventually into inner speech through which s/he regulates her/his own mental functioning (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). However, human mediation is not limited to the realm of child cognitive development. Within SLTE, such forms of human mediation represent key ways to move teachers from and between everyday and scientific concepts so that the emergence of "*true*" *concepts* becomes the psychological tools that enable teachers to instantiate not only locally appropriate but also theoretically and pedagogically sound instructional practices for the students they teach. Of course, the specific forms of human mediation used will differ depending on the goal-directed activities teachers and teacher educators are engaged in as well as the institutional settings in which that mediation is embedded. For Smolcic (Chapter 2) involvement in a 7-month TESL certificate program that included a short-term field teaching experience and cultural/language immersion in Ecuador enabled her teachers to move towards greater interculturality, or

intercultural competence. Critical to this shift was the coupling of direct personal interaction in a carefully structured cultural and linguistic immersion program with guided discussion, reflection, and guidance from inter-culturally experienced mentors and peers. For Reis (Chapter 3) participation in dialogic blogs and an on-line asynchronous discussion forum created a virtual space in which he and his teachers collectively challenged the prevailing NS–NNS dichotomy and the "native speaker myth" within SLTE. The strategic mediation that occurred within these virtual spaces enabled his non-native English speaking teachers to challenge disempowering discourses, to create a sense of individual and group agency, and to take on more empowering identities with which to (re)position themselves as legitimate English teaching professionals. From a sociocultural theoretical perspective, attention to the quality and the character of the mediation that teachers receive is absolutely critical to understanding, supporting, and enhancing the development of teaching expertise in SLTE programs.

The Zone of Proximal Development

If mediation is "[t] he central fact about our psychology" as Vygotsky noted (1982, p. 116, cited in Wertsch, 1985, p. 15), questions arise as to what mediation should look like. In spite of Vygotsky's limited exploration of the *zone of proximal development* (ZPD), Chaiklin (2003) notes only eight references in total, the ZPD has become the most adapted, investigated, and celebrated of Vygotskian concepts in the general educational literature. The wealth of research using ZPD concepts all begin with Vygotsky's (1978) definition: "It is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86).

Lantolf (2000b) describes the ZPD as "a metaphor for observing and understanding how mediational means are appropriated and internalized" (p. 17). In one sense, the ZPD is the metaphoric space where individual cognition originates in the social collective mind and emerges in and through engagement in social activity. In another sense, it is an arena of potentiality, a space where we can see what an individual might be able to do with assistance; one's potential versus what one has already internalized and thus can do on one's own. In other words, knowing what a novice teacher can do on her own tells us little about her potential to learn something new. However, when we see/hear how this same teacher interacts with someone who is more capable while accomplishing a task that is beyond her abilities, this creates a window through which we can see her potential for learning and her capabilities as they are emerging. Since the bulk of what we do in SLTE is attempt to help teachers do things they are not yet able to do on their own, mediation directed at this metaphoric space of potentiality is essential.

The challenge for teacher educators is to recognize the outer limits of this metaphoric space and be strategic in the sort of assistance given. According to Wertsch (1985) *strategic mediation* represents cognitive assistance that moves from implicit to explicit, is responsive to immediate need, and is concerned more with

cognitive transformation than behavioral performance. Assistance must be graduated—too much (i.e., do this, do that) decreases learner agency, while too little increases frustration (i.e., I can't do this) and it must meet the learner's needs at a particular point in time. Johnson and Arshavskaya (Chapter 11) illustrate various types of cognitive assistance given to a team of novice teachers enrolled in a TESL methods course as they collectively planned, practiced, taught, and reflected on a single lesson that they taught in an ESL composition course. The strategic mediation provided by the teacher educator and fellow classmates throughout this extended team-teaching project was found to shift from indirect, with a focus on how the ESL students might experience the team's instruction, to direct, where the teacher educator attempts to reorient the team's conceptualization of both what they were expected to teach and how they were expected to teach it from an expert's point of view. By design, this sort of extended team-teaching project created opportunities for authentic participation in the activities associated with teaching and learning and created multiple and varied spaces for strategic mediation in these novice teachers' learning-to-teach experiences.

Critical to Vygotskian sociocultural theory is the notion that learners *do* need to engage in some sort of cognitive struggle; according to Chaiklin (2003), "Vygotsky never assumed that learning related to the zone of proximal development is always enjoyable" (p. 43). On the contrary, because the ZPD itself is comprised of unstable maturing cognitive functions, strategic mediation within learners' ZPD will not necessarily give rise to a smooth, even, or the inevitable process of conceptual development. In Childs (Chapter 5) a novice teacher wrestling with what it means to be an L2 teacher experienced emotional and cognitive dissonance, underwent both progression and regression, and at times suffered from both personal and professional instability throughout his year-long engagement in an in-service professional development program. His emerging (re)conceptualization of L2 teaching was mediated by his own language learning history and the activity systems that individually and collectively comprised his first-year teaching experience. Similarly, Yoshida (Chapter 9) describes the initial negative reaction that Japanese teachers of English in a graduate level curriculum design course experienced as they were asked to write about their beliefs and experiences as learners and teachers of English while simultaneously being introduced to the scientific concepts connected with curriculum design. The activity of self-reflective interaction with these everyday and scientific concepts, and with the teacher educator was a dramatic shift from the norms typical of instructional interactions in this particular cultural and educational setting. However, the teachers' externalization of their beliefs and metaphors about teaching and curriculum through the course management tool of Moodle revealed several contradictions that were ripe for mediation by the teacher educator. By asking probing questions, proposing alternative metaphors, and expecting further elaboration, the teacher educator was able to provide strategic mediation that enabled his teachers to work through their discomfort and eventually begin to develop greater metacognitive awareness of their own learning. The findings from these studies reinforce that both the quality and character of the mediation and the socially situated contexts within which that mediation occurs matter.

In several of the studies in this collection, we see teacher educators attempting to recognize the outer limits of teachers' ZPD. This process begins, typically, by encouraging teachers to verbalize their current understandings of whatever concept, skill, or disposition is the focus of study. The mediational means through which such *verbalization* (Gal'perin, 1989) emerges may be reflective writings, collaborative activities with colleagues, reading and responding to theoretical readings, or sustained dialogic interactions with "expert others" (teacher educators, colleagues, etc.). Dunn (Chapter 4) traces how teachers' emerging understandings of the scientific concepts associated with the notion of social inclusion (Kubota, 2004) are mediated as a result of reading and responding to various theoretical articles on this topic. Interestingly, these teachers' verbalizations (written and oral) represent a hybrid discourse in which they fuse their paraphrasing of concepts associated with social inclusion with their experiential understandings and burgeoning teacherly rationale for the role that social inclusion can and should play in L2 teaching. Such intentional and goal-directed paraphrasings, or what Vygotsky (1987) called *imitation*, exemplify how teachers' verbalizations can help to push the boundaries of their current state of cognitive development.

Once teachers' current state of cognitive development becomes explicit, it becomes open to dialogic mediation that can promote reorganization, refinement, and reconceptualization. Golombek (Chapter 8) makes use of digital video protocols, in which a teacher and teacher educator discuss the teacher's video-recorded instruction, to prompt a kind of dialogic cooperation, with the teacher educator continually assessing the teacher's understanding in order to determine an appropriate mediational response. This sort of dynamic assessment (Poehner, 2008) within a teacher's ZPD creates multiple opportunities for the teacher educator to assess the teacher's current capabilities in ways that she was not yet capable of determining and to reorient her conceptual thinking by suggesting expert instructional responses and making the reasoning behind these responses transparent. Essential to strategic mediation within the ZPD is the notion of *intersubjectivity* (Wertsch, 1985) (i.e., attunement to one's attunement), in which the learner's understanding of the situation from the expert's point of view is necessary for their interactions on the external or social (*interpsychological*) plane to move to the internal or individual (*intrapsychological*) plane. Golombek provides evidence that the teacher educator's use of different mediational strategies was contingent on the teacher-learner's need, thus enabling them to attain intersubjectivity. These studies suggest that the quality and character of the strategic mediation provided depends, in large part, on being able to assess teachers' ZPD and directing that mediation at teachers' potentiality.

Activity Theory as an Analytical Framework

As noted in the preface, a major contribution that a sociocultural theoretical perspective makes for SLTE is to explicate the relationship between teacher professional development, on the one hand, and the cultural, institutional, and historical situations in which that development occurs on the other. Activity theory,

an extension of Vygotskian sociocultural theory first put forth by Leont'ev (1978, 1981) and more recently taken up by others (Engeström, 1987, 1999a; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Thorne, 2004), is an analytical framework (rather than a theory per se) that maps the social influences and relationships involved in networks of human activity. An activity theoretical perspective attempts to construct a holistic view of human activities as well as human agency within these activities. As a way to depict how different individuals' activities are interwoven and thus how and where individual thinking emerges in social contexts, Engeström (1987) suggests the model of a collective human activity system shown below in Figure 1.1.

Several of the studies included in this collection take up an activity theoretical framework to examine teacher professional development within the broader social, political, historical, cultural and institutional contexts within which teachers live and work. In any activity system, the *subject* is the individual or group whose agency is selected as the point of view in the analysis. In Kim (Chapter 14) and Ahn (Chapter 15), for example, both researchers use an activity theoretical framework to understand how Korean EFL teachers (novice in-service, novice pre-service) understand, function, and engage in English language teaching under the nationally mandated CLT-oriented curricular reforms. The *object* is the "problem space" at which these activities are directed and that object is continuously molded and transformed into an *outcome* that is shaped by a host of *mediating artifacts* (both physical and symbolic). For example, while the *object* of these teachers' instruction was for students to develop greater overall L2 communicative proficiency, within the Korean English language educational system students must pass a high-stakes grammar and reading comprehension test (*mediating artifact*). As Kim and Ahn report, the *outcome* within this activity system was found to morph into students

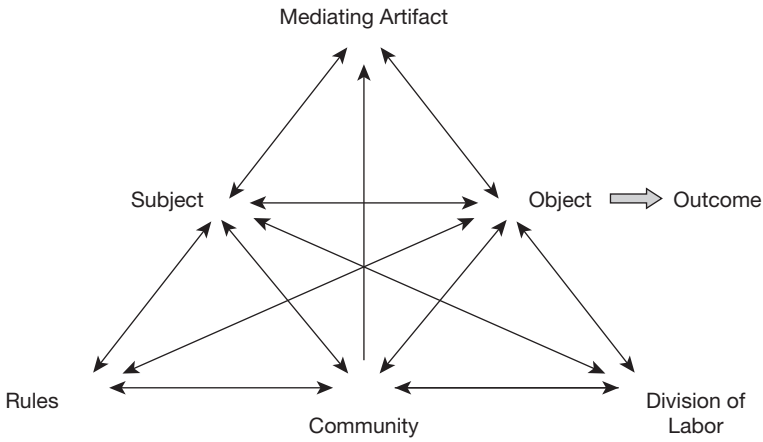


Figure 1.1 Human Activity System.

Source: Adapted from Engeström, Y. (1987). *Learning by expanding: An activity-theoretical approach to developmental research*. Helsinki: Orienta-Konsultit.

attending to grammar and vocabulary rather than advancing their overall L2 communicative proficiency. The teachers in both studies recognized this contradiction, and even made some attempts through their instructional activities to redirect the outcome, but given the power of high-stakes tests and student agency, the students continued to attend to aspects of their teachers' instruction that they perceived would enable them to achieve their goal of passing the high-stakes test.

The *community*, within this activity system, consisted of teachers, students, and in Ahn's study, mentor teachers, who shared the same general *object* and who position themselves as distinct from other communities. In any community there exists a *division of labor* determining who does what, how activities get done, and who holds power or status. Likewise, how things get done is shaped by *rules*: both explicit and implicit norms and conventions that place certain limits as well as possibilities on the nature of interaction within the activity system. More often than not, the *rules* have been ritualized through a long sociocultural history. According to Cole and Engeström (1995), an activity system contains the results of all previous activity systems that have influenced it. Thus, the concept of sociocultural history is an important explanatory tool for understanding any activity system. In fact, every dimension of the activity system—whether it be the subject's personal history, the community's values, beliefs, and norms, or the physical and symbolic artifacts that mediate the subject's activities—has emerged from and become stabilized through its sociocultural history. For example, the norms of schooling, sometimes referred to as the *hidden curriculum* (Denscombe, 1982), represent the sociocultural norms and values emphasized by schools that dictated what both the Korean English teachers and their students accepted as usual or normal in English language classrooms. And for both Kim and Ahn, these rules did not include the use of English as the medium of instruction or instructional activities that require students to engage in communicatively-oriented activities.

The power of activity theory as an analytical framework is that it allows us to capture how each component in the activity system influences the other either directly or indirectly, while simultaneously capturing the situated activity system as a whole. And when we do this, invariably we uncover inner contradictions or the "clash between *individual actions and the total activity system*" (Engeström, 1987, p. 31). As Kim and Ahn find, the high-stakes grammar and reading comprehension test derailed their novice teachers' efforts to enable students to develop greater overall communicative proficiency. As Engeström (1999a) argues, human activity is both unstable and unpredictable, and the first stage in resolving any contradictions that the activity system may be facing involves uncovering such contradictions.

Within SLTE, *contradictions* are endemic in teachers' professional worlds and, therefore, are also ever present as teachers engage in professional development programs. Engeström (1987) posits four levels of contradictions: primary, secondary, tertiary, and quaternary. First, a primary inner contradiction is a conflict which occurs *within* each component of an activity system. Engeström argues that this primary contradiction constantly exists in each component of the activity system. Secondary contradictions can be found *between* the components of a human activity system. Engeström (1987, 1993, 1999a) notes that secondary

contradictions are key for depicting an activity system and the force of change. Secondary contradictions generally occur when "a strong novel factor" (Engeström, 1993, p. 72) is infused into any component of an activity system. As an activity system tries to resolve the secondary contradictions it confronts, the activity system evolves into a new form. For example, Tasker (Chapter 13) traces in-service teachers' participation in Lesson Study (Lewis & Tsuchida, 1999) an inquiry-based approach to professional development that encourages teacher investigation into student learning, as they work to resolve a contradiction that existed between the English language learning their students were prepared to do outside of class and the lack of student responsibility for their own language learning. Critical to these teachers' engagement in Lesson Study was the articulation of this contradiction and the subsequent creation and implementation of various instructional activities designed specifically to support students' attempts to take more responsibility for their own language learning. Participation in Lesson Study enabled these teachers to not only identify this contradiction within their existing activity system but also to create an intervention to resolve it, which began to alter the activity system itself.

In addition to primary and secondary contradictions, Engeström (1987) posits that tertiary contradictions arise when another activity system which is "culturally more advanced", such as the government, prescribes a new objective—"a novel factor"—for another activity system. Engeström (1987) concludes that a new object can "still be subordinated to and resisted by the old general form of the activity" as a result of the contradiction. Finally, quaternary contradictions occur between a central activity system and its neighbor activities. For Kim (Chapter 14) and Ahn (Chapter 15) the Korean Ministry of Education's mandated CLT-oriented curriculum and Teach English through English (TETE) policy functioned as tertiary and quaternary contradictions in the activity systems in which their English language teachers were both teaching and learning-to-teach. Exposing such tertiary and quaternary contradictions helped to explain why the importation of Western methods (i.e., CLT-oriented curriculum) failed to permeate the daily instructional practices of English language teachers in Korea.

Conclusion

We reiterate that taken as a theoretical stance, a sociocultural perspective allows us to not only *see* teacher professional development but also to articulate the various ways in which teacher educators can intervene in, support, and enhance teacher professional development. By looking at the professional development activities we expect teachers to engage in, identifying the quality and character of the mediational means that are made available in those activities, articulating what we are collectively trying to accomplish in these activities, examining the pedagogical resources L2 learners are using, attempting to use, or need to be aware of in order to successfully or even partially participate in these activities, and tracing individual cognitive development over time, we can see the "twisting path" (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 156) of cognitive development. In other words, we can see how complicated that path is, where and when strategic mediation is necessary, how individualistic and

idiosyncratic cognitive development is, and the extent to which (or not) "true" concepts begin to take form, become internalized, and begin to function as psychological tools (*thinking in concepts*) that enable teachers to instantiate locally appropriate and theoretically and pedagogically sound instructional practices for the students they teach.

In this introductory chapter we have attempted to explicate the central concepts of a sociocultural theoretical perspective and its implications for SLTE using concrete examples gleaned from the fourteen empirical research studies presented in this edited collection. However, we have chosen to organize the entire collection around five research areas that we believe are central to the overall mission of SLTE programs. These include Part I: Promoting Cultural Diversity and Legitimating Teacher Identities; Part II: Concept Development in L2 Teacher Education; Part III: Strategic Mediation in L2 Teacher Education; Part IV: Teacher Learning in Inquiry-Based Professional Development; and Part V: Navigating Educational Policies and Curricular Mandates. This edited collection, we believe, illuminates the extraordinary explanatory powers that a sociocultural theoretical perspective offers SLTE as we trace, understand, intervene, support, and enhance L2 teacher professional development.

Part I

Promoting Cultural Diversity and Legitimating Teacher Identities

Chapter 2

Becoming a Culturally Responsive Teacher

Personal Transformation and Shifting Identities During an Immersion Experience Abroad

Elizabeth Smolcic
The Pennsylvania State University

Introduction

The cultural gap in the United States between school children and their teachers is wide and growing. Students in public schools are more culturally and linguistically diverse, and demographics forecast such diversity to continue for the foreseeable future (Assaf & Dooley, 2006; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Sleeter, 2001; U.S. Department of Education, 2006). Meanwhile, as a demographic group, public school teachers are typically White, monolingual, of middle-class background, and from suburban or rural home contexts (Taylor & Sobel, 2001, p. 488). The demographics point to a growing disparity in life experience and values between schools and students. Many teachers bring a monolingual and dominant culture perspective to the task of teaching and cite their lack of experience with diversity as one area for which they feel unprepared as they move into classrooms (Sleeter, 2001). How, then, does a teacher move from a life history defined by the majority culture and dominant language to understand and interact with a classroom reality of cultural hybridity, multilingualism, and diverse home life experience? One proposal is that teachers should engage in reflective and personally transformative activity to embrace "otherness" and recognize the diversity inherent to all cultural frames including their own (Merryfield, 2000; Scahill, 1993; Suarez, 2002).

As classrooms become more diverse, the need for teachers to interact successfully with difference becomes more urgent. A "culturally responsive" teaching practice includes a teacher's developing awareness of her own cultural identity, of her students' cultures as well as the cultures of the schools, of cultural variation in ways of learning, and of instructional practices rooted in non-dominant cultural ways of being (Gay, 2000; Huber, Kline, Bakken, & Clark, 1997; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Thus, teacher education programs, and specifically, programs that prepare teachers to instruct English language learners, need to be concerned with helping teachers to examine their own cultural assumptions and inquire into the backgrounds of their students. Teachers should develop an understanding of different cultural systems, know how to interpret cultural symbols, and establish links between cultures in their teaching (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005).

This chapter focuses on the learning experience of one teacher-learner (referred to by the pseudonym Nora) as she completes a 7-month long Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) certificate program that included a field teaching and cultural/language immersion experience in Ecuador. The analysis describes Nora's first steps in a journey towards interculturality, uncovering her developing understanding of culture and her own identities. My claim is that acknowledgement of personal histories, values and cultural identities may lead to shifts in identity, and aid in the process of a teacher becoming culturally responsive to other cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Moreover, while a journey towards intercultural competence is a life-long learning process (Alred & Byram, 2002; Kinginger, 2008; Merryfield, 2000), given particular conditions, this process can *begin* to take place in a very brief amount of time in a carefully structured cultural and linguistic immersion experience.

Taking Steps Towards "Political Clarity"

Some teacher educators, particularly those with a commitment to social justice education, emphasize that teacher education should require a critical analysis of one's own culture and a consciousness of how human differences are used by people in power to rationalize inequities and maintain their position of dominance in society (Cochran-Smith, 2004a, 2004b; Merryfield, 2000; Sleeter, 1996, 2001, 2005). Thus, there is a link between awareness of one's own cultural identity and the development of a critical consciousness that allows one to move away from a "deficit" perspective about the education of minority students (Cochran-Smith, 2004b; Giroux, 1988, 1992; May, 1999; Nieto, 1999; Sleeter, 1996). "Political clarity" is a learning process described as "coming to understand better the possible linkages between macro-level political, economic and social variables, and subordinated groups' academic performance at the micro-level classroom" (Bartolomé & Balderrama, 2001, p. 57). This notion was useful to explain Nora's internal deliberations and dissonance as she interacted in the second language and cultural environment in Ecuador, uncovering her first steps towards "political clarity."

The TESL certificate program took up these challenges. First, teacher-learners completed various tasks to describe their own cultural identities as well as utilize ethnographic techniques to investigate local Ecuadorian cultures and make cross-cultural comparisons (Roberts et al., 2001). Secondly, sociopolitical aspects of English language teaching such as white privilege, racism, language attitudes and ideologies, were topics for discussion and investigation. Simultaneously, by using Ecuador as a living case study, it was possible to uncover many of the global geopolitical factors that are the backdrop to immigration to the United States. Weekly talks by local Ecuadorians on the country's economics, history, politics and cultural and social development complemented the actual lived experience with host families, who often had family members living abroad to work and send money back to Ecuador. This is an important issue since a significant proportion of the Ecuadorian GDP comes from repatriated wages earned abroad. Thus, the

TESL program set into motion a process of analyzing assumptions that are subsumed in our views towards immigration and immigrant students within the educational system.

Learning about Diversity: Community-based Field Experience for Teachers

In the research literature on teacher education for diversity and multicultural education, empirical data has demonstrated that classroom exposure to multicultural education and issues of diversity, and racism in teacher education are often without the intended effect (E. L. Brown, 2004; Gomez, 1996; Merryfield, 2000; Sleeter, 1996, 2001; Zeichner & Melnick, 1996). It appears that intellectual analysis alone is inadequate to bring about changes in beliefs and attitudes as well as the critical social perspectives that are crucial to change in educational contexts. In fact, several studies have found that stand-alone cultural diversity courses can reinforce stereotypical perceptions of self and others, and teacher-learners exit such courses unchanged or affirmed in their dominant culture worldview and less open to consider the world from a different perspective (E. L. Brown, 2004; Byrnes, Kiger, & Manning, 1997; Goodwin, 1994; Zeichner & Melnick, 1996).

On the other hand, studies that have explored the impact of community-based immersion experiences for teachers speak to the power of learning from direct experience with cultural "others" (Cooper, Beare, & Thorman, 1990; Mahan & Stachowski, 1990; Suarez, 2002; Zeichner & Melnick, 1996). Gomez (1996) found that the most promising practice for challenging teacher-learners' perspectives on diversity was their placement in situations in which they became the "other" and were simultaneously engaged in seminars or ongoing reflection to guide their self-inquiry about diversity. Additionally, compelling evidence comes from Merryfield's (2000) work in which White teacher educators cited living in another culture as *the* critical step towards their understanding of what being "different" from the majority of people in a society entails in daily life. Becoming an expatriate brought up contradictions concerning expectations of how people behave, their cultural values and worldview. In order to resolve these contradictions, the teacher educators had to deconstruct previously held assumptions or knowledge about how the world works and consider new perspectives and explanations. Implicit in Merryfield's findings, but not fully explained, is the notion that these "globally competent" teacher educators faced dissonance in their international experience and through confronting that dissonance were somehow transformed.

Cultural Historical Activity Theory: A Sociocultural Perspective on Agency and Identity

In this research, I relied on *cultural historical activity theory* (hereafter, activity theory) because it brings into focus the interplay of a complex range of contextual factors allowing a robust understanding of concrete human activity as it unfolds in an immersion learning situation. The premise of this research project is that

student learning during immersion is crucially dependent on an individual's past history, dispositions toward learning and the *mediational means* that are present in the learning situation. The work of May (2001) and Lave & Wenger (1991) demonstrates that while *identity* is delimited by social structures and human interactions within those structures, we still have some free choice in the matter of how we express and portray our "selves." In particular, many second language researchers view *identity* from a poststructuralist perspective; not as something fixed for life, but as changing, fragmented, and contested in its nature (Block, 2007).

A strength of the theoretical perspective of activity theory is its inherent dialectical sensitivity to human agency and the structural aspects of human interaction. It makes clear that *agency*, referring to the human capacity to act and make choices, is constrained to some degree by the social constructs inherent to any given time and place. In activity theoretical terms, *agency* is not seen as a characteristic or property of an individual, but it is a relationship that is constantly co-constructed and negotiated within the social system. (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001; Roth & Tobin, 2004). Likewise, *identity* is not simply a matter of individual agency, but exists as part of a dialectical system which links the individual and the social structure. In relation to human learning and development, the *subjects* in an activity not only produce tangible outcomes that are subsequently reintegrated into the activity system, but rather in the process of realizing the object/motive of the activity, they also produce and reproduce their own *identities* as subjects in the system. (Engeström, 1987).

In relation to "border-crossing" experiences, like the embedded immersion segment of the TESL program examined here, Block (2007) has asserted,

> when individuals move across geographical and psychological borders, immersing themselves in new sociocultural environments, they find that their sense of identity is destabilised and that they enter a period of struggle to reach balance . . . the ensuing and ongoing struggle is not, however, a question of adding the new to the old. Nor is it a half-and-half proposition whereby the individual becomes half of what he or she was and half of what he or she has been exposed to (p. 864).

Byram (1994, 1997) claims that learners need to "decentre" in order to achieve the complex psychological change involved in intercultural learning. To "decentre" requires that learners problematize their culture's representation of the world, taking an outsider's view of their own culture which they had before known only as an insider. Therefore, their cognitive schemata are modified to take into account new representations which either extend their understanding or challenge their established views of the world. According to Byram (1994, p. 70), "decentreing" implies a challenge to one's identity and change in affective dimensions of personality. This means that attitude shifts during intercultural learning are not simply adopting positive attitudes towards the target culture because even positive prejudices can hinder effective intercultural interaction. However, it is clear that not all learners who participate in an international or "other" cultural experience

are transformed by it. This conceptual notion of decentreing has accumulated many names in the literature investigating intercultural learning, for example, "third space" (Gutierrez & Rymes, 1995; Kramsch, 1993); "rich points" (Agar, 1994); and "constructive marginality" (Bennett, 1993). The data to follow describes the experience of Nora as she moves into and out of this "third space."

The ESL Teacher Preparation Program

The ESL certificate program (12 credits) was offered by a liberal arts college, Woods College, in the northeastern United States. A four-week immersion experience, sandwiched between courses on the college campus, is located in a small city, Otavalo, in the Andean highlands of Ecuador. The immersion situation provided a rich context to enact L2 learning, teach English, and interact with cultural "others."

Specifically, the experience abroad takes up three primary learning objectives for teacher-learners: 1) to build cultural sensitivity and develop interculturality; 2) to apply English language teaching strategies that are responsive to culturally and linguistically diverse students; and, 3) to reflect on and enrich individual teaching practices. The program design includes the following activities:

1. a mentored teaching practicum with Ecuadorian English language learners
2. classroom instruction on ESL teaching pedagogy and second language learning theory
3. daily life with a local host family
4. ethnographic investigation into local cultures
5. informal talks by community members on Ecuadorian history, economics, the indigenous political movement, music, and ecology/sustainability
6. second language (Spanish or Quichua) classroom learning
7. visits to local Ecuadorian schools
8. weekend excursions to distinct cultural and ecological regions of Ecuador for a broader perspective on the country and its peoples

During the immersion experience in Ecuador, two courses, each linked with a practicum, are offered in an intensive format of daily class sessions: 1) "Understanding L2 Learning and Cognition" and 2) "Developing an ESL Teaching Practice." The first course includes Spanish or Quichua instruction and the participants' analysis of their language learning experiences inside and outside of the classroom. In the second practical experience, participants teach English and are observed and given feedback by mentor ESL teachers in a summer program for Ecuadorian children at the local university.

Data Collection

In my analysis of Nora's experience in the TESL program, I noted specific incidents that seem to be contradictory or hint at discontinuity within the overall perspective

of the participant. The longitudinal nature of this study made it possible to view the development of themes over the course of a year's time. Data sources were: 1) semi-structured interviews with Nora, program staff and her host family; 2) journals and other written narratives; and, 3) researcher field notes of the teaching practicum and the research process. (The researcher acted as one of the teacher mentors and program coordinator). I interviewed Nora before the program began, once a week during the immersion experience, soon after returning to the United States, and five months after the program's conclusion when she had begun her student teaching experience for her undergraduate teacher certification program.

In our pre-departure interview, a few themes arose as threads that then became interwoven throughout the activity of the program and surfaced again in written narratives and interviews throughout the three phases of data analysis (pre-program, immersion-program and post-program). Some themes were resolved for Nora during the year, while others are long-term processes of growing awareness and change that may take place over a lifetime.

Data Analysis

The constant comparative method was used to conduct a grounded content analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) in order to gain access to Nora's conceptual world as she learns about ESL teaching in a cultural and linguistically different setting. This process, called axial coding (Flick, 2002), allowed the construction of a coding system with specific dimensions of the category emerging from passages of the data. Initial key word codes were primarily descriptive. As described by Miles and Huberman (1984), "they entail no interpretation, but simply the attribution of a class of phenomena to a segment of text" (p. 56). Another pass through the data revealed patterns and relationships between key words and clustering of these ideas into major themes. I made efforts to keep the labels of the major categories near to the language used by the participant, using *in vivo* codes (Flick, 2002), in order to keep the analysis as close to the data as possible.

An activity system framework was used to further categorize the codes, allowing the researcher to view the program as an interactive system and identify relationships between elements of the system. In activity theoretical terms, it is fruitful to move from the analysis of individual actions to the analysis of their broader activity context and back again (Engeström, 1999a). In this way, activity theory provided both theoretical concepts to understand human development as mediated activity, but also a tool to uncover and organize an analysis of interactions among different elements of the subject's activity systems.

Some researchers (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Lektorsky, 1999) are critical of activity theory's tendency to focus only on the structural aspects of human activity. Because of the way the activity theoretical framework cuts up reality from a third-person perspective, the analyst's attention is centered primarily on the structural aspects of experience. As pointed out by Roth & Tobin (2004), "human beings act not because of structural aspects in an abstract world (revealed by third-person analysis); rather, they act because of structures as they experience them in their lifeworlds." (p. 170).

In this study, the first phase of data analysis took a subject-centered perspective on agency to understand the experiences of the focal participant from their individual perspectives (Roth & Tobin, 2004). In other words, the data analysis brought Nora's personal motives, life history, individual capabilities and particular human interactions to the surface. A second data analysis investigated the TESL program as a collective experience and synthesized the fine-grained analysis of each case study to discern overall patterns. This perspective offered important insights into the activity system itself and offered ways to bring about potential program innovation.

Findings

The following data analysis presents the reader with a detailed exploration of Nora's changing views of immigrant learners and teaching to diversity, her self-perceptions and identity shifts during the course of the program. While we cannot use a single participant's personal experience to make generalizations about learning that takes place during immersion/study abroad generally, a detailed analysis of individual experience can offer important insights into the conditions that facilitate (or alternatively, impede) learning in the immersion context.

Negotiating Uncertain Spaces: Spanish Language Heritage and Identity

Keeping Spanish in her life is one of Nora's motives for participating in the TESL certificate program. In her words, "I feel it will fulfill one of my own dreams that I've had since I was younger, since I started learning Spanish, was to always have Spanish in my life . . . it was kind of the answer to what I wanted—to have this Spanish in my life still . . ." (interview, during immersion). Nora's father is Mexican-American and Spanish is his first language, however, he was restricted to English in school under threat of corporal punishment. Nora reports, "My father is fluent in Spanish **and I wish that he had taught us Spanish at an earlier age**, but he was determined to overcome his poverty-stricken childhood." (autobiography). "He sparked my interest when I was little. I obviously had that culture, I wanted to learn Spanish" (pre-interview). As a class assignment, Nora writes a "linguistic autobiography" in which she charts her history and experiences with language(s).

> "I've always wanted Spanish to be there. I think in our family it's a big thing . . . we talked about our linguistic autobiographies [in class] and I think that one thing, I don—, **it's not necessarily disturbing, but it's like, <u>kind of like a jolt</u> is that, my dad speaks Spanish, but, when it comes to me, my sister, my brother, we didn't learn as children, we learned in a formal setting in a classroom . . . it's kind of one of the things that I think I've gotten out of this.** I hadn't thought about, you know, continuing the Spanish and everything and **I hadn't really thought about how, you know, with my father Spanish almost ended if my sister and I hadn't taken Spanish in high school . . . it's just a big thing . . . and I don't want it to end here." (during immersion).**

The act of externalizing her family history in the writing of a linguistic autobiography and then talking about it with others in class are *mediational means* that trigger for Nora an awareness of the importance of this heritage in her life. However, the contradiction around Spanish for Nora's father (in school contexts where he was punished for L1 use) seems to continue to live in Nora's own experience with Spanish. She asserts, "**I felt confident in Spanish in high school, but after attending college I feel that I have partially lost the language somewhere**" (autobiography). She talks in superlative terms about her high school study abroad experience as "the most wonderful experience of her life" and asserts an intention to make Spanish a minor in college. Then paradoxically, she stops studying it after her second year in college. "I love Spanish to death, but I ended up dropping it because I didn't enjoy my Spanish classes here" (pre-interview). When she took the Spanish placement test upon entering college, she was placed in Spanish II and says she felt discouraged—"having taken Spanish since I was in 7th grade and then coming into college and only skipping one [level] was like, well, maybe I really didn't learn all that much in high school. But then again, I had been to Spain."

Nora entered college believing she had a good background in Spanish and then found it difficult to meet the expectations of a Spanish course which she initially viewed as below her capabilities. What worked to support her language learning in high school, a familiar community of learners and a supportive teacher, were not available to her in college. She points out, "I've thought about why I did not enjoy Spanish here [at college] . . . partially, it was because I was spoiled in high school having the same teacher . . . by my senior year, the students I was with in class were also the ones who'd been taking it since 7th grade." (pre-interview). Thus, there is the contradiction of "loving Spanish," but giving it up, or in Nora's words, "I kinda just dropped Spanish off," as if she opened the door of her car and let Spanish walk away (pre-interview).

Nora's contradiction around Spanish might be seen as a mirroring or continued embodiment of her father's contradiction. The Spanish language was his home language, but he was prevented from using it in school. While her father is bilingual, his wife is not and they move away from Texas to the Northeast where the language practice of his own family became monolingual. We cannot know if the father continues to identify with the Spanish language, but his daughter seems to both desire this identification, and at the same time, experience obstacles to enacting it in her own life.

Cultural Learning: Building Awareness of Cultural Identities

Kinginger (2008) reminds us that the quality of a study abroad experience is crucially dependent on both the way students position themselves *and how the students are positioned by others* in interaction. Naturally, the interpersonal relationships in a host family situation are not always positive, however, in a short-term program such as this one, it seems important that some type of "authentic" communicative and interpersonal space be constructed in which participants are interacting, using the L2, exploring C2 cultural practices and being emotionally cared for. The host family

gives Nora an insider perspective and allows her to begin to move within a "third space." She says, "The stay with the host family gave me first-hand insight to typical life, family structure, beliefs and values, and in turn their culture . . . It was another experience that made a very big impact on me."(reflection paper).

Nora considers the host family experience of other participants as well as comparing what she knows of her own cultural norms and that of the family she lives with. In-class discussion on the ethnographic investigations the teacher-learners are conducting helps Nora to recognize that her particular experience with the host family is not generalizable to all Ecuadorian families. She remarks,

> "**Firstly, I have realized that even though I stayed with a very nice family it was also very different for other people in our group. In other words, generalizations cannot be drawn from only one family, but discussion about each different experience for us helped to gain more information to observe** . . . I have read and observed that in Latin American family structure, it is the responsibility of some child (mostly the eldest) to take care of the mother after she is old and senile. This makes the families close . . . My host mother said that in their culture it is very important that you be near your family. This is very different from my family here in the U.S. because my immediate family is very separated from my extended family. **However, when looking at any one family it is very important to remember they do not represent the entire culture**." (reflection paper).

A comparative perspective on national cultures is critical to Nora's developing cultural understanding.

> "Learning about the culture and the history in terms of U.S. history and culture, really made an impact on me. Never before had I thought to compare our U.S. history to the history of another country . . . I gained a better understanding of why things are the way they are in Ecuador. **I also realized that by comparing the histories and cultures of both countries, I found that there are issues that I was never aware of before**." (reflection paper).

Overall, the analysis illustrates several types of cultural learning that Nora is able to explore through her interaction with the mediating artifacts that are present in the learning situation: 1) recognizing that national cultures are not homogenous, nor static; 2) acknowledging that historical circumstances of cultural groups can lead to enhanced understanding of cultural values and practices; and, 3) understanding one's own cultural background helps one to be able to analyze other cultural frameworks. We can see Nora engaging with mediational means of several forms: writing about her past language/cultural history, listening to other participants' stories about their host families, interacting with her host family and reflecting on the comparisons made by Ecuadorians of the colonial histories of North and South Americas. These *mediational means* support shifts in how Nora understands her own cultural identity. She comments,

> "**Through writing a paper about my linguistic past, I realized even more how much Spanish and culture is a part of my life** . . . before I went to Ecuador for this program, I felt that I was very culturally aware. After this experience, I feel that I was both right and wrong. I was right because I knew all about my family's experience and our own cultural differences, but I was wrong because I had assumed that they [Latin American cultures] were all the same. **After writing the linguistic autobiography, I was very aware of my own cultural background and this helped to facilitate even more intercultural learning for me.**" (post-immersion reflection).

Further, as we will see later, the mediational means that are implicated in the activity system begin to open up a "third space" for Nora in which she transforms her understanding of what it means to be a teacher and how she intends to position herself in relation to her future English language learners.

Opening to the World: Class-based Ideologies of Home and University Communities

We can watch Nora exploring her personal autonomy through the frequently heard voices of her family back in the United States, who are not present physically during the TESL program, but clearly affect her interactions. The analysis illustrates how an individual is mediated not only by symbolic and material tools, but also by social formations like the immediate community of practice and even distant and "imagined" communities. (Anderson, 1983; Thorne, 2005; Wenger, 1998).

In both interviews and journal entries, Nora draws frequent contrasts between her individual views and experiences, and her family context and life history—the provincialism of her hometown, lack of diversity in her secondary school, the conservative political views of her parents, her Texan cousins and her boyfriend. We might view these contrasts as objectifications of contradictory aspects of her life that she is working to resolve as she takes on new identity positions. In the following excerpt she contrasts her attitude of openness to the attitudes of her parents. She claims,

> ". . . by the time I was a senior [high school], **I feel that I was more open** to things by the time we—I was in Spain. And I feel like I had already started to try **to look at things more with open eyes** than just being like, I don't want to see it. Which is basically what my parents, when I was younger had taught us to do.
>
> *Interviewer: They taught you to do what? What do you mean by that?*
>
> "Just turn your shoulder and not look and not even try to help in some other way than giving them money and they run away. But the thing my dad told us when we were young was that, if you give them money, they're just gonna go to tell their friends and then they're all gonna ask for money. Which might, like I mean, I've seen it happen. I know it's true, but at the same time I was

> like, **'Oh my gosh, I can't believe that!'** You know, it was just like my parents thought it—it was like the most wrong thing to do. **So it was really a lot of [my] parents' influence too**." (pre-program interview).

In this excerpt, she is explaining how her parents had advised her to respond to people asking for money on the streets in Mexico. In her final utterance, Nora acknowledges the impact her parents had on her thinking. And, in the bolded quote, Nora is remembering what she thought in response to her parents' recommendations. Through that remembering, she asserts her desire to adopt a different response to the "other" than the attitudes modeled by her parents. At the same time that she is agreeing with her parents' view ("*I've seen it happen. I know it's true.*"), she also objectifies and names the impact of her parents' beliefs and positions herself in opposition to them. In the process, she is recognizing the influence of her parents' attitudes, but begins to assert a new subject position for herself which contradicts the views of her parents.

In another example, during a post-program interview, Nora takes a stance on the "English Only" movement that is clearly distinct from the views of her family and boyfriend. Referring to her boyfriend, Nora says, "he believes that we should have an official language and this is where we differ because **I still think we shouldn't** and I had the debate with my brother over Christmas about having an official language and . . . he wants one, but he doesn't understand how far people will go with it." (post-program interview). A structured debate in one of her classes on the sociopolitics of "English Only" helps Nora to externalize and then internalize her understanding of the topic. She remarks,

> ". . . because we had that debate in [SLA] class and you know I didn't know all that much about [the issue] beforehand. When we got there and had that debate I had to be on the opposite side of what I really felt, and it really is an eye-opening experience, because then you can be sitting there being the extremist, but what happens to people in between like my brother or my boyfriend? . . ." (post-immersion).

On the other hand, this process of becoming "open-minded" is a source of conflict as it represents some distancing from her family roots. Nora relates a conversation with her Texan cousin in which s/he voice disapproval of Nora going to college,

> "'Great, you're spending your parents' money.' And, but I mean in the end, we [she and her siblings] are going to get good jobs and they won't, but part of it was that, I mean, they were my cousins. So, it was just unconditional love because they're your cousins, you're supposed to love them. **And it's really upsetting**, just the fact that I want to help make the world a better place, but they're more 'gimme this, gimme that . . . I want, want, want . . . gimme, gimme, gimme.' So, I mean I've always been open-minded around them, just for the fact that they're my cousins . . . I'm going to accept you as you are, but my sister and brother don't. **So then it comes down to being torn between my own family**."

Lantolf & Thorne (2006) have pointed out that academic knowledge or "school literacy" can be differentially valued among social groups and this differential regard for education or schooling can give rise to political and ideological struggles for an individual within a community. We can see Nora being caught between the differing value orientations of her working-class background and the liberal discourses of the TESL program. This tension contributes to the dissonance of not being able to communicate easily in the L2/C2 and Nora is emotionally distraught during her first week in Otavalo. However, as the immersion experience continues, Nora's desires to reconnect with Spanish and reinforce her Mexican-American identity seem to be satisfied through her L2 learning activity and developing cultural awareness (both of herself and of Ecuadorian cultures).

Steps Towards "Political Clarity"

Besides interactions with the host family which is an intentional *mediational means* of the program, the analysis revealed other serendipitous encounters that seemed pivotal to Nora's learning during the immersion experience. During the first days in Ecuador, an encounter with children living on the streets of Quito sparks an internal deliberation on how she wants to respond to their pleas for money. The other participants in the group function as a "temporary other" with whom a dialogic interaction is established around this question. Nora contrasts her uncertainty about how to respond to street children to what she perceives is a clear stance on the part of her classmates. Having been exposed to poverty before in Mexico, she has thought about how she might react this time and seems discouraged that her reflecting on it beforehand hasn't prepared her to react in a different way (more compassionate, humane) when she encounters children living on the street in Quito. The analysis shows Nora moving into a "third space" in which she is reconsidering her existing ways for framing the situation and responding to it. In the excerpt below, the contradiction she feels is expressed through vacillation on various ways of responding and her going back to previous experience in a similar situation in Mexico.

> ". . . **we did talk a lot about it** [**poverty**] **when we were in Quito** a lot about the children who are so impoverished **and I still haven't even made up my mind on that** (laughs) [. . .] Yeah 'cause **that's what I felt like we had to do is like we had to know—we had to have a feeling about** *[no, no]* **it right away 'cause I think some of the people in the group really did have that** *[well, yeah]* and so then for me I kinda was like alright well you know I'm kind of sad . . . and so I was like alright well I'm going to prepare myself for this time, and you know, and have an answer for what I'm going to do when I run into it and then when it came down to being in the Plaza de San Francisco in Quito and had all those little kids run up like just some of the—you know the stories that **they say, you know they crowd around you and they take stuff out of your pockets and it all came into mind** so whenever they walked up to me I just brushed them off and then I was surprised at myself cause then **I—I felt bad because I didn't**

> **even like give them a chance** or, you know I didn't even like think about reaching into my pocket and giving them the change that I did have so then I was just surprised by myself on that note because I didn't—**I didn't really want to have that reaction.**" (during-immersion).

She refers to stories "they say" of being robbed by street kids, expressing a fear of the "other" which then becomes an element of her immediate response to the children she meets. However, Nora wants to respond differently in the future, "I was surprised by the response that I did have . . . **I did kind of think the next time I'll try harder to have a different response and so I think that's like the mentality that I took on after we had talked about it with everybody else** . . ." (during-immersion).

At program's end, we see that this incident remains with Nora. In a paper on the general topic of culture and language learning written several weeks after the immersion program is completed, her negotiation of a response to people asking for money on the street resurfaces.

> "The first issue that is very important to me is the issue of poverty. Before I went to Ecuador, I had visited Mexico with my family and my parents had scared me by telling me to not give any beggars anything because then they follow you around. I saw this occur first hand and did not know how to interpret my feelings. So when it came time to go to Ecuador I was unsure how I would react to the homeless and beggars. **It helped a lot when we had discussions about the poverty and I was able to understand much more the differences and similarities that there are between our cultures.** The first and major difference is that the poverty line is much lower in Ecuador than in the U.S. [. . .] The part that made me extremely nervous was that I could have gotten robbed by one of these **unfortunate people**. We had discussions about what to do and how to handle it, but I was still unsure of how to take all of this knowledge and develop intercultural competence. What I found was that you have to find your own ways to cope with the poverty yourself." (post-immersion, reflection paper).

Nora claims that classroom discussion and a comparative analysis of national cultures have helped her to negotiate difference, yet the people she encounters on the streets remain in a position as the "other," whom she refers to as "unfortunate people." In other parts of this paper, she points out structural societal differences between the U.S. and Ecuador that contribute to large portions of the Ecuadorian population living without resources to meet basic human needs, (i.e. lack of a minimum wage, gaps in government social services, an underfunded educational system).

We can view Nora's interaction with Ecuadorian people as the center or stimulus for a struggle to begin a process of developing *political clarity*. In this incident, both the actual life experience of the immersion situation and the class discussion are *mediational means* in her developmental process. It is doubtful that Nora would have engaged in this process of *political clarification* without the emergence of this

life experience that presents her with a real-life contradiction and which she feels the need to resolve. Nora's movement towards *political clarity* is very much in process as she struggles with poverty conceptually and practically in her daily life in Ecuador. Nora's visit to Ecuador is brief (4 weeks) and at this point, we can only see some of the sources of dissonance and her internal vacillations.

Several months later, the data from a post-program interview gives us a sense of how this process continues to play out as Nora returns to her home and the U.S. public school classroom as a student teacher. Nora begins to relate some of her experience in Ecuador with how she might position herself as a teacher of ELLs. She proposes the notion that an ESL teacher may need to support ELLs *and their families* in access to social services and that differential access to resources both in the U.S. and in the home countries of her students may be something to explore in her future classroom.

> "Some students may be coming from this type of background where they were oppressed and had nowhere to turn to, but now they have arrived in the U.S. to find relief from the oppressed lifestyle [. . .] It is also very important to realize that even if they moved here to find relief from poverty, they may also be experiencing worse conditions [. . .] I feel that in this situation, **teachers may need to find help for students and families, or at least to point them in the right direction for help.** I believe that for every teacher it is important to address this issue very openly and directly. **Students will not understand difference and how our social system works if we are unable to discuss it**." (post-immersion).

> "**The entire Ecuador trip was an experience in itself because it helped to give an idea of what it might feel like to be an immigrant in the U.S.** The importance of being aware of the cultural differences between the students is that it helps to ease the bumps of creating a classroom community. I feel that the course we took before we left helped me to realize how important it was to know my own feelings. **I have always had an awareness of my own background and I feel that this will be used in everything that I do as a teacher to help me to understand where the students are coming from. In the future, I can use the experiences and feelings that I felt while I was in Ecuador to help me to understand the position the students may be in**." (reflection paper).

The former excerpts show that through the experiences of the activity system Nora has developed empathy towards ELLs and the immigrant experience. Further, she positions herself as an advocate for both her learners and their families. While Nora does not come from an immigrant family, she seems to imagine herself as part of the immigrant community. This is not surprising given the desire she expressed to make Spanish a part of her life and keep it alive in her family tree.

Both of these excerpts, produced after the program's conclusion, underscore the power of narrative (the telling and writing of stories about the experience to the

researcher) to externalize and then internalize understandings that might otherwise go unnoticed. The mediational means encountered in the immersion experience (either intentional or serendipitous) brought up dissonance and contradiction and clearly play a role in Nora's shifting sense of her cultural identities and roles as a teacher of ELLs.

Conclusion

Wenger (1998) has defined identity as, "a way of talking about how learning changes who we are and creates personal histories of becoming in the context of our communities" (p. 5). The analysis of Nora's experience brings into focus her "personal history of becoming" and offers a view into the shifting subject positions that a learner inhabits as she moves through a cultural and linguistic immersion experience.

Specifically, the program activity offered ways for Nora to reflect upon and re-connect with her Spanish language abilities and her Mexican-American heritage. In this process, the dissonance of the cultural and linguistic immersion is a mediational means to facilitate Nora's identity shifts. The border-crossing experience creates a space where Nora is not able to rely on the cultural and linguistic cues of her home upbringing, and therefore, puts her into a place less-connected to the known and brings her self-identity more clearly into focus. Thus, while the immersion experience in Ecuador is a tangible, physical journey, for Nora it is also a psychological journey where the possibilities of new subject positioning are more easily stepped into.

The immersion context offers various mediational means that provide Nora with alternative ways of defining cultural resources and simultaneously offer opportunities to form social relationships with Ecuadorian people of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. And significantly, the activity system included various forms of guidance to move Nora along in this journey. Weekly meetings with interculturally experienced mentors, journal writing to reflect on daily culture, L2 learning and English teaching, and group discussion to share varied individual experiences of local interactions mediated Nora's understanding of her own cultural grounding, her knowledge of the cultures of Ecuador, and global sociopolitical realities of unequal access to economic resources. Thus, we can see these mediational means as strategies for developing new "subjectivities" for participants. In sum, the immersion experience opens up a new social, cultural and language environment that is not necessarily available within the confines of a traditional university classroom, and which leads to a type of personal transformational learning that is critical for teachers working with students of difference.

The data excerpts that describe Nora's journey through the immersion experience illustrate how human ontological development is socially mediated within the settings in which people interact. It also underscores the power of narrative to externalize and then internalize understandings that might otherwise go unnoticed. At the same time, the findings highlight the need for on-going intra-group

discussion as a way to access differing individual experiences, and guided reflection during *and after* the program to help teacher-learners make sense of their new self-awareness and learning about cultural "others" as this develops over time. It is not clear that Nora would have arrived at some points of awareness without the post-program interviews with the researcher that brought her attention back to the already complete lived experience and required her to re-visit it. The key to an individual's development within this type of immersion experience is the responsibility of the teacher educator to provide opportunities for reflection and dialogic interaction about culture and language learning.

At this juncture, we can consider how these personal changes might translate into benefit for the future students of these teachers. Within the limits of this research project, there is not a clear answer and further longitudinal research following teacher-learners back into their classrooms is needed. The data offer evidence to substantiate the findings of previous research which emphasizes the importance of direct, personal experience of being the "other," or alternatively, of witnessing the reality of asymmetrical power relations across social groupings for teachers to develop "political clarity." (Bartolomé & Balderrama, 2001; Gomez, 1996; Merryfield, 2000; Sparrow, 2001; Suarez, 2003; Zeichner, 1996). Further, the analysis underscores the importance of providing multiple ways for teacher-learners to objectify learning about their cultural identities, culture-general topics and additional cultures with which they interact. To implement a short-term sojourn abroad for teacher-learners, significant resources must be devoted to on-site staffing and careful planning of interaction because it is critical to bring about dialogue and individual reflection on the experience.

As a theoretical lens, activity theory forces our attention beyond the intended outcome of the activity system—ESL instructional practices as a learning goal—to a view of possible new social roles and identities that teacher participants can construct over time (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). As the immersion experience unfolded and then later as Nora looked back on the experience, her desire to re-connect with Spanish and reinforce her identity positioning as a Mexican-American was satisfied through her second language learning activity and developing cultural awareness (both of herself and of Ecuadorian cultures). In Nora's words, the journey to Ecuador was a way to "open up to the world" which involved negotiating uncertain terrain as she moves into and out of a "third space." For her future learners, it may be her first steps towards becoming a culturally responsive practitioner.

Chapter 3

"I'm Not Alone"

Empowering Non-Native English-Speaking Teachers to Challenge the Native Speaker Myth

Davi Schirmer Reis
Duquesne University

Although non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) comprise the vast majority of teachers of English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) worldwide (about 80 percent according to Canagarajah, 1999), many qualified NNESTs struggle to assert and negotiate an identity as legitimate English-as-a-second/foreign-language (ESL/EFL) instructors in the contexts where they teach (Canagarajah, 1999). This is due in large part to the pervasive "native speaker myth" (Phillipson, 1992) and an idealized notion of what constitutes a native speaker. Underlying these myths is the assumption that native speakers (NSs) are inherently better language teachers than non-native speakers (NNSs). Although this assumption has been challenged by applied linguists who have proposed alternatives to the NS/NNS dichotomy (V. Cook, 1999; Rampton, 1990), the NS myth and ideology continue to marginalize NNESTs and thus work to undermine their professionalism.

In fact, despite expanding research and pressure from the international association of TESOL's NNEST Special Interest Section (Braine, 1999, 2010; Kamhi-Stein, 2004; Llurda, 2005; Mahboob, 2010) "native speaker-ness" is still considered to be a criterion in job ads, whether hidden or overt. To combat this ideology, TESOL has issued position statements against the discrimination of non-native speakers of English in TESOL, stating that although "[a]ll English language educators should be proficient in English regardless of their native languages, [. . .] [t]eaching skills, teaching experience, and professional preparation should be given as much weight as language proficiency" (TESOL, 2006). In addition, TESOL argued that

> English language learners [. . .] have the right to be taught by qualified and trained teachers. Native speaker proficiency in the target language alone is not a sufficient qualification for such teaching positions; the field of teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) is a professional discipline that requires specialized training (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, 2003).

Despite these efforts to dispel the NS myth, such perceptions continue to harm not only the professional lives and sense of self-efficacy of many qualified NNESTs

(Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 1999; Golombek & Jordan, 2005; Pavlenko, 2003), but the TESOL profession as a whole, as unqualified teachers continue to be hired on the basis of their status as NSs. When looking for employment opportunities, NNESTs' chances of getting a job are likely to be influenced more by their accent (and race) than by their professional qualifications (Clark & Paran, 2007; Mahboob, Uhrig, Newman, & Hartford, 2004). Furthermore, the NS myth propels what has been referred to as the NNEST "anxiety" (*see* Llurda, 2005), that is, the nagging sense of professional inadequacy that prevents many qualified NNESTs from becoming adequately confident instructors.

Within this highly charged sociopolitical context, this chapter examines the influences of the NS myth and traces how a series of professional development experiences support a NNEST's attempts to explore and take on empowering identities as a legitimate TESOL professional. The study draws on previous research from the disciplinary subfields described below to craft a theoretical stance that is appropriate for examining the everyday world of NNESTs' professional identities. It also draws on a sociocultural theoretical perspective on identity realization in order to trace how participation in a series of professional development experiences supports a NNEST's attempts to explore identities with which to (re)position herself as a legitimate English teaching professional.

Critical Pedagogy

In education research, the word "critical" has been used in reference to "how dominant ideologies in society drive the construction of understandings and meanings in ways that privilege certain groups of people, while marginalizing others" (Hawkins & Norton, 2009, p. 31). Critical pedagogy, in turn, is charged with empowering[1] individuals, through education and critical reflection, to realize how they are situated and situate themselves in the broader context of power relations and, more importantly, with giving them the tools with which to attempt to escape and fight oppression (Freire, 1970; Hawkins & Norton, 2009). In this light, this study explores the processes through which NNESTs can achieve a sense of professional identity and legitimacy by being empowered to recognize, acknowledge, and contest ideological discourses that position them as second-rate professionals. It focuses on how teacher education can help NNESTs strive for professional legitimacy while reshaping their instruction in response to more empowering conceptualizations of self.

Narrative Knowing and Narrative Inquiry

We understand our lives by narrating them (to others and to ourselves) and by infusing our experiences with significance and meaning (Polkinghorne, 1991). From a narrative epistemology, we all live storied lives and build "storied selves" (Bruner, 1996b). Likewise, many have argued that teachers live storied lives (Elbaz, 1983; Olson, 1995). They understand their practice and continuously weave their identity through the act of telling narratives. Despite the material conditions and

constraints in which teachers operate, they still have a certain degree of agency to shape their storied selves through the narratives they tell and live by. As argued by Benwell and Stokoe, "the practice of narration involves the 'doing' of identity, and because we can tell different stories we can construct different versions of self" (2006, p. 138). Thus, because narratives are fundamentally intrinsic to the process of making sense of oneself and to the shaping of one's identity (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004; Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000), the exploration of the meanings arising from and being created by narratives (i.e., narrative inquiry), enables teachers to explore and articulate the often tacit connections between their identity and their instructional practices (Simon-Maeda, 2004). In this study, narrative inquiry is the very mediational tool through which a NNEST was able to re-story her experiences, weave and negotiate empowering professional identity options, and seek to establish greater professional legitimacy.

Teacher Identity

Few would disagree that teachers' instructional practices are shaped not only by the professional education they have experienced and accumulated, but also by their own experiences as students (Lortie, 1975) and by their identities and emotions (Duff & Uchida, 1997; Johnson, 1992a; Simon-Maeda, 2004; Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, & Johnson, 2005). For the present study, identity is defined as multiple, dynamic, relational, situated, embedded in relations of power, and yet negotiable (Block, 2007; Norton, 2006). This study focuses on the use of linguistic resources and action as key factors involved in identity negotiation, thus allowing for an emphasis on the discursive nature of identity construction, its embeddedness in social and power relations, its situatedness in practical activity, its negotiability, and its intentionality. In this post-structural view of identity, language and discourse play a key role as "[w]ho we are to each other, then, is accomplished, ascribed, disputed, resisted, managed and negotiated in discourse" (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, p. 4).

In order to trace how a NNEST attempts to articulate, claim, and assert an identity as a legitimate professional within the context where she teaches, the notion of positioning (Davies & Harré, 1990) is especially helpful. Because discourse is always embedded in relations of power, individuals at times choose to willingly take on certain subject positions and freely reject others but, conversely, are sometimes ascribed certain subject positions which they do not value, claim, or desire. For NNESTs, to say that identities are negotiated within power relations means that NNESTs' professional legitimacy is eroded to the extent that disempowering discourses (such as the NS myth) that position them as illegitimate professionals remain unchallenged. Thus, in many contexts, qualified NNESTs are positioned as less able professionals than native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) by the public discourse, the institutions where they work, their colleagues, their students, and even their social acquaintances. Despite the expanding body of research on NNESTs and on ways to empower them (Braine, 1999, 2010; Kamhi-Stein, 2004; Llurda, 2005; Mahboob, 2010), it is less clear how this goal can be

accomplished by means of professional development opportunities (notable exceptions are Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 1999; Golombek & Jordan, 2005; Oxford & Jain, 2010; and Pavlenko, 2003).

A Sociocultural Theoretical Perspective on Identity Realization

A sociocultural theoretical perspective on identity realization means that one's identity arises from and within one's social relationships and sociocultural context (van Huizen, van Oers, & Wubbels, 2005). That is, from the dialectical relationship between the individual and the social, in unique yet constrained ways (Valsiner, 1998; Wetherell & Maybin, 1996). It draws from recognizable social types, yet infuses them with one's own idiosyncrasies as it is internalized (Holland & Lachicotte, 2007). In addition, an individual constructs, displays, and manages his/her identities in the context of his/her social relations and activity in a process of constant becoming (Cross & Gearon, 2007; Holland & Lachicotte, 2007). As a member of communities of practice, an individual can potentially re-story him/herself into new subjectivities through both discourse and action (Holland & Lachicotte, 2007; Wertsch, Tulviste, & Hagstrom, 1993). Finally, one's emotions are at the heart of this process of re-storying oneself (DiPardo & Potter, 2003; Mahn & John-Steiner, 2002).

In this light, supporting the development of NNESTs' professional identity also entails a series of socially mediated processes. First and foremost, it involves promoting NNESTs' awareness of how they position themselves professionally and are positioned by others (e.g., students, institutions, the public discourse) in regards to their legitimacy and in relation to both the local and broader contexts where they work and live. It also entails the creation of mediational spaces (Golombek & Johnson, 2004) where, through critical reflection and collaborative inquiry, NNESTs can challenge disempowering discourses and conceive of legitimizing professional identities. Once internalized as higher-order psychological functions (Holland & Lachicotte, 2007), these renewed identities can potentially engender significant changes in NNESTs' sense of individual and group agency. Finally, NNESTs' identity development entails a commitment to change in both discourse practices and practical activity with the goal of empowering themselves and others (Stetsenko & Arievitch, 2004). Only then, as a community of practice, will NNESTs "escape from the tyranny of environmental stimuli" and intentionally author "new selves and new cultural worlds and try to realize them" (Holland & Lachicotte, 2007, p. 116).

Methodology

The research questions that motivated this study are as follows:

1. How does a focus on NNEST-related issues (implemented through online discussions and a dialogic blog) support a NNEST's attempts to explore,

conceive of, articulate, and internalize identities with which to (re)position herself as a legitimate English teaching professional?
2. To what extent does the exploring, conceiving of, articulating, and internalizing of legitimating subjectivities done by a NNEST influence the nature of her instructional practices?

The data were collected at a large northeastern university in the U.S. as part of a larger study involving six instructors (MA and Ph.D. students in TESL and Applied Linguistics, respectively), their students, the ESL program supervisor, and me, the researcher. The course taught by the participating teachers was the required ESL freshman-level composition course for international undergraduate students offered by the ESL Writing Program. The main goal of this study was to provide professional development opportunities for NNESTs in regards to their professional identity as ESL instructors. The current chapter is a case study based on one participating teacher, Karina[2].

Participant

Karina is a Russian female in her mid- to late twenties. I first met her early in the fall of 2008, when she was starting her first year as a Ph.D. student in Applied Linguistics. Prior to arriving in the U.S. at the age of 22 to pursue a master's degree (also in Applied Linguistics), Karina had lived in Russia and completed a bachelor's degree in philology there with a focus on teaching English and Russian. At the time of data collection, Karina reported having worked for seven years as an EFL/ESL teacher.

As a doctoral student in Applied Linguistics and as a teaching assistant for her department, Karina spoke and used English fluently and appropriately in both departmental meetings and social functions. In my best judgment, she would most likely be considered a "superior" user of English in all four skills, She obtained the Certificate of Proficiency in English (A score) and 280 points on the computer-based TOEFL test.

Data Collection Procedures and Tools

Several data collection instruments were utilized in this study: an online, asynchronous discussion board, moderated by me, through which the participating teachers discussed previously assigned readings on the NS/NNS dichotomy and the NS myth; a dialogic journal (i.e., private, ongoing asynchronous online exchanges via a blog between each instructor and myself) focused on the teacher's professional identity; semi-structured interviews focusing on the participant's background, professional identity, and attitudes about language learning and teaching, the NS/NNS dichotomy, and the NS myth; videotaped classroom sessions; stimulated recall sessions; copies of the students' writing assignments as well as the feedback from the instructor on these writing assignments; audio recordings of individual meetings between the instructor and a few of the students to go over writing assignments; and field notes taken at the participants' weekly meetings with the TA supervisor, other TAs, and me.

The online discssions board and the dialogic journals comprised the main mediational tools used in this study as professional development activities. They were intended to give participants a chance to articulate their opinions and beliefs in regards to teaching ESL and to deepen their awareness of their professional legitimacy as NNESTs in the backdrop of the NS/NNS dichotomy and the NS myth. My role in the study oscillated between that of peer and "expert other." I attempted to strategically mediate (Wertsch, 1985) Karina's thinking by reading and reacting to her journals and online discussion posts, asking probing questions during the interviews, requesting clarification during the stimulated recalls, and providing my own insights and expertise whenever appropriate. I attempted to push her to move beyond her current thinking and understanding of herself as an ESL teacher. The readings for the participating teachers focused on NNESTs' professional concerns and included: Braine, 2004; Canagarajah, 1999; Faymonville, 2000; Maum, 2002.

For the purposes of this study, the curriculum of the ESL freshman composition course was deliberately modified to include a unit addressing the NS/NNS dichotomy (e.g., the various and competing definitions of native speaker, the notion of multicompetence, etc.). As part of this unit, both the instructors and the students worked with the following texts meant to expose them both to the NS/NNS dichotomy and NS myth: Cook, G. (2003), Cook, V. (2005), Kirkpatrick (2007), Matsuda (2003).

Data Analysis

A grounded content analysis (Bogdan & Biklin, 1998; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was conducted on the data. The analysis involved deriving and categorizing major themes that emerged from the spoken data (interviews, classroom observations, and stimulated recalls) and written data (online discussions, dialogic journals, students' papers, teacher's written feedback, and fieldnotes). This analytic process involved multiple readings of the data to identify linguistic instantiations of reoccurring themes that addressed the study's central research questions. The themes that emerged reflect evidence of Karina's emerging understanding of: (a) the NS/NNS dichotomy; (b) the NS myth; (c) her self-concept/perceptions and identity(-ies); (d) her self-confidence as a teacher; (e) her English skills/expertise; and (f) her perceptions of (critical) pedagogy. Based on these analytical categories, the data were re-examined to identify evidence of self-reported shifts in Karina's identity (including self-concept) with regards to being a NNEST.

In a conscious effort to triangulate the analysis (Pavlenko, 2007), the data were examined to account for Karina's narrative understanding of her subjectivities (in relation to herself and to others) and how such understandings played a role in the development of her thinking and in her instructional practices. More specifically, Bucholtz & Hall's (2005) *indexicality principle* [3] was used in order to identify how Karina constructed and positioned herself, as well as how she (re)negotiated these identities and positionings. Regarding identity formation, "indexicality relies heavily on ideological structures, for associations between

language and identity are rooted in cultural beliefs and values—that is, ideologies—about the sorts of speakers who (can or should) produce particular sorts of language" (p. 594). In several of the excerpts that follow, these linguistic instantiations of how Karina perceived, positioned, and otherwise understood herself are underlined in the data.

Finally, Karina's instructional practices were examined to identify evidence of the types of instructional tasks assigned, how they were implemented, and why and how the students responded to and participated in those tasks.

Findings

Karina's response to the topics and interactions brought about by the professional development experiences reported here was filled with ups and downs, false starts, and growing pains. Her participation in these experiences destabilized her beliefs about the NS myth and helped her to uncover some of the hidden ideologies that continue to propel it. Below, I expose the twisting paths Karina has taken, showing how her prior beliefs have been challenged, her identity destabilized, and how she started to conceive of herself, of her students, and of the English teaching profession in more empowering ways.

Awareness of and Experiences with the NS Myth

Karina had been aware (and in fact, a victim) of the prejudice against NNESTs even before she became a participant in this study, although she would not necessarily have been able to clearly articulate it or its relationship to her teaching. During our first interview, she stated that NESTs in Russia were routinely paid higher salaries and enjoyed more prestige than NNESTs like herself. She also recalled the experience of being ridiculed by her colleagues in Russia, who asked her "how can you teach English in the country where English is their first language? if you're not a native speaker?" (Interview 1, 9/5/08). Then, after arriving in the U.S., her awareness of the NS myth was heightened when she applied for an ESL teaching position at a very recognizable English school in New York City and was not only turned down as a NNS, but told that "they [the school] do not hire non-native speakers for ESL" (Interview 1, 9/5/08).

Likely due to her firsthand experiences with the NS myth in both Russia and in the U.S., Karina initially showed some awareness of the ideology surrounding discussions of accent, stating that "there is this conception of correct English, proper English, and like, accented English, right? So, like proper English, non-accent has more prestige, right? It's kind of authentic" (Interview 1, 9/5/08). She also already knew that there are "physiological [. . .] limitations" and that her accent "is also part of my identity" and a kind of "self-expression" (Interview 1, 9/5/08). Clearly she had been exposed to the ideologically laden notions of "correctness" and "proper English." When I asked her about her knowledge of grammar and its metalanguage, she questioned whether "we can talk about correct English anymore" (Interview 1, 9/5/08).

Internalized Prejudice and Feelings of Professional Insecurity

Although Karina did point out what she believed to be both the pros and cons of being a NNEST, she tended to dwell on her perceived deficiencies, especially in the first half of the study. Karina had come to internalize the very prejudice and oppression that the study set out to challenge. She considered herself inferior to NSs of English in many ways and expressed the view that NESTs are, almost invariably, better at teaching the target language and culture in "authentic" (Interview 1, 9/5/08) ways. This is not surprising, given the strong discourse around the NS superiority and the NS myth. For example, in reference to her experience of being turned down for a job in New York City, she stated:

> they explained that [. . .] non-native speaker cannot really convey the culture and all this sociocultural like, aspect of, and like, I partly agree with them, right? there's something like truth about that but at the same time it makes me a little less confident [. . .] (Interview 1, 9/5/08)

Given how she positions herself as inferior to NSs, it is not surprising therefore, that she also reported feeling self-conscious, while teaching, of her perceived lack of appropriate English proficiency and knowledge of American culture. This understanding of herself as lacking professionally is linked to her wavering confidence level, feelings of professional insecurity, and low self-esteem. For example, Karina expressed the view that while teaching ESL she avoided positioning herself as a NNEST because "if they [her students] kn[e]w that I'm non-native speaker maybe it w[ould] somehow like, affect their, like, perception of me" (Interview 1, 9/5/08). Similarly, she once stated that "I'm doing them a disservice with my accented English, not so fluent oral English, etc." (Dialogic Journal, 11/2/08).

Throughout the study, Karina dwelled on her perceived lack of "cultural knowledge" (which she defined as linguistic and social behaviors) of American life. Indeed, the connection between language and culture posed a very difficult challenge for Karina (Interview 2, 12/17/08). Her beliefs that it was difficult for a young adult like herself to be socialized into a new culture; that language and culture are inseparable (Agar, 1994); that her ESL students wanted to learn U.S. culture, yet perceived her as lacking in this area and would prefer a NEST; along with her strong emotional ties to her Russian language and culture, created a contradiction that destabilized her thinking and her emotions. On the one hand, she felt she lacked the type of knowledge that her students expected of her. But on the other hand, she believed that learning this type of knowledge would entail becoming more "integrated" (Online Discussion, 12/12/08) into the American culture and thus less "Russian" (Interview 2, 12/17/08). For her, becoming the kind of ESL teacher who would be able to gain her students' trust and acceptance could potentially strip her of her identity as a Russian ESL teacher:

> I still think that my lack of acquantance (*sic*) with U.S. culture could be a drawback to me as an ESL instructor. At the same time, I don't want to get

> myself any more integrated into the U.S. culture (Online Discussion, 12/12/08)

DAVI: to what extent do you believe that learning these things [American culture] [. . .] mean[s] that you would be losing or letting go of your own Russian cultural background and identity?

KARINA: [. . .] I (always) feel like I lose something. [. . .] I don't want to let uh yeah to like become a new person like I (have my) background and my history (Interview 2, 12/17/08)

Although this contradiction remained unresolved at the end of the study, participation in the professional development experiences throughout the study provided Karina with emotional support and validation. As a gap between cognition and emotions is often the impetus for change, Karina's feelings needed to be taken into account, especially as an opportunity to foster transformation.

Tracing Shifts in Emotions, Cognition, and Activity

Through various mediational means (e.g., theoretical readings, conversations with the researcher, interactions with her peers, and the very activity of teaching about the NS/NNS dichotomy and the NS myth), Karina was able to start moving from external mediation to regulating her emotions, thinking, and actions. Initially, she began to move from an everyday, simplistic conceptualization of the NS to a much more complex picture informed by theoretical (scientific) concepts about the topic and brought about by the professional development experiences reported here. Through mediational tools and spaces, Karina was able not only to externalize her current understandings of everyday concepts (i.e., the NS myth), but also (through theoretical constructs) to reconceptualize and recontextualize her understanding of herself in order to think and act in more empowering ways. As argued by Johnson (2009), teachers' understanding "emerges out of a dialogic transformative process of reconsidering and reorganizing lived experiences through the theoretical constructs and discourses that are publicly recognized and valued within their professional discourse community" (p. 98). Although this process has no end point per se, Karina began to reorient her thinking regarding her positioning as a NNEST and how her teaching aligned (or not) with her cognition.

Verbalizing Personal and Professional Subjectivities

Participation in the professional development experiences described here made it possible for Karina to explore her personal and professional subjectivities, the usefulness of the terms NS and NNS for understanding one's identity, and ideological assumptions behind the NS/NNS dichotomy. In one of the online group discussions around Canagarajah (1999), she stated:

> In the end, I feel grateful for people who decided to take up the issue of NNS teachers in ESL. Before reading these things, I was often asking myself: What

> is my status in ELT [English Language Teaching Profession]? Do my students see me as some kind of an imposter? [. . .] However, I wonder if we can totally get rid of the terms NS and NNS. I think these terms are helpful in questions of identity. Sometimes saying that I am a NNS helps to somehow create some bondage with my students. I had similar experiences with them, I also am not from here, I know their struggles with the language, etc. (Online Discussions, 10/25/08)

While she positions herself as an imposter in the ELT community, in one of our stimulated recall sessions, Karina expressed how she found it "interesting" that "people can actually *talk about*" the NS myth:

> I felt that it was like really interesting that people can actually *talk about* this because I felt like it was like a taboo topic or something yeah so I never read about this kind of thing before (Stimulated Recall 2, 9/25/08, italics mine)

The very opportunity to verbalize (Gal'perin, 1992) her thinking regarding the NS myth made her assumptions known to her and to others and thus amenable to discursive mediational processes that can "promote reorganization, refinement, and reconceptualization" of new understandings (Johnson, 2009, p. 63). Thus, Karina's interactions with myself and with her peers helped her to articulate (and rearticulate) her thinking and make it explicit, thus encouraging a process of restructuring of this knowledge into deeper (i.e., scientific) concepts. As argued by Johnson (2009), "scientific concepts provide both a discourse through which to name experiences and a basis upon which teachers are able to ground their internal rationale for alternative ways of understanding themselves and the activities of teaching" (p. 39).

For example, through the dialogic journal, Karina and I were able to engage dialogically and to collaboratively reorient her thinking. In the excerpt below, for example, my strategic mediation (Wertsch, 1985) enabled Karina and me to wrestle with a key assumption behind the NS myth:

DAVI (8/31/08):

> How do you feel about being a non-native-speaking ESL teacher?

KARINA (8/31/08):

> Native/non-native speaker-teacher dilemma is a hard one for me [. . .]. I do think that my background as an EFL learner helps me a lot [. . .], but at the same time I do not always feel confident in my classes. It happens when I think I am not fluent enough or lack some vocabulary. I also sometimes hesitate to correct my students' errors—since I do not think I know all there is to know about English.[. . .]

DAVI (9/7/08):

> But don't NSs also lack some vocabulary? And isn't it impossible for anyone to ever know all there is to know about English? [. . .]

KARINA (9/7/08):

> I agree that native speakers may lack some vocabulary knowledge [. . .] [But] NNS teachers never cease to be L2 learners, right? Even if they have 20 years of experience of teaching this language [. . .] As for NS's, they are fluent and proficient speakers since quite an early age.

In a related journal exchange, our interactions led Karina to question whether she was "still under the NS myth spell":

DAVI (10/19/08):

> I think the NS myth is SO STRONG and PERVASIVE that it goes unnoticed many times. [. . .]

KARINA (10/20/08):

> do you mean i'm still under the NS myth spell?
> but it is very hard to question smth you've always thought to be like a fact of life or smth [something] like that. [. . .]

Although Karina continued to position herself as "an EFL learner," a label she considered simply impossible to overcome in her professional community, the opportunity to externalize her subjectivities enabled her to start to challenge the NS myth and her long held beliefs.

Exploring Empowering Subjectivities

Engagement in these professional development experiences also gave Karina an opportunity to explore empowering subjectivities. In the excerpt below, she explored the previously unlikely possibility of reconciling two key subjectivities: that of a "NNS" who is also an "effective" teacher:

> I think I I began to feel more comfortable <laughter> with being NNS, like I understand there_ there are other people like- as me, with the same background (those things) *and* being, I don't know, effective teachers. so I think I feel a little bit more confident and comfortable with that, yeah (Stimulated Recall 2, 11/19–20/08, italics mine)

In addition, being exposed to discussions relevant to the NS/NNS dichotomy and the ideologies surrounding the NS myth enabled Karina to position herself as belonging to a counter "imagined community" (Norton-Peirce, 1995):

> uh, we [two of her graduate classes] talked about this [. . .] very briefly, but still like, it- I think it kind of stick- stuck with me, uh because so many people are talking about this and like, saying the same thing, <laugh> (Interview 2, 12/17/08)

> I think that reading & discussions on NS/NNS issues has definitely helped me to open and liberate my mind from partly dogmatic/ideologic

> conceptualizations. Definitions of NS/NNS and bilinguals, as I knew them before, have certainly undergone some changes (Dialogic Journal, 9/30/08)

Through the online discussions, Karina was able to challenge disempowering discourses and conceive of legitimizing professional identities:

> "Traditional" assumptions about NS and NNS speakers work out fine in many cases, *e.g.* mine. [. . .] However, we have many "categories" of people for whom these criteria do not work out so well. These "in-between" cases [. . .] make the categories of nativeness vs. non-nativeness unclear and fuzzy (Online Discussions, 9/10/08).

It also became clear that, as a result of being exposed to discourses counter to the NS myth, Karina started to consider new ways of thinking about the topic and how to respond to it:

> I think I realized that I also had some, some assumption in my mind that, I never doubted. and it's really good to look at it from a different perspective and to doubt like some ideological maybe things that we accept as if they were the truth but actually they were just said by- invented by somebody before us and it's really kind of revolution, revolutionary move to kind of like overthrow maybe not to really overthrow but like try to like doubt or something (Stimulated Recall 1, 9/25/08)

In several of the online discussions, Karina's peers also helped to collaboratively mediate her thinking. One of Karina's peers argued that talking about the ideology behind the NS myth is pointless unless NNESTs are given concrete and viable ways to assert their legitimacy. Karina had to both articulate her opinions and defend her position:

KARINA: I cannot agree that he [Canagarajah, 1999] leaves out the question of WHY NNS teachers do not enjoy the same esteem by their students exactly because of the ideological assumption (NS is better than NNS) that we find so hard to doubt or challenge. Unless we talk about this (about the WHAT), I doubt that anything will change (even if the more practical issues of HOW are solved) (Online Discussions, 10/19/08)

These data suggest that Karina started to envision the possibility of adopting two previously conflicting labels (i.e., "NNS" and "effective teacher"), one indexing her perceived status as a NNS and another indexing teacher efficacy, as harmoniously co-existing subjectivities. In addition, she started to position herself with others who have been "talking about this" and "saying the same thing," acknowledging that "things that we accept as if they were the truth [. . .] were just [. . .] invented by somebody before us"; and that the labels NS/NNS can be "unclear and fuzzy" for many.

Asserting Legitimacy by Populating Scientific Concepts

Participating in these professional development experiences gave Karina the chance to start articulating a professional identity that reconciled being a NNEST with being a qualified ESL teacher. The theoretical readings on the NS myth and the NS/NNS dichotomy that Karina was exposed to, mainly through participation in the study, but also through her coursework as a graduate student, enabled her to name her experiences and reconstruct her identity. Much of this realization seemed to emerge as a result of reflecting on the scientific concepts embedded in the readings, and by appropriating and populating these concepts with her own interpretations (Bakhtin, 1982). Karina started to think in concepts, as evidenced by her emerging use of the discourse of theory to rethink, reorganize, and rename her experiences. In a way, these scientific concepts vested her with the authority to resist the NS myth. In the excerpt below, Karina starts with a paraphrase of Liang's (cited in Braine, 2004) conclusion "that NS and NNS backgrounds do not really matter," and yet infuses it with her own "addition" (i.e., understanding):

> Liang's [cited in Braine, 2004] conclusion is, I think, really powerful—that NS and NNS backgrounds do not really matter. What matters is professionalism and experience (*my addition*) (Online Discussions, 10/30/08, italics mine)

In addition, the online group discussions provided Karina with a social backdrop against which to claim, even if fleetingly, the possibility of being both Russian *and* a proficient speaker of English:

> I would identify myself as a quite proficient user of L2 and native speaker of Russian—the country and culture I love and feel part of. [. . .] (Online Discussions, 12/12/08)

Finally, Karina was able to articulate new understandings of her English speaking skills and of herself. In the excerpt below, she downplays the need to improve her pronunciation and emphasizes that she is more concerned with the content of what she says:

> when I was starting to learn English [. . .] I was doing my best to like, improve my pronunciation. [. . .] but like, now I just don't care, really, what [. . .] I sound like. I just (I'm) concerned more about *what* I'm saying not *how* I'm saying it (Interview 2, 12/17/08, italics mine)

These data suggest that Karina has begun to assert her legitimacy both personally and professionally. As a bilingual individual, she was beginning to position herself as "a quite proficient user of [her] L2." As a professional ESL teacher, she downplayed one's NNS status and instead started to focus on one's "professionalism" and "experience."

Re-positioning One's Legitimacy within a New Community of Practice

In terms of promoting NNESTs' awareness of how they position themselves professionally and are positioned by others in regards to their legitimacy, Karina's participation in the professional development experiences in this study enabled her to become aware of the NS/NNS dichotomy and the NS myth at a much deeper level: "to me all these readings were like a revelation. I was not exposed to the discussions of NS fallacy before." (Online Discussions, 10/19/08). "I had no idea other people were in the same boat as me." (Dialogic Journal, 11/01/08).

Not only did Karina become more aware of the issue in empowering ways, she began to position herself in relation to a community of scholars and practitioners who have struggled with the same "dilemmas" and who have proposed alternative ways of thinking about them. In the following online exchange, based on an excerpt from Kirkpatrick (2007), Karina clearly aligned herself with this expert view and readily offered an answer to Lee, another study participant:

> We cannot ignore prejudice as a fundamental cause for shaping our views about language. It is a major cause for distinguishing between a native variety of English and a nativised one, for thinking that one variety or accent of English is better than another and for thinking that pidgins and creoles are inferior in some way to other languages. In the context of World Englishes, it is important to realize the role that prejudice can play in making judgments about different varieties—and therefore about the personalities or intelligence of the speakers of those varieties—and to try and ensure that any judgments we make can be supported rationally.
>
> (Kirkpatrick, 2007, p. 15)

LEE: Just curious . . . Are there people who actually say a certain vareity (*sic*) is inferior to another? Who are they? (Online Discussions, 9/28/08)

KARINA: Yes, I do think there are people who think that there are "inferior" and "superior" dialects. [. . .] As Kirkpatrick [2007, p. 4–5] puts it, we all are linguistically prejudiced. And I don't think it has anything to do with languages. It has to do with racial and ethnic prejudices. Language is just smth [something] noticeable and more politically correct to talk about. Indian or any other "nativized" English are viewed as less "pure" because these languages developed in former colonized countries and now—developing countries, while British/Americam (*sic*)/Australian English are associated with power and wealth (Online Discussions, 9/29/08)

In this excerpt, Karina was able not only to address Lee's question by aligning herself with a notable applied linguist, but also to start peeling away the layers of prejudice against NNESTs (i.e., the connection between linguistic *and* racial discrimination) in ways that she was not able to do before.

In sum, once internalized as higher-order psychological functions such empowering subjectivities can potentially engender significant changes in NNESTs' sense of individual *and* group agency, as evidenced in the following excerpt:

> I became aware not only of new "content"—what is the whole issue all about, but also found a new pespective (*sic*) to look at things, in a different way that I'm used to. E.g., caring not for the accuracy and/or idiomaticity of students' language, but also considering their desire to express their identities in L2, get across their meaning, etc. I also realized that I'm not alone. That there is NNEST and other teachers going through similar experiences as me (Online Discussions, 12/12/08)

Idealized Conception with a Commitment to Action

The second research question, though pivotal to this study, proved more difficult to answer. Although there was little evidence (from the classroom observations) that Karina changed her instructional practices in response to her evolving thinking, beliefs, and subjectivities, it was clear that Karina's view of herself was strongly connected to her teaching practice. For example, she reported that she "sometimes hesitate[d] to correct [her] students' errors" given her belief that she does not "know all there is to know about English" (Dialogic Journals, 8/31/08). Whereas it is reasonable to conceive that most teachers would not be able to answer all questions from students at all times, what likely propels this belief (i.e., notions of language ownership and authority) is what makes it self-defeating for Karina as a NNEST.

Nonetheless, based on and throughout the online discussions with her peers, Karina began to question her instructional practices. Her responses to the following excerpt by Faymonville (2000) reveal her struggle and intent to reconcile her practice with her emerging thinking on what it means to teach ESL writing.

> We write so that a reader can understand. [But is] understanding limited to absolute and complete conveyance of meaning with the goal of complete elimination of "noise" and miscommunicaton? Why do we automatically categorize a non-native writer's manifestation of difference as an error rather than an experiment in making meaning? Why do we not give the non-native writer the benefit of the doubt that he or she might be trying to convey meanings that cannot be expressed through native, standard usage? What is it about an ESL mistake that marks it as an ESL mistake and as a failure to reach native speaker audience?
>
> (Faymonville, 2000, p. 135)

In the following exchange Karina focused on the need to reconcile writing according to expected conventions with writing to express one's voice:

KARINA: Dorothy [another study participant], I think what you say about NNS and NS—that both could be miscommunicating, successfully communicating, making "errors" and etc. is really insightful!! However, I wonder what then do I as an ESL instructor do?[. . .] Am I to correct any of the (stylistic?) "errors" or dismiss them as long as I get the meaning? [. . .] I think in oral speech, one can get away with almost anything—[. . .] But written academic writing—is

quite a different, fixed genre. Students would appreciate knowing "the norms" (from Davi's post) (Online Discussions, 11/18/08)

DAVI: [. . .] I think that's a very fair question! [. . .] How have you all been handling this so far? (Online Discussions, 11/19/08)

KARINA: I haven't yet figured out how exactly to react to the "stylistic"/accented (?) errors in my students' essays. Even though I do see that they have the right to learn the "norms," but are we teaching them so that they just get the correct forms?? Or do we teach them with the purpose that thay (*sic*) are able to express what they want to say? & develop their own personal voices?[. . .] (Online Discussions, 11/21/08)

Just as importantly, Karina also expressed a desire to match her new way of thinking with her actions (Roth & Lee, 2007) as an ESL teacher.

DAVI: how do you think that having participated in this study might change who you are as a teacher and what you do in the classroom, if at all? [. . .]

KARINA: [. . .] I feel like if I think differently, I should do things differently too, but I haven't so far figured out how, how to (be able to do that) (Interview 2, 12/17/08)

Despite not knowing yet how to align her thinking with her pedagogy, Karina decidedly showed her desire to do so. When asked what she was hoping students would get from engaging with the NS/NNS topic, she stated that she wanted her students to think differently, relate the topic to their lives, and simply "feel better" about themselves as L2 users:

DAVI: [. . .] what were you hoping for them to get from these articles?

KARINA: mhm. I think I wanted them to see how they can relate to this topic because [. . .] they consider themselves like non-native speakers or L2 users so I get maybe I wanted them to think differently about this to see how it relates to their lives (Stimulated Recall 1, 9/25/08)

[. . .]

KARINA: [. . .] maybe I was trying to make them more confident and hope it could. yeah not only think differently but also just feel like (even) better about themselves (Stimulated Recall 1, 9/25/08)

In another online discussion prompted by reading Maum (2002), in which some of the teachers questioned how much their students were actually benefitting from engaging with the NS/NNS topic, Karina expressed her opinion that "we can change things by DOING":

> Regrettably, I also agree that hardly did my students change their perceptions of NS and NNS ESL teachers, just based on what we read and discussed. I recently read an article in TESOL [*The TESOL Quarterly*] which looked at how ESL students' perceptions of their NNS ESL teachers changed over the

> semester. The researchers reported that there was a much more positive evaluation of the teacher by the end of the semester. So, I think we can change things by DOING (Online Discussions, 12/8/08)

Karina began to consider changing both her discourse practices (i.e., what she says about the NS/NNS dichotomy and the NS myth) and practical activity (i.e., her teaching and engagement with the profession) with the goal of empowering herself and others (Stetsenko & Arievitch, 2004).

> NNS teachers do not enjoy the same esteem by their students exactly because of the ideological assumption (NS is better than NNS) that we find so hard to doubt or challenge. Unless we talk about this [. . .], I doubt that anything will change (Online Discussions, 10/19/08)

> Yes, I definitely think that NNEST [the NNEST-IS within TESOL] and other organizations of this kind are a big must in TESOL. These issues should not be a tabboo (*sic*) topic but discussed and new ideas—implemented (Online Discussions, 10/30/08)

Though most of the data point to Karina's development as reaching only an idealized conception with a commitment to action (Golombek & Johnson, 2004), there is some evidence that she has begun to internalize a different way to think and act regarding L2 writing instruction, ESL students' writing, and its connections to students' subjectivities. In a reaction paper tackling what is involved in grading ESL students' essays, her student wrote the following as his very last sentence (underlining done by Karina): "Writing is a process that will improve over time and the writer will have a possibility to write like a native speaker." (Student Paper, 10/19/08). In response to this statement, and specifically in reference to the underlined predicate, Karina responded: "is this the goal? What about learners' identities?"

Conclusion

This chapter traced how Karina's thinking and actions were mediated through two main professional development opportunities: a dialogic journal between her and myself, and an online, asynchronous discussion forum involving myself as the researcher and other participant teachers. The online discussion board served as an asynchronous "space" for discussing NNEST-related issues and exploring one's self-concept as a teacher and beliefs and attitudes about the NS myth, as well as how these beliefs might affect one's instructional practices. The journal allowed me to see Karina's thinking and encourage her to further explore personal, linguistic, and professional issues, to articulate her beliefs and attitudes about language, language learning, language teaching, and to deconstruct the tenets of the NS myth. Both the dialogic journal and the online discussions exposed Karina to alternative, more empowering identity alternatives to counteract the perceived inferiority that so many NNESTs have adopted.

Through these mediational tools, as well as mediated processes and spaces, Karina was able to start moving from externally mediated thinking to internal mediation of her own thinking and emotions. In other words, she started to internalize mediational tools (scientific concepts) by materializing, appropriating, and reconstructing these concepts to regulate her own thinking and acting. She started to use theoretical constructs to name and understand herself and her experiences, thus beginning to reconstruct her subjectivities and considering alternative ways to transform her instructional practices.

The findings of this study suggest that professional development opportunities for NNESTs must create learning conditions in which NNESTs are encouraged to become aware of how they are positioned by others and how they attempt to position themselves in terms of their professional legitimacy in local and broader contexts. In addition, the findings of this study suggest that it is critical for teacher educators to create mediational spaces that allow NNESTs to collaboratively challenge disempowering discourses and conceive of legitimizing professional identities, create a sense of individual and group agency, and support NNESTs as they commit to changes in both discourse and action.

Given the estimation that most ESL teachers in the world are NNESTs and given that their students are NNSs also, L2 teacher education programs should include professional development experiences, such as the ones discussed here, which encourage their teacher candidates to see themselves through a different lens. The "NNEST lens," as it has been called, is "a lens of multilingualism, multinationalism, and multiculturalism" that "takes diversity as a starting point in TESOL and applied linguistics practice and research and questions the monolingual bias in the field" (Mahboob, 2010, p. 15). By understanding how NNESTs can be empowered to move from a "deficit discourse" (Bhatt, cited in Mahboob, 2010, p. 2) to seeing themselves as legitimate ESL/EFL professionals, L2 teacher education can support them in overcoming their insecurities and in building their professional identities. L2 teacher education programs that choose to address the NS ideologies with their students, however briefly, will be a step ahead in preparing confident, effective, and agentive professionals. With such professional development experiences, NNESTs can work to dispel a myth that has for far too long created serious employment inequity and harmed the work we do as a field and as educators.

Finally, the notion that identity is socially constructed and negotiated within power relations and structures also means that for the NS myth to be dispelled, NNESTs should not be the only ones involved in this process. As the NS ideology reaches far beyond the classroom walls, it is imperative that all teachers (NESTs, NNESTs, and all in between), as well as administrators and students, become involved in acknowledging, challenging, and deconstructing this pervasive fallacy. As argued by Mahboob (2010),

> far from being deficient, NNESTs enrich the field by adding multilingual, multinational, and multicultural perspectives to issues that have traditionally been seen through a monolingual lens (p. 15).

Notes

1. I echo Brutt-Griffler and Samimy (1999) and Lather's (cited in Brutt-Griffler and Samimy 1999: 419) view of empowerment as the "analyzing [of] ideas about the causes of powerlessness, recognizing systemic oppressive forces, and acting both individually and collectively to change the conditions of our lives."
2. Pseudonym chosen by the participant.
3. According to the indexicality principle, "identity relations emerge in interaction through several related indexical processes, including: (a) overt mention of identity categories and labels; (b) implicatures and presuppositions regarding one's own or others' identity position; (c) displayed evaluative and epistemic orientations to ongoing talk, as well as interactional footings and participant roles; and (d) the use of linguistic structures and systems that are ideologically associated with specific personas and groups" (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 594)

Chapter 4

Working Toward Social Inclusion Through Concept Development in Second Language Teacher Education

William Dunn
University of Alberta

Student teachers in second language education programs bring with them their histories as language learners, and these previous experiences shape their views of language and language teaching. As noted by Britzman (2007), "Growing up in education permeates our meanings of education and learning . . . It makes us suspicious of what we have not experienced and lends nostalgia to what has been missed" (p. 2). In many cases, prior experiences as language learners—particularly in formal settings—lead to the view that language is, above all, a set of grammatical rules, lexical items, and four skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing). Such a perspective is often perpetuated and reinforced by the conceptual framework around which many second language education textbooks and courses are organized. As a result of the social turn in applied linguistics (Block, 2003) and increasing interest in a sociocultural theoretical perspective in second language teacher education (e.g., Johnson, 2006, 2009), new theoretical concepts offer the potential to broaden notions of language and what it means to be a language teacher.

This chapter describes a study that was designed to investigate the introduction of new concepts into a teacher education program with the aim of preparing student teachers to work in culturally diverse classrooms. Two concepts—critical multiculturalism as described by Kubota (2004) and critical language awareness as described by Train (2003)—were emphasized to explore links between languages, communities, power, and resistance. Grouped under the meta-concept of social inclusion, these notions were grounded in research showing the importance of a sense of belonging and the effects of alienation experienced by language learners (e.g., Norton, 2000, 2001; Piller & Takahashi, 2006). The findings of the study are interpreted using the notion of concept development as theorized by Vygotsky (e.g., 1986) and more recent proponents of Sociocultural Theory (e.g., Davydov, 1990; Karpov, 2003).

Concept Development

Concept development as understood within the framework of sociocultural theory is ideally suited for understanding second language teacher education. One reason is that it provides a rationale for including a formal, theoretical learning component to teacher education programs, as opposed to learning only through practical

classroom experience. As noted by Grimmett (2009), such a rationale is necessary in the current political climate that often devalues the need for formal, theoretical learning by teachers. Moreover, sociocultural accounts of concept development provide a framework that unifies theoretical and practical knowledge in teacher education. Bridging theory and practice has been one of the most persistent problems in the field of teacher education (Britzman, 1991; Grimmett, 2009; Kennedy, 1999).

The Genesis of a Concept: Social Inclusion

Along with what Block (2003) described as the "social turn in second language acquisition" has come a greater awareness of, and increased interest in, the social position of second language learners. Manifestations of this shift in the field include greater attention to socio-political aspects of language learning (Burnaby & Cumming, 1992; Hall & Eggington, 2000) and the emergence of critical perspectives in the field of second language education (Kumaravadivelu, 2006a; Norton & Toohey, 2004). At the same time, the increasing diversity of student populations due to immigration, has led to the need for multicultural forms of education as a means of fostering equity and a sense of belonging for all students. Sociocultural Theory offers an ideal framework for responding to this situation, given that Vygotsky's theories were developed out of his own concern for making education inclusive within the context of cultural diversity and social change (Kozulin, 2003).

The concept of social inclusion can be a useful way of understanding the relationship between language learning and opportunities for belonging (Dunn, 2008; Olivier & Dunn, 2006). Social inclusion has been defined as "the capacity and willingness of our society to keep all groups within reach of what we expect as a society" (Freiler, 2001, p. 2). The term is often used to encompass its negative corollary social exclusion, defined by Galabuzi (2004) within the Canadian context as "the inability of certain subgroups to participate fully in Canadian life due to structural inequalities in access to social, economic, political, and cultural resources arising out of the often intersecting experiences of oppression as it relates to race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation, immigrant status, and the like" (p. 238). Though borrowed from other fields such as social work and public policy, the concept of social inclusion holds value for second language education and is reflected in a line of research showing the links between language learning and a sense of belonging (Norton, 2000, 2001; Piller & Takahashi, 2006).

Two useful sub-concepts of social inclusion are critical multiculturalism (e.g., Kubota, 2004) and critical language awareness (e.g., Train, 2003). Critical multiculturalism argues that our multicultural society is stratified such that different groups hold different amounts of power and do not benefit equally with respect to their social condition. It seeks to unveil the mythology behind views of multiculturalism that focus primarily on the appreciation and tolerance of cultural diversity. Critical language awareness examined in relation to language education (Train, 2003) studies the links between languages, communities, power, and resistance.

As new concepts emerge within the field of second language education, it is important to understand their appropriation by student teachers. These parallel processes reflect two key elements of Sociocultural Theory. The first is sociocultural history, which refers to the emergence and accumulation of new cultural tools, including symbolic ones such as concepts (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). The second is the cognitive development of individuals in relation to ontogenesis (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). One of the principal concerns of Vygotsky's work was to offer a theoretical explanation of the link between these two processes. Drawing from this theoretical framework, the goal of the research presented here is to investigate the development of the concept of social inclusion among student teachers, as a useful means of preparing future teachers to better address the needs of diverse student populations.

Method

Data were collected in two different professional development contexts, a brief 90-minute workshop and an intensive 100-hour course. The purpose of examining the workshop data is to investigate some of the initial steps toward concept development in second language teacher education. The intensive course data offer insights into concept development and expansion across a longer timeframe.

The Workshop

Description: The 90-minute workshop was designed to provide a brief introduction to the concept of social inclusion in relation to second language teaching. The rationale was to gain an understanding of the role that a single, brief workshop could play in concept development given that in-service professional development sessions often use this format. Given the time constraint, it focused almost exclusively on the sub-concept of critical multiculturalism, as defined above. The workshop was delivered by the researcher as a guest instructor in a methods course designed to prepare students for a teaching internship in a secondary-level second language classroom. Exploration of the concepts *social inclusion* and *critical multiculturalism* were not otherwise part of the content of this section of the course, which focused primarily on designing lessons and instructional sequences that promote the development of language proficiency. The workshop began with an explanation of the concept of critical multiculturalism and continued with a series of activities, each of which included a brief written response collected as research data. The first activity asked students to comment on whether they felt that any aspects of critical multiculturalism, such as racism, discrimination, social exclusion, or power, would be inappropriate or unsuitable topics to raise in a second language class at the secondary level. The rationale for this activity was to get students thinking about the implications of incorporating the concept of critical multiculturalism into their teaching practices by leading them to reflect on

the difficult knowledge that it implies, but also the value that it holds for working toward social inclusion. In the second activity, the workshop participants read an excerpt of an article by Schick & St. Denis (2005) that critically examines multicultural discourse in the Canadian context. They were then asked to react to the ideas expressed in the text. The third activity asked the workshop participants to describe some of their own questions and concerns about responding to the diverse needs of their students and working toward social inclusion in the classroom. All of the written activities were followed by small-group and full-class discussion.

Participants: Twelve students took part in the workshop, ten of whom agreed to provide data for the research. The workshop participants were undergraduate students in the final year of their Bachelor of Education program. All were majoring in teaching one of a number of second languages including French, Spanish, German, and Mandarin. At the time of the workshop, the participants were nearing the completion of a nine-week teaching internship in their major subject area. In a previous semester, they had carried out a five-week internship in their minor subject area.

Data and Analysis: At the end of the workshop, students were invited to anonymously submit their written responses from the workshop activities for use as research data. The written responses were analyzed using a comparative approach to identify patterns in the data followed by an interpretive analysis procedure described by Hatch (2002). This procedure involves recording ideas and impressions in the form of research "memos" that are subsequently studied to identify emerging interpretations. Finally, these interpretations are carried back to the data to ensure that they are supported and to make further refinements. In the analysis of the workshop participants' written responses, the research memos focused primarily on passages that included explanations of the concept, as well as those that suggested how the student teachers were able to link the concept to their previous experiences and how they envisioned it as useful for their future classroom practices. In the data excerpts below, italics are used to indicate how the student teachers represented through language the ideas that are emphasized in the analysis.

The Course

Description: In order to investigate concept development over a longer timeframe than that of the workshop, data were also collected from students who engaged in concept development in a teaching methods course. The course was compulsory for student teachers majoring in second language education. The equivalent of three semester-long courses, it met intensively five days a week for six weeks so that the students could carry out their student teaching internship during the remainder of the term. The main topics covered in the course included understanding the nature

of language, designing tasks and other learning opportunities, planning lessons and units, assessing learning, and incorporating technology.

As part of an action research project described by Dunn, Kirova, Cooley, & Ogilvie (2009), the concept of social inclusion and its relation to language teaching was infused into the regular course content. The overarching goal of that broader project was to engage student teachers in intercultural inquiry as a means of preparing them to teach in culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse classrooms. The idea was that incorporating the exploration of anti-oppressive pedagogy into subject-area methods courses, rather than leaving it entirely in the realm of stand-alone courses on diversity and multicultural education, would help student teachers better understand the links with everyday teaching practices in specific school subjects.

In the second language methods course described here, the intercultural inquiry focused primarily on developing the concept of social inclusion and the related sub-concepts *critical multiculturalism* and *critical language awareness*, as defined above. These concepts were presented early in the course and then revisited with each of the main course topics listed above. For example, in relation to the topic "understanding the nature of language," the student teachers explored ways in which language serves as a means of discrimination within society, and they considered implications of the notion of "foreignness," which is frequently used in second language education in such terms as "foreign language." In relation to the topic of designing tasks and opportunities to learn about culture, the student teachers explored critiques of cultural "spectacles" and "performances," such as the arguments put forth by Schick & St. Denis (2005).

Participants: Of the eight students enrolled in the course, three agreed to be interviewed for the study. Because the course instructor was also the researcher, students were not asked to take part in an interview until after the course had ended. All three interview participants were women, and all were undergraduate students in the final year of a Bachelor of Education program. All were native speakers of English, and two were majoring in teaching French as a second language, while one was majoring in teaching Spanish. At the time of the interviews, the participants had completed a nine-week teaching internship in their major subject area, as well as an earlier five-week internship in their minor subject area.

Data and Analysis: The interviews were designed to elicit information about the student teachers' experiences in the course and during their internship. They were asked, for example, whether they felt prepared to work with diverse student populations. They were also asked to describe examples of situations from their internship in which they had worked with students from different cultural, ethnic, or linguistic backgrounds. The interview sessions lasted between 30 and 60 minutes, and they were audio-recorded. Recordings and transcripts were analyzed using Hatch's (2002) procedure for interpretive analysis, described above in relation to the workshop data. In the case of the interview data, the research memos focused on instances from the student teachers' self reports of their experiences that could

be interpreted as examples of thinking or acting "through" the concept *social inclusion* or the related sub-concepts *critical multiculturalism* and *critical language awareness*. The words used by the student teachers to express ideas that became focal points of the analysis appear in italics in the excerpts from the interview transcripts.

Initial Steps Toward Concept Development

In this section, findings from the workshop data are discussed in relation to initial steps toward concept development. These initial steps were characterized by imitation and the formulation of rationales or motives for learning and applying the new concepts.

Imitation in the Early Stages of Conceptual Development

Although the workshop participants were not explicitly asked to define critical multiculturalism, many of their written responses included definitions and explanations that communicated their emerging understanding of the concept. A principal feature of these definitions and explanations was the melding of ideas repeated from the workshop materials with ideas drawn from the student teachers' own prior understandings and experiences. The blending of aspects of the theoretical concept of critical multiculturalism with personal experiences and perspectives was particularly evident in the written responses to the workshop activity that asked participants to read and react to an excerpt from an academic text by Schick & St. Denis (2005). In this text, the authors strongly question non-critical forms of multicultural discourse that focus on cultural celebration by pointing out how these discourses trivialize culture as something to be enacted or performed for the enjoyment of the others—particularly for the majority group. They argue that the resulting dominance of the majority in relation to minority cultural groups "is neither changed nor challenged by the multicultural spectacle that resists engagement with the underlying question of what is accomplished by such a performance" (Schick & St. Denis, 2005, p. 307).

In reacting to the text, one workshop participant wrote:

> "I'm kind of torn as a second language teacher because I agree that *too often culture is trivialized* and *reduced to issues of food and dance, etc.* However, as a second language teacher *these are the concepts/ideas that are the easiest and arguably most interesting to present/teach.*"

As an expression of an emerging understanding of critical multiculturalism, this statement captures the notion of the trivialization of culture through its reduction to tangible objects and performances—an idea drawn directly from the workshop reading. At the same time, it reflects a reluctance to reject these trivialized aspects of culture because of the student teacher's view that they bring enjoyment to second language classrooms, coupled with the fact that their concrete nature makes them easy to incorporate into lessons.

Another workshop participant's reaction to the text was expressed as follows:

> "I think *it's okay to display and discuss cultural differences*, but often *we (as dominant society) we only accept certain expressions of cultural expression* (such as food and dancing), and then *we think we are being 'multicultural' and 'tolerant'*."

This statement explains critical multiculturalism in a way that repeats key points from the workshop materials. For example, it expresses the idea of "hierarchical" multiculturalism through the parenthetical insertion of "dominant society" to explain what is meant by "we." The statement also repeats from the workshop the idea of limitations to the forms of tolerance and acceptance expressed through non-critical discourse on multiculturalism. As in the previous example, however, these elements of critical multiculturalism are merged with a desire to retain the celebratory act of cultural display.

A third example of a reaction to the Schick & St. Denis (2005) text offers a more elaborated understanding of social inclusion in relation to critical multiculturalism. The student teacher wrote:

> "*Canada is lucky to have a multicultural label. This makes us look like a country that will embrace/accept everyone.* Is this true? I feel that it is not. *Whiteness has a privilege and power with it.* There are many characteristics of our society that have a right (White) way, and *it's assumed that to be a Canadian you will follow.*"

This statement repeats from the workshop materials the notions of power and hierarchy within multicultural society, expressed here through the reference to the compulsion to follow norms. Also repeated is the idea that multiculturalism is a key feature of Canada's national identity and a source of national pride. Furthermore, this statement uses ideas from the workshop to draw a direct link between critical multiculturalism and social inclusion by pointing out that those who act outside of prescribed norms face exclusion. Merged in with these ideas repeated from the workshop is the concept of white privilege. While highly relevant to the concept of critical multiculturalism, the concept of white privilege was not discussed as part of the workshop content. Consequently, this element of the written response was drawn from the student teacher's prior experience with this theoretical concept.

In each of the above examples, the repetition of ideas drawn directly from workshop materials can be seen as a form of imitation. Even if the ideas have not yet been fully understood or appropriated, the fact that they can be imitated as paraphrases indicates that they are within reach to be understood more fully (Newman & Holzman, 1993). In this sense, the ideas expressed through imitation can indicate ways in which the workshop participants may be seen as thinking in advance of their current state of development—a developmental state reflected in the prior perspectives and experiences that they expressed in their written responses. This creative form of imitation that incorporates elements of oneself

rather than simply copying establishes connections between a new concept and prior experiences.

Goal-Oriented Activity

In addition to linking understandings of the new concept to their prior experiences and everyday concepts, the workshop participants, without being explicitly asked to do so, also linked the concept with rationales for learning it and applying it to their teaching practice. For example, one participant wrote:

> "I feel that *we call ourselves multicultural, but we still differentiate people by race/ethnic background. We need to teach our students respect and understanding of other cultures and traditions so they can learn and understand one another.*"

The rationale communicated here is grounded in a desire for mutual cross-cultural understanding, which is consistent with the concept of social inclusion. The notion of critical multiculturalism is also partially reflected through the view that popular multicultural discourse is superficial in not addressing exclusion based on racial and ethnic differences.

Another student teacher expressed the following rationale for developing the concepts of social inclusion and critical multiculturalism:

> "I think the topics of racism, discrimination, poverty, stereotypes, inequality and linguistic imperialism *are topics that need to be discussed* in a second language classroom. *Most students from second language backgrounds face many of these challenges.*"

In this example, the list of topics was drawn directly from the workshop materials, but the rationale emerged from the student teacher's encounter with the concept. In expressing the student teacher's own rationale, this statement also reflects the perspective of students from minority groups, suggesting a sense of responsibility for ensuring that students' diverse needs and backgrounds are addressed through teaching practices. Such a notion of responsibility toward others conveys understanding of the concept of social inclusion.

By expressing rationales to frame and direct conceptual development and learning, the examples above reflect the goal-oriented nature of human activity, a key element of Sociocultural Theory (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). The central role played by rationales, or motives, in this theoretical framework led Leont'ev (1981) to assert that "there can be no activity without a motive" (p. 59). Motives express *why* something is done (Lantolf & Appel, 1994) and, therefore, explain the way in which people attribute meaning or purpose to their actions.

Summary

The findings presented and discussed above suggest that the initial steps toward concept development involved a creative form of imitation as well as the

attachment of motives to the concept. With respect to imitation, the student teachers' written definitions and explanations of critical multiculturalism were hybrid texts that blended elements repeated from the workshop materials with elements originating from their own prior experiences and perspectives. Interpreted through the framework of Sociocultural Theory, this blending is an important aspect of development in that it represents the dialectical unity of one's current level of development and one's potential level. In other words, it reflects a zone of proximal development that bridges what one knows now with what one will potentially know, reflecting simultaneously who one is and who one can become.

The mediation of the workshop, including materials such as the text, allowed the student teachers within a short timespan to express complex ideas through the concept of critical multiculturalism. However their imitations of ideas and discourse drawn from the workshop were not merely copies or reproductions. Rather, as historical individuals, the student teachers fashioned their use of the ideas in relation to their past experiences and previously developed concepts—both everyday and theoretical ones. This act of connecting the theoretical concept of critical multiculturalism to other experiences and concepts marks an important initial step in concept development and creates a zone of proximal development for new ways of thinking about second language education.

In addition to connecting the concept to their prior understandings and experiences, the student teachers also connected the concept to rationales for learning and applying it. As a concept is attached to a motive or rationale, its development is transformed into a goal-oriented activity. In this way, it is made personally relevant and therefore desirable or worthy of effort.

Extending the Concept to Classroom Experience

This section presents findings based on the intensive course data in order to investigate concept development beyond the initial stages discussed above in relation to the workshop. Through self-reports of their experiences, the post-internship interviews offered insight into how student teachers linked their conceptual understanding of social inclusion to their classroom practices. Some of the data were previously reported in Dunn, et al. (2009), but they are extended and reinterpreted here using elements of Sociocultural Theory. The findings are interpreted in relation to the vicarious forms of knowing made available through concepts, the value of concepts in helping student teachers envision alternative modes of educational practice, and the challenges of making the final step from thinking through concepts to acting through them.

Vicarious Knowing Through Concept Development

In expressing the desire to gain more experiences of cultural diversity as a means of attaining new awareness and understanding, one student teacher stated:

> "*How we set about practical experience is we do it in the communities where we live.* So the chances are that when I get a teaching job I probably won't work at a school that's three blocks down the street from my house. So, I don't know, *I haven't had a lot of exposure to things* that are way, way *out of what I actually grew up with, what I'm familiar with.*"

Besides expressing her own personal understanding of the value of conceptual learning, this statement provides a strong rationale for the importance of developing concepts through formal education. It points to the idea that formal conceptual learning can provide a foundation when everyday experience is lacking. This point is particularly important with respect to diversity and social inclusion given that for many student teachers, prior experience is lacking or in some cases based on stereotypes or misinformation embedded in popular discourse. Research has indicated that many student teachers have limited experiences with diversity (e.g., Milner, 2003). Theoretical concepts offer a means of vicariously knowing aspects of the world that cannot be readily observed or things that have not been experienced empirically (Davydov, 1990). Like other aspects of our sociohistorical endowment, concepts allow us to share accumulated knowledge and to gain understanding from others without having to rediscover or experience for ourselves what others have already come to know through their own experience (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). In this way, formal conceptual learning can provide a way for student teachers to develop, in advance of their everyday experiences, a framework for interpreting new experiences as they arise, and perhaps even a desire to seek them out.

Envisioning Alternative Practices

In discussing the links between social inclusion as a concept and the everyday practices of classroom teaching, one student teacher described what she saw as the need for change in how teaching resources and materials represent cultural diversity. She stated:

> "I think it's important because then *it gives the students something they can relate to. It makes them a part of it* instead of just being in someone else's culture and learning someone else's stuff. Especially being from Canada, you can say like 'Oh, this is our culture. *I'm a part of it. My religion, my faith, my whatever is here, and it's represented.*' I think that's important—to feel proud of who you are."

This statement suggests an emerging ability to think about everyday teaching practices through the conceptual lens of social inclusion. By seeing the point of view of the student and considering what social inclusion might mean from the students' perspective, this example demonstrates empathy, which is underscored linguistically through the student teacher's shift from third person to first person. According to Dyche and Zayas (2001), empathy is essential in transcending cultural differences and working toward inclusive modes of practice.

But while this example may offer some evidence of the student teacher's concept development beyond the initial stages, the question remained of whether the student teachers might be able to employ the concept of social inclusion with a deeper understanding in order to envision more radical forms of structural change in the classroom. As an example of thinking through the concept of social inclusion in relation to teaching practices, the student teacher's discussion of representing diversity in teaching materials seemed limited by the fact that it was uncertain whether the element of critical multiculturalism had been appropriated given the emphasis on celebratory aspects of multiculturalism with no explicit reference to power. Furthermore, the statement leaves unanswered the question of whether or how a teacher might have sufficient knowledge and experience to ensure that other cultures are accurately reflected through such an attempt at inclusion.

Elsewhere in the interview, however, the same student teacher offered a stronger indication that she was developing an expanded conceptual understanding of social inclusion in relation to language teaching. Moreover, her statement addressed the question of how a teacher might come to know and understand the diverse experiences and cultural perspectives of students:

> "Being a language major excites me and intrigues me very much, so do other cultures and traditions and customs and places. I think that *all of these students have a lot to offer*. And *if we listen and not just teach them* what we need to teach them, but *actually listen to what they're saying*, then *we can learn from them, too*. And the students can. Like not just me, but *the other students could as well, if they let themselves*."

This comment suggests a deepening understanding of social inclusion in that it addresses the power imbalance by proposing a dialogic view of an inclusive ideal whereby knowledge and shared experience are co-constructed between teachers and students. It links the concept of social inclusion to classroom practice by envisioning alternative modes of classroom interaction.

Another student teacher expressed a similar dialogic view of the learning that can occur between teachers and students. She stated:

> "I've learned a lot about different cultural groups and things like that, but I know I don't know everything. So I would say that *I'm competent because I'm aware that I don't know everything*, you know, and I'm careful to not make judgements, and to question OK maybe this is why a student is acting this way, or maybe, you know what I mean? But I mean *it would always be a learning process*."

Like the previous example, this statement suggests the creation of a dialogic space of mutual learning opened up between teacher and student. It points to an expanded development of the concept of social inclusion manifested through the envisioning of an alternative mode of practice that reflects an understanding of the issue of power in relation to social inclusion. Given the teacher's power and

authority in the classroom, there must be a willingness and openness on the part of the teacher for such a space for learning to be constructed. This statement suggests that teachers who appropriate the concept of social inclusion have to adopt a different stance and must realize the need to learn from their students.

The dialogic situation described above implies a more sophisticated understanding of the concept of social inclusion and a greater ability to use it as a means of thinking about language teaching and envisioning new modes of practice. The understanding implied here is that for meaningful inclusion to occur, the roles of expert and learner must be not merely reversed, but shared in such a way that they become no longer relevant. Mutuality is an important condition for inclusion. Otherwise, the implication is that the dominant group is the expert and the minority group must learn from the expert to be "let in." Such a view of inclusion would be limited by failing to dismantle that power imbalance that leads to exclusion in the first place.

One Step Short

Even if there was some evidence that the student teachers were becoming able to think through the new theoretical concepts by envisioning alternative practices, the full development of concepts and conceptual thinking is a long and ongoing process that can be characterized by challenges and setbacks. In particular, making the final step from thinking through a concept to acting upon it represents a revolutionary leap that does not come easily. This point was underscored by one student teacher's description of a classroom context in which she had taught:

> "We had two ESL students in our French class, which was really, really frustrating. And my mentor teacher said don't even, don't even bother like trying to teach them anything because they shouldn't even be in the class, in his opinion, because they were there to learn English and they were in a French class. And so it was really, *it was frustrating for me to try to teach them* another language, which was like a third language then from the perspective of like, you know, these are the rules. *I had to teach them the rules in English*, but *they didn't even understand that* because, English wasn't their first language. So that was really, really difficult . . . because *I couldn't motivate them* to get them to learn anything because *I couldn't connect with them in any way*."

As the teacher educator, my initial reaction upon hearing this in the interview was one of shock and disappointment. The student teacher's inability to connect with the ESL students seemed antithetical to the concept of social inclusion. I found it difficult to reconcile this statement with the student teacher's interest in social inclusion, her expression of inclusive views, and her desire to gain more experiences of cultural diversity in order to benefit her teaching. I questioned the value of what had taken place in the course. Unexpectedly, however, the interview became an opportunity to continue the process of concept development through the reintroduction of the mediation of the instructor/researcher and the opportunity

for further discussion of social inclusion in relation to the concrete practices of language teaching.

After recounting this incident, the student teacher initiated a return to this topic much later in the interview. She asked if I thought it was plausible to teach ESL students in a language classroom and wondered what might have helped in teaching the ESL learners that she described. I explained that I did think it was possible and that I hoped all teachers, including myself, would continue to seek out ways to ensure that all students regardless of their native language are fully included in classroom learning opportunities. I suggested that insights might be drawn from other language teaching contexts such as ESL classes where the teacher does not speak the native language of any of the students. After a somewhat lengthy discussion of the topic, the student concluded by saying:

> "But, I mean, that's very, very true about, you know, you have *a classroom with a whole bunch of people who speak a different language* and how you teach them. I guess *you use different things* rather than, *rather than the way that I was taught the language*, which I guess is what, of course, I always revert back to is the way I was taught the language."

This statement indicates that everyday concepts and competing theoretical concepts persist alongside a new concept as it continues to develop. Yet, even as she recognized the influence that her prior perspectives of language teaching continued to have on her thinking and practices, she also expressed an openness to other possibilities and a willingness to keep trying. Having returned, in spiral developmental fashion, to the possibility of imagining alternative modes of practice, the student teacher now had further understanding that could serve as a tool for continuing to work toward bringing the concept of social inclusion to concrete action.

Summary

By going beyond what we know from our everyday experiences, theoretical concepts offer new ways of understanding the world. They can provide vicarious forms of knowing by allowing us to grasp that which we are unable to experience directly. This movement beyond direct experience also makes it possible to imagine the world other than it is and, therefore, to envision new modes of educational practice. For example, the vision of altering power structures to create a space for mutual learning between teachers and students suggests the emergence of the student teachers' ability to think through the concept of social inclusion in relation to classroom practices.

Nonetheless, while pointing toward concrete action, the vision articulated by the student teachers seemed to remain at the level of an ideal. If bringing a new theoretical concept to concrete action through praxis is an essential final step in full conceptual development, then additional development beyond what was captured through this study would be needed to go from the ideal to a more

developed plan for action and ultimately to concrete action for bringing about change in educational practice. While there was evidence that the student teachers were developing an emerging ability to think through the concept of social inclusion, acting through the concept remained elusive.

Conclusion

Thinking through theoretical concepts in teacher education is about envisioning alternative practices and seeing the classroom other than it is. This revolution in thinking mediates practical activity and makes possible a parallel revolution in teaching practices. Consequently, thinking through theoretical concepts reveals not what is, but what is possible. As noted by Davydov (1990), theoretical thought reflects "what is being accomplished as possible and by virtue of which that possible becomes a reality" (p. 270).

The "distinction between being and coming into being" (Davydov, 1990, p. 270) can be seen in many aspects of the findings from this study. In the workshop data, it is reflected through the way in which the student teachers' explanations of critical multiculturalism blended elements of their prior perspectives and experiences—an expression of being—with ideas imitated from the workshop materials—an expression of becoming. This blending signals an initial step in concept development, establishing a ZPD and thus opening a space for a new theoretical concept to develop. Another important initial step was the attachment of a motive to the concept, thus making it personally relevant and providing a rationale for developing the concept and using it to guide one's thinking and practices. In the intensive course data, being and becoming were reflected in the notion of vicariousness. By offering understanding even in the absence of everyday experience, theoretical concepts allow for a form of becoming, or thinking in advance of one's prior experiences. With respect to envisioning alternative practices, the notion of being and becoming bridges the developing concept with new ways of thinking and new possibilities for educational practice. Ultimately, these new ways of thinking can lead to new practices, but the findings of this study point to the challenging nature of making that final step.

Workshops and intensive course work are typical formats for professional development in teacher education, and this study suggests that each helps to mediate teacher learning in different ways and to a different extent. The mediation embedded in the workshop—particularly the reading activity and the task of writing a reaction to the text—seemed to assist the student teachers in laying some of the groundwork for new ways of thinking to emerge. This initial step is important, but it is only the beginning of a long and effortful process. The intensive course allowed for more extended interaction between the instructor and the student teachers and more extensive engagement with the new theoretical concepts through the infusion of the concepts across the various course topics, as described in the Method section above. Although there was some evidence that student teachers in the course were moving toward new ways of thinking, they were not yet able to shape their practices in relation to their ideals. Given the prevalence of

workshops and course work in preparing teachers, it is important for all who are linked with teacher education (teacher educators, teachers, administrators, etc.) to recognize the particular roles that these and other educational formats can play in concept development and the building of expertise, but it is also necessary to be aware of the limits of what can be accomplished and in what timeframe.

Fully embracing a new theoretical concept such as social inclusion requires no less than becoming someone that we are not yet by becoming able to envision new possibilities for the classroom and broader society. The challenges of such a monumental process are evident, but so too is the significance. In responding to diversity in schools, it is important for the field of second language teacher education to continue to look beyond the emphasis given to teaching grammar, vocabulary, and language skills. The sort of revolutionary change represented by taking on alternative ways of thinking, acting, and being is essential for teachers of diverse learners, and teacher education has a critical role to play in this process.

Part II

Concept Development in L2 Teacher Education

Chapter 5

"Seeing" L2 Teacher Learning

The Power of Context on Conceptualizing Teaching

Sharon S. Childs
The Pennsylvania State University

Long before deciding to become second language (L2) teachers, novice teachers subconsciously develop conceptions of teaching cultivated by their experiences as learners in classrooms. Their beliefs develop from what they experience as participants in the "public" side of education, but they never experience the "private conversations" in the minds of teachers that are the conceptualizations grounding why teachers do what they do. The challenge for L2 teacher professional development programs is to move students beyond their learning histories and tacit notions of teaching and mediate the development of a pedagogically sound, explicit conceptualization of L2 teaching, which may become the "psychological tool" through which they think about and carry out their teaching.

This study follows Mark, a novice English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher wrestling with his conception of what it means to be an L2 teacher. Designed to capture his learning in the activities of his social world, the data show that as his notions of language teaching and learning are challenged by new and changing contexts, he feels a disconnect with what he thinks he knows about L2 pedagogy and what he is experiencing as both a student in an MA TESL program and a novice ESL teacher. A sociocultural perspective on human learning provides a theoretical lens through which to "see" his struggle to conceptualize L2 teaching, a struggle that follows a "twisting path" (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 156) shaped and reshaped by contexts.

Data Collection

One challenge of this study was to determine the types of data that would capture as much of the "systemic whole" (University of Helsinki) mediating Mark's learning and to do so through the symbolic tool of language. As such, it includes several data sources:

- Semi-Structured Interviews—Mark participated in three semi-structured qualitative interviews at the beginning, midpoint and end of Semester One and the midpoint and end of Semester Two. The initial interview provided an understanding of his previous language learning and teaching experiences, and the remaining interviews asked about his teaching experiences and insights over the course of two semesters.

- Classroom Observations—I observed, logged field notes, and audio recorded five classes. I also jotted down questions that I emailed to Mark immediately following my visits for clarification.
- Stimulated Recall—During Semester One, Mark was videotaped twice, at the midpoint and the end, in the activity of teaching. Immediately after each taping, we viewed the video together, and he reflected aloud on his teaching as I took notes. All stimulated recall conversations were audio recorded, transcribed, and analyzed.
- Journals—Mark wrote reflective journals, almost weekly, throughout Semester One. The only directive I gave for the journal writing was to share any thoughts related to his teaching and learning about teaching and email me at the end of each week.
- TA Meetings—During Semester One, I attended, audio recorded, and took field notes at three weekly meetings with the TAs and supervising professor.
- Lesson Plans—Throughout Semester One, we discussed his lesson plans during interviews and stimulated recalls. I then collected his plans at the end of Semester One.

Each data source provides a unique view into Mark's struggle to conceptualize his teaching, and together they show teacher learning ". . . as a practice-mediated phenomenon that takes place over time in various activity settings and communities of practice such as university programs and schools" (Smagorinsky, Cook, & Johnson, 2003, p. 1417).

Data Analysis

I conducted a grounded content analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) of the data to identify patterns or themes that emerged in how Mark was experiencing his teaching and learning activities. Using Leont'ev's (1977) activity theory, an extension of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, affords a conceptual framework for capturing the "whole" and identifying the relationships of activity systems within it. According to Leont'ev (1977), "activity" is directed toward an "object" that is determined by a "subject," all of which is immersed in the social world. In this study, the "subject" is the L2 teacher engaged in the "activity" of L2 teaching and learning about teaching, with the "object" as the L2 teacher's learning and development. Lantolf & Pavlenko (2001) note that in activity theory,

> the task of scientific investigation is to determine how general mental concepts develop out of specific activities, and this task is accomplished through the investigation of the history of human beings, either as individuals, societies, cultures, or as a species, and of the activities through which they transform their worlds and are in turn transformed by their worlds. (p. 144)

Several activity systems emerged as "specific activities" that individually and collectively mediated Mark's conceptualization of L2 teaching:

1. his language learning beliefs (language learning as social practice);
2. balancing his roles as both graduate student and novice ESL teacher;
3. his support systems (i.e., supervising professor, the professional development program itself, peer ESL teachers, graduate courses);
4. his classroom teaching activity.

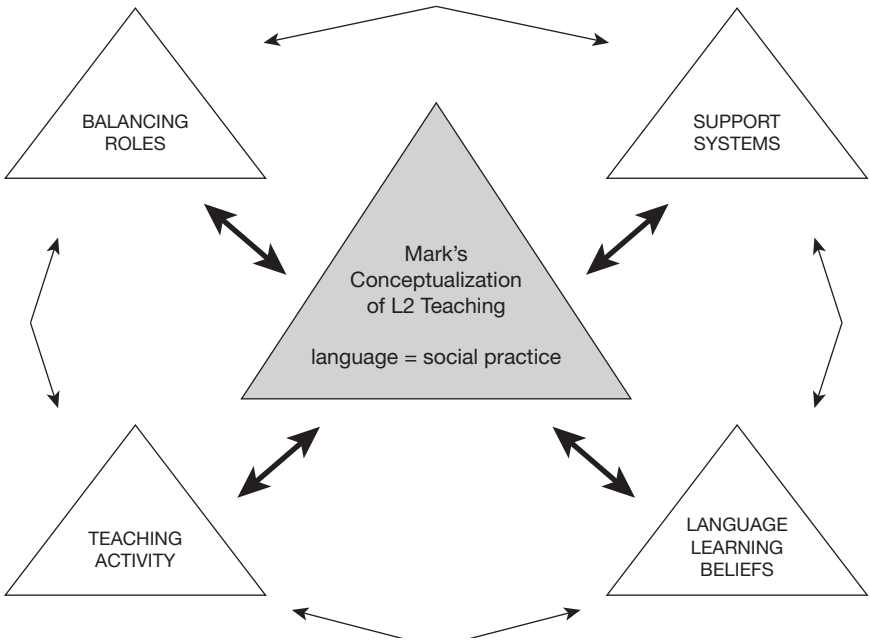


Figure 5.1 Activity Systems Mediating Mark's Conceptualization of L2 Teaching.

After locating these activity systems, it was evident that each context was in some way pushing his emerging understanding of L2 teaching, a process that can be described as a psychological struggle. From a sociocultural perspective, the potential for teacher learning occurs when there is a contradiction between *everyday* concepts and *scientific* concepts. Because the feeling of tension between cognition and emotion can sometimes create a space for learning (Golombek & Johnson, 2004), I looked for affectively charged language that might signal an opportunity for learning, evidence of learning, and the role of context in creating that opportunity.

Finally, I use Vygotsky's (1986) psychological constructs to understand Mark's struggle to conceptualize L2 teaching, beginning with the construct of affective volition about which Vygotsky (1986) writes:

> Thought is not begotten by thought; it is engendered by motivation, i.e., by our desires and needs, our interests and emotions. Behind every thought there is an affective-volitional tendency which holds the answer to the last "why" in the analysis of thinking. A true and full understanding of another's thought is possible only when we understand its affective-volitional basis. (p. 252)

Understanding a learner's affective volition can help make sense of his openness to mediation defined as the process of connecting and relating our social and mental worlds through physical and symbolic tools in activity. A connection between our worlds is most likely to happen when mediation is provided in the zone of proximal development (ZPD).

The Findings

Organization of the data analysis was a challenge because I wanted to tease out the themes in the data while never losing sight of the totality of Mark's learning. To best represent his journey, the data are analyzed according to each of the four (4) activity systems and presented chronologically by Semester One and Semester Two to show his psychological struggle over time.

Semester 1: Activity System—Language Learning Beliefs

Mark conceptualizes language learning as social practice, an understanding emerging from his own experiences. In addition to traditional, grammar-based high school German classes, Mark's language learning experiences include state-side and international language immersion contexts; two summers as a language

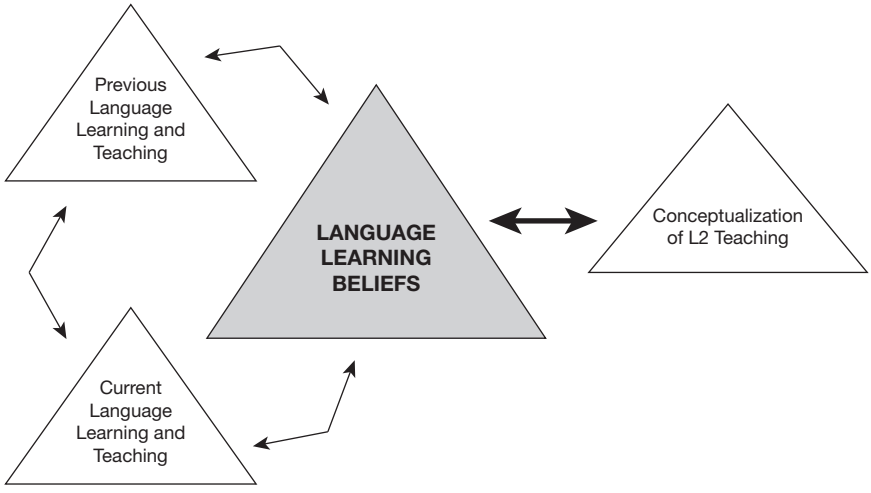


Figure 5.2 Language Learning Beliefs Mediating Mark's Conceptualization of L2 Teaching.

learner in a German immersion language camp experience, his junior year of high school in Germany, and his senior year of college in Germany.

Through these experiences, he develops the belief that immersion environments afford the most effective language learning opportunity because in these spaces, learners quickly feel frustration and confusion, and their emotions provide the motivation for learning:

> **People don't like it [confusion] and they want to understand**. And if they are given the chance, **if it seems very clear cut and they aren't challenged too much, they don't have the drive to catch on because they don't feel lost a little bit.** (Interview #1, 9/8/05)

Mark's views about second language learning are consistent with the theoretical underpinnings of his professional development seminar. As Mark begins to teach in this new context, his beliefs and apprenticeship of observation drive his lesson preparation and classroom activities as he tries to create a language immersion experience in a writing class being taught in a classroom context:

> **I think it's been failing** in the last few lessons because **I really want them to talk** a little bit more, and they're really reticent to talk . . . and **I really try to get my students to talk** all the time and with German **as I've done before.** (Interview #1, 9/8/05)

Mark seems to equate student talk in the target language with a language immersion learning experience and is frustrated when his attempts to foster oral participation are met with resistance.

Affection Volition and Reluctance to Seek Mediation

Mark tries to engage his students in dialogue throughout much of the semester, but at the end of October, begins to think about and teach his classes differently. He seems to struggle with his new approach even though it may be appropriate for his writing classes:

> **Like last week, what I had them do for the first time was have them write for a large portion of class** and turn that in to me to have me look at it. **And I hadn't done it before because I just felt like the class is quiet**, a lot of the, I don't know, theory is that if they're, they're paying for it they can have the quiet writing time while they're gone, but we did a lot during class, like we interjected a little bit of help along the way or whatever. **And I think it was good in class, but previously I wouldn't have done that. At the beginning of the semester, I wouldn't have had them all just write. Like I would have had them do, had a more of, I don't know, an activity than just writing**. (Interview #2, 10/20/05)

Mark has a network of support (see *Support Systems* p. 75) as part of his professional development seminar and could tap into that network for help with this aspect of

his teaching. Although he does seek help from one of his peer ESL teachers regularly for classroom activity ideas and his supervising professor, there is no evidence in the data that he sought to understand how a writing classroom context could be different from an immersion context and how to encourage student learning in his classrooms. Mark is teaching and learning in a busy social world, and many other factors are mediating his activity. A closer look at the activity system of his roles during Semester One illustrates one of the most salient factors, time.

Semester 1: Activity System—Balancing Roles

At the beginning of the first semester, the activity system Mark speaks and writes of most frequently is balancing the two roles he is navigating in his new context: his role as a first-year, first-semester graduate student in a major research institution, and his role as a novice ESL teacher in an intensive, in-service professional development seminar. These potentially complementary roles become contradictory as he struggles with how to define himself in each role as each competes for his time.

Roles Defined

As a graduate student, Mark must stay continuously enrolled in at least nine graduate credit hours per semester and maintain a 3.0 grade point average. As a teacher, Mark is expected to prepare and deliver well-reasoned, challenging lessons for two sections of an ESL writing course designed for beginning to intermediate English language learners (ELL). This role requires a significant amount of time because it is his first ESL teaching experience, it is an academic writing class for which he feels unprepared, and he is given much latitude in determining course curriculum.

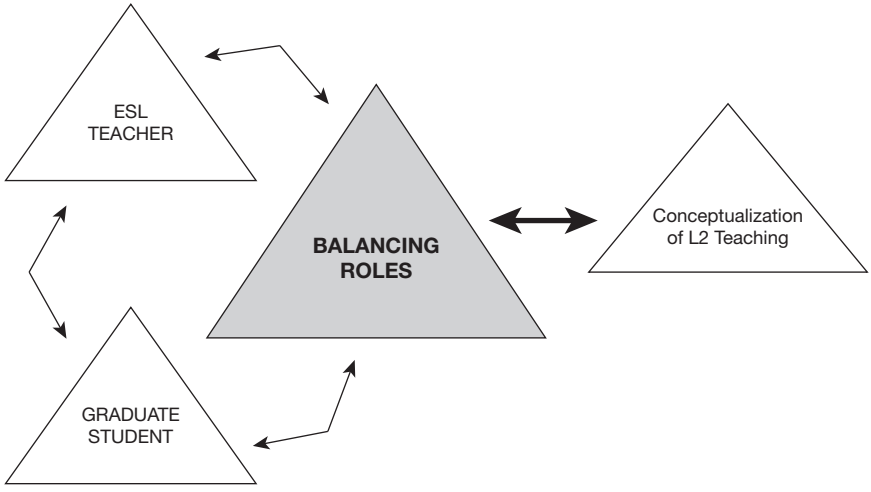


Figure 5.3 Balancing Roles Mediating Mark's Conceptualization of L2 Teaching.

Mark also has self-generated expectations for his performance. He is committed to achieving As in his graduate courses and to providing student-centered, task-based learning opportunities for his ESL students; however, he admits that many times he sacrifices his own academic coursework to focus on his students and his teaching. These competing expectations lead to tensions manifesting in stress, feelings of inadequacy, and continuous reassessment of his expectations. Vygotsky's psychological constructs allow a closer look at how Mark wrestles with his conception of L2 teaching in this context.

Affective Volition and Mediation

At the beginning of the semester, Mark is confident in his abilities as a graduate student and does not express concern about this role. He does not, however, feel that same level of confidence as an ESL writing teacher. As Mark anticipates the start of classes and finds out about this study, he quickly agrees to participate. He has the desire to do well as a teacher, and he thinks that participation will help him stay focused on his teaching:

> **I would love to** [**participate**] actually because I think **it will be good for me. I'm being selfish** because I thought having someone watching me **would keep me on track.** (Interview #1, 9/8/05)

His comment that the study might "keep me on track" indicates that even before he started teaching, he was concerned about how he would handle the demands of the semester and mediate his learning as a teacher and a student. He is even more interested when he finds out that a journal is required for the study and welcomes the idea: "I signed up to do this with you because **I really wanted** to have that [the journal]" (Interview #1, 9/8/05). He is unsure about what to expect from his teaching, and is seeking mediation to support his experience. Ironically, as the semester progresses, he needs regular prompting to complete his weekly journal, and at the end of the semester, he is almost disappointed that he did not use the journals as a tool to mediate his learning, saying "**I wanted to be good** at them so much and that, honestly, is the reason I participated." (Interview #3, 12/16/05)

Affective Volition, Mediation and ZPD

Mark anticipates that he will struggle to balance his commitment to teaching and graduate work, and in fact he does. He seems initially to be self-regulating his activity and seeking mediation from fellow teachers but usually for ideas and materials related to classroom activity ideas. Given his new teaching context, novice ESL teacher status, and limited time to devote to both roles, searching for assistance in this way seems like an expected behavior.

Mark's ability to self- and even other-regulate shifts at different points during the semester when he feels added pressure from assignments for his graduate courses and his own classes. At the midpoint of the semester, he expresses concern

about where to focus his energies. Realizing there will be consequences, he decides that his students matter more than his own graduate work:

> **I have priorities** and the students come before me. [My supervising professor] I'm sure says I'm supposed to come before students, but **I would feel bad.** Like because financially, if someone found out that I was neglecting my students, I would not maintain my financial aid here at [the university]. **But if *I* slip a little bit** behind the scenes no one knows that. (Interview #2, 10/20/05, italics added)

Mark feels tension, but does not indicate in this interview or journal that he sought assistance with this type of struggle. What he does indicate is that the tension brings an emerging awareness to a connection between the learning in his graduate courses and what he is doing in his ESL classes. The tension creates a potential learning space as Mark is functioning in his ZPD:

> **I think that a lot of it is incorporating the content of the courses** that I'm taking into what I'm doing and to do that **as fast as possible.** Like because **I felt that at the beginning I didn't see the interconnectedness** between what I'm doing and what I'm learning. **Like I separated those roles in myself**, like, thinking that while I'm in class as a student, I'm a student. And when I'm in class as a teacher, I'm the teacher. And really, **I need to** while I'm in class as a student **think, I'm a teacher. How is this going to help me?** And when I'm in class as a teacher **I have to think, I'm learning by doing this, how can I incorporate that in what I produce as a student in my other classes? That it's not two different hats** because like that's what people say—you're a student and you have this job, like this after school job kind of thing, and it's not, true it's one. (Interview #2, 10/20/05)

Mark is verbalizing a new understanding of L2 teaching, one that is clearly mediated by his ability to self-regulate within the activity systems of his graduate coursework and his ESL teaching activity. But the understanding he can articulate needs time and mediation to fully develop and internalize into an integrated concept of what it means to teach. Mediation is available to him through his professional development seminar, but because he has not internalized all that is happening with him, he cannot articulate his needs to seek assistance by others. This could be largely due to the issue of time and the fact that he cannot step away from the day-to-day flurry of teaching and learning activity to reflect on what he is experiencing. Time is a contextual factor that has a powerful influence on his learning particularly in the face of end-of-the-semester deadlines.

Return of Role Imbalance and Psychological Struggle

As the semester draws to a close, even though Mark is beginning to make sense of the dialogic relationship of his roles, that relationship causes those earlier tensions

to return. As he tries to complete his final course assignments and prepare his students for competency tests and determine their grades, he makes a sweeping generalization about his overall performance as a teacher: "**The only thing that I've been pretty proud about** is that I've turned in every writing thing the next class time so far." (Stimulated Recall #2, 11/29/05) While Mark does not clearly state what he thinks he has to be as a teacher for his students, the previous quote and the following passage indicate that he feels that he must be available to them whenever they need him. As stress weakens his confidence in his teaching abilities, it also forces him to draw boundaries with his students, something he has not been able to do before. The following excerpt from his final journal entry shows this shift:

> During these last few weeks, **my time has become very conflicted** between addressing my students' concerns and my own. As they miss deadlines and e-mail me things outside of class, **I have a hard time** keeping up with everything. (Journal #4, 12/5/05)

In the final interview conducted at the end of the semester, Mark reflects on his roles and speaks more freely now about his experiences than at any point in the semester:

> **I really wanted** to give my students my primary focus and myself secondary, and I'm sure I'm getting fine grades or whatever but **I know they [my grades] were affected** by me teaching the classes. **I've had a lot of problems balancing my roles**, not problems, I think my academics have gone a little bit because of having to keep my students as a priority. (Interview #3, 12/16/05)

It is not until the end of the semester when deadlines are over that he again reflects on the connection of his teaching and learning experiences:

> **I think that it's really important** that [the department has graduate] students doing the teaching . . . Especially for me, I know that others have had ESL experiences, but for me it was really new. So to have the practical applications of like the theoretical things I was learning in class, **I think gave me a little more insights** than the other students that weren't TAs [teaching assistants] that didn't have a way to apply something the next day that they had gone over in class. (Interview #3, 12/16/05)

While Mark is far from internalizing his newly emerging conception of L2 teaching, he seems emotionally charged as he realizes and can articulate that his learning has been mediated by balancing his roles as L2 teacher and learner.

Semester 1: Activity System—Support Systems

Another activity system that mediates Mark's conceptualization of L2 teaching is his network of support, including his language learning histories, his graduate courses which focus on L2 acquisition and pedagogical theory, and most

importantly, the support system afforded through his department's professional development seminar. Mark's language learning beliefs seem to be congruent with those of his department and specifically the professional development seminar, and the following mediational means are also part of his learning and teaching experience:

1. the supervising professor for the seminar
2. other ESL teachers who are also graduate students
    a. a large workroom that serves as a collegial space for the teachers
    b. participation in weekly meetings with the supervising professor and the teachers who have similar courses

Supervising Professor

Mark's supervising professor plays a key role in mediating his conceptualization of L2 teaching and, thus will be the only support discussed here. In addition to regularly scheduled meetings with his professor and other ESL teachers, Mark seeks advice from her often for a range of teaching concerns, from creating his syllabus and dealing with classroom management issues to sharing ideas for teaching strategies:

> I think it's that [**she**] **has been so good** at creating such a good environment that **I go to her more than I would**. I started out that way where I wouldn't go to her because everything's fine, you know, the macho, **I can handle it, I don't need directions, or whatever.** But **now I feel like if I go to her that she's not going to judge** me for not being as prepared as I should. **So I do go to her more than I would probably.** (Interview #2, 10/20/05)

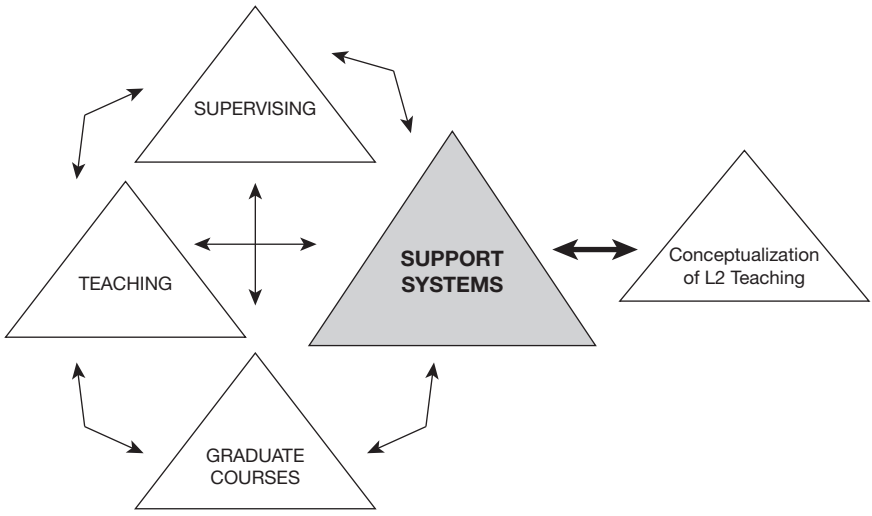


Figure 5.4 Support Systems Mediating Mark's Conceptualization of L2 Teaching.

Even though Mark is comfortable with his supervising professor and knows that she is supportive and accessible, his exchanges with her decrease toward the end of the semester. While this is somewhat because of time constraints, Mark confesses that it is largely a conscious choice on his part. His supervisor is also a professor for one of his graduate classes, a course he has allowed to "slip" because of his teaching responsibilities:

> **I get self-conscious** dealing with [her] because she's also the teacher of the course that I'm taking right now. So like, if I just did something that I think is sub par or whatever, and sometimes I thought things were sub par, and I got an A or like whatever from her. **But then but like she sent me an email today that I didn't get a very good grade on her final** but I still got an A in her course. But like then having to interact with her in a professional way, but that may change next semester. (Interview #3, 12/16/05)

Although Mark consults his supervisor less frequently over time, the meditation she provides, both in terms of teaching and emotional support, plays a critical role in mediating his understanding of L2 teaching. Before sharing her particularly meaningful observation of his class, we must look closely at Mark's classroom teaching to understand the impact of her visit on his emerging conceptualization of L2 teaching.

Semester 1: Activity System—Classroom Teaching Activity

Two distinct yet connected themes emerged from the data that provide a representation of Mark's teaching activity.

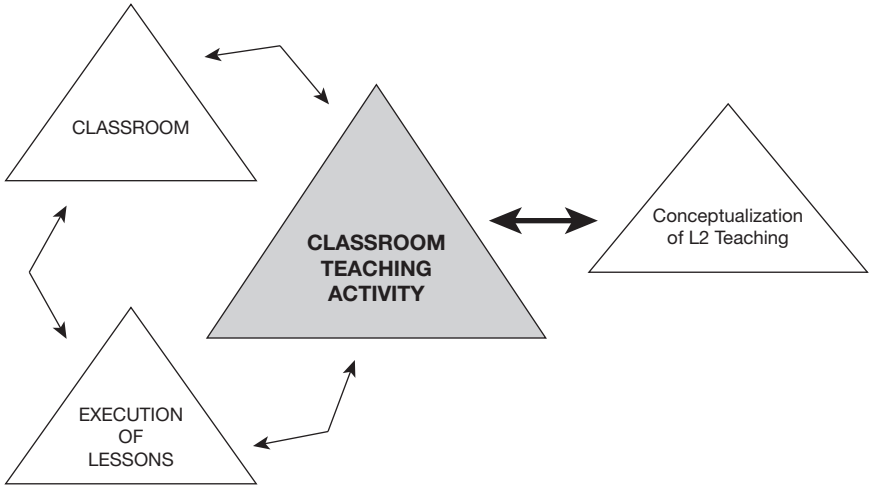


Figure 5.5 Classroom Teaching Activity Mediating Mark's Conceptualization of Teaching.

Classroom Management

Because this is the first time Mark is teaching ESL and teaching in a traditional classroom context, he has to learn about classroom management and his responses to student behaviors such as being tardy for class, not completing assignments, and lack of interest in the lessons. He then has to decide and enforce what the consequences will be for these types of behaviors. Throughout most of the first semester, Mark did not seem to have expectations for his students nor clearly delineated boundaries:

> I told them that two tardy attendance days can add to an absence, but if they come in the first few minutes . . . **I'm not much of a stickler**. (Stimulated Recall #1, 10/11/05)

By the end of the semester, Mark's frustration with his students' classroom behaviors spurs an emotional response that mediates how he thinks and talks about his students and his own expectations:

> I think that **I've become a little bit more strict** about a few things, like speaking out of turn in class and things like that, **because I kind of got burned** by relaxing the tone with George and a few other students a few times. (Interview #3, 12/16/05)

Classroom observations confirm that he is "a little bit more strict," and one example relates to disciplinary action he takes in a class toward the end of the semester. Three students arrive without the required assignments, and without hesitation, Mark dismisses them to go to the library to complete them for a late grade. This type of response suggests that he was beginning to think differently about his role as a teacher and set boundaries and expectations with his students.

Execution of Lessons

At the same time Mark is learning to manage classroom behaviors, he is also learning to manage the flow of activities in the classroom by thinking differently about what he is doing. Initially, Mark was trying to determine and respond to the needs of his students. The following journal entry indicates that Mark is thinking about his students' language learning, but he is thinking about it as a series of activities rather than as social practice:

> **I decided** that **their biggest need** was for a better understanding of verb tense. **I spoke for a large portion of the lesson and wrote on the board.** The students were asked to chime in and give correct examples. The homework was to finish some sentences that were started in the textbook. **I am really trying to lay track** for switching the focus to genre and form of writing later on, but it is difficult. (Journal #1, 9/16/05)

Mark gauges the effectiveness of his teaching and their learning on whether or not the students participate in classroom activities. Up to this point, he believes learning is happening because students seem to be responding to his instruction. Emotionally, he is content: "**I am glad** that I picked up on the problems that my students were having, and **I hope that it continues to go this well**." (Journal #1, 9/16/05)

Affective Volition, Mediation and ZPD

Mark's confidence level shifts dramatically one afternoon in late September after a visit from his supervising professor. Through the mediation she provides, his psychological struggle to conceptualize L2 teaching differently becomes visible:

> I didn't want to send out my e-mail [journal] until I had gone through all of my notes. **This week was very interesting for me** as [my supervising professor] observed me and I got a lot of feedback and ideas. On Tuesday, I had [her] observe my other section, and **my class did not go so well (I am sure she would never word it like that, but it's true).** (Journal #2, 10/2/05)

It is clear from the first sentence of his journal entry that the story he is about to share involves a strong emotional component. This account seems to create emotional and cognitive dissonance resulting from a contradiction in his teaching activity and the mediation by his more capable supervising professor, and the gap affords a learning opportunity for Mark who is clearly functioning, albeit uncomfortably, in his ZPD. As Chaiklin (2003) states, "Vygotsky never assumed that learning related to the zone of proximal development is always enjoyable" (p. 42). Mark continues to describe the moment:

> I then met with her [my supervising teacher] on Wednesday to talk about my class. We focused on error correction, how to communicate task instructions. **It gave me a lot to think about. I was also impressed with how [she] challenged me:** the times when **she wanted me to articulate myself to solidify my ideas** were so much like the instances when she was hoping that I would challenge my own ideas and change them, that I didn't feel like I was being put down for my mistakes. **I really feel lucky to have her helping me.** On Wednesday evening, **I was telling myself that the silver lining was that I wouldn't have gotten such good feedback if [she] had seen me at my best** (it was a stretch at the time, but I really believed it by the time Thursday rolled around). (Journal #2, 10/2/05)

Because of the emotional and cognitive dissonance and the mediation provided by his supervisor, Mark shifts how he thinks about his teaching. Almost immediately, he changes how he executes his lessons the following day:

> **Because of the conversation I had with [her] I changed my plan for Thursday** from a focus on "how to outline" to "how to choose the best preparation for

> yourself." **It went really well.** I had my students present the method that their group was assigned. Then we talked about the advantages of each. (Journal #2, 10/2/05)

Mark is pleased with his classes, recognizes the benefits of the mediation from his supervising professor, and is regaining his ability to self-regulate his teaching and learning activity. From this October moment until the end of November, classroom observations, journals and interviews provide evidence that Mark is consciously aware of his teaching activity and trying to create pedagogically sound lessons. As the final weeks of the semester arrive, pressures and deadlines from Mark's courses compete with his time:

> I have decided that after today, **I will not be able** to give them any last minute help. They needed to get those concerns to me when there was more than a matter of hours before the assignments were due. (Journal #4, 12/5/05)

The element of time interferes with his emerging conceptualization of teaching as he struggles to manage his teaching and graduate student responsibilities but does not seek assistance.

Semester 2: Same Activity Systems—New Contexts

As Mark begins the second semester, his learning is mediated by what appear to be the same activity systems: language learning beliefs, balancing his roles, support systems, and classroom teaching activity. While on the surface similar activity systems might indicate renewed opportunities for growth, that is not the case. The activity systems are the same in name only as the context of each is different. Mark's psychological struggle is different as well. Instead of struggling to conceptualize teaching as he had in his own language learning histories or during the bright spots in the first semester, he now struggles to justify why he seems comfortable to teach in a way that is not congruent with his language learning beliefs and his newly emerging conceptualization of L2 teaching.

Balancing Roles and Teaching Activity

Although Mark is balancing the same roles he had in the first semester, graduate student and language teacher; the description of each is different because the contexts have changed. His graduate courses are not focused on L2 pedagogy nor do they require the same time commitment as his courses last semester:

> I'm on top of my own classes this semester. And last semester **I had snowballed toward the end.** And the courses I'm taking this semester **aren't as time consuming**. The **functional discourse grammar** was kind of front loaded, but that's what I have more experience with was the **theoretical grammar stuff.**

> **That's been my exposure to linguistics until this year.** So I did fine on that. (Follow-Up Interview #1, 3/13/06)

Mark indicates that he is managing his classes this semester, and his comment about the functional discourse grammar course sheds light on the shift in his teaching activity, a shift that will be explored later in this section.

In addition to his graduate courses, he is teaching two classes: a section of the same ESL writing class he had the first semester, and a level two German class for undergraduates. Planning for the ESL class this semester is not as time consuming because he now has a curriculum in place. He comments that, overall, he did not make many changes to his lessons and teaching activity between the first and second semesters: "**I didn't do anything too dramatic**. I changed the order of some of the things. I really tried to make sure to give more pre-reading activity, **like discussion, which didn't really pan out with these students**." (Follow-Up Interview #1, 3/13/06) Because Mark has not fully developed the psychological tools through which to think about his teaching, he looks to the context of the classroom as the reason for the lack of participation in classroom discussions. First, he points to the class size:

> And like, ah, the **spoken participation is really different because of fewer students who are on the whole not so talkative**. So the three (3) of them really are the only ones that volunteer to speak, and the other four (4) or five (5) don't really speak, and even then it's, **it's difficult**. (Follow-Up Interview #1, 3/13/06)

Then he suggests that it is because of their motivation for being in the United States:

> Well, they're a little bit older than my students from last semester. I think they're like **nontraditional students**. They have a little bit more background from the university and then they transferred or whatever. None of them are, well, I think maybe Thanh, the guy from Viet Nam, he might stay here, **but I think the rest of them are here purely foreign exchange students and are going back** . . . the rest of them **are pure, you know, visitors. And I'm sure that they're not going to necessarily need English** like some of the students who were actually going to live in America. (Follow-Up Interview #1, 3/13/06)

Mark seems satisfied with his explanation and his students' behavior since he is "sure that they're not going to necessarily need English." Even in the German class, participation is an issue, and he again points to student motivation. This time, instead of the visitor status, he attributes it to his students' having other priorities and an hour of German each day is just not worth the effort:

> I have to create the atmosphere of German in the German classroom. **I'm the only one that's gonna really just speak German. They're not going to talk to**

> **each other**. They all have English as the common language. They all just got out of a day or morning of speaking English and for an hour they're supposed to speak as much German as possible. And German, it's difficult for me because there's 20 kids, and **German is not their priority** and so attendance isn't perfect. And there are so many things to grade . . . (Follow-Up Interview #1, 3/13/06)

These excerpts show that Mark's expectations of his students are dictated by the context of the classroom and not by theoretically and pedagogically sound understandings about how to teach language.

The context of the German department also determines Mark's expectations for his students and how he teaches. The department has standards that are measured through portfolios of student achievement. Mark notes that the German portfolios focus on skills and are different from those required by his other department:

> It's been difficult just because of the plan the German department has laid out. It has a lot of different things. They want the students to have interviews throughout the semester and **do what they call portfolios. But they are much different from linguistics. It's just, it's pretty much just a periodical check on the different skills.** (Follow-Up Interview #1, 3/13/06)

Essentially, the German program textbook is standards-driven, and teachers are expected to cover certain material in the text by the end of the semester:

> But the **grammar is all hopefully the same by the end of the semester**. It might be in different level and different stages, but the vocabulary we didn't have a template of what they need for vocabulary from the book because it's ridiculous. (Follow-Up Interview #1, 3/13/06)

As such, the textbook, or at least the concepts themselves, mediate Mark's teaching rather than his conceptualization of how to think about his teaching. The textbook becomes an important focus for Mark, and he spends a lot of time explaining the problems with the German 2 textbook even though it is being phased out of the program:

> The **book is absolutely awful. It's horrible**. So now the other classes like German 1 have the new book that they will get half way through the next semester, and German 3 has the new book that comes after that. But German 2 is the 2nd half of the series. And I think they should have just had them buy the book. **It's been so much trouble. I stopped using the book** maybe like a month and a half ago. (Follow-Up Interview #1, 3/13/06)

Because of external constraints imposed by departmental requirements, Mark is almost "required" to teach in a textbook-driven fashion. In spite of the fact that the textbook is far from adequate and a textbook teaching approach is not

congruent with his own teaching philosophy, Mark is quite comfortable in this teaching context because it is familiar: "**Oh, it's much more fun** to teach German. **I really like it**." (Follow-Up Interview #1, 3/13/06) Unlike the first semester, Mark does not indicate tension between his role as a teacher this semester and as a graduate student. However, because the data from Semester 1 showed that the tension in his roles created a "space" in which his conception of teaching was beginning to emerge, the absence of tension this semester is a sign that his emerging conception was not being fostered.

Support System

Just as there is no evidence of contradiction and tension related to his roles, there is limited evidence of support systems mediating his learning. Mark no longer participates in meetings with the ESL teachers, spends very little time in the teacher workroom, and does not seek assistance from his supervising professor: "So **we never set up that weekly meeting**, so I think we've all just gone to her [the supervising professor] as things have come up. And **I just haven't, you know, really connected with her**." (Follow-Up Interview #1, 3/13/06) He meets periodically with the German supervisor and occasionally emails another German instructor but has no other regular contact with the German department. Because Mark is not required and/or chooses to have little interaction with other teachers in the ESL and German departments, his context and affective volition determine the opportunity for pushing his conceptualization of L2 teaching from external mediation means is almost nonexistent.

Language Learning Beliefs

The contexts of Mark's second semester continue to reshape his thoughts about teaching, and while it is not apparent that his core beliefs about language learning have changed, the way he talks about his teaching activity has:

> **I have reverted a little bit** in that the [ESL] department is very, I don't know, **touchy feely. Everything can be done through communicative learning. And I like that, but I feel there's a point** at which there's complicated grammar that **just needs to be explained, practiced, and charts and things like that memorized.** (Follow-Up Interview #1, 3/13/06)

Mark realizes that his teaching approach is not reflective of his own experiences and philosophy nor does it echo the philosophy of his graduate department and professional seminar. Yet he justifies his teaching activities by explaining that others in the German department have the same beliefs:

> **I've talked to other people in the German department, and that's kind of the conclusion we've come to.** I mean, I love this. They also have in the German department a big focus on communicative learning, but when you sit down

> and talk to the instructors, they say that's all well and good, but when I'm teaching this, this, and this, I have to just stop and sit with them **and do the "chalk and talk" and say here's what, you know, here's the phenomenon, and here's how you do it.** (Follow-Up Interview #1, 3/13/06)

Mark enters his university ESL teaching and learning experience with preconceived notions of teaching from his "apprenticeship of observation" (Lortie, 1975) as an FL learner. He participates in activity systems whose contexts mediate him in his ZPD and challenge his previous thoughts about teaching. Throughout his first semester experiences, Mark's emerging conceptualization of L2 teaching is being fostered. During the second semester, he participates in the same activity systems, but the context of each has changed. The emerging conceptualization of teaching based on theoretically and pedagogically sound ideas begins to fade as he is not challenged in the same way to think about his teaching. Mark's emerging conceptualization of L2 teaching follows a "twisting path" (Vytogsky, 1987, p. 156) mediated by his own language learning history and the activity systems that individually and collectively comprise his first-year teaching experience: balancing his role as graduate student and teacher, support systems available to him, his classroom teaching experiences, and his beliefs about language learning. Because he is not challenged, there is no evidence of a ZPD or motive to continue to push his learning, and no evidence of a psychological struggle to conceptualize what it means to teach.

Conclusion

What can a study of this nature tell us about L2 teacher learning as it relates to the goal of teacher education? Broadly, it illustrates that developing a conceptualization of L2 teaching based on sound theory and pedagogy involves a psychological struggle mediated by time, consistency of concepts, and supportive, open relationships. First, learning takes time, and on the flip side, the feeling that there is not enough time can distract from learning. Helping novice teachers understand that their conception of teaching will develop over time can remove pressure they might feel to "get it" immediately. It also reminds teacher educators to be patient and have realistic expectations of their students' growth and development. In Mark's case, he had an ideal environment for mediating his learning during his first semester, yet he needed more time to develop his ideal of teaching. Additionally, the pressure of not having enough time to plan well for his teaching activity and graduate classes stole time and focus from his emerging conception of teaching.

Second, consistency of concept mediates understanding. For novice teachers, that means that the more consistent the conceptualization of teaching undergirding each aspect of their professional development experience, the more likely it is that they will be able to develop a conception of teaching that will become the tool through which they think about what they do. For Mark, his first semester was part of a professional development program that had consistency in its conception of teaching. But that consistency was broken when he began teaching in another

department with a different conceptualization. His emerging understandings of teaching were not supported, so further development did not happen.

Cognitive support is one kind of support that mediates how novice teachers conceptualize their teaching. A second is emotional support provided through open, healthy relationships between and among the novice teacher, teaching peers and teacher educators. Teachers have to want to learn and be willing to be supported and mediated in their learning process and teacher educators have to recognize that "mediation is contingent" and sometimes "not welcome" (Lantolf, 2000b, p. 81). The attitudes of those involved in the process can determine whether learning progresses, regresses, or remains unchanged. Whether Mark did not realize that he needed support or chose not to seek it is unclear, but what is clear is that he needed emotional as well as cognitive mediation throughout his first year of teaching.

Through supportive relationships, consistency of concepts, and over time, teacher educators can mediate novice teachers' development of a conceptualization of teaching that will serve as the foundation for how they think about their teaching that they will carry within them into their classrooms. While teacher education cannot prepare students to be ready to teach in every context, it can prepare them to understand that context is a powerful mediator that can shape or be shaped by how they conceptualize teaching. It is incumbent on teacher professional development programs to ensure that teachers leave with this understanding and help them develop psychological tools to mediate how they think about their teaching so that the "conversations" they have in their minds are consistent with theoretically and pedagogically sound teaching regardless of context.

Chapter 6

Embracing Literacy-based Teaching

A Longitudinal Study of the Conceptual Development of Novice Foreign Language Teachers

Heather Willis Allen
University of Miami

In 2007, the Modern Language Association (MLA) issued a formidable challenge to U.S. collegiate FL (foreign language) departments, stating:

> [F]oreign language departments . . . must transform their programs and structure . . . [r]eplacing the two-tiered language-literature structure with a broader and more coherent curriculum in which language, literature, and culture are taught as a continuous whole . . . will reinvigorate language departments as valuable academic units central to the humanities and to the missions of institutions of higher education. (p. 3)

Since then, the FL profession has debated these curricular recommendations. One critical area it de-emphasized was how overarching changes in collegiate FL study should influence the professional development of future professors. Its only specific recommendations were to "teach graduate students to use technology in language instruction" and "enhance and reward graduate student training" (pp. 8–9).

This lack of specificity was discussed in several subsequent publications (Allen & Negueruela-Azarola, 2010; Pfeiffer, 2008; Schectman & Koser, 2008). Among these, Pfeiffer explained that FL departments granting Ph.D. degrees are sites where "future faculty is trained and socialized into a mode of professional thinking that will have repercussions long after the current professoriate has retired," meaning any curricular transformations should require an "immediate effect on the education and professional training of graduate students" (p. 296).

Indeed, FL graduate students' professional development has gained relevance in recent years given their role as TAs (Teaching Assistants), particularly for Ph.D.-granting departments, wherein they teach half or more of first-year language courses (MLA, 2007). Although the responsibility for TA development is now typically the domain of L2 education specialists rather than literature specialists (Katz & Watzinger-Tharpe, 2005), the dominant model of teacher education has not changed: it is a pre-service workshop followed by an in-service methods course focused on "a general sense of what rudimentary communicative language teaching should be about" (Rankin, 1994, p. 25).

This model is consistent with Freeman's (1993) notion of "frontloading," or attempting to equip teachers at the outset for all they need to know and be capable of doing throughout their career. Such a model is particularly problematic for FL graduate students typically socialized into teaching in departments embodying a "language–literature dichotomy" (Kramsch, 1993, p. 7), one consequence being the view that lower-level language instruction is less difficult or sophisticated than literature instruction. In addition, two different cohorts usually teach language and literature with "minimal or nonexistent" collaboration (MLA, 2007, p. 2). According to MLA data, 80 percent of teaching assignments for TAs are in lower-level language courses, even for those in their fourth year of teaching or beyond (Steward, 2006). Although documents like the MLA Report suggest that *what* future FL professors need to know and *how* they should teach are evolving, how they learn to teach is stymied by an outdated model of professional development for which research has largely failed to document its outcomes. Among the many critical questions to answer is how professional development experiences should be structured to establish connections between theoretical knowledge and teaching practices and to integrate linguistic and literary-cultural content.

Research Design

A comparative case study was conducted to explore two graduate students' evolving understandings of *literacy* and its application to collegiate FL teaching during their first years in the classroom. The research questions included the following:

1. What roles did the participants' beliefs related to language teaching and learning play in their evolving conceptual understandings of literacy and its application to FL instruction?
2. What difficulties did they encounter when attempting to instantiate literacy-based teaching?
3. How were their efforts to carry out literacy-based teaching constrained or supported by the departmental context, curriculum, and professional development opportunities?

Theoretical Framework

Lantolf and Johnson (2007) propose foregrounding one overarching concept to challenge teachers to re-envision everyday concepts related to instruction, a recommendation consistent with other researchers' arguments that doing so is desirable to unify curricula and provide teachers with coherent notions of teaching and learning (Smagorinsky, Cook, & Johnson, 2003). The concept centered on in this study was *literacy* (Kern, 2000), chosen to challenge TAs to rethink traditional perceptions of language versus culture or literature and "productive" versus "receptive" skills, and defined as follows:

> [T]he use of socially-, historically-, and culturally-situated practices of creating and interpreting meaning through texts. It entails at least a tacit awareness of

> the relationships between textual conventions and their contexts of use and, ideally, the ability to reflect critically on those relationships . . . literacy is dynamic—not static—and variable across and within discourse communities and cultures. (Kern, 2000, p. 16)

Kern further elaborated seven principles of literacy to guide teaching practice including *interpretation*, *collaboration*, *conventions*, *cultural knowledge*, *problem solving*, *reflection and self-reflection*, and *language use*. Whereas language, conventions, and cultural knowledge represent core elements of literacy-based instruction, they are taught in conjunction with the processes of interpretation, collaboration, problem solving, and reflection. Keeping in mind the varied instructional needs of learners, the New London Group (1996) articulated four types of activities to include in literacy-based instruction—*situated practice*, *overt instruction*, *critical framing*, and *transformed practice*.

Two final notions germane to this study are conceptual and pedagogical tools. *Conceptual tools* mediate decision making for planning, instruction, and assessment and include theoretical principles, concepts, and frameworks, whereas *pedagogical tools* have more local, immediate utility and include instructional practices, strategies, and resources (Grossman, Smagorinsky, & Valencia, 1999). The distinction between the two types of tools is significant as novice teachers often encounter difficulty instantiating pedagogical applications of theoretical concepts and frameworks. Grossman et al. (1999) further posit five degrees in the process of appropriation: *lack of appropriation* (due to incomprehension, resistance, or rejection of the tool), *appropriating a tool's label* but not its features, *appropriating surface features of a tool* yet not understanding how the features contribute to a conceptual whole, *appropriating conceptual underpinnings* and being able to use the tool in new settings, and *achieving mastery* in the tool's use.

Participants

From five students in a Ph.D. program in Romance Studies recruited for an ongoing investigation, Andrea and Maria (both pseudonyms) were chosen for analysis in this study. Criteria for their selection were shared characteristics including their L1 (Spanish), lack of previous teaching experience, and time spent in the U.S. prior to the Ph.D. Andrea, 27, was raised in Puerto Rico, where she lived until age 18, until her studies at a private university in the Northeast U.S. After majoring in International Studies, Andrea completed an intensive one-year MA program in Spanish literature at the same university. She claimed to have made the decision to pursue a Ph.D. in Spanish literature to become a teacher. Two years into doctoral coursework, Andrea began specializing in contemporary Spanish Caribbean literature. She is currently a fourth-year student preparing her dissertation proposal. Maria, 26, was raised in Cuba, where she lived until age 16 before moving to the Southern U.S. with her family. She completed her undergraduate studies, double-majoring in Spanish and Biology, at the same private university in the Southern U.S. where she later enrolled in her Ph.D. program. Maria said that she

had chosen to pursue her Ph.D. based on a passion for literature. Two years after starting her Ph.D., she began specializing in the contemporary Spanish novel. Like Andrea, Maria is now a fourth-year Ph.D. student writing her dissertation proposal.

Teaching Context

During the participants' first year of Ph.D. coursework, they completed a required pre-service pedagogy seminar (hereafter the "methods" seminar). Given the communicative nature of lower-level courses and materials used, concepts related to several approaches (communicative language teaching, literacy-based teaching, task-based instruction) were introduced. Conceptual tools of literacy introduced included the seven principles of literacy (Kern, 2000) and the four curricular components (New London Group, 1996). Course requirements included a written assessment of key concepts, an analysis of the textbook, peer microteaching and classroom teaching, and materials for one instructional unit. In their third year of the program, both participants enrolled in an optional seminar on literacy and advanced FL teaching (hereafter the "literacy" seminar). This course focused on instructional design for advanced FL courses and culminated with a project requiring students to design a syllabus and sample unit for an advanced undergraduate course in literature or cultural studies. Conceptual tools introduced included design of meaning, available designs, the four curricular components and the seven principles of literacy. Examples of pedagogical tools of literacy introduced were reading matrix, journal writing, graphic organizer, directed-reading-thinking activity, and semantic mapping.

Regarding their teaching trajectories, beginning in their second year of Ph.D. coursework, Andrea and Maria taught Elementary Spanish and participated in teaching workshops, ongoing observations of teaching by the Spanish language program director (LPD), and monthly course coordination meetings. Andrea, having completed an optional seminar on bilingualism, had the opportunity during her third year to teach elementary Spanish for heritage speakers. During their fourth year, Andrea co-taught two different third-year Spanish language courses with two tenured faculty members whereas Maria taught an early intermediate Spanish course the first term and co-taught a third-year Spanish literature course with a tenure-track faculty member the second term.

Data Collection

Multiple data sources were collected over three years, beginning with the methods seminar, and ending at the start of the participants' sixth term of teaching. To gain a firsthand sense of their perspectives on learning to teach, three primary data sources were collected—interviews, written narratives, and teaching artifacts. Secondary data included participants' demographic profiles and students' evaluations of teaching.

Among primary data sources, semi-structured interviews, digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim, were conducted five times—at the methods seminar's end, twice during the participants' first year of teaching, before and after the literacy seminar, and at the conclusion of the participants' most recent semester of teaching. Written narratives included language-learning autobiographies, self-evaluations, statements of teaching philosophy, discussion board postings from the methods seminar, and reading reaction journals from the literacy seminar. Teaching artifacts included materials developed in both seminars (e.g., model instructional sequences, sample unit, and syllabus project) and lesson plans.

Data Analysis

Analysis of data began with careful reading of transcribed interviews and written narratives. Next, each reference in interview and narrative data to conceptual tools of literacy (the seven principles of literacy and four curricular components) or their practical instantiations as pedagogical tools was coded as one *meaning unit* with each labeled with a code name based on the theme expressed. Thus, a meaning unit neither fragmented one idea into meaningless truncated segments nor confused it with other ideas expressing different themes (Ratner, 2002). If more than one theme was expressed within the same phrase, it was coded twice. Initial thematic codes were established and then revised, a recursive process leading to re-coding several times. Codes were compared and then clustered based on thematic resemblance into coding categories. The final analysis included five coding categories: conceptual tools, pedagogical tools, beliefs about teaching and learning, affordances, and constraints. In certain cases, a code was coded under more than one category (e.g., textbook as both *pedagogical tool* and *constraint*). Among these categories, the first two contained the greatest number of codes.

Next, teaching artifacts such as lesson plans were analyzed for ways in which the participants attempted to instantiate literacy-based instruction at certain points along their trajectory as new teachers in comparison with their narratives. I sought to determine whether alignment was seen between what participants said regarding conceptual tools guiding their teaching practices and whether conceptual understanding was translated into pedagogical tools. As such, the study attempted to go beyond relying wholly on *subject reality* (Pavlenko, 2007), i.e., participants' thoughts and feelings on teaching and professional development, the curriculum, and the local context, to gain a deeper understanding of how participants appropriated, reconstructed, and transformed their teaching activity in light of affordances and constraints present.

Findings

Andrea

Notions of literacy during pre-service professional development. Even before being introduced to literacy-based teaching, Andrea's discussion board postings from the

methods seminar revealed her everyday concepts of language learning. In one posting, she described learning Italian in college as "very frustrating," and, based on that, said teachers should avoid "infantilizing" students or "depend[ing] solely on the [text]book." Without positing a preferred approach, she wrote, "How can we make beginning FL courses intellectually exciting when it's a language where the student has had absolutely no encounter with?" Thus, the way that Andrea wrote about language learning was based on her own lived experiences rather than scientific concepts.

Several weeks later, she defined literacy in her midterm exam:

> [N]ot merely alphabetization . . . a much more holistic approach towards language learning. In literacy the objective is to have students be able to understand not only words as a sequence but rather creating meaning through language and in language . . . the why, let's say, of choosing certain words in certain occasions and the conventions that allow this to occur or not occur. (2/14/2007)

This response demonstrates that Andrea had begun moving from an everyday notion of literacy to describing several features of literacy-based instruction, including focus on meaningful *language use* and *conventions* informing communication, both principles of literacy as defined by Kern (2000).

Andrea's initial belief in avoiding over-reliance on textbook materials was underscored in a written evaluation of the Spanish textbook. She criticized its separation of communication from grammar and lack of being "rooted in any specific cultural context," stating, "If my goal is to develop my students' FL literacy, I think the book itself is very generic . . . [exercises] seem drill-like and self-referential." These comments point to Andrea's notion of literacy as focused on meaningful, situated language versus the textbook's "generic" language. Further, this was the first instance in the data where Andrea used the concept of literacy to name her own teaching activity and describe the object orienting it.

In the second half of the methods seminar, Andrea was exposed to the real challenges of text-based instruction when she taught an Elementary Spanish class as a course requirement. In a written self-reflection on the session she had taught, she said,

> The students were taken aback by the fact that they were being asked to actually read an article that was geared towards native speakers. Once I explained to them that they didn't have to understand EVERYTHING, just the major points . . . they calmed down. The text was challenging, but I think they all got something out of it. (4/9/2007)

Andrea's comments reveal that her zeal for using texts was not mirrored in students' reactions. The dissonance between her enthusiasm and their surprise did not hamper Andrea but underscored the importance of communicating realistic expectations to students and validated her belief in the viability of literacy-based instruction.

We see an echo of her classroom experience described above in her statement of teaching philosophy:

> Authentic materials expose students to discourses, different genres, and different registers . . . Whether the lesson is focused on grammar, vocabulary, interpretative communication, classroom activities should be structured around these authentic materials . . . it is not the text that plays a role in what students understand, but rather how the students are guided and the strategies they are given to approach a text. (5/4/2007)

These comments reveal that Andrea has moved beyond her initial everyday concepts of FL learning, linking them to scientific concepts of literacy. Further, she now focuses on modes of engagement literacy involvement for students as facilitated by the teacher. Not evident in her comments was how literacy is instantiated and which tools and resources beyond texts facilitate it.

First experiences as a teacher. A week before starting to teach, Andrea was ambivalent about carrying out literacy-based instruction, stating in an interview that students' "intellectual skills are a lot higher than their linguistic skills." She admitted, "I'm not sure exactly how to go about it." A month later, she described a lesson for the next day:

> The goal is speaking about likes and dislikes through what Spaniards like, how they use their time during the weekend . . . It is a little challenging, because it doesn't use like and dislike too much here, but I didn't just want to spoon feed them. (Interview, 9/13/2007)

Andrea explained that the lesson centered on a two-page article on Spaniards' preferred weekend hobbies, a text she worried might produce an "initial shock" for students. To avoid this, she planned to ask students to read and summarize a short portion of the reading, assigning various paragraphs to different students. When reflecting afterwards, Andrea was surprised the lesson had gone "so smoothly" but mentioned a new concern:

> It was on the habits of Spaniards and only maybe two of them picked it up . . . everybody else was, like, vocabulary or grammar . . . they really reacted like that was the main point of the lesson, which I thought was strange. I don't know if it has to do with them not perceiving culture as part of a Spanish class? (Interview, 9/17/2007)

She brought up the situation with her Spanish LPD, asking for alternative courses of action. Later that term, on the basis of his suggestion to clearly state cultural objectives at the start of each class, she claimed to "lay it out explicitly" what her cultural objectives were, something she found helpful in raising students' consciousness of her focus.

This episode demonstrates how Andrea, in attempting to instantiate literacy-based teaching, reacted to the unforeseen dilemma of a reading being perceived as a mere vehicle for learning the verb *gustar*. Given her goal to teach meaningful language use through texts, Andrea thought students might feel overwhelmed linguistically but never foresaw their disregarding cultural elements. Yet the confusion and disappointment emerging from this incident served as a catalyst for Andrea's development as a teacher, supported through dialogic engagement with her LPD and needed cognitive assistance that pushed her to mediate her students' learning experiences more explicitly. Thus, a potentially disheartening formative experience helped Andrea to formulate a new strategy for literacy-based teaching.

Constraints to instantiating literacy-based teaching. Andrea's language program was in transition during her first years of teaching, something she experienced as a series of contradictions, including the textbook she nearly disregarded as a pedagogical tool and a "balancing act" she found between "how I want [students] to learn and how they are evaluated." (11/8/07) Because most Spanish instructors were adjunct faculty who did not learn about literacy in formal coursework, standardized exams that were created by TAs and adjuncts together were a site of struggle, with frequent disagreements as to what should be assessed and how.

For Andrea, having to administer an exam including multiple-choice questions and low-frequency vocabulary made her "very angry." Instead, she wanted open-ended prompts, which she viewed as more consistent with "what you do when you communicate" in reality. She described her resulting actions as follows:

> I kind of took over . . . When it was my turn to create the exam it was very sort of literacy-based . . . about them taking a trip to Peru, it was the geography and environment chapter, so there was a picture of different areas, they had to fill in blanks to say what area they wanted to work in and why and sort of send a letter of application. So I created my exam in the way I wanted and everybody had to use it. (Interview, 1/21/2009)

When pressed as to how others had reacted, she said her LPD being "so excited about my exam" did not "leave any room for questioning," and afterwards, students' success on the exam showed her colleagues "this can work . . . they can do it."

Whereas Andrea's effort to create a literacy-based exam may have resulted in some shifts in her colleagues' take on assessment, convincing them to put texts at the forefront was a greater challenge. In an interview, Andrea explained that after attending a summer conference on integrating technology in teaching, she and another TA led a workshop on using film in FL courses. Andrea recalled her colleagues' skepticism when she projected a film short on a Muslim student deciding whether to remove her veil in a Spanish school, as they made comments like "There is so much dialogue in that!" and "You'd have to do so much work to introduce that." In response, Andrea told them to "have a little faith in [students]" and that a film-based lesson's success depended on asking appropriate questions to guide viewing and interpretation.

These examples reveal how Andrea positioned herself in respect to her colleagues, even when norms of instruction and assessment and beliefs about language of more experienced teachers were incongruous with her views. While Andrea demonstrated individual agency in externalizing her own understandings of teaching to others and in challenging them to rethink their own practices, she was not acting alone—in both instances, she received assistance from others including her LPD and her colleague who led the workshop with Andrea, essential forms of support in validating her emerging conceptions of literacy-based teaching. Further, she was receiving consistently high evaluations of teaching from students and, in response, she said, "They find it demanding and challenging . . . they never say 'if I just read the book it would have been the same thing.'" Andrea's longstanding belief in teaching beyond the textbook was thus reinforced, and despite numerous contradictions to her instructional priorities, her motive remained focused on literacy-based instruction.

Developing notions of literacy during in-service professional development. In Andrea's third year of teaching, she participated in the literacy seminar. Theoretical readings on literacy and designing a Spanish cultural studies syllabus provided opportunities for further conceptual development and reconstruction of her teaching practices. An example of the degree to which she viewed literacy theory as relevant to her teaching can be found in one interview in which Andrea mentioned four different course readings, one (Kern, 2000) in four separate responses to interview questions. As she explained in a written reflection at mid-semester, "I had an idea of what literacy-based teaching was [but] it has become much more coherent." She added that whereas before she saw literacy as primarily linguistic, she now viewed it as "cognitive, linguistic, and sociocultural." In this regard, Andrea visibly shows a fuller grasp of how various features of literacy contribute to a conceptual whole, a new understanding she constructed using relevant constructs from course readings.

Evidence is seen around mid-semester of how Andrea was now thinking *through* literacy in concrete ways to teach. In a written reflection, she stated, "I have already incorporated the *reading matrix* in the course as well as the *four curricular components* . . . I am much more aware of the way my students create language from *Available Designs.*" Having learned about the matrix in a course reading, Andrea demonstrated its use in a presentation she made in class and began using it afterwards. She elaborated on this later, saying,

> I realized that a lot of them knew the meanings of words but couldn't put them together. It was very hard for them to understand how one sentence led into another . . . [Matrices are] a really good way to walk them through something, leaving the questions very open but very structured. (Interview, 5/5/2009)

These comments suggest that after multiple opportunities in the literacy seminar to learn about this pedagogical tool and receive assistance from her instructor and peers on its use, Andrea identified a specific difficulty that her students confronted,

driving her to try the reading matrix. Andrea's interactions with her own students and recognition of their struggles to construct textual meaning facilitated her trying the reading matrix, which became a psychological tool for Andrea to think about structuring literacy-based instruction. Further, this is an illustration of how she demonstrated a more advanced level of appropriation, i.e., *appropriating conceptual underpinnings of the tool*, and using it in a new context to solve new problems.

Andrea also stated that the syllabus project had been a critical force in pushing her to distill her understandings of literacy and "make ideas, the idea, of Kern concrete . . . articulating them in a way that it's approachable, it's not all jargon." Several times, Andrea contacted me to discuss and revise her course goals and objectives, a process that she struggled with, eventually adopting the notion of the three modes of communication as a way to incorporate *integrated* linguistic modalities, a key element of Kern's (2000) conception of literacy. As she described,

> Just setting up the goals and objectives helped me to think about my ideas about language . . . but staying away from a four-skills approach and articulating it in a literacy vocabulary, that was very hard. Every time I wrote something, I immediately knew whether it was consistent with a literacy approach or not. (Interview, 5/5/2009)

Andrea's reflections provide evidence that the project challenged her to think through literacy at a level more abstract than lesson planning, something she found difficult, requiring several reformulations of her syllabus, which she chose to do in dialogic mediation with her instructor. Further, meshing the National Standards' construct of modes of communication with her literacy-based goals and objectives displays how Andrea did not simply appropriate concepts of literacy scholars but populated them with her own intentions and interpretations. For example, her linguistic objectives were formulated in part as follows in her course syllabus: "[T]his course will . . . develop students' ability to exchange, support, and discuss their opinions and perspectives on topics dealing with contemporary and historical issues of the Spanish Caribbean." Rather than focusing on speaking as an isolated skill, Andrea elaborates an objective related to the *presentational* mode of communication and infuses it with principles of literacy including *collaboration*, *cultural knowledge*, and meaningful *language use*.

Maria

Notions of literacy during pre-service professional development. Maria's early discussion board postings from the methods seminar centered on constructing teaching for "different types of learners." In one, she wrote:

> Since every student has a different way to learn and respond to what is being taught . . . an eclectic class (in which a combination of several approaches is used at the same time) would be most effective . . . a possible combination could be students [using] the textbook along with some visual and auditory

> aids. This can also include communication and learning grammar and vocabulary inductively. (1/31/2007)

Her belief in eclecticism had strong implications for how Maria positioned herself vis-à-vis literacy given her reluctance to embrace any one approach. In the following weeks, the instructional materials Maria created showed attempts to combine approaches and relied primarily on textbook exercises. In a written evaluation of the Spanish textbook, she praised its use of "several methods and approaches" and concluded that its shortcomings "can be overcome with the imagination, creativity and consciousness" of the instructor. Maria evidenced difficulty understanding several concepts introduced in the seminar, for example, writing several times about the "sociocultural approach," which she seemed to equate with including cultural elements in teaching. In her midterm exam, Maria provided problematic responses for how "communicative language teaching" and "sociocultural perspective on language learning" relate to instruction. Thus, it is not surprising that she wrote in a discussion board posting around that time, "I am confused with so many theories going on at the same time." Despite wanting to embrace eclecticism, Maria felt confusion as she attempted to make sense of her teaching by combining disparate concepts from various theories and approaches.

Maria wrote in her end of semester teaching philosophy that the choice of approach should depend on "the class's needs and interests." She also stated, "As a teacher, I will situate myself in the middle of the two extremes: literacy-based approach and communicative approach." These comments suggest that although Maria *appropriated a tool's label* for several concepts related to FL teaching, she did not demonstrate awareness of their features or how to align them with pedagogical tools. Unlike Andrea, who appeared to internalize a view of literacy and CLT as complementary approaches, Maria seemed to view them as opposites. Although data from the methods seminar did not provide a clear explanation for *why* this was the case, when asked about it in a later interview, she replied, "[T]he book has a more communicative approach but it never talked about the literacy approach . . . at that time I was not able to make clear connections." This statement implies that lack of alignment between the textbook's approach and literacy-based instruction was one element that made it difficult for the concept of literacy to cohere for Maria.

First experiences as a FL teacher. Just before beginning teaching, Maria described her instructional goals as "not giving priority to anything but everything," naming several "tools I learned from the methodology class" as important—authentic texts, inductive grammar lessons, and contextualized vocabulary presentations. Although Maria named texts as one pedagogical tool she planned to use, her first priority seemed to be teaching structural aspects of Spanish. In an interview a month later, she explained that she organized her teaching to "cover the most important things first . . . grammar points that I consider kind of hard." This outlook was evident in a lesson she taught on pastimes using a Powerpoint of images representing her weekend. Maria explained, "The main goal is that students learn how to use *me*

gusta, that they know how to conjugate it, that they know how to use the infinitive." Afterwards, she wrote in a self-reflection that she was pleased that "students were able to understand the grammatical point [and] were able to make verb conjugations correctly."

This episode provides both a contrasting counterpart to Andrea's lesson on expressing likes and dislikes based on a text and an illustration of how Maria tried combining various pedagogical tools, i.e., contextualized vocabulary presentation and inductive grammar presentation. Although alignment is, in fact, seen in her stated goals and strategies to carry it out, the lesson could not be construed as literacy-based. Further, Maria did not articulate functional or cultural objectives as per the lesson plan template but instead fashioned grammatical objectives.

Later that term, in an interview, Maria described a lesson on expressing future plans she created using the song "Como Quisiera." As a comprehension check, she planned to have students fill in blanks in the lyrics as they listened to the song. When her LPD asked if an interpretive activity would follow, she responded "I couldn't think of anything that would work." Even when he drew her attention to interesting metaphoric language in the song, she had difficulty brainstorming ways to use it, finally offering a partner interview on future plans for the winter holidays as a possibility.

We thus see Maria attempting to carry out text-based instruction, yet failing to grasp the conceptual underpinnings of literacy or their pedagogical implications. The song served as a prop for focusing on grammar. Her omission of a meaning-focused activity and struggle to plan one, even during dialogic mediation by her LPD, underscores that her teaching was not yet oriented toward literacy.

Constraints to instantiating literacy-based teaching. During Maria's first two years of teaching, she received inconstant student evaluations, ranging from fair to good. She said during an interview that teaching Elementary Spanish One and Two twice each allowed her to "go back, sit, and think [about] what did and did not work and why are these things are not working." When pressed to elaborate, Maria explained that she had grown dissatisfied with the textbook, saying,

> Sometimes you have to create your own materials based on your students' needs . . . I teach the main ideas of the chapters but I try to change the activities. Some chapters, I don't think they are authentic at all . . . the cultural aspects of the book are not engaging. (Interview, 1/21/2009)

This view pushed her to "introduce [texts] more and more." She mentioned that a recent student evaluation of her teaching read, "She's not using the book and that's very good." As with Andrea, this was an important confirmation for Maria that going beyond the textbook was positively received by students. Whereas Maria continued describing her approach as "eclectic" at that time, involving pedagogical tools including TPR, visual aids, videos from Youtube, written texts, and inductive grammar lessons, she referred much more often to texts' role in her teaching and the inclusion of culture, even within inductive grammar lessons.

Maria's shifting view of the textbook, from thinking that it would be an important resource to her later realization of its inauthenticity suggests that continued reflection on the textbook and her students' perceptions of it pushed her to rethink her teaching practices and how she constructed students' language learning. While still not *appropriating conceptual underpinnings of literacy*, Maria was beginning to come to terms with the contradiction between her goal to meet students' needs and interests while becoming increasingly disenchanted with the tool of the textbook.

Developing conceptual notions of literacy during in-service professional development. Given Maria's evolving conceptions of teaching and openness to trying new tools and strategies, she enrolled in the literacy seminar. Yet initially, based on several theoretical readings and in-class discussions, she questioned literacy-based instruction's viability, writing that it could make learning more "dynamic and meaningful" but was "challenging for instructors" (Week Four Reflection), "very difficult to implement" (Week Five Reflection), and "requires more efforts from the instructors and the students" (Week Six Reflection). Maria seemed to struggle in deciding whether to orient her teaching more toward literacy as she gained awareness of the effort required of her as a teacher to transform how and what was taught.

Nonetheless, by semester's mid-point, Maria's written reflections pointed to shifts in her understanding of literacy: "[Before] I had a notion-definition-abstract idea about literacy . . . I was not able to make concrete in [my] courses . . . I was able to do some components of literacy, but not as integrated and a continuum as Kern explains." She later explained in an interview, wherein she compared her current understandings with her earlier ones: "We had this definition, we had examples . . . I was more concerned about trying to fit in all my lessons than to think about [literacy]." Her comments suggest that in addition to Maria's initial *lack of appropriation* of the concept of literacy based on incomprehension of its features and applications, her preoccupations as a new teacher were focused on daily pragmatic aspects of teaching (i.e., textbook-dictated coverage), a fact that she later acknowledged.

A few weeks later, after demonstrating a literacy-based lesson for seminar peers and watching and critiquing others' presentations, Maria began experimenting with what she called in a later interview "using some of Kern's ideas" by implementing the four curricular components, as she had done in her presentation, which she said left "more room to be creative." For example, she described redesigning a cultural project, typically prepared by students outside class, to span several class sessions:

> The first part was overt instruction. I explained everything they had to do, to support their research with facts, details, provide me a bibliography, I gave them the idea of this transformed practice, so they [had] to pick a topic, they [had] to do this critical framing—give me these sociocultural and political facts but then go further in the investigation . . . They had an oral presentation in

> which they had to defend their ideas and present an argument . . . they would come to me for feedback and I asked them to feedback each other, and we had a general discussion after the presentations . . . it turned out that they all liked it . . . Their comments were "at the beginning I didn't know what I was doing and I was kind of afraid, this was new . . . but because we had a lot of help and guidance, we were able to do it." (Interview, 5/5/2009)

This passage provides the first evidence of Maria describing specific conceptual tools of literacy to name her teaching practices, and, going beyond merely *appropriating a tool's label*, she uses several tools of literacy to reorient her students' modes of engagement with the cultural project. She explained how the New London Group's (1996) curricular components provided an organizational framework to better scaffold the project's components, facilitated more feedback for and between students, and led to more *collaboration* and *meaningful language use*, themselves principles of literacy elaborated by Kern (2000). Maria further explained in a post-seminar interview that the way the literacy seminar's final project had been organized had served as a sort of model that got her thinking of redesigning her student's project.

A semester later, Maria explained a second way that she had used literacy-based pedagogy to restructure her teaching in relation to an oral assessment she viewed as "memorizing the lines" and "not authentic at all." She approached her LPD with a proposal to redesign it as an in-class debate. As Maria described in an interview,

> They have to watch the movie . . . and I give them a list of discussion topics. I don't tell them which one is the target one, but they all connect at some point. I give them a word bank with the main social issues, and I tell them grammar objectives, so they still need to produce, you know? But they are not going to memorize something . . . [It's] a class debate, but it's not a one-on-one thing, so everybody is trying to talk. (12/03/2009)

This episode shows how Maria demonstrated agency in realigning her teaching toward literacy. Whereas in previous semesters, she did not find the oral assessment problematic, according to her statements, her conceptions of teaching and learning had shifted, motivating her to use new pedagogical tools (e.g., movie, word bank) and modes of engagement and interaction. Further, grammar and vocabulary are no longer at the forefront but are tools to facilitate students' meaningful interaction in Spanish.

Discussion

The findings in this study illustrate that the "twisting path" (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 156) of concept development experienced by two first-time teachers of Spanish as evidence of the ability to think through concepts of literacy in structuring teaching practices did not emerge for either participant until four semesters after they started teaching. This demonstrates what a gradual and often difficult process teachers'

conceptual development is, requiring multiple, sustained opportunities for dialogic mediating, scaffolded learning, and assisted performance (Johnson, 2009).

The findings also provide evidence that whereas everyday notions of language learning and teaching and daily pragmatic concerns dominated participants' early semesters in the classroom, their thinking about teaching and the ways in which they claimed to construct their teaching practices gradually integrated conceptual underpinnings and pedagogical applications of literacy. Catalysts that facilitated that development included both constraints faced in the participants' local setting and affordances related to their professional development experiences.

The participants encountered two major constraints to instantiating literacy-based teaching. The first was grappling with the contradiction between the approach of the textbook and principles of literacy-based teaching. This was a struggle particularly for Maria, who initially thought the textbook would be useful but later discovered that neither she nor her students found it authentic or engaging. Her evolving mindset regarding the usefulness of the textbook as a pedagogical tool also highlights the mediating role of students' own intentions and behaviors in shaping teachers' cognitions. The influence of students' beliefs and reactions to teaching practices also mediated Andrea's cognitions and constructions of teaching, as demonstrated by the episode when students did not view culture as an appropriate instructional focus.

The second constraint that participants faced was a lack of alignment between literacy-based instruction and assessments designed at times by colleagues who did not hold the same concept of literacy-based teaching. For both participants—albeit at different points in their developmental trajectories—perceived curricular limitations led them to exercise agency in modeling literacy-based assessment and examples of how to instantiate text-based instruction. In this way, not only did conceptual and pedagogical tools of literacy reshape the participants' teaching practices, tools they created had a potential spin-off effect in their local setting, challenging their colleagues' traditional notions of language teaching and learning. In this sense, novice teachers *can* serve as agents of change and models of how to translate theoretical concepts into meaningful classroom practices. This is particularly heartening for university FL departments wherein LPDs often feel like the "lone" force driving curricular change and carrying out professional development.

Finally, the findings in this study illustrate several ways in which participants' conceptual development was supported by their participation in dialogic mediation, scaffolded learning, and assisted performance with others, both peers and "experts." Although course readings on literacy theory, particularly in the second seminar, provided valuable opportunities for participants to more fully grasp conceptual underpinnings of literacy, presenting a literacy-based lesson to peers and designing a literacy-based syllabus were the activities that participants viewed as most useful for learning to instantiate literacy-based teaching and, eventually, applying tools of literacy-based teaching to their own instructional dilemmas. Beyond the TAs' participation in two pedagogy seminars, ongoing dialogic mediation with their LPD represented another valuable affordance, both

in helping them rethink and reconstruct their teaching practices and in validating their agency and decision-making in relation to literacy-based assessment.

Given new understandings of literacy and transformations in teaching practices emerging during and after the literacy seminar, this study demonstrates the value of expanding formal pedagogy instruction for FL graduate students beyond the methods course and focusing on one framing construct relevant to language and literary-cultural teaching. Given financial and structural constraints in higher education today, this should be viewed as one possible form conceptually driven TA professional development might take. In addition, LPDs should maximize existent forms of professional development (e.g., the methods seminar, TA observations) and articulate alternative means of supporting conceptual growth. This continued focus on conceptually driven, literacy-based TA education and further study of its outcomes can bring about a recognition that enhancing graduate student professional development is the first step in dismantling the language–literature divide and transforming the nature of teaching in tomorrow's FL departments.

Chapter 7

Synthesizing the Academic and the Everyday

A Chinese Teacher's Developing Conceptualization of Literacy

Gretchen Nauman
Yanshan University, Qinhuangdao China

Viewing inservice teachers as a part of their instructional system allows teacher educators and teachers to better utilize the resources available locally, both those in teachers' own experiences and in their instructional contexts, to promote professional development. This view, however, has not been evident in many professional development initiatives in English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts, where new theories or pedagogical innovations are presented in a lecture-style workshop (Guefrachi & Troudi, 2000; Parrott, 1993) and without knowledge of the local context (Dubin & Wong, 1990). This "jug-and-mug approach" (Parrott, 1993) assumes that theoretical and pedagogical innovations, often coming from outside of a teacher's immediate context and experience, are learned through the process of being poured into inservice teachers. Despite the prevalence of this professional development approach, research in second language teacher education suggests that teacher development assists teachers to the extent that it links new teaching approaches to a teacher's instructional context (Au, 1990; Martin, 1993).

Sociocultural theory offers a framework for supporting inservice teachers' development which mediates the tension between innovations originating from outside the teaching context and local teaching practices through developing *true concepts*. True concepts develop as scientific (abstract) concepts are linked with everyday (experiential) concepts. Equipping teachers with such concepts, which may be enacted differently according to the context, enhances teachers' professional abilities, preparing them to manage the inevitable changes in their work environments, such as changes in student populations, textbooks and academic requirements, as well as mandated reforms.

This chapter explores how a sociocultural understanding of concepts can be used to mediate teacher development in the design of a professional development seminar and as a framework to examine teacher learning. Specifically, it describes the arrangement of a seminar that introduced a new concept of literacy to Chinese teachers of English, and traces the ways in which the varied activities in the seminar mediated the uneven development of the concept in the case of one teacher.

A New Concept for Chinese Teachers: Literacy as Communication

An understanding of the local setting is crucial for introducing a new concept so that it can be integrated into the existing material and conceptual structures. In China, the setting for this study, numerous tensions surround the teaching of English due to the importance society attaches to English and the rapidly changing circumstances surrounding the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), including changes in curriculum and exams, that have brought changing constraints and resources (Jin & Cortazzi, 1998; Nunan, 2003).

One of the recurring questions in EFL in China is why communicative language teaching (CLT), though promoted by the government,[1] has not been widely adopted (Barkhuizen, 2009; Burnaby & Sun, 1989; Hu, 2005a; Ouyang, 2000). Several factors can be conjectured. First, students and teachers may still be influenced by the previous style of discrete knowledge-oriented examinations. Another factor seems to be that CLT has been perceived as focused on improving *spoken* English (Shu, 2004 cited in Xu, 2006; Wu & Fang, 2002), whereas Chinese education has traditionally valued learning through *reading* texts; additionally, spoken English abilities are not often tested on exams and most Chinese do not anticipate having opportunities to speak English with non-Chinese speakers (Rao, 2002; Yang, 2006). Furthermore, CLT has been introduced as the use of particular techniques which are not easily applied to Chinese settings (e.g. because of large class sizes) or consistent with Chinese sensibilities (e.g. the teachers' roles as experts) (Burnaby & Sun, 1989; Gu, 2005; Hu, 2005a; Ouyang, 2000).

The goal of enhancing students' communicative abilities in English, however, is not necessarily in conflict with acknowledging the value of texts as a resource for language learning. In China, written texts are the most accessible source of English. An exclusive focus on learning *about* language is not entailed by the study of texts, but rather derives from the teachers' and students' understanding of what language learning is and what texts are. A communicative framework for teaching texts, allowing that learning language is both knowing *about* the language as well as knowing how to *use* the language, offers a solution to the tension of goals of enhancing students' communicative abilities and using texts, a locally valued resource.

Kern (2000) offers an approach to teaching foreign language which appears suitable to Chinese EFL because he frames reading and writing activities as literacy activities that are communicative. He further defines literacy, through seven principles, as being collaborative, interpretive, and involving conventions, cultural knowledge, problem solving, reflection and self-reflection, and language use. Because Kern's approach links the local resource of studying texts with the new goal of increasing communicative abilities, it was chosen as a valuable concept to share with Chinese teachers in this study.

The multiple links making a true concept valuable include various supporting or subordinate concepts which elaborate the meaning of the concept. The core concept in this study is Kern's claim that *literacy involves communication* which in

the seminar was linked to other scientific pedagogical and linguistic concepts (e.g. the role of goals in learning and teaching, and Kern's Available Designs as a multifaceted view of language). Additionally subordinate concepts, such as Kern's seven principles, further defined the nature of the core concept. In this chapter I will examine the development of Kern's principle that *literacy involves interpretation*, as a key subordinate concept to the core concept that *literacy involves communication*.

Planning the Use of the New Concept to Mediate Teacher Learning

In order to mediate teachers' learning of the new concept *literacy involves communication*, I initiated a weekly seminar for interested teachers at the university in which I was working.

In the first term, the goal of the seminar was to help the L2 teachers become familiar with the core concept *literacy involves communication*, and a number of supporting concepts from Kern. The specific activities of seminar meetings varied from week to week, utilizing a variety of teaching and learning techniques, usually including reading and discussion activities, with occasional writing activities. The goal of the activities was to both enhance the teachers' learning and to allow them to experience how the core concept could be enacted in instructional techniques. Most of the texts the group read in the early part of the seminar were excerpts from Kern to present the central scientific concept, while later readings used for comparative purposes were journal articles related to either teaching and learning in China or the teaching of foreign language literacy.[2] Discussions were used to link concepts to the practical realities of teachers' classrooms: in the most extensive and systematic of these discussions each teacher gave a presentation of a teaching activity that he/she had used in classroom instruction and we discussed how each one related to Kern's ideas. Teachers were frequently asked to reflect on their teaching and how it related to Kern's concept in both discussion and in writing. At the end of the first term, each teacher wrote a final project which integrated a topic from his/her own research or teaching interest with the topic of literacy.

The goal of the second term was to discuss the concept of *literacy involves communication* in several focal areas, such as setting learning goals and teaching writing. In these areas we focused on details of teaching techniques, such as setting goals over a two-year period and giving feedback on writing, to better facilitate the teachers' development of true concepts. In this term the seminar met every other week, to give teachers more time for some "hands-on projects," such as analyzing a text for voices, practicing genre analysis, and surveying the techniques they used in teaching reading, and eight teachers attended the seven seminar meetings. The focal areas were chosen by the researcher either as strategic to linking scientific concepts to teachers' classrooms (such as goal setting) or in response to teachers' expressed needs (such as giving feedback on written work).

Method for Examining Development of a New Concept

Although ten teachers participated in the study, this chapter focuses on one of the teachers, a young woman given the pseudonym of Ao. Ao was in her fourth year of teaching and was at that time also beginning to work on an MA degree in her spare time. The data included all the written and spoken materials produced in the seminar (audio and videorecorded and transcribed), two interviews with Ao at the beginning and end of the term, and observations of her classroom instruction. All of Ao's written work was also examined for indications of her concepts.

Observations of Ao's classes were an important way for me to to see how the new concept was used in her instruction. The observations were carried out in sequential classes, so that the flow of teaching over a two- to three-week period could be examined. Then a set of two or three observations was followed by a debriefing interview. These observation sets were carried out three times: early in the first term of the study, and at the end of both the first and second terms. The debriefing interviews, totaling three, were used to clarify the content of the classroom interactions and to allow Ao to voice her conceptualizations involved in the activities of the class.

The overall approach used to analyze the data was inductive (Creswell, 1998) aiming to find the meanings that participants had given to their verbal expressions (Spradley, 1979). First, key data were transcribed, and I noted observations on those transcriptions as well as on other data which could not be transcribed in its entirety. After examining the general seminar data for themes and instances of mediation, individual participants' data were analyzed for indications of conceptual development of the new concept through specifically examining the development of Kern's seven principles. Then, the reoccurring themes in participants' discourse (e.g. teaching goals, purposes for reading, role of translation) were identified in order to give a context for the analysis of particular pieces of data. The discourse and instructional activities of each teacher were repeatedly examined for how they revealed the teacher's concept of literacy. The constant comparative method was used (Goetz & LeCompte, 1981; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), identifying patterns and themes that came from the data which were then compared and coded into tentative conceptual categories (Erickson, 1973).

An analysis of Ao's conceptual development is presented here because she was one of the teachers in whom the new concept began emerging through her teaching activities and reflection on them. Ao did not seem to have the most developed concept at the end of the study, but through examining her case, we can see aspects of the process of conceptual development.

Findings

The Development of Ao's Understanding that Literacy Involves Communication

Ao's overall development of the concept of *literacy involving communication* was uneven, with different paths of development found among the seven principles,

similar to what was found in Smagorinsky, Cook, & Johnson (2003). However, her overall development with regard to Kern's principles showed increased understanding of all of them at least verbally, and she integrated aspects of half of them into her teaching in ways appropriately situated to her classroom instruction. The following analysis exemplifies Ao's development through examining the subordinate concept *literacy involves interpretation*, and in particular how she linked this to both scientific and everyday concepts.

Initially Ao had little knowledge of Kern's scientific concept presented in the seminar, but she had some everyday concepts which included aspects of the concept *literacy involves communication*. Before the seminar, Ao had little formal exposure to the concept of literacy as a social activity: for her, as for other teachers, the word/concept "literacy" was almost completely new. On the first day of the seminar when I asked the teachers to articulate their everyday concepts of reading and writing ("write your definition of what you think reading is") Ao unexpectedly defined reading as a communicative activity connected with new information and cultures: "**reading is to communicate with the writer** and learn something new, some new information, new culture" (Ao, Sem.1, 3/11/08).[3] Ao's description of reading as a communicative activity came before any presentation of Kern's ideas. Later, in her interview, Ao's description of her personal approach to reading was consistent with this statement that she understood reading to be a type of communication with the author. Neither Ao's discourse nor her classroom instruction in the first month of the study showed this concept to be further articulated nor strongly linked to other concepts or to her teaching activity, so it is likely it was an everyday concept.

To show the development of Ao's principle of *literacy involves interpretation*, it is helpful to see how various components of the principle developed. Kern's statement that *literacy involves interpretation* includes two aspects: readers are interpreting an author's writing, and the author is interpreting the world (Kern, 2000). Additionally, both these aspects assume a third subordinate concept: different interpretations of a text are possible, though some interpretations can be seen as being more consistent with the text than others.

Development of the Subordinate Concept "Different Interpretations May Exist"

Ao was able to verbalize the idea that different readers may come to different interpretations early in the study. This understanding was closely tied to her personal experiences, for example being unsure of her understanding of a foreign teacher's questions and instructions, which was not new for her.[4]

> . . . I know each of the words here [in the written assignment] perfectly but I feel uncertain about the answers because I am not sure if my answers are what you expect from us . . . **I am not sure if I interpret the questions correctly** . . . **The problem** may lie in the fact that we always try to **read between the lines** to see **if we get it right** . . . Last semester when we had X's classes, I had

> difficulties in understanding what he wanted us to respond once in a while. (Ao, Assign.1, 3/18/08)

Ao's explanation showed that she realized different interpretations are possible, and she also felt, at least in an academic setting, that she must find the one which the writer intended. During the early meetings of the seminar the principle of *literacy involving interpretation* was mediated in a number of ways, including using Kern's definition of literacy to introduce the idea of interpreting texts and discussions asking teachers for their interpretations of words and discourse. In the previous excerpt the concept that *different interpretations exist* is an everyday concept for Ao, but this is linked with "interpret," a word used in the scientific concept presented in the first seminar meeting.

In the early observations of Ao's classes, she did not mention explicitly the existence of differences in interpretations held by authors and readers, or between readers, so although she had this everyday concept it did not appear to be used as a pedagogical tool in her practice. However, in the third observation, which took place after seven seminar meetings, in her spontaneous discourse Ao conveyed the idea to her students that they could have their own interpretations. She suggested that her students might have an understanding of the word/concept (i.e. superwoman) other than that of the author.

> . . . you zijide **interpretation**. danranle wenzhang suo jiangde (. . . **but anyway you have your own interpretation**. of course what the articles says is) if a woman can manage her home successfully and also if she makes great achievements in her job she can be the superwoman. **probably this is just the author's understanding**. (Ao, Obs.3, 4/23/08)

Ao did not explicitly instruct her students in the principle that they could have views independent of the text writers' views, but acknowledged their rights to have their own views on this particular value-laden word/concept. She is not attempting to teach a scientific concept but voiced her everyday concept to the students, externalizing this concept within her instructional context in a particular instance, and again linking it to the specific term "interpretation" that she spoke in English, marking it as a technical term.[5] Thus Ao's development can be seen in her taking her own everyday concept experienced as a reader and applying it to her students' reading, at the same time that she linked it to a scientific concept. These occurrences were a foundation for the development of the other two subordinate concepts.

Development of the Subordinate Concept "Readers Interpret Writers' Texts"

In her typical teaching early in the study, Ao asked her students to find the main idea of texts, but these tasks did not usually allow students to voice their own interpretations. As has been described by Jin & Cortazzi (1998), in most cases she

asked a question of the whole class, and all the students would reply in chorus, often quoting a sentence from the text. This activity helped students to identify the most important sentences, but did not allow them to formulate their own interpretations.

In the fourth observation (after 13 seminar meetings), I observed Ao for the first time asking students to formulate interpretations of the text, and then giving them instruction in how to do so. Ao based this activity on a task in her textbook requiring students to write the main idea of each of the four sections of the text. She additionally supplied the students with a strategy for finding the main idea of the section of discourse: "first look at the main idea of each paragraph [in the section] and then link them [the main ideas] together" (Ao, Obs.4, 6/4/08). She then employed her own questions to guide the class in using the strategy to work out the main idea in each of the first three text sections. For the last section, she asked students to write out the main idea in a brief sentence or phrase, and then she commented on different students' answers.

Ao's undertaking this main idea activity may have been mediated by a number of different seminar and non-seminar means. The textbook provided the basic exercise, an important resource in carrying out the activity, and shaped the activity by dividing the text into sections. In the seminar we extensively discussed summarizing as a means of interpreting a text, and the teachers had written summaries of their understandings of Kern's ideas, afterwards analyzing some of the summaries. This set of activities seems to have mediated Ao's understanding of the value of verbalizing interpretations and mediated her use of this summarizing task. Additionally, Ao's use of the main idea task may have been mediated by a colleague's example: the week before this observation, another teacher presented to the seminar group part of her teaching approach that included having students write the main idea of each section of the text. Ao's activity imitated her colleague's activity in that for the first time she utilized the exercise and she asked her students to write answers rather than orally report them, which was her usual method. Lantolf & Thorne (2006), highlighting the important role that imitation plays in development, note that in order to imitate, a person must understand "the goal and means through which the activity is carried out" (p. 167). In addition to imitating her colleague, Ao added her own understanding as she scaffolded her students' learning a process for summarizing a part of the text.

Ao's developing concept can be seen in her use of the textbook's main idea activity because this activity involved students in synthesizing main ideas, a scaffolded approach to producing their own interpretations. She began to employ Kern's scientific concept, giving students an opportunity to interpret the text, in her instructional activity. Furthermore, she equipped her students with a specific means of formulating a main idea, demonstrating that she had both set a goal of their making interpretations and recognized the difficulties that the new activity might present. In thinking through the steps necessary for the students to carry out the activity, Ao linked the concept of *readers interpret writers' texts* to her other pedagogical knowledge about how students learn new activities.

A week after this task, Ao articulated the goals of an activity to her students more explicitly in an activity she created to encourage students to interpret texts. Utilizing a poem from her textbook, but designing the activity herself, Ao asked her students to read through the poem individually and then write down their interpretation of it. She explained to students that she thought they might have interpretations that differed from each other.

> so I want you to READ the poem. and try to see what the author wants to convey. I mean **maybe different people have different interpretation**. about the poem. because different people have different life experience . . . just see what the author is trying to say in this poem. just write down a paragraph. I think that writing down will help you organize what you're thinking. (Ao, Obs.5, 6/11/08)

After the students wrote their ideas, she sought volunteers to read what they had written by asking the students to add ideas which were different or additional to those that had been read. In the wrap-up of the activity, she evaluated the students' contributions, praising them for understanding the poem and, in particular, its underlying metaphor and for building on one another's ideas.

> actually I feel SURPRISED at what you said. **I think you REALLY understood the poem**. and that was much BETTER. than I expected . . . and also I think you several guys **you supplemented each other**. that is really good. anyone else? (4) and **you ALL know the author is not just talking about ROAD**. he's talking about the CHOICES in life . . . (Ao, Obs.5, 6/11/08)

Although the students' interpretations of the poem did not vary significantly, Ao gave her students permission and space to formulate their own interpretations. At the same time Ao's feedback provided one guideline for the students' interpretations: they had recognized (and by implication, all of them should recognize) the central metaphor of the poem. Ao thus linked the abstract idea of readers interpreting texts with an instructional task that she designed, allowing for different interpretations while providing a standard for their interpretations.

Investigating the genesis of Ao's activity, it appears that the interpretation of the poem activity was mediated in part by Ao's work on the final project for the first term of the seminar, in which she reflected on her teaching goals and explored new ways to help her students know that literacy involves communication. Her instruction during the three-week period was oriented to completing the project, the goal of which was to experiment with several new techniques in teaching a unit in her textbook. Ao's "new" approach to teaching the central text of the unit was actually a variation on her previous approach in which students continued to focus their attention on decoding the words of the text. Ao was still considering whether she agreed with Kern's approach, as shown in her question at the end of one discussion: "what if Kern isn't right?" (Ao, Notes, 6/16/08). Thus her activity was

shown to be experimental rather than a reflection of her understanding that interpretation was important for her students. The poem activity was used to impact her students' understandings of literacy, to "see reading is not limited to articles or passages to get answers" and "to let my students see both reading and writing can be ways of communication with the author" (Ao, Final Project, 6/17/08). Her articulated goals guided her use of the poem found in a part of her textbook, entitled "language enhancement," which she said she had not previously used in her instruction. Though she was not yet sure how to link *readers interpret writers' texts* to the study of the central text for the unit, Ao was able to set new goals for her students' learning and link the concept to secondary aspects of her classroom instruction: first adapting an exercise and then using the resource of a typically unused part of her textbook to create an activity to meet her newly set objectives.

In these two activities, Ao not only invited students to interpret the text but also added the dimension of having students write their interpretations. In the previous data there had been no student writing activity in Ao's classes except copying words and personal note-taking. In the poem interpretation activity, Ao not only asked her students to write their answers, but also articulated to her students that writing would help them to organize their thinking. Ao explained in the debriefing that her students "were not used to" writing their ideas, and thus she had to repeat the request for the students to write their interpretations several times. Ao's new use of writing tasks showed that she was linking her conceptual understanding of interpretation to a growing understanding of the role of writing activity in her instructional setting. In the poem interpreting activity Ao again showed an understanding of her setting and her ability to mediate the new activity to her students. When asked what she wanted students to gain from the task, she explained that she asked the students to find the author's idea and to practice writing because Kern's theory claimed that reading and writing were integrated. Although her activity had smoothly linked reading and writing, she had difficulty articulating her own purposes in doing that, but rather appealed to Kern's claims.

> I don't know how they [comprehension and writing] can be connected CLOSELY but **according to what we have learned in Kern's theory. those parts are INTEGRATED ones**. and writing actually is a big—not a big part but. yeah it's a big part. in LITERACY. so I think. I should add some writing part in the reading class and also I believe that writing can make them think clearly . . . (Ao, Deb.2, 6/16/08)

This excerpt suggest that as she articulated her reason for arranging this activity, Ao was in the process of externalizing the exact role of writing in literacy as a "big part" of literacy. Although her instructional activities reflected her sense of the importance of writing, she was still building her own scientific conceptualization of writing and appealing to Kern as her authority for her actions.

Ao's further development of the subordinate concept that *readers interpret writers' texts* could be seen eight months later as she designed a complex set of activities to

enhance her students' understanding of and confidence in translation. Ao linked the concept of *literacy involving interpretation* to translation, a traditional classroom exercise in China, which though found in textbooks and tests, has been viewed with uncertainty because of its association with the much disparaged grammar–translation approach. In the seminar we read and discussed Kern's claim that translation could be a useful exercise for highlighting the choices available for expressing one's ideas. A summary of Kern's view was printed on a seminar handout.

> According to Kern translation is not just a check of understanding or structures but an opportunity **to compare different ways of expressing an idea**. In particular, **comparing different translations** shows how word choice and structure change the emphasis and flavor of the translation. (Sem.10 handout, 5/13/08)

Additionally, one of Ao's colleagues, Bi, presented a four-week unit that she designed in which she used translation as one of the main tools for developing students' awareness of language resources. This presentation led to extensive discussion of the role of translation in teaching. About eight months later, Ao adapted these ideas for use in her classroom.

In her earlier observed classes, Ao often briefly checked students' answers to the translation exercise in the textbook, but in the classes at the end of her year's attendance in the seminar, Ao transformed both her goals for and activities in using translation in her class. In the first term Ao had consistently asked students to speak out their translations and then she would read parts of the translation found in the teacher's book to comment on the suitability of a student's translation. The apparent goal was to check if students could produce a correct translation, which she evaluated largely with the support of a translation provided in the teacher's book. In the final observations, all the translation activities had the common element of students comparing translations: after students wrote out their translations she read aloud those of several volunteers and asked the class to evaluate which translation better expressed particular sentences or ideas within the sentences. This led to discussions over exact meanings and connotations of words and phrases, where the knowledge was jointly constructed by the students and teacher. When asked to explain why she chose to have students compare translations, Ao's explanation integrated Kern's idea that comparison was a tool for analysis with the principle of accuracy which she also intended to teach the students.

> I told them. the most important thing is. you just translate—you try to make the ORIGINAL meaning. understood. then I thought HEY **if they compare the different translations. they may realize. this one might be. BETTER**. they use the more **accurate words**. or better jushi (sentence structures). (Ao, Deb.3, 3/19/09)

While Ao does not mention the discussions of the seminar and Kern's ideas as specific mediators of her creating a focus on comparison, she restated the idea that

comparison could facilitate her students reflecting on their word choice. Thus Ao changed the goal of the class translation activity from checking answers to allowing students to reflect on the accuracy of their interpretations. Ao's conceptual development can be seen in that she was reorienting her students to an exercise she had regularly used for another purpose in the past, shifting the students' mode of engagement from that of mere producers of interpretations to taking on the additional role of evaluators.

In these last observations Ao further demonstrated her effective linking of the concept to her instruction by instructing her students in how to make and evaluate interpretations. She did this by teaching them both a technique and a principle for translation and having students apply them in several translation activities, specifically, translating two technical paragraphs and a poem. For sentence level translation, she reminded them to identify the main subject and action of a sentence. I had demonstrated this approach to understanding sentences at the beginning of the seminar, and Ao had already encouraged her students to use it in earlier classes, but she reintroduced it as a technique to use when translating a sentence. Then she taught a translation principle she had learned as a student: good translations should be "faithful, accurate and graceful." She used this principle as a guideline for evaluating students' translations, reminding them to balance these three aspects, explaining specifically that when translating a poem "it is not enough to have a nice sounding translation. We have to look at how different it is from the meaning of the original" (Ao, Obs.8, 3/11/09). Ao's development of the principle that *readers interpret writers' texts* could be seen in both her changing the nature of the classroom activity and in her efforts to link translation with these two tools to assist her students to make suitable interpretations.

The nature of Ao's concept of *readers interpret writers' texts* can be seen in the genesis of its development. Initially she experienced this concept as an everyday concept related to her own reading, which she then applied to her students as readers when she acknowledged that they might have different interpretations from those of an author. She then utilized two resources in her textbook which she had not used before to allow students to form their own interpretations: in the case of the exercise, she made a simple adaptation to it, whereas with the poem, she created a completely new activity, in which she was able to clearly articulate her purposes. Although these activities had the appearance of displaying the use of a true concept, Ao's goals for the activity were mediated by an external requirement (writing a project), and her understanding of the scientific concept was still being formulated. The last observations revealed a deeper linking of the concept *readers interpret writers' texts* to her instruction. Her application of Kern's principle to a segment of her routine teaching, and the way in which she linked it to her own purposes and mediated it to her students shows that the concept was more closely linked to her instruction and other concepts she had.

Development of the Subordinate Concept "Writers Interpret the World"

The subordinate concept that *writers interpret the world* was not developed to the same extent in Ao's thinking and instruction as that of *readers interpret writers' texts*. She expected her students to express their opinions in the writing of certain essay topics, but did not emphasize her students' roles as interpreters of the world when they wrote. In terms of her view of writers as interpreters she pointed out that the writer may have his/her own view of the topic, and during the year she expanded this idea in her instruction a little.

Ao's experience in the seminar brought her regularly into contact with the concept that *writers interpret the world*. As the seminar group discussed writers' theoretical stances, this concept was implicit in discussions of scholarly articles in the seminar: comparing writers' understandings, it was evident that they were interpreting data from their own viewpoints. However, this view is counter to the traditional understanding in China, where texts are considered to be authoritative. In one early seminar meeting, when the social roles between readers and texts in the classroom were explicitly discussed, one of the teachers (Y) mentioned how students as readers may feel inferior, which I (O) expanded to a feeling of being inferior to the text and unable to question it.

O: what's an example of the social role of the reader? . . .
Y: the students may feel they are in some inferior roles that's a kind of social role
O: so **the student may feel INFERIOR**. and they may feel inferior to (1) do you have anybody specifically in mind? inferior to [some: teacher] teacher (1) how about **inferior to the text**? [some: yes] maybe that's also a kind of feeling. OH **the text is RIGHT**. I'm just a student. I don't know. right? (Sem.4, 4/1/08)

From Ao's comments during seminar meetings, including her questioning of Kern, Ao did not appear to think that students should feel inferior to the text but that she thought that writers are interpreters and they, and their texts, could therefore be questioned.

The direct questioning of an author was only observed once in Ao's first term's instruction. In this activity Ao demonstrated her view about the role of writers, specifically textbook writers, and readers when she invited her students to judge whether they agreed with the "correct" answers for an exercise supplied in the multimedia materials they were using. After revealing the editor's answers, she asked the students if they agreed, and why they did or did not. Later she explained to me that she wanted her students to think about the answers for themselves because the textbook authors had their own interpretations of the texts.

> I want my students to think if the answer [in the book] is right or their answer is right . . . the textbook and the answers they also—they are given by SOMEONE. they CAN make mistakes . . . **that's their OWN. subjective**

> **opinion. so you don't have to just say you** [the authors] **are right and we are not**. (Ao, Deb.2, 6/16/08)

Ao may have held this view of the limited role of textbook writers (i.e. textbook writers' interpretations were not incontestable) previous to the seminar, but after the discussion in the fourth meeting, she explicitly gave her students this opportunity to take a role as evaluators of the text. This activity and discourse are signs that this concept was developing when Ao connected the idea of writers as limited interpreters of the world with an instructional activity from her textbook, initiating the evaluative component of the activity herself. As she diminished the textbook writers' roles as the producers of final authoritative answers, she concomitantly reinforced her students' roles as interpreters.

At the end of the year's study, Ao's discourse in the midst of a class discussion of a text showed she was linking the concept of *writers interpret the world* with another of Kern's principles, *literacy involves culture.* Ao recounted how well her students had responded in asking questions and thinking about the text and reflected on what had influenced their responses. One of the factors she felt affected the students was her comment that the writer was reflecting his own cultural views and that the students should be aware of those cultural aspects while reading.

> I also told them. before **I encouraged them to ask questions** I told them. you may see the cultural difference. **the text doesn't have to be telling about a cultural difference obviously**. but this guy [the author] is not Chinese. when he is writing that maybe his target readers are not you guys. maybe **what he valued is different from what we value**. (Ao, Deb.3, 3/19/09)

Ao began to introduce her students to the relatively abstract issue of how the view of the writer influences the text in subtle ways. This discourse, like that on page 107, appeared to be spontaneous, not intentionally linked to an activity. She indicated generally both that the writer had his own interpretation of the world, and that differences between his interpretation and those of her students might be based on cultural values and cause misunderstandings. This was not a fully developed activity, nor did Ao provide a concrete example of the type of difference in views which her students might find. However, Ao was closely linking these two abstract principles to her particular text and it apparently stimulated her students' thinking, and the students' responses were exciting for Ao:

> I thought oh there were some students who were thinking more than what I was thinking. **they did a VERY good job yesterday** . . . one student asked me questions. **really interesting** questions . . . I thought ah **he is really thinking** then we were discussing about this question. **some of the students gave very good answers. very unexpected answers**. (Ao, Deb.3, 3/19/09)

Ao's satisfaction with her students' discussion reveals her goals: that they would bring up questions and answers demonstrating their original thinking. Her

recognition that her asking questions and calling attention to the relationship between the author and her students were important factors in the success of the discussion are an important part of her continued conceptual development. In this activity, her application of the scientific concepts related to interpretation and culture were effective in meeting her goals. Her positive sense of the efficacy of the concept could be an important personal link promoting her continued use of this principle in her instruction in the future.

For Ao the concept of *writers interpret the world* was an everyday concept that she was beginning to link to her instruction at the end of the year. Though she used it as a guiding concept in one activity, she was just beginning to bring it into the teaching of her central texts. Her use of this concept in her discourse about the text in the last observation was a sign that she was linking the scientific concept to her specific text, though she did not do this with specific examples. The linking together of two principles from Kern also shows her growing understanding of how interpretation was linked to writers' and readers' cultural settings.

In examining Ao's development of the subordinate concept *literacy involves interpretation*, a true concept of literacy as communication had not fully emerged at the end of the year. Rather Ao was still learning how to meaningfully and consistently link the concept to her instruction of her central texts and to mediate to her students' understanding that *writers interpret the world*. At the same time, she was using new discourse and new instruction practices which were transforming the ways her students interacted with the text.

Conclusion

From this study there are promising indications for the use of Kern's application of foreign language literacy to China. In this setting where the study of texts is valued and English texts are easily accessible, Kern's approach to literacy as a communicative activity appears to be a useful tool. The use of Kern's concept allowed teacher and students to examine texts carefully, while changing their interaction with those texts. In Ao's classroom, her use of the concept *literacy involves interpretation* helped her create new activities that transformed her students' relationships with their texts, so that they took on new positions in relation to the text as interpreters rather than merely finding correct answers to exercises and questions. Though seminar discussions did not emphasize the teaching of writing, Ao engaged her students in a variety of writing tasks as she tried to implement a literacy orientation in her instruction. She transcended the standard view of writing as only an exam exercise and introduced her students to the view of writing as a tool for thinking as well as a way to communicate their ideas.

An important consideration when introducing a new concept into a setting is to identify the available resources in the system which will support the use of the concept. In this setting, there were a number of material and conceptual resources to which Kern's concept was linked. The Chinese tradition of close study of texts was one such resource, as was the introduction of CLT more than 20 years ago. Although CLT has not been enacted in ways that those bringing the innovation

expected, the public discourse concerning what constitutes "knowing English" has changed, merely aiming to know *about* English is no longer a justifiable goal. The new conceptual resources related to communication also resulted in new material resources when the changes enacted in the national syllabus led to changes in both examination forms and textbooks. These new materials were intended to guide students to employ their procedural knowledge, thus supporting the concept of literacy as a kind of communication. Thus, while Ao's textbook resources were not oriented exclusively towards a literacy-based understanding of learning English, they offered some support which she exploited to alter students' view of texts as being acts of communication.

This study suggests that the introduction of a new concept to experienced teachers may best be accomplished in a long-term teaching community, creating as many links to teachers' actual teaching settings as possible. If a number of teachers in one location learn a new approach together, they can build a common conceptual discourse and activities, allowing them to exploit one another's teaching experiences to enhance their instruction. Applications can be more specifically adapted to their particular situation since materials, curricular requirements and other common resources and constraints can be explored more carefully. In a situation like that of public education in China where the textbook is intended to be the main source of learning, it is particularly important to strategically consider how to use this resource.

An examination of the development of Ao's concept of *literacy involves interpretation* confirms that teachers' classrooms are an important site of their learning. Ao's various applications of the concept to casual instructional discourse and a variety of teaching activities allowed her to come to link the scientific concept with her everyday concepts and experiences, resulting in the emergence of a true concept. This development was mediated by her reflections on her classroom activities, particularly visible as she discussed them with me, and by her students' responses which either confirmed or denied the meaningfulness of her use of the concept with them. Ao used her students' responses to judge the extent to which her use of the concept was effective in meeting her goals for her students. Thus there was a spiraling development whereby positive responses from her students increased Ao's willingness to use the concept and helped her to more closely determine what would be useful in her future teaching. Ao also learned from less successful activities: in the case of her modest adaptation of her teaching of the central text in her final project, Ao realized that she had not arranged the activity in a way that it would transform the students' approach to the text. This revealed to her that changing the structure of an activity was not sufficient, but that she needed to reorient her students to new goals during activities: although the discussion of goals was prominent in the seminar, it was while engaging in instruction that Ao came to understand the importance of her students' goals for the activity.

This study supports the value of Vygotsky's descriptions of the types and development of concepts in the professional development of teachers. Since the efficacy of concepts derives from their multiple links with other concepts, both scientific and everyday concepts, and experiences, teachers should have

opportunities to link scientific concepts to their classroom activities and to other pedagogical concepts they may already have. It follows that creating links with a number of other concepts and experiences will take place over time, so that those involved in teacher development should plan to provide extended support for teachers learning new concepts.

Notes

1. Notable reforms in the national syllabi, exams, and textbooks have been discussed in Hu (2005b).
2. The key other articles presented in the first term were: Auerbach & Paxton, 1997; Gao, 2006; Herndon, 2002; and Paine, 1990; and during the second term: Gillette, 1994; Widdowson, 1994; and You, 2004.
3. Bold type indicates the author's emphasis.
4. Her second example refers to an MA class she took with an American teacher in the previous term.
5. It could also be argued that Ao was not yet ready to mediate this concept to her students in Chinese.

Part III

Strategic Mediation in L2 Teacher Education

Chapter 8

Dynamic Assessment in Teacher Education

Using Dialogic Video Protocols to Intervene in Teacher Thinking and Activity

Paula R. Golombek
University of Florida

The field of second language teacher education (SLTE) has embraced a view of teacher learning as being socially negotiated, resulting through participation in the sociocultural practices and contexts of teaching, that is, grounded in the professional thinking and activities of teachers (Borg, 2003; Freeman, 1996, 2002; Freeman & Richards, 1996; Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Johnson, 2006a; D. Woods, 1996). This epistemological shift within SLTE mirrors a number of disciplines that have reconceptualized what it means to know a subject and, consequently, how to teach it. Mathematics and biology, for example, have fundamentally changed their notions of the knowledge needed to learn these subjects from knowledge of content only to knowledge as a dialectical relationship between content and the cognitive processes necessary to understand that content conceptually. Bishop (1988) has labeled this "mathematical enculturation," a process of learning math that connects the concepts that mathematicians know with how they think systematically and problem solve. The goal of instruction is to move students beyond their intuitive and empirical understanding of concepts to scientific thinking (Adey, 1999; Driver, Guesne, & Tiberghien, 1985), or mathematical thinking (Nelissen, 1999). Similarly with SLTE, the goal of instruction is to move learners of teaching beyond their experiential "apprenticeship of observation" (Lortie, 1975) ways of thinking to expert teachers' ways of thinking.

The expert teacher thinking of second language (L2) teachers has been characterized as *expertise as a process* (Tsui, 2009, p. 194), in that an expert teacher, when confronted by a problem in the classroom, is able to reflect consciously on the various dimensions of a teaching context. Tsui (2003) suggests that an expert teacher's "ways of thinking and ways of learning" (p. 281), if made explicit, can help to orient beginning teachers in their own teaching and assist in the development of expertise. For approximately the last fifteen years, SLTE has been incorporating inquiry tools, too numerous to detail, that facilitate the externalization of teacher-learners' beliefs concerning experiences in and conceptualizations of language learning and teaching. Externalization is clearly only one facet of mediation on the complex path of teacher development (Golombek & Johnson, 2004).

This chapter reports on the integration of Dynamic Assessment (DA)—mediation that integrates learning and assessment—in dialogic video protocols (DVPs) to engage teacher-learners in a social practice that has the potential to promote expert thinking. This study asked the following questions: In what way can a teacher educator support the development of a teacher-learner using DA procedures? How can DA support expert teacher thinking in a teacher-learner? This chapter argues that teacher performance alone does not provide a true sense of a teacher-learner's abilities and that using DA procedures in DVPs enables a teacher educator to be responsive to that teacher-learner's needs, thereby promoting internalization of key concepts.

Developmental Activities that Support Teacherly Thinking

If the thinking of a teacher is rooted in and influenced by what teachers typically do (Johnson, 2006a), and if the externalization of expert teacher thinking is essential, the field of SLTE is presented with a serious challenge to include professional developmental activities that cultivate, to modify a phrase from Goodnow (1987), the socialization of teacher cognition. This proposition is easier said than done.

Activities that support expert teacher thinking within teaching English as a second language (ESL) programs would seem feasible and yet are notoriously difficult to implement. On a practical level, not all SLTE programs have access to ESL courses or cooperation with ESL programs in which teacher-learners can initiate their instructional experience. On an institutional level, conflicting epistemologies continue to exist both within and across SLTE programs, resulting in different views of what teachers know, what they need to know, and how to develop that knowledge. This has tangible implications for what courses teacher candidates take, the requirements in those courses, and the modes of assessment. No matter what the orientation of an SLTE program, a long-established practice is the microteaching assignment, which is required in many different content area courses, for example in so-called methods courses. The fact that teacher-learners instruct "students" who pretend not to have expert language proficiency and metalinguistic awareness often results in ersatz student–teacher interactions in which both parties are self-conscious. Add to this the stripping away of the social, institutional, and historical factors inherent to teaching, and the microteaching is a blemished teaching activity. If carried out in a bona fide teaching context, the microteaching assignment can enable teacher-learners to articulate and enact their theoretical knowledge through specific instructional objectives and activities, with a specific group of students, within the affordances and constraints of a specific institution.

A practicum, or internship, can offer teacher-learners the variety of social activities in which teachers typically engage, but, as Gebhard (2009) notes, great variability in the teacher-learner's responsibility exists across the practicum. Teacher candidates typically enact another person's syllabus, instructional goals

and objectives, and sometimes lesson plans. Although the practicum is typically the capstone experience, teacher-learners may have, even after the experience, little to no authentic teaching experience and lack procedural knowledge of the day-to-day running of classrooms. This unfamiliar foray into teaching can be unsettling, mysterious, and frustrating (Johnson 1996a). In this sense, courses in SLTE programs must adapt standard practices, as well as incorporate novel systematic developmental activities, embedded within authentic teaching contexts so that teacher-learners can, with guidance, both conceptualize the particulars of specific lessons for specific students and actualize them in the face of competing classroom demands. As a result of this sustained interaction in the cognitive and material activities of teaching throughout the teacher education program, teacher-learners may act with greater contextualized knowledge and agency in the practicum.

The practicum often includes formal observations done by the teacher-learner's supervising teacher that are based on an implicit or explicit rubric of, often discrete, performance criteria. Interviews with the teacher candidate before and/or after the observation can provide supplementary information concerning how s/he conceptualizes the content, the rationale behind objectives and activities, and the reasons for in-process decisions. While promoting a process of reflection and articulation, the observation and interview also represent what Darling-Hammond & Snyder (2000) call "remote proxies for the actual knowledge, skills, and dispositions to be assessed" (p. 527). Not only is the thinking about the teaching event distant from the actual event, it is often used for summative purposes.

Developmental activities that promote expert teacher thinking grounded in teaching activity have inherent dilemmas. The ephemeral nature of the teaching event itself is tricky in that teacher-learners may reconstruct a lesson through selective memories (Brooks & Kopp, 1991). They may also, no matter what the form of expression is or who the audience is, feel compelled to present a positive narrative presentation of self that inhibits meaningful self-examination. Videotaping of a teacher's class and analyzing the video systematically through a DA procedure can be one way to deal with these dilemmas.

Dynamic Assessment

The origins of Dynamic Assessment (DA) can be found in Vygotsky's (1978) powerful concept the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). In their comprehensive overview of DA, Lantolf & Poehner (2004) define DA as a procedure

> that integrates assessment and instruction into a seamless, unified activity for simultaneously assessing and promoting learner development through appropriate forms of mediation that are sensitive to the individual's (or in some cases a group's) current abilities. In essence, DA is a procedure for simultaneously assessing and promoting development that takes account of the individual's (or group's) zone of proximal development (ZPD) (p. 50).

DA is a kind of dialogic cooperation between mediator and learner, with the mediator continually assessing the learner's understanding in order to determine an appropriate mediational response. Although Vygotsky did not use the term dynamic assessment, he did discuss specific ways that teachers could mediate student activity, such as "demonstration, leading questions, and by introducing elements of the task's solution" (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 209). He describes the mediator's role as showing how a problem could be solved and then seeing if the student could solve the problem through imitation; by beginning to solve the problem and seeing if the student could finish it; by enabling the child to solve the problem through interaction with a more capable other; or by explaining the principle underlying the problem (Vygotsky, 1998, p. 202).

Lantolf & Poehner (2004) present two orientations to DA that differ in terms of the emphasis placed on mediation and outcomes—Interventionist DA and Interactionist DA. In Interventionist DA, the nature of the mediation is generally prescribed, scripted, and sequenced. Still mediating emerging abilities, it is regulated by more traditional psychometric standards.

In Interactionist DA, not only are assessment and teaching viewed as "two sides of the same coin," but teacher intervention is crucial (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, p. 327). Because there is no prescribed script that the mediator follows, the mediator responds intentionally and spontaneously to the ripening needs of the learner. Poehner (2008) likens this interaction to a dance. The mediator is trying to gage learner understanding while simultaneously challenging his/her abilities, and the learner responds in a variety of ways. It is an unpredictable and unfolding dance that places tremendous demands on the mediator who must not only respond on the spur of the moment to the learner's every response but ensure the learner's agency. Aljaafreh & Lantolf's (1994) suggestions on the mediational assistance conducive in a zone of proximal development are also valuable in a DA procedure: mediation should be graduated, that is moving from implicit to explicit; contingent on a learner's needs; and dialogic.

The goal of DA is what makes it different from other approaches to formative assessment that link instruction and assessment in systematic ways: "to unify assessment and instruction into a single activity, the goal of which is learner development" (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, p. 351). The successful completion of the task is not the goal, nor is assessing what the student can do alone. Rather, the mediator discerns the student's interpsychological ability, and the mediator and student's joint activity serve to promote that student's future development.

Integrating Dynamic Assessment into Dialogic Video Protocols

Stimulated recalls (Calderhead, 1981) have been advocated in second language research (Gass & Mackey, 2000) and, notably, in SLTE research exploring teacher decision making, beliefs, and knowledge as a means to gather data about teachers' cognitive process in L2 research (see Borg, 2003). Because the cognitive structures and processes underlying teacher activity are unobservable, watching the replaying

of instruction generates a recall of conscious thoughts, which can then be verbalized. When using stimulated recall as a data collection tool, researchers limit their participation to one of eliciting data.

The use of video protocols, or stimulated response, is not a new idea in teacher education, but the way that teacher educators use video protocols could be an innovation in supporting the socialization of teacher cognition. I use the term dialogic video protocols (DVPs) because the teacher educator's role is to intervene directly during the process and be responsive to the teacher-learner's understandings of teaching, representing a kind of Interactionist DA. The interaction between the mediator and the learner, in this study the more expert teacher educator and the teacher-learner respectively, can be viewed as a form of assisted performance that is a "source of development" (Elkonin, 1998, p. 299) for the teacher-learner. The mediator meeting the teacher-learner where she is at hinges on the concept of *intersubjectivity*, or "when interlocutors share some aspect of their situation definition" (Wertsch, 1985, p. 159). Just as the adult and child in interaction do not define objects and events in a situation in the same way, a more expert teacher educator and a learner of teaching do not define the objects and events in a particular teaching situation in the same way. Wertsch stresses that the kind of shared cognition developing between the mediator and teacher-learner is essential in the development of their relationship and in the cognitive transformation of the learner. Likewise, this kind of responsive relationship is a central tenet in DA. Intersubjectivity, in this case, the teacher-learner's understanding of the situation from the teacher educator's point of view, the more expert viewpoint, is necessary for their interactions on the interpsychological plane to move to the teacher-learner's intrapsychological plane.

Gal'perin's (1989) theory of mental functioning is useful at this point to explain the value of the materialization of teaching in the video and the interactions taking place in the DVP. According to Gal'perin, mental activity is controlled by three activities: orientation (responsible for planning how and what something is done); execution (responsible for the doing of the activity); and control (responsible for assessing how the activity was carried out). The videotape becomes the object of analysis, the concrete resource through which the teacher educator and teacher-learner construct a ZPD in response to the planning and executing of a specific instructional activity and evaluate it. Because teacher-learners may not be able to control their performance (Gal'perin, 1989) and because they may have emotional assessments of their performance, the DVPs allow for a more systematic analysis of not only what happened but what could have happened. Simply put, the teacher educator can determine whether the teacher-learner, when prompted, can articulate robust reasoning (Johnson, 1999) and identify alternative instructional responses that embody conceptual thinking.

A mediator providing appropriate support, as Leont'ev claims, is contingent upon that mediator having knowledge of the learner's social history, self-development, and previous educational environments (as cited in Ableeva, 2008, pp. 79–80). The teacher educator must develop knowledge of the learner's educational history, language learning history, beliefs about language learning, etc.

And while the teacher educator must have some acquaintance with the teacher-learner, that knowledge is continuously altered throughout the DA.

Method

All participants in this project were part of a course that I taught to enable teacher-learners to integrate a discourse-oriented approach to pronunciation in speaking and listening instruction. As part of the course requirements, the students were required to practice teaching a specific aspect of connected speech for listening purposes to their classmates and then teach that lesson in one session of a course offered by the ESL Program housed in the department. The ESL course was the second in a series of three courses for international teaching assistants (ITAs) addressing their speaking and listening needs. The class had thirteen students who were from the People's Republic of China, the Republic of China, and South Korea. This chapter focuses on Abra (pseudonym), a first-year student in the MA TESL. Though born in England, Abra moved to the United States as a small child and attended public schools and graduated with a teaching degree from a large public university in the Northeast.

Students in this course were encouraged to teach in pairs for both intellectual and emotional support. Abra, however, decided to teach alone, in part due to her quickly identifying what her instructional focus would be and the resources she would use. Her instructional idea was so detailed that she asked if she could teach one week of the course, or three classes. Abra's instructional focus was on linking; her objectives were to enable students to understand what linking is, why linking happens, and under what conditions it occurs; to predict where linking might occur; and to perceive linking in discourse and understand the individual words in order to understand the speaker's message.

I attended and videotaped the first class session of Abra's teaching. The following day, we conducted a dialogic video protocol. I encouraged her to stop the video at any point that she deemed relevant to discuss what was happening in the class and what she perceived. I, likewise, stopped the video at any point that I determined appropriate for mediation. The interaction took approximately 90 minutes. The DVP was also videotaped and transcribed.

I based my initial reading of the DVP transcript on the discovery of salient themes concerning problems Abra faced in the classroom using an inductive procedure (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Problems represented an opportunity to create a ZPD, in which the teacher educator would provide mediation depending on how the mediator–learner dialogue unfolded. Three problems consistently were identified by the teacher educator and the teacher-learner: engineering student participation, orienting students to the task, and speaking too quickly. This chapter focuses on Abra's attempts to engineer student participation. Because the quality of the interaction in DA is crucial (Lantolf & Poehner, 2004), the data concerning engineering student participation were then analyzed using the principles of ethnographic semantics to study the meanings the participants gave to their words and expressions (Spradley, 1979) in order to comprehend how *intersubjectivity* (see

previous section) was being attained. On the basis of this analysis, categories were proposed to characterize the teacher educator's strategic mediation.

In the presentation of the findings, the "mediator" or "teacher educator" is me. Abra is typically referred to by her pseudonym or as the "learner," in keeping with the terminology used in DA, or as the "teacher-learner."

Findings

Mediation Provided During DVP

When discussing Abra's lesson plan and throughout our watching of the DVPs, Abra expressed a strong desire to encourage meaningful student participation. As we watched the videotape of her teaching, she, on several occasions, expressed dissatisfaction with her attempts to prompt student participation, which she felt often resulted in her answering her own questions. In this lesson, students had been taught explicitly about linking through explanations and examples. After this explicit instruction, Abra gave the students excerpts from the script of *Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace*. She first asked students to read through the script to predict where linking might occur on the basis of their understanding of the concept. She then directed them to listen carefully for linking as she played the selected scenes from the movie. After directing them to listen and identify if linking had occurred in the predicted places, students watched and listened to the scenes again.

After listening twice, Abra and her students went over the transcript together. A female student nonverbally expressed what appeared to be a surprised response. Abra stopped the tape at this point to discuss what she viewed as a missed opportunity to engage that student in meaningful participation.

1 A: and then one of the girls at that point laughed
2 P: hmm
3 A: like she was understanding and I wanted ta- I wanted to take that and do something with it but I didn't know what so I just kept on going
4 P: yeah (.5) hmm
5 A: but I saw her um respond like "oh my god that's so strange"
6 P: uh-hm
7 A: but I I didn't know what to do with it
8 P: uh hm
9 A: I
10 P: I saw her kinda go ["wo"]
11 A: [yeah]
12 P: too
13 A: yeah what-what is there something I could've done to like um tap into that response? Or should I cause I felt like I just ignored it I just
14 P: uh-hm
15 A: kept going

16 P: uh-hm
17 A: and I didn't mean to
18 P: uh-hm
19 A: completely ignore it
20 P: yeah
21 A: I wanted to acknowledge it like "yeah isn't that weird?" and so I said (.5) so it sounds strange but that's how it is
22 P: uh hm
23 A: I said that=
24 P: =hm
25 A: in hopes that that would address her (.5) is that what I said?

REWIND TAPE and REPLAY

26 A: yeah well all I did was I smiled
27 P: uh hm
28 A: that was how I acknowledged her
29 P: well I don't know. I mean think about it (1.0) is there something- do you think there is something you could've done? What could you have done.
30 A: I could have stopped and said yeah it sounds weird right
31 P: uh-hm
32 A: y'know an like to her yeah it sounds weird so that she knows
33 P: uh-hm
34 A: that I- I noticed her response
35 P: uh-hm
36 A: and that she's right to make that response
37 P: uh-hm (.5) yeah (.5) I noticed you had a strange response
38 A: yeah
39 P: how come?
40 A: yeah
41 P: yeah
42 A: how come
43 P: yeah cause
44 A: get her to talk about it. Get her to think about it cause she obviously reacted and then she'll stop to think why did I react and whatever it was that went through her mind.
45 P: uh-hm (1.0) because (.5) you know the first time what you said is you're automatically saying what it is that she thought. It is strange, y'know
46 A: yeah
47 P: and so I'm I guess what I'm saying is
48 A: let her say it=
49 P: let her say it
50 A: yeah
51 P: oh you had a strong reaction
52 A: yeah

53 P: I do this in class all the time
54 A: I know
55 P: sure and she did she made a really strong reaction
56 A: yeah
57 P: it really had an impact on her
58 A: yeah
59 P: and so find out why
60 A: yeah
61 P: why did you respond that way
62 A: and I feel like it was rude for me to ignore it an' just go on
63 P: hm
64 A: like it you'know. My my heart was not content with it but I
65 P: uh-hm
66 A: but I was too nervous to think what's the right thing to do
67 P: uh-hm
68 A: but now I know (.5) so I'm verbalizing what I think was going on in her mind but it would've been nice if I let her say it
69 P: uh-hm

In line 13, the teacher-learner attempts to request assistance from the mediator or to use "the mediator as resource" (Poehner, 2008) but then continues with an explanation of her understanding of what happened. In fact, up to line 29, the mediator simply provides backchannels to encourage the learner to continue explaining the situation as she understands it. These mediational responses, or *backchanneling to elicit explanation*, are necessary because without understanding how the teacher perceives the situation, the mediator cannot guide her in ways that meet her where she is at. The mediator needs to understand how the teacher-learner defines the situation, or to attain a level of intersubjectivity. In fact, in line 26, after rewinding and re-watching the tape, Abra corrects the way she thought she had responded to the student. Interestingly, she thought she had verbally responded to the student, but the replay shows that she responded nonverbally with a smile, a reminder that memories may be muddled when reconstructing a teaching event. The video, thus, plays a crucial role in enabling the mediator and teacher-learner to share intersubjectivity by, at this level, defining the situation, from the teacher-learner's point of view.

In line 29, the mediator encourages the teacher-learner to think about alternative instructional actions and then asks a direct question as to what an alternative plan of action could have been. This *direct questioning to elicit an alternative instructional response* provided an opportunity for Abra to consider the various situational factors involved in this concept of engineering student participation—to perform a kind of "do over"—and represents another level of intersubjectivity in that the mediator is attempting to re-define the situation from an expert's point of view. Although the mediator asks a direct question as to what she could have done differently, the question represents a rather implicit form of strategic mediation: the response to the question requires an alternative instructional response from

Abra with no further assistance from the mediator, at least initially. Abra's response should give the mediator a clue as to how to react responsively. In line 30, Abra begins to explain an alternative response, and the mediator again responds with backchannels to encourage her to elaborate. In line 37, the mediator summarizes what Abra has been saying, but in line 39, the mediator attempts to extend Abra's thinking by voicing what she as a teacher might actually say in a situation like this, or by *voicing an expert's response*. The mediator's response is more explicit as she attempts to move Abra beyond just acknowledging the student's reaction to orienting her by telling her what she could have said to engineer that student's participation. Abra's echoing of "*how come*" in line 42 is followed by the mediator response in line 43 "*yeah cause,*" a response that seeks to call attention to the reasoning behind the question. This type of mediation, *eliciting reasoning*, is valuable because within DA, it is not sufficient that the teacher-learner simply mimic the instructional phrase, but understand the intention behind it. The expert teacher guides the teacher-learner's understanding of how to assess the concept of engineering student participation in this teacher–student interaction. The elaboration of this reasoning provides a glimpse into expert teacher thinking by making the assessment explicit in hopes of re-orienting the teacher-learner to the concept.

Whether the mediator intended to actually finish this explanation herself is unclear, but Abra picks up this prompt and provides the reason beginning in line 44. Abra's response demonstrates that she can justify this alternative instructional response, providing the mediator with important information about her ability to articulate robust reasoning. In line 47, the mediator attempts to summarize the gist of the issue, which Abra collaboratively completes in line 48, an example of intersubjectivity that demonstrates her understanding of the intention behind the mediator's suggestion. The mediation that has been occurring on the interpsychological plane is reflected in a change in Abra's intrapsychological functioning as she demonstrates her understanding of the intention behind the alternative instructional response.

Why the mediator again summarizes the issue and the possible response is not readily evident, but Abra's response in lines 62 through 66 provides additional information to which a mediator using DA should respond, suggesting that this kind of summarizing can allow the learner a brief moment to process. Abra's response reminds the mediator of her principles concerning the nature of teacher–student relations in the classroom, and the affective concerns she experienced during this interaction. Abra expresses her dissatisfaction with her instructional response in a strong and poetic manner, *my heart was not content*. Despite that discontent, she could not respond differently, in part due to the nervousness she felt. This cognitive and emotional dissonance has the potential to initiate teacher development if that dissonance is somehow mediated (Golombek & Johnson, 2004). Even with the mediator's initial prompt (line 29), she comes up with an alternative response that still has the teacher explaining the student's reaction to the student (lines 30, 32, 34, and 36)—a contradiction between her proposed response to encourage student participation and her concept of good

teaching. The mediator understands something more about where she is at and how to focus a response. After the mediator presents a plausible teacher response, Abra populates her intentions in a critique of her instructional response in her own words, *I'm verbalizing what I think was going on in her mind but it would've been nice if I let her say it.* Abra shows that she is developing her ability to self-critique and to explain the reasoning behind an alternative instructional response that facilitates student participation.

Orienting Students to a Task and Participation

In the next excerpt, another example of Abra's struggle to engineer student participation, Abra stopped the video because she wanted to discuss the way she transitioned from watching and listening to the movie to discussing the instances of linking they found. She asks the students a broad question, "Did anybody hear any linking?" Abra's question is met with silence.

1 P: what could you have done?
2 A: and then I could've said "did any of the place you circled sound as if they were (.5) pronounced (1.0) separately?" Sort of like
3 P: uh-hm
4 A: physically going at it from the inverse=
5 P: =yeah
6 A: instead of saying "well did you hear linking?"
7 P: uh-hm
8 A: Well did you hear it (.5) did you hear each (.5) word pronounced separately, (1.0) did you not hear linking (1.0) so if they'd say "no no no it wasn't separate here":
9 P: uh-huh=
10 A: =y'know
11 P: that may be going a step ahead of the game=
12 A: =yeah
13 P: I don't know (1.0) what if you just simply said "okay let's look at line one together" (.5) "who can give me an example of linking here"
14 A: okay
15 P: umm (.5) it would be a way to specify the way that the thing is rather than like choosing one or another you're focusing attention
16 A: yeah
17 P: "does anybody have an example" um (1.5) um
18 A: yeah
19 P: that would be, that would be one way (1.0) to do [that]
20 A: ["Did] anyone pick any- was anyone able to identify how: two words were being linked together in line one" (1.0)
21 P: uh-hm
22 A: something like that

23 P: I-I think to draw their attention to line one ra[ther]
24 A: [yeah]
25 P: than leaving it so: open (1.0)
26 A: yeah: (1.0)
27 P: and when things are so: open,
28 A: it's a little (.5) not so easy ta figure out what to do
29 P: uh-hm (1.0) and so you wanna help them know what to do

In line 1, the mediator again uses *direct questioning to elicit an alternative instructional response.* In lines 2–10, Abra attempts to articulate one. In line 11, the mediator offers an explicit evaluation of Abra's response explaining why it is problematic from an expert's point of view—it attempts to engineer participation in an indirect and inverse manner, asking them to consider where they had not heard linking. Then, in lines 13 and 15 the mediator again uses *voicing an expert's response*, "*okay let's look at line one together*" (.5) "*who can give me an example of linking here.*" In lines 15 and 19, the mediator explains the expert's reasoning behind this response. The mediation serves to reorient Abra to the issue by showing how students being oriented to an instructional task are connected to their subsequent participation in the task. In other words, the mediator defines the situation as follows: if students understand what they are being asked to do, this understanding assists their participation. Rather than simply mimicking the mediator's phrasing, Abra *ventriloquates* her own response (line 20), showing a sense of agency and intentionality. Ventriloquation (Bakhtin, 1982) occurs in the following manner: "The word in a language is half someone else's. It becomes 'one's own' only when the speaker populates it with his [*sic*] own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention" (pp. 293–294). In line 23, the mediator continues an explanation as to why students probably did not respond to Abra's prompt. This mediation is situation specific and tied to Abra's conceptions of good teaching. In lines 27 and 28, the mediator and Abra co-construct the crux of the problem. The mediator begins with a dependent clause "when" structure, which Abra then collaboratively completes, again demonstrating her understanding of the issue at hand. In line 29, the mediator affirms Abra's understanding and connects this concrete example with the interrelated abstract concepts of orientation to task and engineering student participation. This represents an important moment in the mediator and learner attaining intersubjectivity in that Abra is defining the situation from an expert's point of view, thus her idealized concept is moving from the interpsychological to intrapsychological plane.

Conclusion

The results suggest that DA procedures used in a DVP provided opportunities for a mediator to assess a teacher-learner in ways that she was not yet capable of determining and to reorient her conceptual thinking by suggesting expert instructional responses and making the reasoning behind them transparent.

Through the teacher-learner and the mediator's stopping of the video when either felt an aspect of teaching to be problematic, the teacher-learner externalized her understanding of the teaching context, revealing invaluable information about her abilities to self-evaluate when isolated from the cognitive and affective demands of the actual teaching situation. The DA procedures used by the teacher educator in the DVP revealed a great deal more about the teacher-learner's abilities as a teacher than her performance alone in the classroom because the mediation focused not only on explanations of what was problematic but why, and what alternative instructional responses might be and the intentions behind them. Throughout the DVP, the DA procedure encouraged the teacher-learner to mentally manipulate (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006) ways to engineer student participation on an ideal mental plane that aligned with her conceptions of good teaching.

The teacher educator, meanwhile, used different mediation strategies that were contingent on the teacher-learner's needs to enable them to attain intersubjectivity: *backchanneling to elicit explanation; direct questioning to elicit an alternative instructional response; voicing an expert's response* and *eliciting reasoning behind an instructional response.* These mediational strategies made expert teacher thinking explicit in several key ways. First, by working to attain different levels of intersubjectivity, the mediator came to understand how the teacher-learner defined the situation and then mediated the teacher-learner "to see the task, however incompletely and briefly, from the perspective of the expert" (Verity, 2005, p. 4). For example, when the teacher-learner struggled to identify an appropriate instructional response to engineer student participation, the teacher educator voiced a teacher's response in order to help the teacher-learner understand the mediation offered. These voicings of an expert's response served to reorient the teacher-learner to the problem she faced; specifically, the teacher educator's mediation was beyond what the teacher-learner could do alone, and served to reorient her by encouraging her to articulate the reasoning behind alternative instructional responses. The mediator's responses served to invite the teacher-learner to participate on the interpsychological plane, and this participation enabled her to form an idealized conception of engineering student participation.

The dialogic mediation also made explicit the expert teacher's "ways of thinking" (Tsui, 2003, p. 281). By beginning to explain the rationale behind the instructional response, the teacher educator highlighted the need to unite the intention behind an instructional response with a goal, in this case student participation. The goal of this process of identifying problems, becoming conscious of one's own actions, and problem solving through conceptual thinking is to foster expert teacher thinking, so that teacher-learners can begin to self-regulate. By externalizing what they think and why, teacher-learners comprehend their actions as reasoned and reasonable responses.

This study does not claim that the teacher educator's responses were always the ideal forms of mediation within DA. Rather, the data show how challenging the spontaneous nature of DA mediation within a DVP is. The concept of engineering student participation while pervasive throughout the data became explicit to the

teacher educator as a result of this analysis of the DVP transcripts. In this sense, teacher educators must be aware of concepts that teacher-learners may be struggling with, as well as staying open to other emerging concepts and the interrelationship between concepts, for example, participation and orientation to task. This represents a fairly demanding cognitive task for the teacher educator. One practical suggestion would be for teacher educators to take notes during the DVP because listening to the DVP session again or transcribing it places unreasonable demands on them.

This study, while demonstrating the value of DA within a specific teacher development practice, offers insights into how DA procedures could be instantiated in other professional development activities. Because development is not straightforward transferral of the external to the internal plane and because individual teachers with different needs and abilities are the locus of change, DA procedures represent an especially purposeful mediational tool to support the development of a cohort of teacher-learners. Ideally, teacher educators should use DA procedures to mediate teacher-learners throughout a practicum experience because teacher educators can uncover the unique abilities of each teacher-learner through this dialogic procedure and individualize an intentional instructional response. Videotaping teacher candidates early on and conducting a DVP can enable the teacher educator and teacher-learners to identify areas for development. A teacher educator could implement DA procedures when discussing lesson plans with teachers or in responses to the teacher-learners' teaching journals. Recently, a teacher education program has been experimenting with integrating DA procedures in an ESOL endorsement comprehensive exam for pre-service teachers in Florida, as well as in coursework so that the pre-service teachers might use DA procedures with their students in their own classrooms (Erben, Ban, & Summers, 2008). Still, a major drawback of DA procedures is that they are time consuming for teacher educators and teacher-learners alike. Moreover, a teacher educator has to be knowledgeable about and committed to the concept of DA to realize the benefits of DA. With knowledge and commitment, a teacher educator could then be selective about which sociocultural practices, or even which sociocultural practices with which teacher-learners, engender the most valuable results.

Any attempt to standardize the mediator's prompts in DA limits the mediator's ability to act responsively to the learner's needs and to co-construct a ZPD (Poehner, 2008). Nonetheless, there are fundamental questions that a mediator should have in mind when using a DVP as a DA procedure:

1. Can a teacher-learner evaluate the execution of her teaching?
2. Can she identify the reasons why particular activities or interactions are problematic?
3. Can she reorient and plan a more appropriate instructional response?
4. Can she ventriloquate an appropriate instructional response?
5. Can she provide robust reasoning for that instructional response?
6. Can she connect specific concepts with specific concrete teaching activity?

Given the spontaneous nature of mediation in DA procedures, these questions will be instantiated in different ways as the mediator and learner negotiate the support needed.

The findings of this study suggest that DA, when embedded in an authentic teaching activity, functioned to promote the socialization of teacher cognition in a beginning teacher. As the teacher educator and the teacher-learner interacted to attain different levels of intersubjectivity, the teacher educator developed a sense of what the teacher-learner's abilities were and how to respond with mediation that met her where she was at. Integrating Dynamic Assessment into the dialogic video protocols enables teacher educators to employ varied types of assistance with individual teacher candidates to promote cognitive transformation. It unites the process of assessing and promoting the teacher-learner's maturing abilities while supporting the development of expert teacher thinking.

Chapter 9

Moodle as a Mediational Space

Japanese EFL Teachers' Emerging Conceptions of Curriculum

Tatsuhiro Yoshida
Hyogo University of Teacher Education, Japan

In Japanese schools, curriculum is often used narrowly and non-critically by teachers, as they equate it with a yearly teaching plan or a sequence in which content, such as grammar or vocabulary, is taught as presented in textbooks. Thus, the ways in which teachers understand curriculum are shaped by the sociocultural and institutional factors which surround their daily practice. For example, Japanese elementary and secondary school teachers are required to use textbooks authorized by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Sports (MEXT), based on the criteria specified in the Course of Study, the national curriculum guidelines. These textbooks function as powerful artifacts which tend to define the ways instructional activities are presented in the classroom, and the sociality of these sorts of artifacts tends to shape teachers' conceptions of curriculum.

These sociopolitical influences on teachers' conceptualization of curriculum are further strengthened by current mandated educational reforms initiated by the Central Council for Education (Central Council for Education, 2008) which required MEXT to revise the Course of Study for foreign languages, emphasizing that English language teachers should equip their students with communicative language abilities that will meet global standards (MEXT, 2008). MEXT will introduce compulsory English lessons (called "English Activities") into Grade 5 and 6 in elementary schools in 2011. For secondary schools, the goals and objectives for English language instruction have been shifting toward "English for communication," stressing the integration of oral and literacy skills for communicative uses. Textbooks are now being edited and authorized based on whether they meet these educational reforms.

Despite these reforms, Japanese schools are heavily influenced by an examination-oriented school culture, which focuses on grammar, memorization of vocabulary, and translation of English into Japanese rather than oral communication skills. Since English is considered an important subject in the sense that test scores are highly correlated with students' overall academic achievement (Butler & Iino, 2000), language teachers face the dilemma of whether to emphasize memorization of vocabulary and grammar and translation skills, or to teach more communicative speaking and listening skills. Struggling with this dilemma, most teachers remain preoccupied with their students' gaining high test scores, and this in turn shapes their concept of curriculum. These complex social, cultural and

institutional factors, constrain teachers' conceptualization of language curriculum and, accordingly, their autonomy as curriculum designers is weakened. Of course, language teachers alone cannot reconcile this dilemma. In this respect, teacher education is responsible for providing sound professional development programs that enable teachers to address the challenges they face at school.

In this chapter, I report on the activities conducted in a graduate course which supported teacher-learners as they attempted to embrace an alternative conceptualization of curriculum and reorient their own concept of curriculum. In order to accomplish this goal, a course management system (CMS) called Moodle was used to create a "space" in which teacher-learners could articulate their everyday notions of curriculum, be exposed to alternative "scientific" concepts (Vygotsky, 1986) and theories of curriculum, and review their current understanding via on-line discussions with me and their fellow students. As the data presented below suggest, as their "everyday" concepts (Vygotksy, 1986) of curriculum were externalized in Moodle and contrasted with the scientific concepts presented in the course, new conceptualizations of curriculum emerged through the social mediation that occurred in Moodle. At the same time, the use of Moodle shifted its function from a simple course management system to a dialogic space supporting their emerging understandings of the concept of curriculum.

The Scientific Concept of Curriculum

The focal site to be discussed and analyzed in this chapter was a graduate course titled, "ELT Curriculum Design," a 4-month elective course in an MA teacher education program in Japan. Eleven students were enrolled in the course; eight had from 7–20 years of English teaching (including one exchange student from Laos) while three had completed undergraduate programs but had little teaching experience.

At the outset, most of the teacher-learners understood language curriculum as what was contained in the textbook and how it was presented in a term. Despite this view of curriculum, they were aware of the complex nature of classroom teaching but not of how the components of language teaching might be linked and integrated in the process of curriculum development. Graves' (2000) model of curriculum development was presented as a framework of curriculum design throughout the course because it takes a systems approach to curriculum design. In the model, the design components (i.e. defining the context, articulating beliefs, conceptualizing content, formulating goals and objectives, assessing needs, organizing the course, developing materials, and designing an assessment plan) are not laid out in linear steps, but interact in more dynamic ways (see Figure 9.1). In particular, she emphasizes that *articulating beliefs* and *defining one's own context* are the foundation of curriculum development. She states:

> As a course designer, you can begin anywhere in the framework, as long as it makes sense to you to begin where you do. What makes sense to you will depend on your beliefs and understandings, articulated or not, and the reality

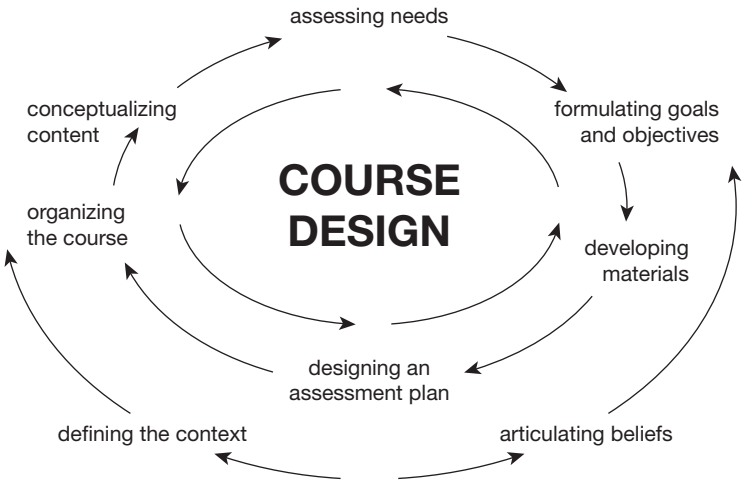


Figure 9.1 A Framework of Course Development Processes.

Source: Adapted from Graves, K. (2000). *Designing language courses: A guide for teachers*. Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.

> of the context and what you know about your students. For that reason, articulating beliefs and defining one's own context are on the bottom of the chart to serve as the foundation for the other processes. (p. 3)

Graves' model clearly contrasted with the teacher-learners' everyday concept of curriculum. However, the contexts, in which these teacher-learners live and work differ greatly from what Graves describes in that they teach English as a foreign language under sociocultural and political situations that are unique to Japan. As was discussed earlier, textbooks are a dominating cultural artifact in Japanese schools, and thus few teachers ever have the opportunity or inclination to develop their own instructional materials other than supplementary hands-on worksheets. In addition, while Graves' model emphasizes assessing students' needs, this feature of curriculum design may not be perceived as necessary since English is a compulsory subject and what should be taught is predetermined in the Course of Study. In addition, most students recognize that they need to learn English to pass the college entrance examinations. However, by being exposed to the design components visualized in Graves' model, it was hoped that teacher-learners would reflect upon their everyday understandings of curriculum and "problematize" many of the taken-for-granted issues existing in the Japanese context. The sociocultural theory claims that it is important for teacher-learners to scrutinize and externalize the understandings of their own contexts and beliefs, through which teacher learning will be mediated and reorientation of the curriculum concept will be promoted.

Other curricular concepts presented in the course were the contrasting metaphors of "learning the landscape" versus "the rutted path" view of curriculum. The National Research Council (2000) states that: "Many models of curriculum design seem to produce knowledge and skills that are disconnected rather than organized into coherent wholes . . . 'To the Romans, a curriculum was a rutted course that guided the path of two-wheeled chariots.' This rutted path metaphor is an appropriate description of the curriculum for many school subjects . . ." (p. 138). This traditional view of curriculum was contrasted with an alternative view of learning, "learning the landscape" metaphor, which was originally claimed by Greeno (1991). Unlike the traditional information-processing view of learning, Greeno considers knowledge either to be learned, or experienced as *conceptual domains*, as environments in which "people can know how to live, and people's learning to live in an environment results mainly from their activities in it." (p. 170) He states:

> knowing the domain is knowing your way around in the environment and knowing how to use its resources. This includes knowing what resources are available in the environment as well as being able to find and use those resources for understanding and reasoning. Knowing includes interaction with the environment in its own terms—exploring the territory, appreciating its scenery, and understanding how its various components interact. Knowing the domain also includes knowing what resources are in the environment that can be used to support your individual and social activities and the ability to recognize, find, and use those resources productively. (p. 175)

In short, the rutted path metaphor represents a traditional linear model of learning, which was heavily influenced by a behavioristic and positivistic view of learning, while the learning the landscape metaphor, which is often a fundamental principle of experiential, reflective, or project-based learning, aims to enable students to "explore, explain, extend, and evaluate their progress . . . [and help] them see relevant uses of knowledge to make sense of what they are learning." (National Research Council, 2000, p. 139). Thus, the course was designed to have the teacher-learners contrast their current understanding of curriculum, dominated by the rutted path view of curriculum, incorporating the Graves' model of curriculum development.

Course Assignments and Moodle as an E-Portfolio

To support the appropriation of these alternative conceptualizations of curriculum teacher-learners were required to complete eight assignments throughout the course (see Table 9.1). These assignments were ordered so that teacher-learners would first articulate and analyze their everyday concepts of curriculum and then consider alternative conceptualizations of curriculum. In the final two classes, they were required to visualize their conceptualization of curriculum and its design.

Table 9.1

Assignment No.	*(Date)*	*Title*
1	(4/15/08)	My conceptualization of "curriculum"
2	(5/12/08)	The "rutted path" view and the "learning the landscape" view of curriculum
3	(5/12/08)	Reaction paper to Graves (2000): A systems approach to course design
4	(6/03/08)	Articulating your beliefs and defining contexts
5	(6/10/08)	Reflection on teacher beliefs assignment (4) and the poster session
6	(6/17/08)	Observation of a video-taped lesson
7	(7/17/08)	Group projects: Making a three-year task-based syllabus
8	(8/16/08)	Recompilation of your e-portfolio

In this activity, they worked in a group of 3–4 and discussed how a language curriculum for a lower or higher secondary school could be designed by making use of the alternative conceptualizations of curriculum they had been exposed to during the course. All the groups presented their visualizations in the form of a poster, in which they depicted how each component interacted within the curriculum and how textbook materials were laid out.

The completed assignments were uploaded and saved in a website created in a course management system called Moodle. Moodle is an open source CMS which has been developed based on "social constructionist pedagogy," and allows students to share their ideas with other learners in a common and teacher-controlled virtual space. Moodle also provides "an easy way to upload and share materials, hold online discussions and chats, give quizzes and surveys, gather and review assignment and record grades" (Cole, 2005, pp. 1–2). Typically, the site administrator sets up a Moodle site and assigns an instructor "teacher privileges" to a new course site. The instructor then decides who can come into the course and how the course is laid out. In our case, however, the author assigned each teacher-learner a "teacher" role and allowed them to own their course sites in the Moodle. This means that they were able to control access to their course sites by other participants, change the layout of the course, and create a discussion forum whenever they liked as well as uploading, downloading, and archiving materials. This unique use of Moodle was necessary because the course was designed to enable the teacher-learners to trace the ways in which alternative concepts of curriculum emerged. Although they could allow other students to visit their sites, none was confident enough to make their site public. Thus, we agreed to maintain password restrictions and each site was basically accessible to the student and the instructor. In other words, the Moodle site functioned as a working reflective portfolio for each teacher-learner (Stefani, Mason & Pegler, 2007). I visited the individual portfolios and left comments on their entries and sometimes invited the students to converse about the issues they raised via the Moodle discussion forum.

Initial Contradictions

In discussing Graves (2000), I emphasized the complex ways in which curriculum components interact with each other and, in particular, the significance of *articulating beliefs* and *defining one's own context* to the process of curriculum design. At the beginning of the course, the teacher-learners struggled with these two components of curriculum design and seemed puzzled as to why they were being asked to talk or write about their own beliefs and experiences. One complained that he took this course to learn "theory" and believed that only theoretical knowledge could be applied to his classroom teaching. Others felt their beliefs were too idiosyncratic to be meaningful to others. They felt if they discussed their personal beliefs this might offend other teachers or threaten their position as professional teachers. These initial negative reactions toward disclosing their personal beliefs and experiences may be the result of "shin'nen," the Japanese equivalent of "belief," which indicates firm, strong ideas, which are hidden and resistant to change.

Another problem they experienced in the initial stages of the course was (re)defining their own teaching contexts since they had never been asked to critically examine their own teaching context. Central to Graves' model, however, is the necessity to clarify one's beliefs about language, teaching and learning and to "problematize" one's teaching contexts. The tension that emerged from these initial activities in which the teacher-learners were asked to articulate their own beliefs and critically examine their own teaching contexts served to create a series of contradictions and, according to a sociocultural theoretical perspective, such contradictions create a space in which there is potential for concept development. In this course, the Moodle site became a virtual space where these teacher-learners verbalized their current understanding of curriculum, struggled with the alternative conceptualizations of curriculum that were being presented to them throughout the course, were pushed to rearticulate those understandings, and finally to reflect back on the emergence of their own developing understanding of the concept of curriculum. The data analysis and findings presented below trace that development as it was articulated by the teacher-learners and made concrete in their Moodle portfolios.

Data Analysis

The data consisted of the eight written texts that were uploaded by each teacher-learner into Moodle. Among these, Assignment 8 was considered most crucial because it required the teacher-learners to look back at their other entries and trace their own emerging conceptualization of curriculum, and then try to explain why it had emerged as it did. As the course instructor, I left comments and questioned or confirmed some issues to push them to articulate their understandings. Thus, the data analysis began by examining Assignment 8, with particular attention to how they described their own emerging conceptualizations. Phrases, sentences, and paragraphs were italicized which appeared to represent how they were describing

their conceptualizations. Once Assignment 8 was analyzed, the previous seven assignments were examined to look for confirmatory evidence that traced their emerging conceptualization of curriculum.

Findings

Data from three of the eleven teacher-learners, Noriko, Kyoko and Katsunori, are highlighted here. Their emerging conceptualizations of curriculum were found to reflect three broad conceptual categories: 1) *metaphoric reorientation*, 2) *revisiting the significance of curriculum activities*, and 3) *reconciling conflicting ideologies*. I argue that these categories represent the development of their thinking about the concept of curriculum.

Metaphoric Reorientation

In Assignment 1, the teacher-learners were asked to articulate what they understood as curriculum. As an in-class activity, they were told to write down what they knew about "curriculum" by using a conceptual map or web. Focusing on the particular words they placed on the map, they detailed their understanding of curriculum within one page. Pictures or diagrams could be added optionally to the paper. The ways in which they described their own concepts of curriculum varied; however, most used various metaphors to capture their understanding of curriculum. For example, some used metaphors which related to plants (e.g. a tree with many fruits) and others used ones related to traveling or mountain climbing. Noriko, a teacher with 26 years of experience, described *curriculum as a compass*.

> I think that "*curriculum" is a compass* which *navigates the way in which we teach* English. It always tells us *which way to change course* and *prevents us from getting lost*. So we can *feel secure about our navigation* and start to get ready for it. A curriculum enables us to *prepare for the navigation appropriately and sufficiently*. (posted on April 15th, 2008)

Her use of this metaphor indicated that she conceptualized curriculum as traveling, as trusting a compass and feeling secure when she followed it. One interpretation of this compass metaphor might be that curriculum is something that is "out there"or given by the Ministry of Education, which regulates her actions in the classroom. To clarify what she meant by *curriculum as a compass*, I posted "Who made the compass?" which pushed her to more fully articulate her understanding of curriculum:

> When we make "curriculum," we have some points to keep in mind. The first point is to have *visions of the goal* which we encourage students to reach in the lessons. The second point is to *make a good choice* from many kinds of teaching skills, styles and materials *according to the goal*. For example, using visual aids are more effective for some lessons, and in other lessons group activities are

> more useful to make them lively. I think that *"curriculum" shows our own principles.* Additionally, through my experience, understanding each learner plays an important role in our lessons. If we know more about their learning ability, interest and personality, it is easier for us to help them with their learning. So we *need to understand students better* and *build up a good relationship with them.* "*Curriculum" should reflect the actual conditions of learners.* (posted on April 15th, 2008)

According to Noriko, a compass is used when we travel to an unfamiliar place and need to find out which direction to go. Noriko confidently stated that it is teachers [= *we*] who design a curriculum and select teaching materials that are appropriate for the students. She even stated that a curriculum shows what principles the teacher follows. It is apparent that she defines a compass as made by teachers themselves and consisting of principles which guide their thoughts and actions. For Noriko, the compass metaphor seemed to capture language curriculum as a complex phenomenon. Considering the fact that her entry above was posted in the second week of the course, she might have had the ideas before she entered the MA program, which could not be proved now. However, it is rather more plausible to assume that the activity, which required her to articulate her beliefs about curriculum by using metaphors and visualization, might shape and make explicit her understanding of curriculum. In addition, although she later implied the complex nature of curriculum by the compass metaphor, the compass metaphor still highlights the fixed goal to be aimed at and plays down the travelers' agency (i.e. who holds it for what) and the environments surrounding the traveling route.

After almost four months, however, when she reflected upon her previous entries in the Moodle portfolio (Assignment 8), she realized that curriculum design should actually be more flexible.

> Actually, my *main idea about curriculum has not changed* for four months. However, I found some points to be changed or improved . . . *Curriculum is not like a compass. A compass points in one direction, to the north, but curriculum is more flexible and inclusive.* (posted on August 4th, 2008)

It appears that exposure to an alternative conceptualization of curriculum and grounding these alternative concepts in curriculum design activities (i.e. Assignments 1–8) enabled new dimensions of curriculum to become visible to her. While from the start Noriko recognized that students' needs and abilities and the goals of her school were part of her understanding of curriculum, four months later she realized that these issues could not converge into a single direction, as indicated by the compass metaphor, but needed to be understood as both flexible and inclusive. In this final assignment, in which she traced her own conceptualization of curriculum, she recognized the inadequacies of the compass metaphor. Although she stated her understanding of curriculum had not changed, her comment suggests that she embraced the notion of an interdependent relationship among the curricular components; it is suspected that learning the scientific concept of

curriculum design, i.e. Graves' systems approach and Greeno's learning the landscape metaphor, began to affect her current understanding.

Recognizing this contradiction in her thinking, I posted an additional question to the discussion forum in her Moodle portfolio asking if she had considered an alternative to the compass metaphor:

AUTHOR: You gave a good review of your previous entries. In particular, I found it very interesting that you reanalyzed the meaning of "a curriculum as a compass" metaphor. After you stop using the metaphor, what do you think it is that will lead teachers to their own goals? (posted on August 17th, 2008)

NORIKO: Now *I will change a "compass" to an "itinerary." Teachers are tour guides*, who have traveled a lot and have a lot of information about many cities, traffic, weather, trouble and so on. *We, tour guides, draw an itinerary* for a certain group of tourists who are *in the same context. An itinerary shows tourists where to go, how to go, what to mainly see and a time schedule for arrival and leaving.* A compass belongs to only teachers, but *an itinerary is to be shared* [by teachers and students] . . . a tour guide helps them and *sometimes an itinerary can be changed* . . . (posted on August 18th, 2008)

Her response to my query gave her an opportunity to articulate a new metaphor, describing curriculum as an "itinerary;" as something that can be shared, along which teachers and students travel together, and thus negotiable. She expanded the itinerary metaphor to suggest that the teacher functions as a tour guide who manages and regulates the itinerary, i.e. curriculum, and stressed the teacher's role as an agent of change and a decision maker in the classroom. As Lakoff & Johnson (1980) argue, since "most of our ordinary conceptual system is metaphorical in nature" this will structure "how we perceive, how we think, and what we do" (p. 4). For Noriko, the emergence of the "itinerary" metaphor in her later writing indicates that she began to use a new conceptual system through which to articulate her reconceptualization of curriculum. In the case of the compass metaphor, attention was paid only to the object, the compass, itself; however, the itinerary metaphor involves participants, places to visit, schedules and the interactions of these constituents. For Noriko, it appears as though her language "caught up" with her conceptualization of curriculum and then seemed to work as a catalyst for her to broaden her understanding of curriculum.

The analysis of interaction between Noriko and the author indicates that the strategic mediation provided by the author enabled her to focus on the different aspects of the travel metaphor, scrutinize the factors related to the curriculum and reorient her understanding of curriculum.

Revisiting the Significance of Curriculum Activities

Assignment 2 required the teacher-learners to read and discuss the contrasting metaphors of curriculum, the "rutted path" and "learning the landscape."

When first presented with the "learning the landscape" metaphor, most of the teacher-learners did not fully appreciate it. Some asked what was "wrong" with the rutted path view, while others found the learning the landscape metaphor bewildering, stating that it just did not make sense to them. However, Kyoko, a secondary school EFL teacher with 15 years of teaching experience, was clearly able to articulate the difference between the two metaphors.

> . . . the rutted path curriculum just gives students the way to follow without letting them see any connections among the factual knowledge which they learn separately. Furthermore, they just follow procedures without realizing what, how and why they have learned. In order to deepen their understanding of what they learned and how to use it, giving students just factual knowledge is not good enough. They must have both a deep foundation of factual knowledge and a strong conceptual framework based on their own experiences, discoveries and learning . . . In contrast, learning the landscape means understanding the overall learning environment around students. It allows students to learn with good understanding of their present situation, the purpose of the activities, the materials which they can use and relevant use of knowledge to make sense of what they learn and its objectives. (posted on April 28th, 2008)

It seems reasonable that a relatively experienced teacher such as Kyoko would have already acquired the knowledge represented by these two metaphors and was thus able to clearly describe their differences. Interestingly, however, her reflective writing posted to Moodle for Assignment 8 revealed that she had thought very little about how curriculum might be conceptualized and how it would affect students' learning. She wrote:

> In the very beginning of this course, we were asked what was the curriculum or what kind of words were related to curriculum . . . *To tell the truth, I did not have any particular beliefs about making a curriculum design because I had not made them with deep understanding. For me, making a new curriculum is a sort of routine work that I do before the new term.* (posted on August 6th, 2008)

Kyoko taught at a very competitive secondary school, where the goal of the majority of students was to apply to prestigious universities or medical schools. Thus, the sociocultural context where the goals of learning and teaching English were in a sense predetermined might not have allowed her to challenge the standard curriculum. Although she was able to articulate what each view of curriculum meant, she had not attempted to embrace these views of curriculum in her daily practices. In other words, she had not internalized the concepts yet. This is a common dilemma for teacher-learners and teacher educators. That is, while teachers are able to accurately describe the concepts they read about in their teacher education programs, or what Freire (1970) called empty verbalism, this ability does

not presume that these concepts have been fully internalized or become psychological tools that drive their thinking and their activities in the classroom.

However, in Assignment 7, in which she collaborated with other students to create a visualization of a task-based curriculum for a junior high school EFL course, her understanding of the "learning the landscape" view of curriculum was tested. In this activity, they discussed how they would be able to create an innovative curriculum by incorporating this alternative concept of curriculum, while integrating the textbooks, the activities and the goals into their curriculum. In Assignment 8 she wrote:

> First, I had to think carefully what a rutted path curriculum meant and why we had to compare it with learning the landscape curriculum. When I made a three year task-based syllabus with Kana and Noriko, *we were able to use these notions automatically as our common understanding.* All of us tried to avoid making a rutted path curriculum and had a long discussion on how to design the curriculum so that *students could enjoy the landscape before reaching their goals.* (posted on August 5th, 2008)

Clearly, Kyoko felt her interactions with her fellow classmates and their struggle to articulate what this alternative concept of curriculum meant to them, enabled her to make sense of it. In their poster presentation, they presented a syllabus titled "treasure hunting" which depicted their understanding of the learning landscape view of EFL curriculum for junior high school students. They used a marine chart metaphorically, by which students navigated and explored the sea and islands.

> When we made *the treasure hunting curriculum*, our hope was that *our students would find different treasures through learning.* The reason why we chose a sea route is because we do not want our students to follow a rutted path. *Instead, we would like them to take their own ways to get their treasures with the help of their teachers.* Of course, *they will enjoy their landscapes on the way*, although sometimes they will be frightened by a heavy storm or the sight of a ghost ship. However, the harder their way is, the greater their joy may be when they achieve their goals. *I believe no matter what their learning may be, it must be a priceless treasure for them.* I am sure that now I will be able to *make a better curriculum for my students* in the future. (posted on August 5th, 2008)

In this entry, Kyoko expresses her confidence in curriculum design; the learning the landscape metaphor enabled her to conceptualize the exploratory nature of learning and how a curriculum can actually facilitate this type of learning. In the treasure hunting metaphor, the agent of the activity is the learner, who looks for something of value (i.e. treasure) following the marine chart. In this sense, Kyoko did not fully reject the rutted path metaphor,yet she thought that learners should decide which route to take. Thus, she was able to not only understand this concept but materialize it in the curriculum design activity. How her conceptual development will impact her future teaching practices is not known; still, her

reflections on her own experiences and the tracing of her own development appeared to have helped her reorient her overall understanding of curriculum.

> Before learning curriculum design, I do not care how students learn English but what to learn. However, now *I am conscious of the quality of learning. Although I cannot deny the cram school type of teaching, I am now able to think of the quality of learning and teaching.* However, I believe understanding which comes from students themselves must be better than the others which are given by their teachers. Furthermore, *enjoying the landscape to the destination is also very important both for students and teachers. I think this change of thinking is the biggest improvement for me.* (posted on August 5th, 2008)

In the final paragraph of Assignment 8, Kyoko explicitly stated that her current understanding of curriculum had changed. She invokes a new term "the quality of learning and teaching," borrowed from Allwright's Exploratory Practice (Allwright, 2003), which I invited her to explore further:

> **Author**: I think this paragraph concludes your learning in this course in a beautiful and powerful way. I like the phrase "the quality of learning." I am also interested in the quality of classroom life by Dick Allwright. I am still exploring what it is. I hope you will keep thinking about it from now on.

Kyoko replied to this comment as follows:

> When I saw the [video-taped] lecture by Dick Allwright, he seemed to encourage both teachers and students to enjoy the class. In order to keep a kind of good quality of classroom life, all of us may have to understand each other well and find the problems which we face together. *We must remember what makes classroom wonderful is not made by not only teachers but also students.*

The paragraph above demonstrates that her self-reported change in her thinking about curriculum design was backed up by her understanding of other alternative understandings of classroom teaching; most notably, a shift toward more learner-centered instruction. Once again, although she was able to describe more learner-centered ways of teaching, it is not clear that she was able to use this concept as a psychological tool. However, what she described as learning in the curriculum design course and what she learned in other courses, seemed to work in consort to help her articulate an alternative conceptualization of curriculum: paying more attention to the quality of learning rather than the quantity or efficiency of learning. Although it may be insurmountable for her to change the standardized language curriculum at her school, the emergence of this new understanding, emerging out of and mediated by her participation in the Moodle portfolio, may have begun to lay the foundation for an alternative understanding of the concept of curriculum that will hopefully remain with her as she returns to the classroom.

Reconciling Conflicting Ideologies in Curriculum Design

Katsunori, who had ten years' experience of teaching English at two urban junior high schools, wrote about his beliefs and school contexts (Assignment 5), immediately after he read about Graves' systems approach to course design. Initially he visually depicted contextual factors surrounding individual students (see Figure 9.2) suggesting that his understanding of individual students' learning English was affected by two factors: *extrinsic* and *intrinsic*. He believed that extrinsic factors such as "academic achievement" and "cultural artifacts, e.g. entrance exams" were powerful and could not be ignored. However, his personal goal for teaching English was to let students "enjoy and experience the sense of fulfillment, or taste the delights of acquiring another language." Thus, intrinsic factors, such as personal interests and cultural and identity formation, were fundamental elements in his teaching. Comparing his diagram to the metaphor of a boiled egg, he stated:

> The problem is that *many students stop eating this boiled-egg before reaching its yolk*. They only care about getting good test scores. [. . .] It is like learning English as a disposable one-way ticket to high schools, because learning English (or any other foreign language) seems no urgent issue for students, except for their entrance exams. That is understandable but *I would rather persuade them to eat the whole egg*, not pushing them too hard, but letting them eat the whole egg *so that they can swallow the mixture of ingredients*. (posted on June 10th, 2008)

In this entry, he is clearly trying to reconcile these two ideologies, i.e. *teaching English for sound pedagogy* and *teaching English for tests*. He did not suggest any

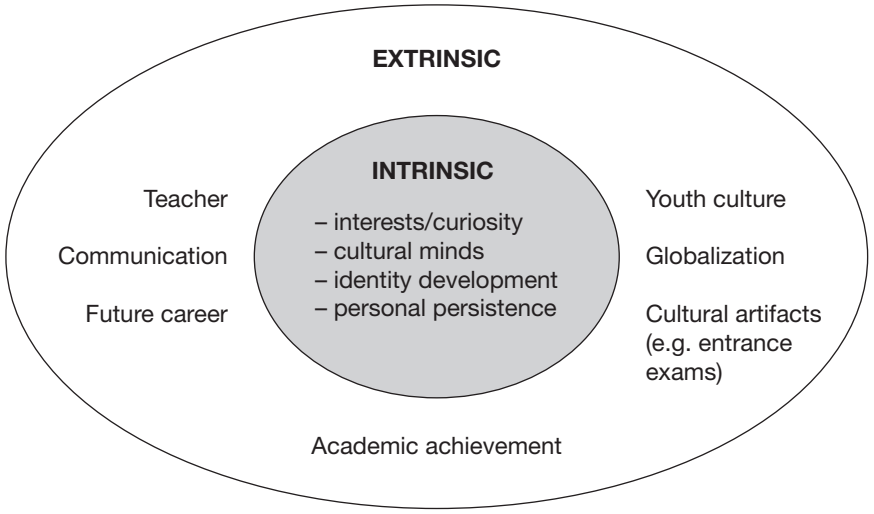


Figure 9.2 Katsunori's Visualization of Extrinsic and Intrinsic Factors which Affect Students' Learning.

concrete ways that would enable students to taste both, but by focusing on how intrinsic factors would affect individual students in pedagogically significant ways, he was able to consider students' needs, an often neglected aspect of the Japanese educational context. Katsunori stated:

> I questioned myself; what problems do the students have, and what are they interested in, what are their future dreams, and where is their motivation for learning coming from? [. . .] That could be my needs assessment, which would further allow me to improve my course design. To re-analyze and understand the context would help solve my puzzlement and build firm beliefs about teaching. And, of course, when I receive affirmative responses from my students and confirm the improvement of their language use, I will be able to articulate my beliefs in clearer ways. (posted on June 10th, 2008)

Two months after Assignment 5, he reviewed his writing archived in his Moodle site and suggested a solution which might help the students *eat both the yolk and the white*. Using the keyword "trust" he states:

> Under the current Japanese school system, improving students' academic scores is the biggest concern. I have so far seen many students worried about or stressed by high school entrance exams. *To overcome the problem, I believe making those students relaxed is really important*. Thus, one of the things teachers can do is to analyze high school entrance exams and tell their students exactly what to do for the exams; to ensure each student's success (in entrance exams) is inevitable. *By doing these, teachers receive real trust from students.* I might sound like a teacher who pursues traditional grammar translation methods or mechanical drills and repetitions. Far from it. What I try to articulate is that *we need to understand the whole contexts where we are situated. Only after that we are able to find the ways to overcome problems. Only when students feel safe about their exams (I mean, students feel confident), they begin to pursue deeper or more sophisticated interests of language learning.* While teachers are getting students' trust, they can repeatedly tell students about possibilities for their future world after acquiring English communication skills. (posted on August 6th, 2008)

Although it is unclear how these ideas might be incorporated into his language curriculum, it is apparent that he is not thinking in an either-or way anymore; rather he admitted the significance of the entrance exams in students' lives and yet tried to encourage student participation in pedagogically meaningful experiences and make them feel secure by establishing trustworthy relationships with them.

On reading his review of Assignment 5, I invited him to further explore this issue by commenting:

> **Author:** You are now critically but positively accepting the sociocultural meaning of learning English for your students. We know it is not easy to deny

> the reality of our exam-oriented society, but *by understanding the conflicting factors and exploring the solution for it, I believe you can help your students become more motivated and confident language learners.* (posted on August 17th, 2008)

Katsunori replied:

> *I hadn't realized that I was accepting the sociocultural meaning of learning English for my students*, but I am glad to realize it now [. . .] I think the word "trust" is very important. *Trust generates "commitment."* When teacher and student give commitment to teaching/learning, they have more chance to achieve higher goals. *When they are interested and committed in what they are doing (about teaching/learning English), they will begin to learn by themselves* [. . .] *If teacher has knowledge and experiences by which he or she judges what the best (or the most appropriate) curriculum for students is, it is easier for both the teacher and the students to build up "trust" or give "commitment" to each other.* Teacher should be a good planner of curriculum and teaching materials. (posted on August 30th, 2008)

My comment created a space for Katsunori to articulate that he had been thinking from a sociocultural point of view and let him trace the process of his thoughts in the entries related to this issue. He appears to be aiming to regain his autonomy as a curriculum planner even under the pressures from the entrance exams ("*he or she judges what the best* [*or the most appropriate*] *curriculum for students is*"). Further, he embeds other concepts, *trust* and *commitment*, as essential to his understanding of curriculum design. Although these two concepts are often taken for granted in educational contexts, he began to embrace these pedagogical concepts so that students' anxiety about entrance exams might be eased and they could explore and appreciate alternative language learning experiences.

Discussion

The findings of this study suggest that the Moodle-based e-portfolios created three-dimensional narrative inquiry spaces (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) in which teachers looked *backward* at their past and *forward* to their future as well as *inward* to themselves and *outward* to the surrounding contexts. In essence, the Moodle-based e-portfolios were *situated within place.* These teachers, in stepping back from their own classrooms, were able to look at their teaching experiences, and the space where they were allowed to go back and forth between their academic work and their classroom practice provided a very different landscape for them to think about teaching and learning.

Having said that, the present study strongly suggests that just providing a virtual space and asking teachers to articulate and reflect upon their experiences does not lead to the appropriation of new curricular concepts; strategic mediation is necessary for concept development. What was crucial to this developmental process

was the role of the scientific concepts of curriculum. When first presented with Graves (2000) and the learning the landscape view of curriculum, the teacher-learners struggled to make sense of these new concepts, primarily because they were contradictory to their everyday concepts. However, by learning about and working through the scientific concepts in the course activities, this struggle and these contradictions actually became a springboard for them to question their everyday experiences and problematize their instructional contexts.

The ways in which the course assignments were laid out also helped the teacher-learners develop a metacognitive awareness of their own learning. The final assignment, which required them to critically review their own development, in particular, pushed them to trace the process of their own learning and their understandings of alternative curricular concepts. Critical to this reviewing process was the role of the expert "other," the teacher educator, in mediating their emerging conceptualizations of curriculum. The unique use of Moodle allowed us to create and maintain a virtual conversation, where teachers were encouraged to explore, exchange and confirm their emerging conceptualizations of curriculum. As the teacher educator, I was able to strategically pose questions and comments aimed to push them to reorient their notions of curriculum. In this regard, the Moodle site shifted in function from a course management system at the start of the course to a space which mediated their learning by the end.

Only when these settings, activities, and mediation are strategically combined and provided in a teacher education course, will teacher-learners begin their learning through readings, lectures, discussions, and the concepts and scientific theories will gradually become internalized and made their own; or at least on the way to becoming psychological tools that have the potential to shape both thinking and activity in the classroom teaching. While I have no evidence of full internalization of the scientific theories provided in the course, the present study suggests that these teacher-learners were aware of their own learning and this is an important first step for further learning. Johnson (2009) argues; "learning is not development; however, properly organized instruction (teaching/learning) can result in cognitive development and can set in motion a variety of developmental processes that would be impossible apart from learning." (p. 76)

Finally, the Moodle-based portfolio allowed teacher-learners to carry their course learning into their understandings of actual classroom teaching. While not part of this study, such three-dimensional virtual spaces have the potential to extend the reach of the face-to-face teacher education programs after teachers have returned to the classroom. They can not only provide support for teachers' continued professional development but also create a space to observe the extent to which teacher-learners are able to transform their newly emerging conceptualizations of curriculum into psychological tools that mediate their classroom activities.

Of course, the challenge now for these teachers will be to maintain these conceptualizations in the face of the constraints and policies that are embedded in the places where they work. This is also a challenge for teacher educators, who need to investigate how effectively virtual sites, such as Moodle and the activities conducted in them, shape the professional development of teachers. To do so,

teacher educators need to follow the teacher-learners into the classrooms after they finish the course. This may increase the duties of teacher educators. However, a web application like Moodle definitely eases the burden and enables them to expand their responsibility to ensure that a sound and quality teacher education program is continued.

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Chapter 10

The Reverse Move

Enriching Informal Knowledge in the Pedagogical Grammar Class

Deryn P. Verity
Osaka Jogakuin College

A student is someone who learns how to turn life into signs. More formally, education "is fundamentally about internalization of knowledge and abilities which can potentially . . . create new tools for regulation" (Negueruela, 2008, p. 195). Schooling aims to transform what Vygotsky called *spontaneous* or *everyday* concepts (informal, implicit, episodic, and unanalyzed knowledge) into *scientific* concepts (abstract, taxonomic, and explicit), that is, knowledge that transcends lived experience (Lantolf & Poehner, 2008, p. 11). Language teacher education often proceeds upon the assumption that this transformation is essentially transparent, not to mention a one-way street. In an MA TESOL class on SLA, for example, students may be asked to identify, through reflection, factors that shaped their exposure to second or foreign languages in various stages of their lives (Verity, 2009); rough parallels can then be drawn between those informal taxonomies and current SLA research paradigms, each with its own linguistic, psychological or social/cultural agenda (Lightbown & Spada, 1993; Ortega, 2005). This recoding of personal experience gives theoretical SLA concepts an episodic dimension, and may help students avoid the dangers of *verbalism*, a theoretical mastery of knowledge that remains separate from material practice (Lantolf & Poehner, 2008, p. 12; Negueruela, 2008, p. 189).

In my experience, MA TESOL students are very open to this approach; it makes sense to connect formal language teaching concepts to everyday life. When it comes to Pedagogical English Grammar (henceforth PEG), however, verbalism often takes root well before graduate school begins: practical knowledge is jettisoned in favor of a half-baked carapace of what Thornbury has called, in a different context, "layers of ritualized teaching behaviors" (1998, p. 113), accessible only through "problematic conceptual tools" (Negueruela, 2008, p. 210), consisting of outdated, misleading and inaccurate rules of thumb, poor examples, and arbitrary and incomplete explanations (Blyth, 1997, p. 54). Although the life-to-signs shift (with its emphasis on reflection, concept, and context) is acceptable elsewhere, in PEG class, students seem to expect the substitution of "received knowledge for . . . cogent analysis and self-understanding within . . . social, cultural, and political contexts" (Freeman & Johnson, 1998, p. 405). As one PEG student wrote: "I have . . . a very very basic understanding of grammar—('grammar' meaning 'grammar jargon' and 'academically defined grammar rules')." (EM2)

Suffering from "expert blind spot" syndrome (being unable to see a body of knowledge from a novice's perspective) even before they are expert enough to *have* a blind spot (Nathan & Petrosino, 2003), MA TESOL students too often seem wedded to a normative image of grammar rather than to one that involves "choices as well as rules" (Burgess, Turvey & Quarshie, 2000, p. 7). They display a "surprising attachment" to the rules and patterns they have memorized and other artifacts of canonical grammar instruction (i.e., instruction that stresses the structural, abstract, and formal qualities of language) (Frantzen, 1995). Can the PEG class be set up so that it retreats from verbalism and becomes instead a "systematically organized experience of ascending from the abstract to the concrete"? (Lantolf & Poehner, 2008, p. 12)

This chapter is something of a meditation upon my attempts to organize such a class, to help MA TESOL students make the "reverse move" of my title, from signs back to life. Much has been written about how novice teachers collect, organize and access their content and pedagogical knowledge (Blyth, 1997; Burgess, Turvey & Quarshie, 2000; Erben, Ban & Summers, 2008; Gatbonton, 1999; Johnson & Golombek, 2003; Nathan & Petrosino, 2003), including Borg's (1998) well-known study of novice grammar teachers. He points out that novice teachers, lacking helpful guidelines for dealing with grammar, operate in "a landscape without bearings" (p. 10); his goal is to provide a "more detailed and accurate description of the structure and quality of teachers' internal maps" (p. 10). By contrast, my goal in PEG is to help my students create a better landscape. The class activities and assignments ask students to engage with basic concepts of grammar in ways that encourage reflective, metacognitive, and self-regulated exploration and evaluation. While they are expected to gain ultimate mastery over much of the material that is presented directly from the textbook, I want them to learn to grant their own intuitions and insights "psychological status" (Negueruela, 2008, p. 211).

In the first part of the chapter, I propose a characterization of PEG as a complex constellation of affective and cognitive variables. I lay out certain challenges that PEG can pose for the MA TESOL instructor and briefly justify my adoption of a sociocultural orientation towards teaching the subject. In the second part, key assignments and activities designed to address those challenges are outlined. For reasons of space, certain elements of the class are left out, including the pre-course class assignments, the online discussion boards, and the final Critical Reflective Review (a kind of mini-annotated bibliography of three topical journal articles). The activities that are included best illustrate, in my opinion, how a motivated instructor can identify mediating tools, whether material or psychological, for the subject matter of PEG, and how a relatively traditional classroom can be a setting for informed and principled sociocultural praxis.

Concept, not Catalogue

Many of the grammar-focused interactions that my students have with their own learners are about knowing the "right answer." Rather than merely help

them compile a larger catalogue of such answers, "as if a glossary were really the end product of grammatical knowledge" (Burgess, Turvey & Quarshie, 2000, p. 17), I seek to equip them with better conceptual and semantic control over the concepts that underlie those answers (Lantolf & Poehner, 2008, p. 13). Grammar knowledge thus becomes a tool for explaining learner activity rather than only judging it, part of a "pedagogy based on fundamental understandings" (Burgess, Turvey & Quarshie, 2000, p. 17). A PEG student expressed his new orientation to grammar in his journal: "I am no longer limited to seeing correct and incorrect grammar, but am able to see where exactly a student has made a mistake." (EM8)

In a way, the PEG class tries to "de-skill" the MA TESOL students (Thornbury, 1998, p. 113), to make a fundamental change in their values and beliefs regarding what grammar is and what grammar knowledge and teaching can include. Grammar is not a static set of rules that can be known, but a continuous activity of knowing, an approach that bears an obvious debt to the concepts of "grammaring" (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1991) and "languaging" (talking through a complex idea aloud in order to improve one's mastery of it) (Lapkin, Swain & Knouzi, 2008). To the extent possible, I make the PEG class a place where verbalizing (as opposed to verbalism) is normal, a place where "teachers can externalize their current understandings and then reconceptualize and recontextualize their understandings and develop new ways of engaging in the activities associated with teaching" (Johnson & Golombek, 2003, p. 735).

The data discussed here are anecdotal and hardly rigorous. However, the student reactions and comments reproduced in this chapter are similar to comments I see every semester, which suggests that the PEG class does at least initiate the reverse move. Evidence shows itself as a change in the quality of knowing: We "*acquired new and exciting perspectives*" [not "more grammar"], wrote one student. Another linked the new tools he had acquired (tree diagrams, terminology, new kinds of rules) with his increasingly expert viewpoint: "The biggest change has been in the way in which I perceive language . . . the facts, trees, and metalanguage are merely ways of supporting and discussing this change in perception." (EM8)

Of course, it can be delicate, even risky, to ask teachers to reverse themselves on grammar. My MA TESOL students teach English in Japan, where grammar is frequently atomized into a catalogue of facts and rules, of discrete-point test items, an attitude nicely summarized by this journal entry from a Japanese PEG student:

> Grammar is regarded as one of the categorization of teaching areas in the Japanese way, that is, grammar is convenient in that we make questions without a passage . . . grammar in the Japanese English teaching is considered one of the style to ask in tests and not regarded as something that helps students' understanding. (JM4)

This comment comes very close to Thornbury's explanation of why novice teachers often resort to the discrete-point teaching of grammar: "Grammar offers . . .

teachers a life raft. By its very nature, grammar imposes order on chaos. Not only does grammar provide content for the language lesson itself . . . but it also lends itself to the formulation of syllabus and test specifications" (Thornbury, 1998, pp. 111–112). Do I as an MA TESOL instructor even have the right to try to effect this change? Given the evidence, I believe I not only have the right, but also the duty, to try. Consider the final journal entry of the same writer as in the previous excerpt. He displays, apparently with pleasure, a very different understanding of the concept of grammar, constructed through his participation in the PEG class:

> Soon after I started to study grammar in the new way last October, I realized the purpose of teaching grammar is totally different from what I had experienced . . . I can't explain what it was, but I actually felt something that could not have been learned if I had been taught it in Japanese . . . After a while, I came to feel that grammar is one of the ways of studying English language . . . Language is originally an invention of a human culture, not a subject to learn . . . (JM8)

Affect: Disclaimers and Dismay

So what is it about grammar? For decades, it has engendered emotional reactions ranging from faint praise: "not necessarily dull" (Politzer, 1953, p. 138), to discomfort: "grammar is the post-mortem dissection of a living organism . . . the straightjacket which squeezes the life out of modern language teaching . . ." (Cioffari, 1958, p. 284), to cynicism verging on despair: ". . . seventy-five years of experimental research has for all practical purposes told us nothing . . ." (Hartwell, 1985, p. 106), to rejection: "the temptation to desert teaching grammar altogether is great" (Nunan, 2005, p. 71). Instruction in grammar, at least in the United States, has its roots in two intellectual traditions, teaching from examples and teaching from rules, but both approaches limit the autonomy and the interest levels of most learners (W. F. Woods, 1986, p. 18). My own students are not shy in airing their own mostly negative feelings: a popular journal topic is *Why I hate grammar*, with sub-topics such as *Why I hate Phrasal Verbs*. In general, there is a pervasive anxiety about having to study grammar; perhaps it is more accurate to say that the anxiety resides in having to demonstrate in front of others how little one has studied grammar. This journal entry, though written at semester's end, captures a common initial emotional stance towards PEG:

> On the morning of the first session for this class I was quite nervous, but also embarrassed. First of all I really didn't know anything about grammar other than basic concepts I learned in school so many years ago. So, walking towards . . . campus I felt like a phony who was trying to pass himself as an English teacher when in fact he knows nothing about it. (BM8)

Another student, also writing in the final week, characterizes his pre-PEG class condition in rather pejorative (note the quantitative orientation) terms:

> Prior to this course, I had little experience with the morphological rules and metalanguage of grammar. I could tell you that a noun was a person, place, thing, or idea or the difference between an adjective and an adverb, but it was a very minute amount when compared to what I now understand. (EM8)

Fear of being humiliated, or at least embarrassed, about their language use and knowledge is a burden that many students bring to the PEG class. As Lantolf & Yáñez remind us, "adults worry about correct answers . . . given their history with authoritative language, adults are less likely . . . to experiment with language in [a] freewheeling way." (Lantolf & Yáñez, 2003, p. 102). For PEG students, perhaps especially for native speakers of English who have not studied grammar formally for many years, if ever, rules of thumb and low-level, "axiomatic" rules (Blyth, 1997, p. 55) are brandished as shields against humiliation. Asking students to acknowledge their negative feelings, to "talk about, compare, classify, and thus manage their emotions" (Holland & Valsiner, 1988, p. 250), can be as simple as giving them a chance to write about them in a journal entry.

Mediation by Material Tools in PEG: Shifting the Locus of Control

Language Play

Anxiety can be reduced through language play, for both purposes discussed by Broner & Tarone (2001): ludic (i.e., fun) and cognitive. Students are encouraged to share language jokes and to report funny English signs (easy to find in Japan and great for illuminating grammar in action: a great favorite is a notice board in a local department store that lists the entire stock of the third floor as *A Pair of Glasses*). For play with a more cognitive focus, I ask the students to illustrate, literally, grammatical ambiguity: "Draw a cartoon?!" The embarrassment provoked by this instruction is shallow and easily shrugged off, compared to that burning behind a sense of deficient grammar knowledge. The weekly exercise of cartooning the two interpretations of sentences such as *Hit the man with the umbrella*; *John painted all the pictures in the hall* and *She looked up the tree* blends the low-anxiety drawing with the high-anxiety grammar task and they kind of cancel each other out. Everyone gets more relaxed about issues of technical prowess, and the cartoons help concretize the concept of structural ambiguity. Within a week or two, at least one student will tell me of using similar cartoons in classes with his or her own learners.

In another example of using ludic form to scaffold cognition, I distribute an optional crossword puzzle, in the next-to-last class, comprised of several dozen items derived from the examples, rules, and metalanguage we have studied (sample clue and answer: "It's happening!" *Progressive*). It is not as much fun as doing the puzzle in *The Times*, but it is an irrefutably concrete, and meaningful, artifact of the new level of mastery they have reached, as well as a useful, if quirky, mediating device for review (Holland & Valsiner, 1988).

Engaging the Toolkit

From imposed external sign to appropriated instructional tool, the cartoons and the crossword puzzle are only two examples of mediating artifacts used in the PEG class. A general goal of all teacher education is to increase the contents of the teaching "toolkit," but tools that work in the MA TESOL context session can seem irrelevant back in the students' own classrooms, a phenomenon neatly described by Susan Nunan, a junior high English teacher: "We all know those folks who have picture-perfect kitchens with the latest tools, tools that rarely see use" (Nunan, 2005, p. 71). By focusing on continuous active engagement with grammar, I hope the PEG students will come to realize that learning to be a good teacher of grammar—through discussion, practice, and reflection—is a process, just like learning to be a student of grammar is. This journal entry describes a particularly serendipitous interaction of the two roles:

> I believe I told you about the joyful coincidence of reading The Grammar Book [our textbook] in a cafe and receiving a text from a student asking me to clarify the differences between some and any, about which I had read not ten minutes before! That was indeed a fun moment and has been followed by many others as my understanding has evolved. With each thing I have learned, I have felt my paradigm evolving and my confidence in my ability to teach grammar growing. (EM2)

Reflective Journals

Students in PEG are a bit surprised at being asked to produce at least one journal entry per class session. Yet for many, the reflective journal becomes an unexpected means of self-revelation, a place where they can put into words as-yet inchoate ideas and reactions. I read and respond to each entry, which gives me at least a minimal personal link with each student.

Research has identified many roles for journals in learning. They offer an affective outlet, a place to process "unanticipated pain and joy" (Ochs & Capps, 1996, p. 30). Given the anxiety about working with grammar described earlier, this is probably a primary use for many students. The journals become a forum in which "to express accomplishments, challenges and difficulties, enjoyment, goals, real life experiences, and to ask questions" (Darhower, 2004, p. 332). Also, the narrative demands of a journal entry can help balance out the (perceived) emphasis on formula and rule in PEG. Writing about the difficulties of a given concept, or drawing a link between class content and a personal experience can help the student make sense of this new way of thinking about grammar: "narrative structures events in terms of human calculus of actions, thoughts, and feelings . . . narrators construct two worlds, one of action and one of consciousness—what one does and what one thinks and feels" (Ochs & Capps, 1996, p. 27). Finally, another function of the journals is to develop the "everyday creativity" of language use (Maybin & Swann, 2007). For instance, PEG students commonly look to analogy to explain their changing definitions of grammar:

Grammar is like mathematics:

> I expected the class to be difficult with huge amounts of data being needed to absorb. I was right about the huge amount of data, but the information had connections to each other and it made some sense (since there are so many "special cases") allowing myself to learn the subject gradually. I felt that Grammar was quite similar to one of my upper division mathematics courses back in college when I was an undergrad. The tree diagrams looked like math proofs and the morphological concepts such as tense and aspects were like theorems. It was a terrifying, but a familiar thought, which gave me a sense of ease and panic taking the class . . . (BM7)

Grammar is like car repair:

> While a mechanic refers to a piston in an everyday way, and wouldn't dream of ordering one from a manufacturer using deep structure terms nor explain its function to a customer in such terms, the engineer thinks of it in terms of deep structure, how it functions in hydraulics. Indeed, this is the very essence of technological progress, the engineer contemplating what else might be able to generate energy. (EM2)

Journals are outlets but also mediating spaces; a practical function of journal writing is rehearsal for future activity (Broner & Tarone, 2001; Darhower, 2004). Some entries from PEG students are almost model mini-lessons in which the writer mines an experience for its grammatical content, as if in rehearsal for a future lesson. The following entry, for example, touches on register ("*each sentence was short and very casual, even making a minor grammatical mistake*"), pragmatics ("*I said 'damn it!,' which I thought would be okay to say in front of my close friend*"), intersubjectivity ("*I knew that she was sharing the same feeling with me at that time*"), and modality ("*if I would explain the same thing to her on the email, I would write it differently*"):

> Unfortunately, we found that restaurant closed . . . I said "damn it!," which I thought would be okay to say in front of my close friend like [J], and I knew that she was sharing the same feeling with me at that time. Soon after that, we luckily found their 2nd store nearby was open, so we were able to accomplish our goals, but anyway, the close relationship with [J] allowed me to make that remark in this context . . . At the Sushi-bar counter, I was explaining to [J] why we put more Wasabi than usual when we eat fatty tuna. "Compare to other fishes, fatty tuna is more oily, right? The oil makes wasabi milder. So, we put more wasabi than usual." Each sentence was short and very casual, even making a minor grammatical mistake (more oily should be "oilier"). If I would explain the same thing to her on the email, I would write it differently: "Fatty tuna contains more oil and fat than other types of fish, and normally, the fat makes wasabi milder when you eat them together. That's why we like to put more wasabi than usual when we eat fatty tuna." (JF5)

Some students find the journals less than helpful; in general, however, reading the journals leads me to agree with Darhower, citing Lantolf & Appel (1994), who points out that "performance on any task is a function of the interaction between individual and task rather than on some inherent properties of the task itself" (Darhower, 2004, p. 326). Like any good psychological tool, the journals not only help students gain control of the material—"a symbolic tool . . . enables teachers to mediate their thinking about a particular problem" (Johnson & Golombek, 2003, p. 731)—but they also can be turned in the other direction to help to control a student's activity. This student found that the requirement to submit a journal entry as an assignment worked as an impetus for him to actually write his thoughts down:

> After the last class I mentally wrote an R[eflective] J[ournal] and it turned into a bit of a rant so I never physically wrote it. Since then I've been thinking about that rant and how to put it into more meaningful words. (EM2)

The reflective journals are mediational devices that highlight personal experience and history, informal expression, and dialogical interaction with the instructor. There are several ways in which the class also requires students to seek mediation from their peers and other external sources of mediation.

Peer Mediation I: Lesson Plan Assignment

Despite the word "pedagogical" in the course title, this class does not contain a standard microteaching module. Given the wide range of teaching contexts, ages, and curriculum types that MA students in this program work with, I believe that it is more useful for them to practice talking about grammar as much as possible (to engage in "languaging" about PEG) than to write and present demonstration lessons. This is a particularly strong pressure on the Japanese teachers of English, as one PEG student explained:

> As a Japanese English teacher I am expected to be an expert on grammar. My colleagues have told me that students wouldn't mind if a native teacher cannot explain grammatical questions, but they would feel annoyed if a Japanese teacher couldn't. (JF5)

A mini demonstration lesson often begs the question of whether the student can talk simply about a complex topic. It can be a big leap from PEG classroom talk to English class discourse, and in the MA TESOL setting it is particularly hard to replicate the English proficiency and levels of motivation that most PEG students face in their actual classes. Without such variables in place, it can be difficult for the novice teacher to judge the effectiveness of a lesson; even adult learners "can exhibit a type of egocentrism when they rely on their own subjective experience of the difficulty of a task to predict difficulty level for others" (Nathan & Petrosino, 2003, p. 919). So while PEG students are required to prepare a lesson, they do not "teach" it to the class; instead they discuss it with a small group of classmates, get

as much feedback as possible, and then have the choice of turning it in "as is," to get my feedback, or reworking the lesson based on the feedback they get from their peers before submitting it.

As with other peer-oriented activities in PEG, the lesson plan assignment is designed to encourage the students to take their peers' comments seriously, that is, to bypass the common resistance to peer feedback when it comes to grammar issues (Schulz, 2001, p. 251), as well as to strengthen trust in each other and to give students practice in judging and evaluating feedback in context. One PEG student identified both peer and instructor feedback as helpful:

> I learned many things from the lesson plan project. Precisely speaking, I got a lot out of all the feedbacks in the group presentations and the comments from the professor . . . I received some important suggestions from my classmate . . . that a couple activities I planned were teacher-centered. For example . . . I was supposed to give feedback to each student. Based on the suggestions from other member, however, I changed this to "make students ask follow-up questions and give feedback to each other." I think better because it is more student-centered and students can review the content of their speech and the right use of past tense forms themselves. Thanks to all the advice and recommendations received from the professor and my classmates, I was able to improve my lesson plan.

Up to this point, it may look as if the writer is essentially writing a thank-you note for the useful feedback. However, in the next section it becomes clear that she is actually writing to work out her own understanding of the importance of feedback. She generalizes from this assignment to the meta-task of creating and participating in a forum for peer feedback:

> Now I believe it is very important for teachers to have this kind of opportunities more often. I would like to keep my doors open to such activities as peer-reviews, peer observations, or even group-teachings too so that I can enhance the quality of my teaching. (JF4)

She understands that giving and getting feedback is more than just receiving helpful comments; it can occur successfully only when the participants explicitly share the desire to improve their activity on the basis of the feedback. Establishing and maintaining intersubjectivity, a state of "shared focus and intention on the part of both" writer and feedback giver (de Guerrero & Villamil, 2000, p. 64), is an important component of both the lesson plan assignment and the poster presentation, described below.

Peer Mediation II: The "Grammar Jamboree" Poster Session

The lesson plan assignment is written solo. A more complex mediating space, where students can engage in rehearsal and discussion and then practice constructing clear

and helpful explanations of technical concepts, is in the collaborative poster session, the three-hour "Grammar Jamboree" that is held about two-thirds of the way through the semester. In groups of 3 or 4, students prepare a poster illustrating key points from a textbook chapter that is not covered in the regular syllabus, and present the poster, along with a brief handout or participatory activity, to their classmates. Besides being usefully proleptic (forward-looking) as a rehearsal for future professional activity (poster presentations are often the first conference presentations many novice teachers give), the Jamboree is, crucially, an almost entirely student-created arena of mediation. From high levels of instructor control at the beginning of the semester, much of the locus of mediational control (source and effect) is now firmly located among the students. In a journal entry recounting his group's preparation for the Jamboree, this student reflects on the metacognitive rewards of these efforts: he has gained enough distance from the task of discussing and understanding grammar that he can observe and comment upon not only his group's cognitive activity, but also on that of the chapter's authors:

> The epiphanies kept coming as we tested and revised the system of adverbial function and a big moment was when we realized that the preverbal was the rare exception that prompted Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman to write "it is commonly the case that the subject in English will be the theme and the predicate the rheme." (EM3)

Textbook as Mediating Artifact

PEG is not an experimental class. Students are expected to demonstrate rather straightforward understanding of, and facility with, the subjects on the syllabus, which is derived from the textbook, that *sui generis* volume, *The Grammar Book* (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999). To this end, and to satisfy the program's requirement for traditional assessment, I give a written quiz in every class and a cumulative final exam during the last class session. *The Grammar Book*, for readers unfamiliar with its dimensions, is over 800 pages long and weighs in at 2kg (nearly 5 pounds). The physical qualities of the textbook are worth mentioning because they contribute strongly to the negative feelings—fear, panic, shock—expressed by many PEG students when they arrive for the first class (it's "*thick, heavy and filled with words I had never seen*," in the words of one student). In this class, perhaps even more than other MA TESOL classes, the textbook, as both a physical object and a culturally-constructed artifact, necessarily has a "strong influence on . . . their beliefs about language . . ." (Blyth, 1997, p. 53). My goal of transforming the belief that pedagogical grammar is just a bigger version of grammar learned in elementary school is not helped by having to require students to buy an 800-page textbook! However, despite being rooted in the highly formalistic descriptive conventions of transformational-generative grammar, *The Grammar Book* is a richly researched, highly readable (if very technical and dense) book that radiates excitement and passion for all aspects of language, including, but not only, grammar. One of its most powerful contributions to the classroom dialogue about grammar is the

proposed taxonomy of the "three dimensions of grammar: meaning, form, and use," (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999, p. 4), a simple but powerful set of terms that liberate grammar from a reductionist mindset; at the same time, the concept of "form" is not eliminated or downplayed.

As much as possible, I model a dynamic relationship with the textbook, demonstrating through frequent reference (and deference) to it that I—as the instructor and presumably more expert in PEG—do not hesitate to turn to it as a valuable source of mediation. In class, I freely refer student questions to the book, looking up answers I have either truly forgotten or pretend to have forgotten for illustrative purposes (Finegan (2003) describes a somewhat similar use of reference materials when he had to deal with a tricky case of linguistic prescriptivism and power relations that occurred among some law students he was supervising). The goal of such modeling is not to get the students simply to imitate me, but to stimulate imitative behavior that has "transformative potential, and hence implies agency and intentionality" (Lantolf & Yáñez, 2008, p. 99). I want the students not only not to fear or dislike the book, I want them to have something like an affectionate relationship to it (a sentiment echoed in one journal as "*I have come to regard The Grammar Book as an enemy and a friend*"). To this end, for example, I require the students to use the textbook on some quizzes, not in a traditional "open-book" way, but to practice looking things up in it: "On what page(s) can the answer to this student question be found?" Process, not product, ability to use, not ability to reproduce, is the goal. As one student noted in a mid-semester journal entry, the textbook is both an iterative tool—*a gift that keeps on giving*—and an active one: "*I am certain that this textbook shifted that notion in my head a bit and has in time, taken away some of my own fear.*" (EF4)

Peer Mediation III: Consultation Periods and Testing

Requiring use of the textbook is one way students' engagement with external sources of mediation can be scaffolded; another is the inclusion of "consultation periods" during tests. These are fixed times in the middle of every test or exam period when students can (or must) talk to classmates about some of the test items; they are allowed to modify their own test paper on the basis of these consultations, though there is never enough time to check every answer. Depending on the group, the topic at hand, and other factors, the guidelines for the consultations might change slightly (e.g., the consultation is required/optional; notes can/cannot be consulted, etc.), but they are a consistent element during every test in PEG, including the final exam.

Allowing students to consult with each other seems to be a simple but powerful way to incorporate the ZPD into what is essentially a traditional testing event. To an extent, my purpose is similar to that attributed to Dynamic Assessment pedagogy (Erben et al., 2008; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, pp. 329ff), an SCT-based pedagogy that blurs the boundaries between teaching, learning, and evaluation: to be future-oriented (how far can this student's understanding be stretched from this point?) rather than past-oriented (what has the student learned until now?). I think

that consulting periods make tests work better. Students learn from the tests while they take them. Consultation also illuminates the power of collaboration in learning, helping to create what one PEG student labeled an atmosphere of "a community of learning" in the classroom: "cooperation . . . not only reveals potential future abilities" but also helps learners develop these abilities (Lantolf & Poehner, 2008, p. 16). Making each quiz and test a chance to learn, not recite, seems to me to be an obvious way to incorporate SCT principles into the classroom.

Conclusion: A Sea Change: Agency Through Engagement

Ultimately, the goal of the PEG class is to drastically increase—affectively, cognitively, and pedagogically—the students' *agency* vis-à-vis PEG (Ahearn, 2001; Lantolf & Poehner, 2008; Negueruela, 2008). I design class materials and assignments that engage PEG students in a wide variety of crucial cognitive and metacognitive activities: appropriation, internalization, modeling and imitation, rehearsal, reflection, play, the search for mediation and the opportunity to mediate others, self-directed languaging and other-directed social communication, while at the same time expecting them to learn a lot about grammar. In everything, the focus is on the engagement of the students with me, with the book, with the conceptual tools the book provides, with their peers, and, in assignments that are not discussed here, with the wider discourse community of applied linguists and pedagogical grammarians. Given my commitment to the principles of SCT, I try to develop teachers' expert activity by giving it appropriate contexts in which to flourish. Agency must be, in the end, nurtured in the "interstices between people rather than within individuals themselves" (Ahearn, 2001, p. 129).

Many, maybe most, PEG students begin the class "object-regulated" (Johnson & Golombek, 2003, p. 733) both by their "normative" image of what grammar is (Blyth, 1997, p. 50) and by their emotional response to this image, as the journal entries quoted earlier illustrate. The move to self-regulation and full agency is not linear, but it can be paved with examples of good design, in both assignments and class activities. We can redefine the study of PEG by pursuing the same combination of personal exploration and reflection, conceptual understanding, and fluency of practical activity with which we infuse other training courses. This helps to develop greater self-regulation, greater agency, for our MA TESOL students when they face the formidable task of having to both understand grammar for themselves and be able to explain it coherently and appropriately to their learners. We can encourage them, like learners of a second language, to "talk themselves" into being better grammar users (Lantolf & Yáñez, 2003, p. 97). We can model behaviors that will trigger transformative imitation and support conscious appropriation:

> When a student recently asked me to explain the difference between Say and Tell and began talking about infinitives, I could hear myself imitating you to put him on the right track; I told him to think about it in terms of meaning and use rather than get bogged down with labels that aren't going to do the job in this case. (EM4)

We can encourage students to engage in the planning and rehearsal of, not just go through the motions of carrying out, future teaching choices:

> I think it will be a good tool for students to see where the connection lies in a RC (relative clause) sentence. I should probably limit the types of sentences to Subject–Subject and Object–Subject types since those two are the easiest to understand. I will give it a try and see how it goes. (BM6)

The main reason for including activities and assignments devised specifically to engage students through practical, concrete activity, and eliciting lots of private and public speech to rehearse their knowledge is a small attempt to solve what I call the "fractal problem" of MA TESOL course design (Verity, 2009). Briefly, this is the paradox of the MA TESOL program instructor standing at the front of the room lecturing a room full of students about the importance of student-centered activity in the second language class. A fully fractal MA TESOL class design would be instantiated through the very student-centeredness that the lecture talks about: material would be congruent with form. Given all sorts of constraints, from time to cultural expectation to the amount of information that must be "covered," it may be impossible to design an ideally fractal teacher education program, but we can build in elements that concretize such principles wherever and whenever possible.

Language classrooms are not simple places; MA TESOL classrooms are perhaps doubly complex, given the entwining of language, pedagogy, and thought. Language teacher education is more than observation or description of behaviors (though both play important roles), and it is more than knowledge about language (though this plays an important role). Students cannot make sense of theory or practice without actively engaging in sense-making activities and discussions. As one writer puts it, some teacher education programs contain "not too much theory but too little concept" (Cook et al., 2002, p. 412). Language teachers, especially those who have never studied grammar formally, may be attracted to a rule-of-thumb version of grammar because of the illusion of control it provides in the face of the "multidimensionality, simultaneity, and unpredictability of the classroom environment" (Thornbury, 1998, p. 111). I suggest that we give our PEG students a taste of that multidimensionality in a setting with lots of cognitive, affective, and material support, and then let them begin to construct tools for coping with it. I agree with Johnson and Golombek when they say that the "explanatory powers of a sociocultural perspective on teacher learning enable the field of L2 teacher education to move beyond simple descriptions of teacher learning as . . . largely experiential, but allow it to trace the inherent complexity of those experiences" (Johnson & Golombek, 2003, p. 735). SCT offers a useful framework for understanding why students of PEG need to be coaxed back, in a reverse move, towards exploration, risk-taking, questioning, and having fun with language, to be encouraged to at least take the first steps in making the climb from the theoretical to the concrete.

In class, and in my comments to students on journals and other assignments, I do not discuss the SCT principles underlying PEG openly, but I don't keep them

a secret either. Here is my response to the journal entry cited above in which the student wrote about feeling like a "phony":

> I do believe that almost everyone feels like a bit of a "phony" or at least some sense of panic before coming into this class . . . that's why I spend so much time trying to demystify the material, encouraging the formation of study groups, and joking around, so that everyone can see that the grammar that we study is not terrifying, even though it IS rather copious!

The journals quoted in this chapter were written by several different students in different PEG classes that were taught in six different semesters. Of course, I do not claim that every member of each group had an identical experience. As in any class, participants came to class with vastly different levels of prior knowledge, preparation, teaching experience, and second-language histories. I teach the group and the individual students, and, like most teachers, interact with both at different times and in different ways. My claims rest, however tentatively, on the evidence I get every semester, in the form of journal entries, conversations and emails, class evaluations, and in-class discussions, that something changes for most students in most classes. Students conquer what one student called her "grammar demons." Students express surprise at how much more comfortable they feel talking about the grammar—rules, explanations, examples—*that they thought they already knew*, as well as new material. Is the class perfect? Far from it and I continue to make changes each time I teach it. But it is satisfying to see that SCT works even in this relatively traditional setting.

The following journal entry, in words as clear as any technical language I could muster, illustrates SCT in action: reflection, participation, rehearsal, evaluation, prolepsis, metaphor, social origins of cognition, and most of all, the potential for joyous transformation that is waiting to be released in all of our classes, all of our students, every time we meet them:

> I have had a great deal of trouble synthesizing my previous understanding of grammar with my current understanding in part for a wonderful reason. It is because I have experienced a sea change, a revolution, in how I think about grammar specifically and language generally . . . With each thing I have learned, I have felt my paradigm evolving and my confidence in my ability to teach grammar growing. In fact, when I was explaining various structures using what I've learned to a student recently and we were marveling at how intriguing grammar is, I blurted out I'm in love! This is why I love thinking! This is why I love language and teaching and why I came to [this program]! I was giggling about grammar! After I had calmed down a bit, I heard my undergraduate zoology's professor's voice when giddy about an amazing aspect of evolutionary theory: "If this stuff doesn't make you say Wow!, you should do something else. There's nothing wrong with that, but you have to do what you love." My mind is on fire with grammar! I hope that with a lot of hard work, I will be able to become . . . someone who in any situation picks just the right

star of knowledge from the constellation of ideas spinning overhead and explains it at every level. (EM4)

Note: All journal excerpts are given with original spelling, punctuation, grammar, and word choice. The identifier that follows consists of the first language of the writer (E=English; J=Japanese; B=Bilingual E/J); gender; and the number of the journal, corresponding roughly to the class session it was submitted for (there are a total of 6 to 8 classes of PEG in a typical semester).

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Chapter 11

Strategic Mediation in Learning to Teach

Reconceptualizing the Microteaching Simulation in an MA TESL Methodology Course

Karen E. Johnson and Ekaterina Arshavskaya
The Pennsylvania State University

Teacher education programs have long been criticized for separating theory and practice. This perception often comes from teacher candidates themselves who vehemently complain that while they read and talk about teaching in their university-based coursework, they have few opportunities to engage in the activities of actual teaching until the culminating internship/practicum, often near the end of the degree program. The microteaching simulation, in which teacher candidates plan and teach "mini-lessons" in front of their peers as a component of a methodology course, has been the standard practice for bridging this theory/practice divide. Originating in the 1960s, microteaching emerged out of a technicist view of teaching with the promise of greater efficiency in the training of teachers. The Stanford Model (Politzer, 1969) ran novice teachers through a cycle of plan, teach, observe, and critique short micro-lessons (5–10 minutes) followed by a new cycle of re-plan, re-teach, re-observe, and re-critique. The content of each cycle consisted of a very specific set of teaching behaviors that were first modeled, then practiced, critiqued, and then practiced again. At that time, teaching was conceptualized as consisting of a discrete set of behaviors that could be broken down into its smallest parts and studied, practiced, and mastered largely through imitation and repetition. In addition, microteaching was deemed to be a more efficient way of acclimatizing novices to the "real world" of teaching, as opposed to the lengthy apprenticeship model of "sink or swim" once they entered schools.

Even after a rejection of this technicist view of teaching and the emergence of the reflective teaching movement in the 1980s (Zeichner & Liston, 1996), the microteaching simulation remains a staple of the methodology course. Its newer permutations include opportunities for systematic reflection that enable teacher candidates to move beyond instructional practices based on intuition or routine toward those that are guided by careful self-examination and critical reflection on the broader social and institutional contexts in which teaching takes place (Farrell, 2008; Richards & Farrell, 2005; J. Roberts, 1998; Wallace, 1996). And while these more progressive forms of the microteaching simulation are generally perceived positively by teacher candidates, both in the general education (MacLeod, 1987) and L2 teacher education literature (Burns & Richards, 2009; Farrell, 2008), two

central concerns remain: 1) lack of authenticity; and 2) actual versus perceived impact on teacher learning.

Despite claims that the microteaching simulation provides teacher candidates with a taste of "real" teaching where they feel supported and receive useful feedback (Farrell, 2008), the fact remains that the learners aren't real, the subject matter isn't real, and the context in which the microteaching is carried out isn't real. In this sense, microteaching does not simulate "real" teaching, largely because the social, institutional, and historical factors that are endemic to "real" teaching are simply not present. Void of the many factors that shape the complex nature of "real" teaching, the microteaching simulation, as a form of professional development, remains inherently flawed. In addition, while self-report data indicate that teacher candidates find the microteaching simulation helpful (Farrell, 2008), there is little empirical evidence that the microteaching experience has any noticeable impact on either the way teachers think about teaching or what they actually do when they teach. This may be due in part because studies that have attempted to determine impact have relied largely on teachers' perceptions of the microteaching experiences rather than any sort of empirical evidence that traces teachers' actual learning and/or professional development over time.

This study attempts to address both of these concerns. Informed by a sociocultural perspective on second language teacher education (Johnson, 2009), the microteaching simulation was restructured to create authentic participation in the activities of teaching while at the same time creating multiple opportunities for strategic mediation in teacher candidates' learning-to-teach experiences. Data were then collected on teacher candidates as they participated in the restructured microteaching experience. A microgenetic analysis (Vygotsky, 1978) of the data was conducted in order to trace teacher candidates' cognitive development as it was in the process of formation throughout the restructured microteaching experience.

Re-conceptualizing the Microteaching Simulation from an SCT Perspective

It is well established in the teacher cognition literature that teachers typically enter the profession with largely unarticulated, yet deeply ingrained, everyday notions about what and how to teach (Borg, 2006; Lortie, 1975). The role of teacher education programs is to expose them to the scientific concepts that represent the up-to-date research and theorizing that is generated in various disciplines. Part of their professionalization, therefore, becomes making connections between these scientific concepts and their everyday experiences as learners and teachers. The responsibility of teacher education, from a sociocultural perspective, is to present relevant scientific concepts to teachers but to do so in ways that bring these concepts to bear on concrete practical activity, connecting them to their everyday knowledge and the activities of teachers. Thus, the goal of any professional development experience, when framed within a sociocultural perspective, is to replace the traditional theory/practice dichotomy with the more fluid construct of *praxis*

(Freire, 1970; Johnson, 2006) or "the integration of conceptual knowledge and practical activity with the goal of stimulating change or [concept] development" (Lantolf, 2009, p. 272). Ultimately, it is this transformative process of making sense of everyday experiences through the theoretical constructs of the broader professional discourse community and vice versa that will radically change how teachers think about and carry out their work.

Additionally, teacher education programs, in both L2 and general educational contexts, have traditionally separated subject matter knowledge (what is taught) from pedagogical knowledge (how to teach) (Ball, 2000; Larsen-Freeman & Freeman, 2008). This long-standing dualism has not only positioned pedagogical coursework as secondary to disciplinary or subject matter knowledge, but it assumes that these types of knowledge can be taught (and learned) in isolation from one another. More recently, however, distinctions have been made between the accepted disciplinary knowledge of a particular field, the general pedagogical knowledge of classroom processes, and the pedagogical content knowledge that teachers use to make the content of their instruction relevant and accessible to students (Ball, 2000; Shulman, 1987). While helpful in articulating the complexity of knowledge for teaching, such distinctions also serve to further splinter the types of knowledge required of teachers and trifurcate them into seemingly isolated realms of teacher cognition. From a sociocultural perspective, however, such dualisms/tri-isms become blurred because human cognition is understood as originating in and fundamentally shaped by engagement in social activities, and it is the social relationships and the culturally constructed materials, signs, and symbols that mediate those relationships that create uniquely human forms of higher-level thinking. Consequently, cognition cannot be removed from activity since it originates in and is framed by the very nature of that activity. From a sociocultural perspective, knowledge for teaching is understood holistically and the interdependence between *what is taught* and *how it is taught* is crucial to both the processes of learning-to-teach as well as the development of teaching expertise.

With these fundamental principles in mind, the microteaching simulation was re-conceptualized into a 15-week extended team-teaching project. Within the context of a Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) methodology course, the project was designed to create multiple opportunities for teacher candidates to participate in a range of authentic activities associated with teaching, to create multiple opportunities for strategic mediation from peers and the TESL course instructor, and to support teacher candidates through multiple attempts at materializing and enacting their teaching practices, all with the ultimate goal of moving them toward greater self-regulation of theoretically and pedagogically sound instructional practices.

The Extended Team-Teaching Project

Four teams of 3–4 teacher candidates were assigned to teach one session of an English as a Second Language (ESL) course offered at a large mid-Atlantic

university. Teams were placed in one of three instructional settings: an undergraduate ESL composition course, an oral communication course for International Teaching Assistants, or an English for Academic Purposes course at an intensive English program. Each team participated in the following chronology of activities:

a) *Classroom Observations* In order to establish a better sense of the situated context in which they would eventually teach, each team member observed at least one session (most observed two) of their assigned ESL class. The observations enabled the teacher candidates to gain a greater sense of the ESL students' goals, motivation, and L2 proficiency, the particulars of this instructional setting, including the curricular materials and required assessments, and the local settings that the ESL students would be expected to function in once they completed the ESL course. The observations also created opportunities for team members to speak informally with the ESL students and the ESL course instructor before and after the class and to gather course syllabi and other relevant instructional materials.

b) *Tutoring Assignment* Each team member participated in six one-hour tutoring sessions with a student enrolled in his/her assigned ESL class. This activity created an opportunity for extensive informal tutor/tutee interaction in which the teacher candidate provided assistance on relevant course assignments and/or other L2 learning priorities identified by the ESL student. A final reflective paper was required in which teacher candidates reflected on what they had learned about L2 learners, L2 learning, and L2 tutoring based on this experience. The tutoring experience proved to be critical in both planning and teaching the eventual lesson because team members gained invaluable information about the ESL course from their interactions with their tutees and they were assured of at least one familiar face in the ESL class they would eventually teach.

c) *Collaborative Lesson Planning: Pre-Practice Teach* Based on content provided by the ESL course instructor, team members collaboratively constructed a lesson plan for the session they were assigned to teach. They were encouraged to supplement the required curriculum. However, their lesson needed to meet the instructional objectives articulated in the course syllabi. Through both face-to-face and virtual meetings, the teams created a lesson plan that included instructional objectives, how they had conceptualized the content, the organization of the lesson, strategies for supporting student learning, and an assessment plan.

d) *Practice Teach* Each team completed a one-hour "practice teach" in front of their classmates and the TESL course instructor. During the practice teach, instruction was halted at numerous points to allow classmates and the course instructor to ask questions, provide feedback, and/or make suggestions. Such intermittent probing, commentary, and suggestions proved to be a critical form of strategic mediation as the team members attempted to reconcile what they had planned for the lesson with how it was being experienced by their classmates, and

how the lesson might be reconceptualized to better meet the instructional needs of their ESL students. This activity also created an opportunity for the teacher candidates to materialize their lesson, both in concrete artifacts, such as handouts and power point presentations, but also in the ways in which they organized student participation in the activities they were attempting to enact in the lesson. The entire "practice teach" session lasted 75 minutes and was video recorded.

e) *Collaborative Lesson Planning: Post-Practice Teach* Based on feedback during the "practice teach" each team revised their original lesson plan. Some teams met face-to-face with the instructor while others met virtually and then submitted their final lesson plan for feedback prior to the "actual teach." This activity created an opportunity for the teams to rematerialize their lesson plans with an eye for how it might be experienced by their ESL students, to reorient the sequencing of activities, and for some teams, to restructure or supplement the content to be covered in order to better achieve the goals of the lesson.

f) *Actual Teach* Each team then taught the redesigned lesson to their assigned ESL class. The TESL methods course instructor attended the session but did not intervene. This activity prompted the teams to make many in-flight decisions as it became clear that in the activity of actual teaching, they needed to alter or adjust their plans depending on how the ESL students responded to teacher-initiated questions and/or engaged in the certain instructional activities. In addition, team members supported each other, for example, if one member struggled to explain an activity or failed to understand an ESL student's question/comment. The "actual teach" session lasted 75 minutes and was video recorded.

g) *Stimulated Recall Session* Within 48 hours, the teams watched their video recorded "actual teach" with the TESL methods course instructor. They were allowed to stop the recording at any point to comment on what they were doing, what they were thinking, or how they were feeling. They were encouraged to externalize their thinking and consider alternative instructional strategies that might have been appropriate in the lesson. This activity created an opportunity for teacher candidates to externalize their thoughts while at the same time receiving strategic mediation from their fellow peers and the TESL course instructor. The "stimulated recall session" lasted 75 minutes and was audio recorded.

h) *Team Teaching Reflection Paper* Each teacher candidate was given digital copies of the "practice teach," the "actual teach" and the "stimulated recall session" and then asked to write a 5–7 page reflection paper in which they focused primarily on what they learned about themselves as teachers, about the activity of L2 teaching, and about their learning-to-teach experiences throughout the extended team-teaching project. This activity created a final opportunity for teacher candidates to externalize their understandings of themselves as teachers and the

activity of L2 teaching based on their experiences in the extended team-teaching project.

Data Collection and Analysis

While four teams of teacher candidates (12 teachers) agreed to participate in this study, only one team (4 teachers) is presented here due to space limitations. Team 1 consisted of two American undergraduate students: one (female) majoring in World Language Education and the other (male) majoring in International Business and Political Science who would be joining the Peace Corps the following semester. The other two team members were enrolled in the MA TESL program: one (female) an international graduate student from Taiwan and the other (female) an American graduate student. None of the team members had prior teaching experience other than informal one-on-one tutoring. Team 1 was assigned to teach one 75-minute session of an undergraduate ESL freshman composition course. The topic of the session was the use of nominalization in academic writing.

The data collected from Team 1 included: 1) handouts and lesson plan guidelines used by the TESL course instructor; 2) lesson planning materials, including curricular materials provided by the ESL course instructor, multiple versions of the team's lesson plan, and instructional resources used to supplement the lesson; 3) a video recording of the "practice teach;" 4) a video recording of the "actual teach;" 5) an audio recording of the "stimulated recall session;" and 6) the final reflection papers.

The data were examined for evidence of what was being accomplished in the various activities embedded in the extended team-teaching project, how teacher candidates' thinking and activities were being mediated during these activities, and the extent to which they were able to internalize these mediational means so as to transform how they think about and carry out their teaching practices. Of key importance in our analysis was evidence of *strategic mediation* (Wertsch, 1985), or cognitive assistance given to teacher candidates that moves from implicit to explicit, is responsive to immediate need, and is concerned more with cognitive transformation rather than teaching performance. Additionally, strategic mediation was operationally defined as attempts to enable teacher candidates to develop an overall orientation toward both pedagogical and subject matter concepts while at the same time beginning to appropriate an expert's understanding of them. Using discourse analytic techniques and grounded content analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) instances of strategic mediation were identified throughout the "practice teach" data. Each instance of strategic mediation was coded into themes based on the principles of ethnographic semantics, in which the meanings that people give to their verbal expressions are the primary focus of investigation (Spradley, 1979; Spradley & McCurdy, 1972). These themes were then traced throughout the team's entire data set to identify teacher candidates' attempts to internalize certain pedagogical and subject matter concepts; both in how they came to understand these concepts as well as their attempts to materialize these concepts in their teaching. The most prominent theme for Team 1 focused on

teacher candidates' emerging understandings of *what* they were expected to teach (nominalization) and *how* they were expected to teach it (orienting).

Findings

Tracing Teacher Candidates' Emerging Understanding of Orienting

The pedagogical concept of *orienting* was initially introduced by the TESL course instructor in a handout and defined as:

> **Orienting**—situate the concept, skill, or content you are teaching in such a way as to make all of its features salient and relevant to the students; help them relate to it in some concrete or personally relevant way . . . this will help them see the "big picture" and relate what they already know to what you are going to teach them. (TESL Course Handout 1)

Despite explicit emphasis by the TESL course instructor on the pedagogical concept of orienting, the content of the team's initial lesson plan essentially mirrored a handout given to the team by the ESL course instructor. This handout included "definitions and examples" of how to nominalize verbs and adjectives and examples of "useless and useful nominalization." During their planning sessions, the team decided to start with a "matching activity" that required students to match slips of paper containing verbs or adjectives with their nominalized forms, essentially "turning a verb or an adjective into a noun, i.e., discover → discovery, move → movement, react → reaction, etc." (Nominalization Handout 1). This was to be followed by a power point presentation of "when to/when not to use nominalization" (i.e., useless and useful nominalization). Next, the team planned to present two contrasting sentences and two contrasting paragraphs that illustrate the ill-effects of over-nominalization (i.e., useless nominalization) followed by a discussion: "Was the first paragraph better or the second? WHY?" Their final activity consisted of a paragraph "to be de-nominalized to make it sound better." (Team 1 Initial Lesson Plan)

The team began the "practice teach" with the matching activity described above, after which TC1 (see p. 176 for an explanation of the abbreviations used in the excerpt) went over the word list in a round-robin fashion to check and discuss, as necessary, each pair of words. At the completion of this activity, the TESL course instructor stopped the "practice teach" and asked the class to reflect on how they were experiencing the lesson so far (lines 1–9). In lines 12–20, a classmate (S1) points out that without knowing the purpose of this particular activity, ESL students might have difficulty nominalizing the list of words. This comment prompted a fellow team member (TC4) to describe the matching activity as an "attention-grabber" (line 21). The TESL course instructor followed up on this comment by reminding the team of the pedagogical concept of orienting (lines 26–27) and the role it plays in supporting student learning.

I: So let's stop here for a second and can those who are participating as students, can we tell [TC1] how we're learning, or how we are learning, or what was going on through our heads as we were doing that first part of the activity? (1) As learners? (2) Let's give [TC1] some feedback.

S4: This one?

I: What we just did. The whole first section. What (1) You as a learner.

S5: That there are different nouns, suffixes.

I: OK. Did you know that right away? Or like got. You just figured that out?

S5: (2) I don't know.

I: OK. All right.

S1: I think it might be better to . . . Like I understand that you were, like, ah, introducing the concept and then explaining it but it might be better to explain it and then do this activity.

TC1: (Yes).

S1: Because I just. (2) I mean. I speak English so I just matched them together so that it makes sense. But if they do need help with English and doing things like this they might not be able to match them up, that well. You know what I mean? But if they understand the purpose of what they are doing, (1) it might help them to be able to figure out some of these match-ups.

TC1: so explain more?

S1: I don't know

TC4: The activity is more of atten- attention-grabber so just the beginning of this.

I: Right. And I I get that strategy and I really like that strategy a lot and because what you wanna do is to bring them right into the language but I I knew what you guys were doing today and () I looked at this and () I was like "what are we doing?" And then [S6] of course told me what we were supposed to do and so I figured that out. But remember when I was talking last week to you about orienting ((in a slowed tempo)) your students? One thing you could say is that this whole activity was orienting, right? You were trying to orient them to it. But orienting in what way? Like. For me, as a learner what I wanted to know is. (2) Why do I care about nominalization? Why is it an important thing? How does it fit in into any kind of context? Now, maybe that's what you are gonna do

[TC2] , is it?

TC2: Yeah.

I: So maybe an idea is to maybe switch this around?

TC2: OK.

I: Now, I don't know. We'll see. But again as a learner, for me it was difficult

41 to kinda know what we were supposed to do. Maybe it was just me. But but I
42 I had a hard time figuring out what, what, what, was the point. What you were
43 trying to get me to do.

(Team 1 Practice Teach 21:30–23:46)

Note:
TC = Teacher Candidate (member of Team 1), S = Student enrolled in TESL methodology course, I = Instructor of TESL methodology course

Several interesting points can be made here. First, it is evident from TC4's comment (line 23) that the team understood the matching activity as an attention grabber, rather than an attempt to "situate a concept, skill, or content in such a way as to make all of its features salient and relevant to the students" (TESL Course Handout 1). Second, a classmate (S1) and then the TESL course instructor attempt to mediate how the team has conceptualized the matching activity. S1 (lines 12–20) hints that without knowing the purpose of the matching activity, ESL students may be unable to complete the task. The TESL course instructor then inserts the pedagogical concept of orienting into the exchange, and questions how the matching activity is supposed to orient the ESL students to the concept of nominalization. Interestingly, both S1 and the TESL course instructor are very indirect in their attempts to help the team understand the concept of orienting. The TESL course instructor reminds the team of the concept (lines 29–32) but does not reiterate its more scientific definition. Her and S1's comments, instead, merely articulate how they were experiencing the matching activity as learners and the need, as learners, to be oriented to what is being taught.

Interestingly, while both peer and instructor mediation is quite indirect in this exchange, immediately after the team received feedback that the matching activity had failed to orient the class to the concept of nominalization, TC2 said: "I'm thinking maybe, this next section, may be good to go at the beginning" (Team 1 Practice Teach 00:24:40–00:24:48). As we will see later in the "actual teach," the exchange here appeared to lay the ground work for the team to recognize that the next section of their lesson might serve to better orient the students to the concept of nominalization than the matching activity.

Toward the end of the "practice teach" the concept of orienting emerges again, prompted by a different classmate's (S7) comment about the overall presentational style of the entire lesson (lines 1–4). In the following excerpt, the TESL course instructor is more direct in her comments, simplifying her definition (lines 5–7), ventriloquating how the team might orient students to the concept of nominalization (lines 12–14), and then suggesting that they reorganize the lesson (line 15).

1 S7: another problem is too that when it's done presentation style (as was done
2 in the beginning) it kinda goes over your head, which by the final activity you
3 don't get those first parts, then they'd get to see (early on) because they didn't

4 do any activities () because they'd miss a big part of it ()
5 I: That's that's what I mean by orienting. When you want to orient your
6 students you want to give them a big picture. You wanna give them some
7 contextualized big thing that they can say—oh I get it! Now let's dissect it, and
8 pull it apart, and figure it how these thing work () and play with it, and do
9 different things, but without that sort of big picture I'm kinda left wandering
10 around, I'm not really sure. And hopefully, you know you can get it this way,
11 but you can also get it right in the beginning by getting it by a sort of big
12 picture when you have those two examples that you can look at. (). Now let's
13 start looking about the different ways that we nominalize, what effect does that
14 have, let's try doing it, that kind of thing. And I think you guys you have all
15 the pieces to that kinda lesson but it just has to be sort of reorganized and
16 integrated it a little bit more together. And I think I think it'll it'll work-

(Team 1 Practice Teach 1:04:38–1:05:41)

These excerpts provide evidence that the "practice teach" created opportunities for both classmates and the instructor to highlight some of the salient features of orienting as well as its pedagogical value. Interestingly, throughout the "practice teach" the concept of orienting is framed less in terms of its scientific definition and more within the context of concrete activity; specifically, how ESL students might need to be oriented to the concept of nominalization for the lesson to be effective.

In their follow-up planning session, the team decided to re-order the lesson and introduce the concept of nominalization through a series of question–answer exchanges. The team had used a very similar series of exchanges during the "practice teach" as an introduction to the power-point presentation on "useless and useful nomination." During the "actual teach" TC2 started the lesson by leading the ESL students through a truncated version of the question–answer exchange he had used during the "practice teach." He started off very broadly, with the question: "Can people list for me anything you use writing for?" Once a list was generated on the board, he focused on the broader notion of genres by stating: "and for every different type of writing the purpose is different, the characteristics you associate it with are different, ah the audience you are trying to write for is different." Once the characteristics of academic writing were generated, he stated: "and in this class we are going to try to improve word choice in writing and to improve conciseness in writing using nominalization" (Team 1 Actual Teach 0:01:15–0:06:43).

During the stimulated recall session, the TESL course instructor tagged this series of question–answer exchanges as orienting the ESL students to the concept of nominalization (lines 1–6). In this instance, the instructor explicitly connects the pedagogical concept of orienting to the practical activity of the team's introductory question–answer exchange.

Teacher Candidate 2's introduction to the class is being watched.

I: So I would call that an orienting activity. I don't know if you guys thought of that in that way but basically you are saying you got academic writing has (sort of) certain characteristics to it, what we gonna do today is (X), and and er it's clear and concise, one way we can (do it) clear and concise is nominalization. Just orients them to (why are we talking about nominalization) what that has to do with- and I <u>like</u> the way you did that. Sort of like () open up here and finally get down to what the thing we are gonna do today. I think this kind of orientation is is (helpful for them to understand) <u>why</u> they are bothering to do this. OK.

Video is being watched and forwarded.

I: () ahead a little bit. OK, so here's where you (kinda) get to () here is the <u>thesis</u> for today—nominalization () and I think that was () OK now now where the lessons going to begin because now we get to this skill or knowledge you'll cover.

Video is being watched.

I: So as a as a, your part, how did you feel about that?

TC2: Ah. I didn't have to change it much from before which () we sort of just switched around it () as we discussed when we practiced in class. How, the, the matching activity was kinda confusing because you didn't know what you were doing-

I: Right- there was no orienting to it

TC2: () so to give them the idea of what we are trying to do and in the context of their class-

I: Right-

TC2: () and we switch my introduction to the front of it

I: Right-

(Team 1 Stimulated Recall 0:10:27–0:12:10)

In line 14, the TESL course instructor prompted TC2 to reflect on how he felt about this activity, of which he recalls that the "matching activity was confusing because they [classmates] didn't know what we were doing" so "we switched my introduction to the front of it" (lines 15–18) based on the suggestions given during the "practice teach" session. TC2 explicitly states that they wanted "to give them [the ESL students] the idea of what we are trying to do and in the context of their class" (lines 20–21). Thus, the stimulated recall session created another opportunity for the TESL course instructor to name the pedagogical concept of orienting but to do so in a way that connected it directly to the team's teaching activities.

The pedagogical concept of orienting was mentioned repeatedly in the final reflection papers. TC3 appropriates the conceptualization emphasized by the TESL course instructor.

> One of the key factors I learned about teaching was that *it is very important to orient your students before you get into the lesson.* This is essential because it *gives students a sense of the subject of the lesson, where it is going, and what is expected from them. A good way to orient students is to provide examples that illustrate the point of the lesson in a contextual way.* (Reflection Paper–TC3)

She followed this comment with reference to the pedagogical value of orienting during the portion of the lesson she was responsible for:

> With regards to my part of the lesson, *I hope it helped the students to be able to orient themselves as to what nominalization can do to their writing and how to avoid it* . . . how nominalization works, how to avoid over using it, and how to identify too much nominalization in their own writing. (Reflection Paper–TC3)

TC2 also appropriates the TESL course instructor's conceptualization of orienting, along with several others, as "important teaching strategies that can be applied to any lesson." (Reflection Paper–TC2)

> Another strategy we discussed was making instruction predictable. *This can be done by orienting the lesson and letting the students know what we are going to be doing and what the expectations of them are going to be.* This aids in the process of engineering participation and making the students comfortable in the learning environment. (Reflection Paper–TC2)

The other two teacher candidates explicitly framed the "practice teach" experience as enabling them to see their instruction from the students' perspective. TC4 indicates that the failure of the matching activity to successfully orient her classmates pushed the team to re-order their lesson plan.

> Practice teaching our lesson plan in APLNG 493 was not what we expected, and, consequently, *a major learning experience. Our idea to begin with showing, rather than introducing, failed as an attention grabber* and succeeded only in confusing all of our practice students. If our class couldn't follow us, how would the ESL students from 004? (Reflection Paper–TC4)

Even the teacher candidate who led the matching activity mentioned the value of seeing her teaching from the students' perspective and recognized the value of modeling as a way to orient students to the activity at hand.

> During the practice, our classmates became our students and helped us a lot *to rearrange the lesson plans more from the students' perspective.* Usually, it's easy for teachers to think from their own perspective that their students might know something. For example, I thought students could know how to match the verbs/adjectives with the proper suffix right when getting the pieces of papers right away, so I don't have to spend so much time explaining how to play the game or modeling for them. *Without practicing this, I may never find that modeling is necessary for the students.* (Reflection Paper–TC1)

A striking feature of these reflective comments is the idiosyncratic nature of their emerging understanding of orienting. While TC2 and TC3 appear to have appropriated the TESL course instructor's conceptualization and explicitly link it to supporting student learning, TC1 and TC4 only refer to orienting in relation to concrete activity, i.e., the "failed" matching activity. From a sociocultural perspective, how an individual learns something, what is learned, and how it is used will depend on the sum of the individual's prior experiences, the sociocultural contexts in which the learning takes place, and what the individual wants, needs, and/or is expected to do with that knowledge. So while we find evidence of newly emerging understandings of the pedagogical concept of orienting, the robustness of those understandings differs vastly; from conceptual and more expert-like, to concrete and framed solely within the context of practical activity. Such unevenness is not only expected but can be quite useful for teacher educators as they attempt to identify the kinds of assistance teachers need at a given point in their development, in essence supporting teachers' potentiality within the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978).

Tracing Teacher Candidates' Emerging Understanding of Nominalization

As the team's understanding of orienting emerged, so too did their understanding of the subject matter concept they were expected to teach; namely, nominalization. Once again, their initial conceptualization of nominalization was clearly "object-regulated" as they fashioned their lesson almost entirely on the handout they had received from the ESL course instructor. Interestingly, they seemed to be consciously aware of this, for example, TC2 recalled:

> *We felt constrained by the materials* that had been provided to us by the teacher of the class. *We felt as if we had to integrate his materials into our lesson* and *organized our lesson in a way that was based strongly on the organization of his materials.* (Reflection Paper–TC2)

As was mentioned above, their first materialization of the lesson focused initially on "word-structure" (i.e., react → reaction) and "types" (i.e., useful/useless nominalization), overuse of nominalization (contrasting sentences/paragraphs) and de-nominalization (making sentences "sound" better).

During the "practice teach" we find multiple instances of strategic mediation as the TESL course instructor attempts to reorient the team's conceptualization of nominalization. For example, she emphasizes the rhetorical effects of nominalization (lines 6–10) and suggests that they try to contextualize their examples as a way to highlight the various types of nominalization.

1	I:	OK. So. Because what I was thinking was em if we could see just two texts
2		which were just short paragraphs and one had virtually no nominalization in it
3		at all and then the other had all the different types you are gonna now present
4		to us=
5	TC 2:	=Right
6	I:	And then if we looked at them as whole pieces we kinda get the effect of
7		what nominalization does to the reader and then you break out the examples
8		and put them in so so () this particular example of nominalization shows how
9		you can refer to a previous subject and this type of nominalization is how you
10		go from a verb to a noun, or whatever.

(Team 1 Practice Teach 00:30:47–00:31:32)

In the following excerpt, TC2 questions the value of his own explanations of "useful and useless nominalization" to which the TESL course instructor tries again to move the team away from presenting nominalization as a list of different "types" to making the rhetorical effects of nominalization more salient to the ESL students (lines 6–11).

1	TC 2:	() I'm not sure how important these explanations, of what it is,
2	I:	a:hu
3	TC 2:	are. You could just give the examples and,
4	I:	That's what I'm thinking.
5	TC 2:	then it's more clear
6	I:	That's what I'm thinking. Because otherwise it seems that there are ten
7		different ways to nominalize and here are the ten different ways and I have to
8		memorize them. But it's not really what is important. It's really the rhetorical
9		effect of the writing on the reader. So maybe you can sorta get rid of different
10		types and just present some examples and have them sort of talk about it.
11		What's the effect of that? Why is that clearer or not clearer?

(Team 1 Practice Teach 00:43:02–00:43:33)

During the "actual teach" we find evidence that the team's re-materialization of the lesson reflects a newly emerging understanding of the concept of nominalization. First, they moved the question–answer exchange to the beginning of the lesson which served to orient the ESL students to the notion that "nominalization is a tool that can make academic writing clear and concise" (Team

1 Actual Teach). Second, they dropped the entire power-point presentation where they had presented a lengthy list of useless and useful nominalization. They did complete the matching activity. However, they moved directly to contrasting sentences and paragraphs in order to illustrate the ill-effects of over-nominalization in larger pieces of discourse. They ended with a shortened version of the de-nominalization activity and focused much more on how nominalization affects readability and conciseness in academic writing, rather then simply identifying nominalized words and then de-nominalizing them.

If we compare the "practice teach" to the "actual teach" we find that the essential differences in the team's re-materialization of the lesson is not so much in *what* they did, but *how* they did it. In other words, while their instructional activities were essentially the same (except for dropping the power-point presentation), the way they verbally framed each activity placed a much greater emphasis on the salient features of nominalization; highlighting both its effect on readers and appropriate usage.

For example, while TC3 led essentially the same activity during the "practice teach" she only mentioned the rhetorical effects of nominalization once, as a concluding remark at the very end of the activity.

1 TC 3: So, hopefully through this exercise you can see how using too much
2 nominalization, especially in academic writing, can confuse the meaning that
3 you are trying to get across, um, to your reader.

(Team 1 Practice Teach 00:52:23–00:52:39)

However, during the "actual teach" she opened this activity by stating:

1 TC 3: So, now that [TC2] and [TC1] have kinda
2 explained to you guys what nominalization <u>is</u> (.) and how you create it, we're
3 gonna take a look at (.) the effects it has on your writing and how it can change
4 the meaning of it, so=

(Team 1 Actual Teach 00:17:08–00:17:20)

After the ESL students had analyzed the two contrasting sentences, she concluded:

1 TC3: . . . so basically there's an over usage of nominalization there, so you can
2 see how, if you use it too much, it can make your sentence difficult to
3 understand and then () this one below, basically takes the same words and
4 turns them into nouns or back to adjectives or adverbs and its much more clear
5 for the reader, so you can understand better the meaning of the sentence.

(Team 1 Actual Teach 00:19:02–00:19:28)

And after they had discussed the two contrasting paragraphs, she ended the activity with:

1 And so, even though this is not something you would find, academic writing,
2 it's not a piece of academic writing, it kinda gives you an idea of (.) what (.)
3 over usage of nominalization can <u>do</u> to your writing, in general, and just how it
4 can change the idea that you want it to express through your writing.

(Team 1 Actual Teach 00:29:24–00:29:53)

Evidence from the team's final reflection papers supports a reorientation in their understanding of the concept of nominalization. For example, TC4 admits that the team was initially unfamiliar with the concept of nominalization but eventually came to understand it more in terms of its use.

> . . . it took some time to familiarize ourselves with the concept . . . *we understood that nominalization is the process of changing a verb or an adjective into a noun*, but *it was interesting to learn that there is an appropriate and an inappropriate time to do this.* (Reflection Paper–TC4)

TC3 emphasizes the importance of enabling ESL students to understand the meaning of nominalization in context rather than its formal definitions.

> I think it would have been more beneficial to the students if we began the lesson with *examples of nominalization in context* instead of just solitary sentences. It is more difficult to see the *positive or negative effects of nominalization* when it is used as part of an isolated sentence versus in a complete paragraph. I think this . . . would have helped them to understand the meaning of nominalization *better than simply providing the formal definitions of nominalization.* (Reflection Paper–TC3)

Finally, just as we saw with the concept of orienting, individual teacher candidates' emerging understandings of the concept of nominalization were idiosyncratic. While TC2 referred to "nominalization as a tool," in both the "practice teach" and the "actual teach," in his reflection paper he indicated that if the team were to teach the lesson again, they should place even greater emphasis on "using nominalization as a tool." "*Instead of* focusing on nominalization *we could focus* on making writing more clear and concise *using nominalization as a tool.*" (Reflection Paper–TC2)

On the other hand, TC3 hints at her own struggle, as a native speaker, to simply understand the concept of nominalization no less to teach it without having the meta-language to do so.

> The biggest challenge of teaching is that *the teacher must understand the materials* well enough to explain it to someone else in a way that they will understand it . . . for example, native speakers *may experience difficulties teaching certain aspects of English* because *they were never explained to them in technical terms.* (Reflection Paper–TC3)

These data remind us once again that teacher candidates' initial understandings of both pedagogical and subject matter concepts will differ, will develop differently, and thus will play out differently in their instructional practices. These data also implicate the teacher educator in providing the kind of cognitive assistance that supports teacher candidates' individual and somewhat idiosyncratic cognitive development.

Conclusion

Overall, the findings of this study suggest that while these teacher candidates initially lacked sufficient knowledge of *what* they were expected to teach and *how* to teach it, the extended team-teaching project created spaces for strategic mediation in their thinking as well as opportunities for them to materialize their emerging understandings of both pedagogical and subject matter concepts in the authentic activities of teaching. From a sociocultural perspective, concepts, once internalized, become psychological tools that guide learners in planning and accomplishing future activities. In essence, this is the ultimate goal of L2 teacher education: to foster conceptual development and move teachers toward greater self-regulation of theoretically and pedagogically sound instructional practices.

In this study, it is not our intention to argue that either the pedagogical concept of orienting or the subject matter concept of nominalization was fully internalized by these teacher candidates. To claim this we would need evidence of how these concepts have become tools for thinking. From a sociocultural perspective, conceptual thinking, or "thinking in concepts" (Karpov, 2003) serves as the basis for expertise in any professional domain. Teachers demonstrate their expertise by thinking in concepts, not just by being able to describe them. So, while we may lack evidence of full internalization, we do find evidence that these concepts are becoming much more salient in these teacher candidates' thinking and we see some initial attempts to instantiate their newly emerging understandings of these concepts in their instructional practices. It is our contention that the strategic mediation provided throughout the extended team-teaching project assisted in re-orienting their understandings of these concepts. More striking, however, is evidence that as the team began to recognize the pedagogical value of orienting their ESL students to the concept of nominalization, they also seemed to become more aware of the salient features of nominalization and its relevance for their ESL students. By tracing the development of conceptual thinking as it is in the process of formation we are able to see the interdependence between content and pedagogy; in essence, the *what* and *how* of teaching are united, develop in relation to one another, and lay the foundation for the development of conceptual thinking, the basis of teaching expertise.

From a sociocultural perspective, learning to teach is not the straightforward appropriation of skills or knowledge from the outside in, but the progressive movement from externally, socially mediated activity to internal control by individual teachers (Johnson, 2009). By design, the extended team-teaching project creates opportunities for authentic participation in the activities of teaching and

multiple and varied spaces for strategic mediation in teacher candidates' learning-to-teach experiences. The findings of this study suggest that it was the simultaneous attention to content and pedagogy, multiple opportunities for strategic mediation, and multiple opportunities to externalize, materialize, and enact their emerging understandings of both pedagogical and subject matter concepts that worked in consort to initiate the development of conceptual thinking. We argue, based on the findings of this study, that reconceptualizing the microteaching simulation from a sociocultural perspective may prove to be a powerful first step in creating initial learning-to-teach experiences that support and sustain productive teacher learning in L2 teacher education programs.

Part IV

Teacher Learning in Inquiry-Based Professional Development

Chapter 12

Teacher Learning through Critical Friends Groups

Recontextualizing Professional Development in a K-5 School

Priya Poehner
The Lock Haven University

American schools in the midst of major school restructuring and change are challenged to develop innovative professional development programs that involve collaborative and democratic discourse. Although this has been an area of much research and discussion within the educational arena for the last decade (Evertson & Murphy, 1992; Fullan, 1991; Hargreaves, 1994) never has teacher professional development been a more contested subject. Bureaucrats and the public see schools as failing organizations and strict measures are being taken to "hold them accountable" while students are being asked to conform to the norm on standardized tests. Teachers are being mandated to log professional development hours to show that they are properly trained. School administration officials hope that these hours will result in higher test scores that will keep their schools off the list of failing schools, and while every school district has days earmarked for "professional development," this term has been difficult to define with educators and administrators alike using multiple, seemingly synonymous terms, such as in-service training, and supervision. Many professional development programs currently offered focus on merely exposing teachers to the latest theories and initiatives without providing the conditions (e.g., time, opportunities to practice, and feedback) required for them to be linked to—and to potentially improve—actual classroom practice, which is at the very heart of professional development. In fact, Joyce & Showers (2002) argue that teachers are not the only ones who benefit from professional development initiatives: such programs can play a crucial role in fostering student achievement through a transfer of the training to classroom practices. Professional development is a key to the success of the individual teacher, learners, and the larger school community.

Some schools are consequently moving toward initiatives that provide a more *dialogic* and *meaning-making* view of teaching and learning, whereby teachers take a more active role in their own development, collaborating with others in their profession to address various pedagogical problems (Clark, 2001). For example, Sergiovanni & Starratt (1998) cite research (Haller, 1968; Keenan, 1974) indicating that teachers are more likely to seek assistance and advice from other teachers than from other sources in developing and enhancing their

classroom practices. Teachers in progressive school communities are seeking out systematic processes to engage their peers in problem solving that addresses their practice, be it studying student work, analyzing lesson plans from multiple perspectives, sharing classroom management practices, or researching and implementing curricular initiatives in the classroom. Glatthorn (1987) refers to these processes as *collegial supervision*, and suggests that it can include professional dialogue, curriculum development, peer supervision, peer coaching and action research.

Teacher learning in collegial supervision occurs through interaction in the social and cognitive activity of teaching rather than through the transmission of knowledge. This epistemology of teacher learning acknowledges that teachers have expertise that can be used to solve dilemmas that arise in their practice. When teachers take charge of their own learning by reflecting upon and questioning their classroom practice they become *teacher researchers* rather than just imparters of knowledge. Sergiovanni & Starratt (1998) define a teacher researcher as "an observer, a questioner, a learner, and a more complete teacher" (p. 259). They emphasize that when teacher researchers write about their discoveries that are linked to their experiences, they embed in it their personal voice and style. This work emphasizes the power that the narrative has in understanding a teacher's way of knowing and acting (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Johnson & Golombek, 2002)

When teachers take an inquiry stance (Wells, 1999) to delve collaboratively into their practice, they are able to gain both professionally and personally from the experience. Collaborative inquiry requires that teachers meet in groups to talk about individual issues of teaching and learning that emerge out of each member's unique experiences (Allen & Blythe, 2004; Weinbaum, et al., 2004). This approach allows teachers to participate in professional development activities that are tailored to their specific needs and interests and that provide teachers with a way to use their classrooms as a site for their own learning. Such professional development opportunities strengthen the collegial bonds that exist between teachers as they make their work public while seeking answers to tough questions that they are unable to solve on their own. Critical Friends Groups (CFG) are one such model of professional development that involves groups of teachers meeting on a regular basis to identify, present and reflect on questions that are inherent to a particular teacher's classroom and practice.

This kind of professional development through teacher collaboration and discourse has many elements that make sociocultural theory (SCT) a viable lens through which teacher learning can be viewed. This theory highlights the social origins of "individual" performance, and allows the researcher to trace the history of a person's development, as with a teacher developing his/her professional competencies. The study presented in this chapter sought to answer the research question, "How can a Vygotskian theoretical framework contribute to our understanding of teacher learning within the context of Critical Friends Groups?" This chapter documents the specific areas of growth that Anna, presented as a case study, portrays as she participates in the Conversation as Inquiry Groups

(CIG) sessions as well as the kinds and amount of mediation that influenced her learning.

Conceptualizing Critical Friends Groups Through a Sociocultural Theoretical Perspective

The concept of Critical Friends Groups (CFG) was created at the Annenberg Institute for School Reform in 1994. Shortly after the program was designed, The National School Reform Faculty, the professional development wing of the Annenberg Institute, began to train coaches in a program that was both "practitioner-driven and highly collaborative." The goal of the program was to "identify student learning goals that make sense in their schools, look reflectively at practices intended to achieve these goals, and collaboratively examine teacher and student work in order to meet that objective" (Dunne, Nave, & Lewis, 2000, p. 9). The program has grown exponentially from the original 88 coaches in 70 schools, to 1,000 coaches in 700 schools in 2000, and the numerous schools that continue to join the program. This teacher professional development program is collaborative, time intensive and practitioner-driven. These groups strengthen collegial bonds among teachers through close reflection on individual practice and student thinking and learning. As with other collaborative models of professional development, CFG is not meant to be an evaluative tool, but rather a means for teachers to direct their own learning and reflection. Teachers publicly state their goals for both their students and themselves as they present their dilemmas of practice to the group. They also examine curriculum, student work and various issues in the school culture that impact student learning (Dunne & Honts, 1998; McDonald, et al., 2003; Weinbaum, et al., 2004).

All conversations within CFG are structured around specific protocols (procedural steps and guidelines) that are both time- and topic-driven. Because there are numerous protocols that differ in format and use, I will explain the protocol used in this study, the Describing Student Work (henceforth DSW) Protocol. The DSW Protocol requires the presenting teacher to share a piece of student work with the group, either by displaying it so all members can view (e.g., via a chart or enlarged student work) or producing copies to distribute to the group. The facilitator then leads the group through a series of rounds during which individual group members take turns making comments or asking questions about the piece of work. Each round has a particular focus (e.g., general impressions of the work, relation of work to development of specific skills or content knowledge) introduced by the facilitator, and the facilitator also may interject comments to follow-up on group members' questions and remarks during the round. The facilitator may summarize the group's statements at the end of each round. The final round in the protocol is to debrief the protocol and its effectiveness in answering the dilemma that was presented to the group. The DSW Protocol, as it was annotated by the facilitator and distributed to group members, is reproduced in the Appendix.

There are essential aspects working together that contribute to the success of protocol-guided conversations: the presenter, the facilitator, the group's participants, the work and the question that frames the group's discussion about this work. The presenter offers to present an aspect of his/her practice for which s/he would like more input from the group. The presenter then meets with the facilitator prior to the meeting to select a protocol, "frame" the question, select a work sample and put the presentation together. The presenter has to make difficult decisions during the pre-conference and utilizes the facilitator's expertise as a sounding board. The presenter must delve into his/her goals for the presentation by identifying a focus question for the group that will result in meaningful discussions and select work samples that will support that discussion. As the teacher looks through all the material about the topic, s/he needs to evaluate the piece that would best highlight the previously determined needs and/or concerns. The facilitator needs to ask appropriate questions that both guide the teacher in his/her thinking and that enables them to fully comprehend the scope of the teacher's concerns so that they can enhance the learning of both the individual teacher and the group. Although this pre-conference is not an essential element of CFG, most discussions are prefaced with a planning meeting that is either informal and short, or more formal where time is dedicated to planning the presentation prior to the group discussion.

At the end of the presentation, the group discusses the effectiveness of the protocol and the impact that the topic had on both the individual and group learning. Allen & Blythe (2004) encourage facilitators to meet with the presenter after the discussion to further support their new understandings of the topic. They suggest that this post-conference take place after the teacher has had time to digest all the information gleaned from the group discussion and is able to make decisions about its implications for his/her practice.

Because it is difficult to ascertain how and why this process helps teachers change in their understanding of a problem, examining the dialogic interactions of CFG through sociocultural theory provides a critical way to understand whether and how teachers develop and the mediational means provided through that collaboration. Vygotsky uses the term "collaboration" in some of his writings on the zone of proximal development (Chaiklin, 2003). This term does not refer to interactions where the expert is always mediating the partner in inadequate areas, but to instances in which the partner is provided support that is related to the problem to be solved. Looking at how mediation occurs within a teacher's zone of proximal development and the mediation provided could be the key to understanding the role that CFG plays in teacher development.

Methodology

This study is one of the first attempts to look at Critical Friends Groups (CFG) from an SCT perspective. The CFG formed where the data were collected were named Conversation as Inquiry Groups (CIG); therefore, this study uses the term CIG when talking about data collected from the interactions of these groups of

teachers. The CIG was a conglomeration of 26 teachers from several elementary and middle schools of a school district in the mid-Atlantic region and local University faculty. This larger group split into two smaller groups after the initial large group training, but all teachers were invited to participate in this study.

The data collected were narrative in nature and portray various sides of the presenting teacher's experience as she grappled with her classroom dilemma. Data from many members of the CIG, including the presenter and the facilitator, help to create a comprehensive picture of the dilemma and the teacher's orientation to it after the CIG process. This narrative data helps to situate the story of the everyday realities that teachers face within the continuum of their experiences both within the classroom and as a part of the greater school culture (Bruner, 1996b; Polkinghorne, 1991). The focus is thereby not on discovering the intricacies of what is going on in these teachers' classrooms, but on *how* these teachers are interpreting and explaining their experiences through their orientation to the dilemma that they are presenting to the group.

This study involved three different forms of data collection, including: 1) direct observation and videotaping of parts of the CIG process; 2) numerous in-depth and open-ended interviews with presenters; and 3) written documents that include reflections and student work. Data from the direct observations and videotaping of the sessions yielded detailed descriptions of the activities, behaviors, actions and emotions that emerged as a result of the interactions and organizational processes of the CIG. Following the group session, the presenter and the facilitator were asked to provide a commentary about the decisions, emotions and thoughts that they experienced while watching the videotaped CIG sessions in the form of a stimulated recall (Johnson, 1995; Shavelson & Stern, 1981). These members were asked to be specific about what they recall thinking through the session, the comments that they felt impacted the changes (or lack thereof) in their understanding of the dilemma, and to describe why they said, what they did, etc. This is especially important, as both the presenter and the facilitator do not engage in the group's interaction other than at specified times and may not be allowed the opportunity to interact or share their thoughts and feelings during the course of the session. The stimulated recall prompted reflection on the part of the teachers and provided insights into their potential development. Following the stimulated recall, two presenters were selected for further interviews based on the apparent impact of their dilemmas in the self-reported growth of group members as a whole. Anna was one of the presenting teachers mentioned several times in the journals of other members present at the group sessions. Anna then participated in a short interview that gave a glimpse into her approach to teaching.

Anna's interview and transcripts of the CIG sessions were analyzed using grounded content analysis (Clandinin & Connelly, 1988; Denzin & Lincoln, 2002; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Each of these narratives was carefully read to determine the connections between the texts and the experiences and/or the knowledge that she brought to the situation. Each of these connections became the themes that were utilized in analyzing the ways in which she understood the dilemma that she

brought to the CIG group. In addition to these data sets, the CIG session in which Anna shared her dilemma of practice was transcribed and coded. These data were closely analyzed for themes that emerged with respect to how Anna and the group members talked about the dilemma.

The Dilemma

Anna, a tenured second grade teacher, experienced a dilemma concerning the performance of one of her students, Kayla (a pseudonym), during a component of Language Arts instruction known as Writer's Workshop. In Anna's class, Writer's Workshop began with what she referred to as "a small moment activity." These activities were writing prompts that asked students to recount events from their lives or to describe people or things that were important to them. The children did not prepare for small moment activities in advance and were asked to work independently on their writing. Anna then met individually with her students in writing conferences, in which Anna read the student's small moment writing and offered corrections and feedback. She explained that she found this approach to Writer's Workshop to be "efficient," noting that "we just don't always have a lot of time" as Language Arts is only one component of her activities with her class (Anna's interview, April 2005).

According to Anna, Kayla was a creative and articulate student who did well when asked to write a story, but who experienced problems with the small moment activities. Her responses were much shorter than the other students', her ideas were not well developed, and her descriptions lacked details. Anna summarizes the situation as follows:

> Kayla is one of my strongest writers and yet when I gave them the "small moment" prompt, she hardly wrote anything . . . I'm concerned about my Writer's Workshop and whether . . . the student is getting what I am trying to get across. (Anna's email, January 2005)

Anna went on to say that she was not overly concerned about Kayla because she knew that she was able to write successfully at times, so she believed her writing abilities were developing. What troubled Anna was why Kayla was not able to show those abilities during Writer's Workshop and what could account for the inconsistencies in her performance. In other words, the dilemma for Anna was spurred by cognitive dissonance in attempting to reconcile two different and seemingly competing profiles of Kayla's writing. From an SCT perspective this dissonance positioned Anna to be able to benefit from inquiry into the dilemma. Gal'perin (1977) makes a similar observation in his model of human action and its relation to internalization and development which is central to understanding how Anna orients to her dilemma on Kayla's writing. Anna's awareness of the two profiles of Kayla's writing and her inability to reconcile them pushes her development by priming her to be able to benefit from the group's mediation. As Vygotsky might have said, Anna's thinking about this dilemma was "ripe" for development.

Reconceptualizing the Dilemma

Anna and her facilitator, Mona, decided to use the Describing Student Work (DSW) Protocol for the CIG session during which she presented Kayla's dilemma. Given that there was not a question to be posed to the group but a piece of work to be presented, Anna (A) and Mona (M) kept their introductory comments to a minimum, providing only minimal details before proceeding to the sample of Kayla's writing:

A: Alright, so I said earlier that I brought writing and I brought the actual sample to share with you but you can see it's pasted and cut and written in red and black. It's a writing piece from a second grader in my class and I don't want to tell you what we were specifically working on. I'd like to see if you could kind of from looking at it figure that out and then she'll tell you what kind of rounds we'd talked about . . . I thought I would just go through and read it with you because some of the parts that were in red were a little bit lighter. Just so that everyone knows the words.

M: Do you want to talk about in general the background or anything?

A: It's a little girl a second grader. Umm I don't think I'm going to go into the background. It's called How I Got Molly. And I will tell you that this is a small moment [from] the story that she was working on.

(From CIG session transcript, February 2005)

Following this, Anna read the piece aloud to the group. The writing sample is reproduced in Figure 12.1. The parts of the text that were written in red ink during Anna's conference with Kayla are indicated by italicized font with the red writing representing the changes that Anna had made to the initial writing.

The excerpt was simultaneously displayed on the table so that it was visible to all the group members and they could read along silently with Anna and see which parts of the text were in red. Anna did not explain exactly how the text in red had been revised, although some of this came out later in the session when she responded to the group members' questions and comments. Following Anna's description of Kayla's writing, Mona told the group that they were going to be participating in a description round similar to the one that they had done while practicing with the piece of art. Mona began by asking the group if there was a volunteer who would

It was *a cold and merry Christmas* at my cousin's house. I was holding one of my many presents. *"I wonder what it is?" I asked.* I opened it. It was the Molly doll I wanted a lot. I gasped. *"It's Molly!" I shouted. "What do you say?" my mom asked. "Thank you Grandma Carole and Grandpa John." I answered. She looked just like in the catalogue. Her nice straight brown braids. She had the round glasses that made her look cute. She had the sweater to match the skirt.* I hugged her tight. For the rest of the day I played with Molly. *It had been a wonderful day.*

Figure 12.1 Excerpt from Student Work.

like to begin the round and then she explained that the conversation would go clockwise (as the group members were seated in a circle) with members passing on commenting if they had nothing to share. The description round provided the CIG with the opportunity to "state the obvious" (the goal of this round) while looking at the student writing. Some of the comments emerging from that round are presented in Figure 12.2 (taken from CIG transcript, February 2005).

"there was writing in both red and black pencil"
"there were periods and capital letters"
"there were spaces between the words"
"I notice she didn't use said. She used asked, guessed and shouted"
"I see that she has an interesting beginning sentence and a conclusion"
"I noticed that the story seems sequenced in a logical way"

Figure 12.2 Examples of Descriptive Comments.

One of the interesting aspects of this round was that at the beginning the teachers focused on simple comments such as the spacing, the capitals and the periods. However, as the round progressed and the group had run through some of the more obvious features of the piece, they began to look harder at the document. Some of the group members seemed visibly agitated that they were unable to find more descriptions to share and Mona encouraged them to broaden their comments to include typical traits that they might expect to see with primary students. *"Perhaps you could think about your experience/ knowledge of what primary students' writing may or may not look like when describing this piece of writing . . . think about what you would expect to see . . ."* As a result of this prompt, the descriptions became less superficial and segued into the second round where the teachers' remarks concerned skills or abilities that the student already seems to have developed and those that she has not. Members were impressed by the amount of description included in a second-grader's text, and others commented on Kayla's apparent control over conventions for reporting speech in storytelling.

In her journal, Anna admitted that she had been skeptical as to whether this section of the protocol would be very helpful because she worried that the group would not move beyond the kinds of superficial remarks they began with. She felt that she already knew Kayla's writing well and that the literal descriptions would give her little new information about her dilemma. She explains,

> I was surprised by the first round of literal descriptions. I didn't think that I would be able to take much away from a round where people simply describe what they see. I was wrong. It was helpful for me to take notes and I divided them into positives and negatives. Then when I was reflecting, things that I could work on with this student really stood out to me. I had missed that she [Kayla] used an interesting beginning sentence. We had been working on that a lot and it was gratifying to see her use it in this context. (Anna's journal, February 2005)

Mona (Mona's journal, February 2005) mentioned having a concern that the teachers' responses would remain superficial, and as a result, had come prepared with prompts and suggestions that could move the discussion along. Mona's prompts represent an important form of mediation that pushed the CIG group members to provide more substantive comments about the qualities of Kayla's writing, which subsequently influenced Anna to begin to change her conceptions of the dilemma. Anna began to see Kayla's small moment activity writing not as deficient but as sharing similarities with her other writing.

Anna also felt compelled in some cases to explain more about the revisions that were written in red ink. She shared that some of the descriptions in Kayla's writing were done after the small moment portion of Writer's Workshop and during her conference time with Kayla. However, she explained that it was Kayla herself who had come up with descriptions and not Anna. At this point, Anna began to think about the kind of support she offered Kayla during their conference time:

> She really didn't need much help. During the conference she was the same strong writer that she normally was during other writing [*sic*]. She was really able to do the revising without much help from me. (Anna's journal, February 2005)

During the debriefing round, Anna stated that the discussion of how she and Kayla revised the small moment writing to improve it now compelled her to wonder whether it was really the writing itself that presented a challenge to Kayla or the time constraint. She observed that compared to the other kinds of writing assignments, only the small moment writing follows a strict time limit. Because Kayla's performance declined during small moment writing but then improved again once she had more time to work on the text during her conferences with Anna, it seemed, to Anna, that this might be the key:

> I know from my own experience that when I'm under a time crunch I just don't do as well. Some people are good under pressure like they say but not everybody. Some of us need that time to really think through what we're doing and then we can do something really good. That's how I operate. (From Anna's interview, April 2005)

As Anna externalized her understandings of Kayla's writing process to the group, she recognizes that Kayla "was the same strong writer that she normally was during other writing [*sic*]". As she begins to reconceptualize the dilemma as being a time issue, Anna can also connect her own sociohistory with Kayla's situation; on the basis of her own experience, Anna begins to empathize with Kayla's challenges as a writer.

Several group members indicated that Kayla may simply need additional time to complete the small moment writing tasks. One suggestion was that Anna consider modeling more explicitly how to make the best use of time during that kind of activity. For example, she could suggest that students take no more than a

couple of minutes to brainstorm their ideas, followed by another three or four minutes to write a brief outline that could be then used as a blueprint for the writing itself.

Another matter that was raised during the debriefing phase was that if other students were like Kayla, ready to assume responsibility for their learning, then perhaps peer conferencing rather than teacher–student conferencing should be explored. Anna acknowledged to the group that she had not considered peer conferencing before but that involving the students in their learning in this way was an attractive idea. This led to animated discussion and a good number of suggestions. Some of the specific suggestions produced during this phase of the protocol are reproduced in Figure 12.3.

"have a peer conference where the students give each other feedback"

"to piggyback on the last idea, what about if you were to use a specific structure with your students so that you know that they are looking at all the elements from your mini lessons during the peer conference?"

"have the students compare current and past samples of writing . . . you could even do one in a small group format in the morning and the second individually in the afternoon and see if there is a difference in the quality of the writing"

"have the students complete a survey of what they like best about Writer's Workshop"

Figure 12.3 Examples of Suggestions During Debriefing (From CIG Session Transcript, February 2005).

Anna was receptive to these ideas and stated in her journal that she left the session feeling that she benefited from it even more than she had expected to. Prior to the CIG meeting, Anna had been perturbed about Kayla's writing progress, but did not make the connection that it could be a result of the way in which she conducted her Writer's Workshop. Anna's awareness of the discrepancies in Kayla's writing and her inability to reconcile them motivated her to seek out the support of her CIG and positioned her to be receptive to their mediation. This cognitive dissonance represents the sort of inner contradiction that Vygotskian sociocultural theory argues creates the potential to push cognitive development. The group discussion led her to reconceptualize her dilemma, and she began to think about how she could change her instructional activity in ways that enhanced the process for Kayla and other students in her class as well.

Transforming Practice

Anna gained more than suggestions on how to "solve a problem"—she built upon her own history as well as the professional expertise of her CIG members to chart a new path that included not only a new orientation to the original dilemma but also ideas for new modes of engagement with other learners in her classroom.

Anna's reconceptualized notion of the dilemma resulted in three immediate changes to Writer's Workshop. The first was that she allowed students to continue

working on their small moment pieces while she met with them individually. Given her recognition that some students require more time than others, she gave students a choice to continue working on their writing if they wished, or to do other work. As Anna mentioned in a paper that was presented at a local conference, Kayla said, "I learned not to be afraid to share my work" (Anna, field notes, 11/2005). This documents that Anna's development was in the direction of increasing student agency and helping students develop metacognitive strategies to become more self-directed.

The second change to the workshop was that she did a lesson explicitly modeling for students how to keep track of time while writing and showing strategies they could use to budget their time more effectively. During a stimulated recall session while watching Kayla write, Anna noted that she did find the work Kayla produced during Writer's Workshop to resemble more closely her other writing assignments, although in fairness it cannot be known for sure whether this change was due to Anna's modeling and the provision of additional time. As Anna herself stated, the reason it is hard to know for sure what made a difference in Kayla's case is that Anna made so many changes simultaneously to her Writer's Workshop time. Nonetheless, Anna perceived the changes she made to Writer's Workshop as beneficial to both her students and herself as it enabled her to be more efficient with her time and her interactions with her students.

The third way that Anna changed as a result of the sustained dialogic interaction provided by the CIG concerns her restructuring of Writer's Workshop, which began immediately after the CIG session and continued during the following school year. Given the group's suggestions about peer editing, Anna began to rethink her approach to Writer's Workshop in order to incorporate more student–student interaction into her program. She started by thinking about providing the students with a format called *"Praise, Question and Polish"* where

> "a student has to listen to his/her partner's story as s/he reads it aloud. Then the student fills out a sheet that I created that gives praise for something that was well written or a good idea; a question that puzzled him/her about the story; and a suggestion for how it could be improved . . . I modeled this with another teacher in the building and had a discussion where the students could ask questions and share concerns before I had them work in their randomly assigned pairs." (Stimulated recall, March 2005)

This format provided a structure that the students could draw on as they gave one another feedback on their writing. Anna modeled this process with another teacher so that the students could see firsthand what this type of interaction looked like.

The group's mediation gave Anna the impetus needed to look at her Writer's Workshop program through a different lens and helped position Anna to transform aspects of her classroom practice to reflect the new knowledge she co-constructed during the sustained interactions of the CIG. Her reorientation to her perceived dilemma as well as the material changes in her instructional activity supports

Lantolf's (2000) interpretation of Vygotsky's concept of internalization as "the process through which a person moves from carrying out concrete actions in conjunction with the assistance of material artifacts and of other individuals to carrying out actions mentally without any apparent external assistance" (p. 14). The new activities constituting the Writer's Workshop demonstrate that her functioning following the CIG session has changed as she is now seeking to bring these new conceptualizations into play by creating new ways of engaging in teaching and learning in her classroom.

In spite of Anna's apparent success at creating a better classroom environment and transforming her material activity, this alone from a Vygotskian perspective does not necessarily indicate that development has taken place. As many Vygotsky scholars have argued (e.g., Feuerstein, Rand, & Rynders 1988; Gal'perin, 1977; Leont'ev, 1992), development must *transcend* a given context or problem and must be transferred to more complex or different activities. The following section documents how Anna transcends her dilemma by modifying an existing CIG tool for use in an altogether different context than the one for which it was created, revealing the powerful learning she experienced.

Recontextualization

As the next school year began, Anna began to think about those aspects of her Writer's Workshop time that worked and others that she wanted to change. One of her favorite parts from the previous school year was the interaction that she observed among students in her classroom. She reported, "the students were much more excited about writing time and were always asking me if I had the new partner assignments ready" (Anna's journal, October 2005). The new school year brought new challenges as Anna had decided to participate in an inquiry project where she had to determine an area of her practice that needed to be investigated, collect data, analyze and then present at a local inquiry conference at the end of the year. While Anna was excited about the changes that she had observed in her students' enthusiasm for the Writer's Workshop time, she wondered if there would be a way to further enhance their zeal for writing. She thus decided to make the Writer's Workshop her primary inquiry topic and decided to use the Critical Friends Groups' protocol format for the students to follow when talking about their classmates' writing. In her inquiry paper, Anna outlines her interest in using protocols as a method to foster student interaction as she felt that during the CIG process,

> "Time is given to one person to focus on something from his or her practice that is meaningful to that person. I've often wondered if students could gain similar benefits from using protocols to look at their work themselves." (Anna's inquiry paper, April 2006)

Anna began to think about ways in which Writer's Workshop could be reframed as a type of CIG protocol where students could be given time to present and

collaboratively work through a problem in their writing. As she explained, this would involve "self assessment" on the students' part as they would have to first identify the problem in their writing that needed to be improved, and it would engage the students in peer review and teaching as they tried to help one another. Anna realized early on, however, that it would be very difficult for second graders to be able to facilitate and participate in the complexity of the protocol structure, so she researched protocols that she could modify. After a careful review of several student work analysis protocols, Anna created a modified Tuning Protocol to include in her Writer's Workshop process. Anna described some of the modifications in her inquiry paper as follows:

> "Facilitating protocols requires many decisions to be made prior to and throughout the meeting (McDonald et al., 2003, p. 18). The facilitator role is one that I believe to be too sophisticated for the skills of primary students. So, one adaptation was that I decided to take on the role of the facilitator for the purpose of our classroom meetings. The other major adaptation I made was the length of time expended for implementing the protocol. Typically, a Critical Friends Group meeting can take anywhere from 45 minutes to one hour to complete. I knew that length of time would be in excess of what primary children could manage productively. So, I decreased the time frame to about one half hour." (Anna's inquiry paper, April 2006)

Anna's implementation of a CIG protocol with her own students represents an especially powerful form of her development. Anna has adapted an existing tool (the Tuning Protocol) and implemented it in an altogether different context than the one it was created for. In this sense, the Tuning Protocol physically represents Anna's transformation as a teacher (Feuerstein, Rand & Rynders, 1988; Gal'perin, 1977; Leont'ev, 1992). Rather than helping teachers work through dilemmas of practice, Anna has assigned new meaning to the protocol so that it may now also help second-grade children work through difficulties in their writing.

Conclusion

As a member of a CIG group, Anna was able to identify a dilemma in her teaching, the dissonance needed to spark development. The CIG process provided Anna with an opportunity for dialoguing, or intermental functioning, as the group worked together to view the original dilemma from various perspectives. The totality of mediation—which included the group, the facilitator, and the protocol—guided Anna to reconceptualize her dilemma, and this in turn enabled her to make distinct changes in the material activity of her classroom. The CIG process helped Anna reframe her approach to teaching writing in her classroom, and that transformation was in the direction of increasing student agency and helping students develop metacognitive strategies to become more self-directed.

The mediation provided by the CIG enabled Anna to transform an existing tool, the protocol that she and her fellow teachers used to support their own learning,

into the Tuning Protocol, a novel tool designed to enable her students to support each other in their learning. This innovative tool, along with Anna as a facilitator, provides the students with a chance to take on the role of a teacher or expert, and, to paraphrase Vygotsky's (1978) description of children engaged in play, they are able to become something they are not. In other words, asking students to diagnose their own writing needs and also to help "teach" one another requires them to take on greater responsibility for their own learning, and in this way it supports the "development of imagination, self-reflection, emotions and awareness of the child's own thinking" (Egan & Gajdamaschko, 2003, p. 87). Although we do not have evidence of student learning, Anna clearly perceives her new approach to be beneficial. As Freeman & Johnson (2005) argue, studies are needed to explore the "relationship of influence" that links teacher learning and student learning. The findings of this study highlight the multiple roles that CIG might play in the potential link between teacher learning and student learning, especially in light of the current educational mandates and pressures on teachers.

The National Staff Development Council (NSDC) (2009) report highlights the claim that professional development needs to be strongly anchored in classroom practice. It states that professional development should be job-embedded, ongoing and linked to issues impacting schools. This is a key argument for including collaborative and inquiry-driven models of teacher professional development, such as CFG, in professional development opportunities offered by school districts. One of the goals of CFG is to identify and create connections between student learning and teacher practice (Dunne, Nave, & Lewis, 2000, p. 9). CFG provides time for teachers to work collaboratively to delve into classroom-based dilemmas, whether they are about curriculum, student work, or issues in the school culture that impact student learning (Dunne & Honts, 1998). CFG also provides a systematic process—protocols—that guides teachers through the process of investigating areas of their teaching that can be enhanced by a group conversation. One of the most compelling features of this method of collaborative discourse is that teachers *volunteer* to participate in a process where they are both the developers and the directors of their "*learning in and from practice*" (Ball & Cohen, 1999, p. 10).

If teachers' development necessitates investigations into their practice, it then amplifies the claims made in this NSDC report that states that "effective professional development is intensive, ongoing, and connected to practice; focuses on the teaching and learning of specific academic content; is connected to other school initiatives; and builds strong working relationships among teachers (pp. 5 and 6)". If we want to see real changes in teachers' professional development, it should be linked to a robust theory of learning. SCT is one theoretical lens that can begin to fill in the holes of what this learning looks like, what supports it, and how it follows a twisted developmental path along which all teachers must travel. Paying attention to these considerations could offer professional development designers powerful vehicles for enabling teachers to transform their practices while utilizing SCT as one of the design elements.

Appendix Describing Student Work Protocol (CIG session protocol, January 2005)

Describing Student Work Protocol
(adapted by Marylyn Wentworth from many sources)

Purpose: The goal of this protocol is to focus on the work of one student as a way to better understand that students' way of thinking

Time: 1 hour (can be as much as 2 hours)

Roles: Presenter of student work; Facilitator/Chairperson; Review group (all but Presenter and Facilitator)

Process:

1. *Review descriptive process (5 minutes)*
   a. Description NOT judgment or evaluation
   b. All work bears the imprint and the signature of the author and so offers an important access to the interest, ways of creating order and point of view
   c. Formal process of go-arounds. You are free to pass
   d. NO cross dialogue
   e. Be brief (not a lot of "ands")
   f. Use action words, descriptive words and phrases
   g. Focus for each round (Facilitator takes notes for common ground)
2. *Practice descriptions (5-10 minutes): Since true description is difficult, start with a reflection/description exercise. The skill of the group in being descriptive rather than evaluative dictates how much practice is needed.*
   a. Free association for "TEACHER," "PDS" or "CIG PROCESS"
   b. Free association with an art piece (with writing?)
   c. Practice go-arounds
3. *Work presentation and description (5–10 minutes)*
   a. Share the work—the teacher may choose to read some of the work or have someone else do so
   b. Describe the work. *The description tends to be less evaluative if the teacher does not give too much information, as too much pre-knowledge may prejudice the view of the team . . . Often NO information is given other than the work itself*
   c. Describe the child (age, siblings, pertinent information?)
4. *Rounds (30 minutes): Each round is summarized by the facilitator and the focus for the next round set. Facilitator might vary the beginning person for rounds and change the order from clockwise to counter clockwise. Facilitator might choose to insert a clarifying question round where the group members can ask the presenting teacher clarifying questions*
   a. Literal description *(always done with this protocol)*: General impressions, physical description as in what do you see
   b. What is this student working on? (Skills or purpose for writing)
   c. Assessment options
5. *Final Round . . . Debrief/Feedback on Process Round (5 minutes)*
   a. How did this work . . . or not?
   b. What did you learn?
   c. Suggestions for facilitation
   d. Time for the presenter to say what was learned from this student

Chapter 13

Teacher Learning through Lesson Study

An Activity Theoretical Approach toward Professional Development in the Czech Republic

Thomas Tasker
U.S. Department of State, English Language Fellow Program

English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers often have few possibilities to develop professionally (Johnston, 1997). Increasing collaborative inquiry-based professional development opportunities for teaching faculty at private language programs has the potential to lead to greater teacher commitment and longer tenure in the field (Tasker, 2006). However, a successful EFL teacher professional development program requires not only a commitment from the teachers and institutional support, but also needs to be perceived by the teachers as relevant to their local teaching context (Yamagata-Lynch & Haudenschild, 2006). Participating in lesson study (Fernandez, Cannon, & Chokshi, 2003; Lewis & Tsuchida, 1997), a teacher-directed collaborative professional development activity, focuses the teachers' attention on gaps in their students' learning by creating a mediational space that encourages sustained dialogic interaction about student learning issues that are central to teachers' everyday teaching practice. The goal of the exploration of student learning within the context of lesson study has the potential to promote greater teacher professional development by focusing teachers' collective attention on shared student learning issues, and pursue jointly constructed solutions. In doing so, teachers move beyond being not only consumers of top–down expert knowledge, but also producers of school-based, self-directed knowledge by adopting a "researcher lens" and generating questions about student learning posited by the teachers themselves (Fernandez, Cannon, & Chokshi, 2002). Teacher educators experienced in lesson study are instrumental in facilitating teachers new to the process to gradually take on the role of researcher without imposing the educator's own ideas and solutions on the group. Lesson study can "carve out a role for experts and still remain a teacher-controlled activity" (Chokshi & Fernandez, 2004, p. 525)

Using a developmental work research (DWR) methodology (Engeström, 2007) and cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) as the theoretical framework, the expansive learning (Engeström, 1999b; 2001) of three EFL teachers engaged in lesson study was investigated during a semester at a private language school in the Czech Republic. This chapter traces the teachers' participation in lesson study and their efforts to resolve a contradiction between the English language learning their students were prepared to do outside of class (very little), and the progress the

teachers observed the students were making (almost none). Over the first five lesson study meetings, the teachers collaboratively explored ways to encourage their students to take responsibility for their learning, ultimately by creating an artifact that could potentially improve their students' critical reading skills. The results indicate that lesson study was instrumental in helping the teachers to reach a possible solution to the contradiction between teacher and student activity systems.

The Lesson Study Cycle

Lesson study is an inquiry-based professional development activity that encourages teacher investigation into student learning, which ultimately could promote teacher learning. It is a framework teachers use to explore a gap between where their students are now, and where they would like them to be. They then seek ways to begin to bridge that gap by creating a research lesson. This lesson focuses on re-directing student learning by changing teaching practices and designing artifacts that could assist their learners in achieving the long-term goal they have established. Teachers emerge from their sustained effort to understand one aspect of student learning with an increased understanding of their students and teaching practice.

Lesson study originated in Japan (Fernandez & Yoshida, 2004; Lewis & Tsuchida, 1997, 1998, 1999; Stigler & Hiebert, 1999), but has become popular in North America over the past ten years (Chokshi & Fernandez, 2004, 2005; Fernandez & Chokshi, 2002; Fernandez, Cannon & Chokshi, 2003; Lewis, 2000, 2006; Lewis, Perry, Hurd & O'Connell, 2006). The lesson study cycle can be grouped into three stages: 1) investigating a gap in student learning and creating a research lesson, 2) teaching (and observing) the research lesson, and 3) critiquing the outcome of the lesson and revising it, and writing a report of the results. In the first part of the cycle, teachers set an overarching goal (a research theme); identify a topic for the lesson; research the topic and the history of how the topic has been taught; and create the research lesson. The overarching, long-term goal is a general statement about what the teachers in the group would like their students to achieve, and is often drawn from the school's mission statement, or from a discussion of possible student learning objectives.

After the lesson study group has selected an overarching goal, they decide what the focus of the research lesson should be. After examining the history of how the topic has been taught, and consulting with other teachers and outside experts or professional literature, the group collaboratively produces a research lesson that addresses their overarching goal, and potentially begins to bridge the gap they have discovered in their students' learning. In the second stage of the lesson study cycle, one member of the group teaches the lesson to her class and the other members observe whether the new mediating artifacts they introduce produce the envisioned learning outcome. In the third stage of the cycle, the group meets soon after the lesson was taught to critically reflect on and revise the lesson. After the lesson has been taught again by another teacher and critiqued once more by the group, a reflective record of the entire lesson study process is often produced.

Throughout the lesson study cycle, it is common for groups to include an outside advisor to provide information about the lesson study process, or a content-area expert to help the group learn more about the topic they wish to investigate. Fernandez, Cannon, & Chokshi (2003) argue that for lesson study to be successful in U.S. schools, teacher educators, as lesson study coaches, need to be available to support new groups and encourage them to take on the role of researcher in their lesson study practice.

Lewis, Perry, & Murata (2006) argue that lesson study research can be "used to test and expand our theories of professional learning" (p. 6) by using the data and artifacts collected during lesson study to "make visible some of the pathways by which teachers may learn during lesson study" (p. 5). However, if lesson study is to be used to inform a theory of learning, then that theory must not only describe who the subjects of learning are, why they learn, and what they learn, including content and outcomes, but must also explicate how teachers learn and what the main processes of learning are (Engeström, 2001).

In this chapter only the initial stage of the lesson study cycle, the teachers' creation of an overarching goal and the design of the research lesson, will be considered. As will be argued below, a significant shift in the teachers' conceptualization of student responsibility towards learning took place as the teachers moved closer to implementing the collaboratively constructed ideas that later became instantiated in their research lesson. Although the other stages in the lesson study process (teaching the research lesson, critically evaluating and modifying the lesson and writing the final report detailing the outcome) also contributed to the teachers' reconceptualization, most of the key changes occurred in the first five meetings.

Activity Theory, Expansive Learning Theory and Cognitive Development

Cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) and expansive learning theory (Engeström, 1999a, 1999b, 2001), offers an account of how cognitive development unfolds. CHAT can be summarized in five principles: an activity system, interacting minimally with one other activity system, is the primary unit of analysis; is multi-voiced; transforms over time; changes and develops through internal contradictions; and can undergo expansive transformations (Engeström, 2001).

In this study, two inter-connected activity systems were investigated: a group of EFL teachers and their students in an educational institution. The subjects of one activity system are EFL teachers, and the object of their activity is their students.

> or more accurately, the relationship between students and the knowledge they are supposed to acquire. The students are for the teachers never merely raw material to be molded. They are the reason for coming to work, for agonizing about it and for enjoying it (Engeström, 2001, p. 54).

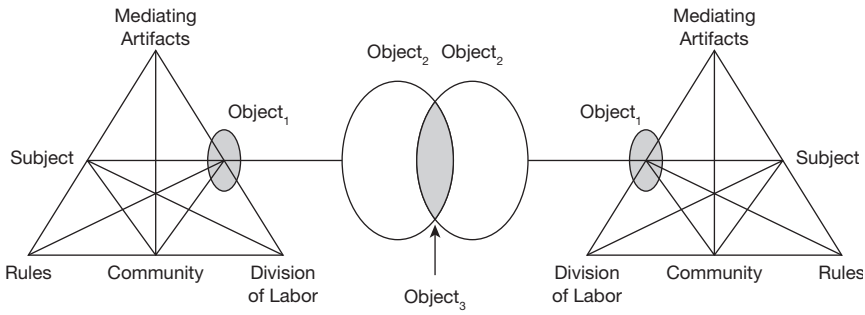


Figure 13.1 Two Interacting Activity Systems.

Source: From Engeström (2001). Expansive learning at work: Toward an activity theoretical reconceptualization. *Journal of Education and Work*, *14* (1).

For the EFL teachers, the object of students and student learning is represented in Figure 13.1 above as Object$_1$, an initial state that is "unreflected, situationally given" (Engeström, 2001, p. 136); the day-to-day practice of engaging with student learning in the classroom. The mediating artifacts they use to achieve this object are an array of physical and symbolic artifacts; for example, collaboration with other teachers, course books, lesson plans, and workshops.

The students of the EFL teachers are the subjects of the other activity system. The object of many of the students' activity is learning English, but it is possible they have other objects as well, such as meeting other people or an increase in salary after completing a course. The mediating artifacts students use to achieve the English learning object include textbooks and materials, teachers, and peers. In this chapter only the relationship between the subjects, mediating artifacts, and objects of the EFL teacher and students' activity systems will be considered.

The first stage in the lesson study process, creating the overarching goal the teachers set for their students and the artifact that became the central part of their research lesson, was introduced to the EFL teachers as a new mediating artifact to assist in their collaborative, dialogic exploration of one aspect of student learning, illustrated in Figure 13.2 below.

Two other principles in Engeström's (2001) theory are that activity systems develop through internal contradictions, and can undergo expansive transformation. Expansive learning theory describes transformation as a cycle of internalization/externalization of new mediating artifacts that potentially lead to reconceptualization of the object of activity. At the beginning of the expansive learning process, a contradiction is perceived by a person or group of people who are part of an activity system, which results in a reflective analysis of activity and collective questioning or rejection of the established practice(s). For the EFL teachers in this study, a contradiction between the objects of the teachers' and their students' activity system, discussed below, triggered the teachers' investigation into one specific aspect of student learning. Engaging in the first stage in the lesson study process offered

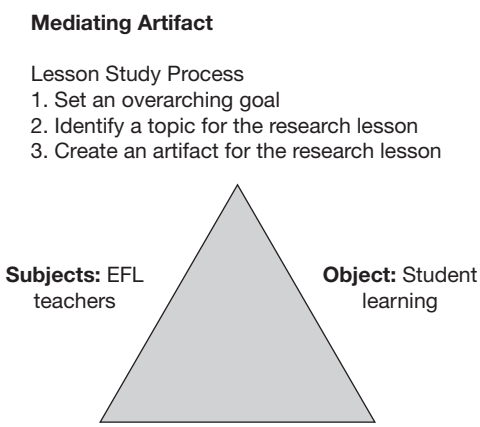


Figure 13.2 Lesson Study as a New Mediating Artifact in Teachers' Activity System.

teachers a means to explore the history of the conflict; externalize their understanding of it, and search for solutions; model potential solutions; and perhaps begin to internalize new mediating artifacts in their effort to re-direct student learning.

The Lesson Study Project in the Czech Republic

This 14-week study took place at a large private language school in the Czech Republic from August to December 2008. The participants were full-time teachers at the school. The study began with four teachers, but one dropped out after the third week. The participants volunteered for the study, and were paid at the end. The three teachers were Lenka, a Slovak female with four years of teaching experience, and a Senior Teacher at the school; Dan, an American male with six months of experience; and Simon, a Danish male with five years of experience, and a Senior Teacher. The Senior Teachers at the school taught full time as well, but had the additional responsibility of being a mentor to the thirty teachers assigned to them and running monthly meetings for their group.

The researcher acted as the teachers' outside advisor to provide information about the process of lesson study, but also to mediate the teachers' discussion in an effort to keep their attention focused on the core elements of the process.

The participants were interviewed at the beginning and end of the project. The researcher and the participants met as a group eleven times, once weekly for 90 to 120 minutes. During these meetings the participants were involved in the lesson study process discussed above. The interviews and the meetings were recorded and transcribed. The participants produced a detailed lesson plan for the research lesson. They also kept a journal to react to discussions the group had during the meetings. For this chapter, only the pre-study interviews and the first five of eleven meetings were analyzed, when the participants were engaged in creating the overarching goal and the main artifact for the research lesson.

Developmental Work Research (DWR) (Engeström, 1999, 2007), like lesson study, involves creating a space for participants and interventionist-researchers to explore critical incidents in the past and current practices of the group through a discussion of the issues that are raised by the participants and "mirrored" back to them in a series of meetings using transcripts of their previous discussions. In the current study, DWR provides a way to investigate the critical incidents the EFL teachers faced in the workplace to uncover the contradictions between the teacher and student activity systems. Engeström (2007) states that DWR methodology aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) and Vygotsky & Luria's (1994) "method of double stimulation" in that the participants are presented with a problem or contradiction that they themselves have identified and discussed as "mirror data" (the first stimulus), and then are guided by mediating artifacts introduced by the researcher, but directed by the participants (the second stimulus), with the goal of developing new understandings and potential solutions. By observing how participants incorporate the newly introduced artifact into resolving the contradiction they face, the researcher is offered insight into the process of development (Vygotsky, 1978).

In this study, the parts of the initial, transcribed teacher interviews connected to workplace problems generally, and student learning issues specifically, were presented to the participants at the first meeting. These "mirror" data, the participants' own words and experiences, were used as the "first stimulus" to explore the teachers' perception of the gaps between what their students are achieving now and what they are capable of achieving. The "second stimulus" is:

> something that has culturally appropriate general affordances but also sufficient ambiguity and malleability so that the subject will have to transform it into a situationally effective mediating device by "filling" it with specific contents (Engeström, 2007, p. 374).

In most DWR studies, the participants and the interventionist researcher used the elements of CHAT to model past approaches to the problems the participants uncovered; understand present experience and practices; then project their vision of potential future solutions. The key point is that this framework "must be explicitly filled by the participants with specific contents that correspond to their assessment of the situation" (p. 374) The process needs to be driven by the participants themselves. In the current study, lesson study is used instead of CHAT as the "second stimulus." With lesson study, the EFL teachers "fill in the contents" from their analyses of past and present approaches to a student learning issue, then work collaboratively to produce a mediating artifact and change teaching practices as part of the research lesson to address the contradiction.

Data Analysis

The constant comparative method was used as a means to organize and conceptualize the data as it was collected to inform the direction of the research

(Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The initial teacher interviews were categorized by the kind of critical incidents that arose, marked by the teachers' use of emotive language such as "it was frustrating" or "my effort was wasted." The decision to create only critical incidents' categories was influenced by DWR methodology (uncovering contradictions from the participants' own words and actions) and lesson study (uncovering gaps between what students are currently achieving and what you would like them to achieve). This represents an unusual alignment between the roles of researcher, researcher-interventionist, and professional development facilitator.

Based on a grounded content analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992), the italicized text and the direct quotes from the teacher interviews and discussions below trace the participants' evolving conceptualization of *learner responsibility* from the contradiction that initiated the teachers' desire to try to change this aspect of student learning, to how the lesson study cycle created the mediational space (and "second stimulus") for teachers to explore their teaching practices and create the mediating artifact they would use to encourage their students to take more responsibility for their learning. This chapter addresses the following research question: How does engaging in the initial stages of collaborative, teacher-driven process of lesson study lead to changes in the way the teachers conceptualize an aspect of student learning?

An Analysis of Teacher Conversations in Lesson Study

Critical Incidents

In the initial, individual interviews, the EFL teachers discussed several issues they had with their students and student learning. The teacher comments that were emotive, e.g. expressing frustration, were added to the list of critical incidents to be used as mirror data during the second meeting of the group for the dual purpose of, in terms of DWR/CHAT, uncovering possible contradictions between the teacher and student activity systems that might motivate expansive learning, and in terms of lesson study, uncovering shared sources of dissatisfaction that could become the focus of the lesson study process. Some of the incidents the teachers discussed were student lack of motivation, problems of being creative, over-reliance on the teacher, and repeatedly making the same errors. Another issue discussed was the unwillingness of students to do work outside of class. The following is an example of a critical incident where Lenka discusses why this was a source of frustration.

LENKA: they *don't realize that they won't learn only in the classroom* that they have a lot of learning has to be done by themselves that they they have to spend time and energy on on English and sometimes *they expect that it's like a magic* . . . so *that's very frustrating when you can't see any progress.*

(Pre-lesson study interview)

The gap between the teachers' desire for student learning outside of class, and the reality that this wasn't taking place is expressed explicitly as frustration by Lenka when "you can see any progress." This critical incident, and many other incidents related to student learning issues from all the teachers' interviews, were presented to teachers during the second meeting.

The "Mirror" Data: Exploring Gaps in Student Learning

As the participants worked through the critical incidents together, several contradictions they all shared began to emerge, but the issue of student learning outside of class received the most attention. Dan and Lenka's conversation that follows reveals the displeasure they feel connected to the progress of student learning.

DAN: we try to teach them English and they go and do whatever else in their lives and if they come back they come back whenever *and they haven't learned English they're still making the same mistakes* that *we think somehow it's a problem with us* or *we didn't teach it well enough* or something but uh (xx) people learning for twenty years and they still have problems with it so

LENKA: *I feel that all my effort was wasted* that I don't even have to go to classes because *they don't work with it at home* they just *sit there and they don't do anything*. No homework.

(Meeting two)

Here Dan states that his students "haven't learned English" and that they're "still making the same mistakes," and Lenka reveals that "all my effort was wasted" when "students don't work with it at home." Although both agree that their students' lack of progress is a concern, Lenka blames the students when she says that "they just sit there and don't do anything" in class because there's "no homework," whereas Dan feels that this is the teacher's fault when he states that "we think somehow it's a problem with us" or "we didn't teach it well enough."

In the next excerpt there is movement away from framing lack of student learning outside of class as an intractable problem, and towards framing learning as something they could potentially encourage in students.

RESEARCHER: *so that's one potential overarching goal then to encourage students somehow to . . . to get students to to*

LENKA: *be responsible*

RESEARCHER: do something

DAN: yeah

SIMON: I was actually thinking like connected to that but *more in the sense of encouraging them to be more enthusiastic about the language*

RESEARCHER: mhm

SIMON: *so that they <u>choose</u>* to read books they *<u>choose</u>* to read articles they *<u>choose</u>* to watch films they *<u>choose</u>* to listen to music

DAN: mhm

SIMON: and *it's not you having to say ok now you*
LENKA: *do this*
SIMON: have to do this now do this that they *voluntarily go* and expose themselves to English outside the classroom. *I think that could be an interesting goal.*
(Meeting two)

After a prompt by the researcher, Lenka advances the idea that students should "be responsible." Simon sees this in terms of "encouraging them to be more enthusiastic about the language" and of "choosing" to do work in English. This represents a shift from the idea that students won't do the homework that is assigned them to the idea that students could somehow "voluntarily go and expose themselves to English outside of class." Simon states that student-directed learning "could be an interesting goal" for the lesson study project. By collectively externalizing the frustration they felt with the progress of student learning, they eventually decide this is an issue they should address.

In terms of CHAT, the teachers used the "mirror" data, facilitated by the interventionist researcher, to mediate their collaborative exploration of possible contradictions between teachers and students. After this discussion, the teachers agreed to focus on the "learning outside of class" contradiction between the teacher and student activity systems. It should be noted that in the last excerpt the object of the teachers' activity system, mediated by the discussion of the critical incidents, has begun to be reconceptualized from "students need to do their homework to make progress in learning" to "students need to take responsibility to make progress in learning" as noted in Figure 13.3 below. Noticing a contradiction and deciding to work collaboratively to resolve it has the potential to trigger the expansive learning of the EFL teachers.

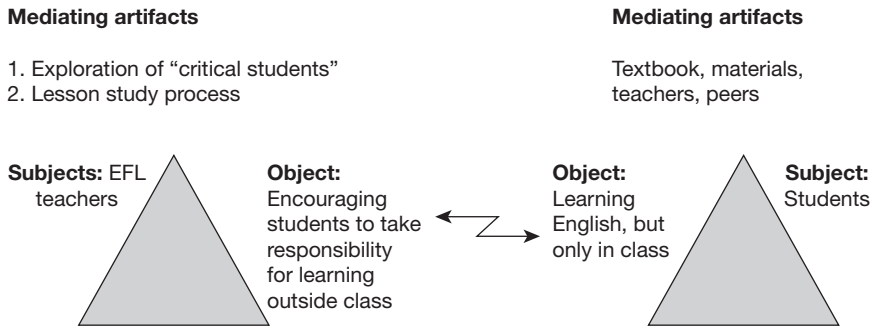


Figure 13.3 The Contradiction between the EFL Teacher and Student Activity Systems.

Creating the Lesson Study Overarching Goal

During the second lesson study meeting, the teachers agreed that students' taking responsibility for their learning would be the overarching, long-term goal of the

research lesson. Excerpt 6 is the final version of the goal they included in their lesson plan several weeks later.

> "We would like our students *to take more responsibility for their English language learning outside of class.* We feel that this overarching goal, although broad and difficult to measure, *will have the most lasting impact on our students' English development* in both the short- and long-term." (From the teachers' lesson plan, meeting eight)

The Overarching Goal Mediates Negotiation of the Topic

Having established the overarching goal they would like their students to achieve, the lesson study group turned its attention towards the topic they would focus on in the research lesson. The objective for the group is now to begin to think how the topic and activities they create could potentially begin to mediate student learning towards taking responsibility. Most of the third meeting was taken up discussing possible topics. In excerpt 7 below, Simon raises the possibility of having students do interviews in the school, and then a little later, in excerpt 8, he suggests reading as a focus of the research lesson. In both excerpts, the group's overarching goal of students taking responsibility mediates their negotiation of their ideas.

DAN: I I would feel really personally I would feel really stupid just wandering up
LENKA: yes
DAN: to someone and saying hi hello I'm in an English class
SIMON: Then how would you feel afterwards if you actually managed to do it?
DAN: Yeah you made a connection had a good conversation. yeah it definitely could feel
SIMON: I mean yeah there's probably going to be difficult for a lot of students probably going to be a barrier there so we can't
LENKA: Yeah
SIMON: put when they actually get talking to them I think they'll, but I'm *I'm not sure it actually moves anything in terms of taking responsibility* because I don't think that having them do that one *won't actually get them to do it again*
DAN: Right
SIMON: which I think is what we want to do we want to *develop some kind of habit*
RESEARCHER: Right. That's a good point.

(Meeting three)

Simon's idea of having the students do interviews is met with skepticism. In thinking through his own idea, Simon raises doubts that this activity "actually moves anything in terms of taking responsibility" because he believes the teacher "won't actually get them to do it again." Although this excerpt does not move the group closer to deciding on a topic, it does show how the overarching aim mediated Simon's thinking about the efficacy of this activity in terms of getting students to

take responsibility, and it does lead him to connect taking responsibility to having the students "develop some kind of habit," a point he takes up below in excerpt 8.

In terms of expansive learning, at this stage the teachers are beginning to collectively search for a solution to the student learning contradiction they face through a dialogic process of externalizing different activities that could embody students taking responsibility. Excerpt 7 is an example of the kind of critical reflection that the group was engaged in during the third meeting. Simon's externalization of a possible solution (interviewing), and perhaps the others' negative reaction to the idea, lead him to question whether this activity will encourage students to take responsibility. This dialogic process enabled Simon to critically reflect on his proposed solution, and led him and the group to discuss other solutions.

The following excerpt shows the topic the group finally settled on, reading, partly due to Simon's argument that "developing a habit" was an important part of taking responsibility.

SIMON: yeah. I think for like in terms of skills *I think reading would be the one that would be easiest to develop a habit.*
DAN: you could have them try to start a blog but or something like that
SIMON: yeah something like that but *I'm not sure they would continue doing it after class.* I think *reading would be probably the area they might actually continue* if you *managed to develop an interest.*

(Meeting three)

Simon believes that "reading would be the one that would be easiest to develop a habit" and would probably be "the area they might actually continue." The group shifted from discussing interviewing and then blogging as possible topics to talking about reading as a topic mainly because of Simon's argument that students would be more likely to continue reading after the research lesson if the teachers "managed to develop an interest."

After the teachers decided to focus on reading, they turned their attention to creating the activities they would do during the research lesson. This part of the lesson study process was driven by a discussion of the kind of mediating artifact they could introduce into student learning, and changes they could make to their teaching practice to encourage students to take responsibility for their learning. Once again the overarching goal mediates the negotiation among the teachers, illustrated below in the following five excerpts.

Selecting Activities for the Research Lesson

Here Dan introduces the idea that students should be allowed to choose the reading material. The teachers talk about the books they could offer their student to read for the research lesson

DAN: [we need to] trust *them to make the right choice*
RESEARCHER: it's up to them but that's it we need to give them some

LENKA: *responsibility*
RESEARCHER: some responsibility
DAN: we also need to have some choice in it
LENKA: yeah
DAN: because we just force it upon them then like most things *if somebody tells you have to do it you're less responsive* than if you say (1) if *you have buy in in some way*.
RESEARCHER: yeah there has to be some kind of buy in I agree. That's a good word. *Any ideas about that?*
SIMON: yeah I agree

(Meeting four)

Dan argues that they have to trust their students to "make the right choice" because "if somebody tells you have to do it you're less responsive than if you say, if you have buy in in some way." For Dan, part of student responsibility is giving the students the right to decide what they read for themselves to ensure they're invested in the activity. As will be seen below, for the teachers, giving students choices at different points in the lesson becomes a crucial feature in encouraging student responsibility. Although the researcher's comment, "any ideas about that?" doesn't provoke more discussion of this point, it does give an example of the researchers' role in the lesson study meetings, to focus the group's attention on ideas brought up by the participants that could further the group's thinking on a topic.

Here, towards the end of the fourth meeting, Simon questions the relationship between reading and responsibility.

SIMON: I'm just thinking about this whole responsibility I'm not I just don't see it.
LENKA: [laughing] but *how do you want to measure* responsibility.
SIMON: I don't know that's the problem. That's the problem I have.
LENKA: *I don't think you can.*
SIMON: *I think you can but you need to identify how you're going to measure it. I think now it's more about developing an interest in reading*
LENKA: mhm
SIMON: rather *than developing a responsibility for learning*. And I think there's a difference. I think one thing is
DAN: yeah
SIMON: *you could say developing an interest in reading is tied in with developing responsibility for your own learning but I don't think they're equal* and I think what we're working on now is developing an interest in reading.

(Meeting four)

Simon is concerned that the work he sees the group doing, "developing an interest in reading," isn't equal to "developing responsibility for your own learning." Additionally, he believes that "you can [measure student responsibility] but you need to identify how you're going to measure it." For Simon, measuring student

responsibility in some way is central in gauging the success of the project. Lenka, however, never accepts Simon's idea that responsibility can be measured when she asks him "but how do you want to measure responsibility . . . I don't think you can."

At this point it is clear that the teachers' conceptualizations of student responsibility, and how to embody this idea in teaching activities, are not the same. Each teacher has contributed something different, each has singled out an aspect of what it means to become a responsible learner. Simon believes developing a habit, like reading more often, is essential, as long as it goes beyond developing only an interest. Dan argues that students need to be involved in choosing materials to encourage a sense of buy-in. These components begin to coalesce to some extent during the group's fifth meeting.

Creating a Reading Activity (and Artifact) that Begins to Encourage Student Responsibility

The teachers now move from conceptualizing how their students might take responsibility for their learning to designing the activities that could mediate this process during the research lesson. This is a crucial part of the lesson study cycle: turning the abstract idea expressed in the overarching goal into practical classroom tasks learners can do in a single lesson that potentially move them one step closer to achieving this goal. In the next four excerpts, from the fourth and fifth meetings, the group works to further define the kind of reading activity they could create for the research lesson that they believe would begin to promote learner responsibility. The group's conceptualization of student responsibility, led by Simon, widens over the course of these meetings.

In this excerpt, Simon advances the idea that developing peer-teaching activities might encourage the students to be better learners.

SIMON: I think it *would have to be something like peer-teaching lexis* or something that actually

LENKA: (xx) yeah

SIMON: *develops some kind of skill in them.* like for example um, *preparing five lexical items to teach* and then doing some kind of research on them on the internet or like in the dictionary or like like making some kind of resources available to them that *would make* them, a better learner so that they might actually take these skills on. Because if we make it something really exam focused ok and I write an email

DAN: yeah

SIMON: and complete the task then it's, I think *it's going to be more homework*

LENKA: mhm

SIMON: they're going to see it more as something extra *an extra workload they have to do rather than something that actually helps them become a better learner* and I think that's what we want.

(Fourth meeting)

Simon introduces the idea that the activity the students do in the research lesson should be "something like peer-teaching lexis" that "actually develops some kind of skill in them." He stresses that the task should be seen by the students as more than just "extra workload they have to do," but something that the students find value in doing. This idea ties into Dan's earlier comment that students need to buy in to what they are asked to do.

Although the idea of having students do a variety of tasks connected with the reading was mentioned a few times before by all the participants, in the following excerpt Simon connects this idea to student choice.

SIMON: say we do that like the first fifteen minutes. so creating like small, I don't know small groups so we say ok if you choose to work with grammar you can sit over here if you choose to work with
LENKA: oh discussing
SIMON: summarizing sit over there
LENKA: oh
SIMON: if you want sit in vocabulary sit over there. *this gives them like the choice.*
RESEARCHER: mhm
SIMON: and some people might have chosen to do <u>all</u> of it if you say ok here's a worksheet
RESEARCHER: oh I see.
SIMON: here's five here's five parts, *decide how much you want to do.* and then ok come to class welcome to the class the first fifteen minutes we're going to talk about the book, *choose what you want to do.* and then if we have them do it in the next lesson say ok <u>again</u> choose what you want to do, and *see if they [did] more, or have they chosen to do something different.* [. . .]
SIMON [a few minutes later]: I think *this could really this could measure something* because *you can actually see how much this person has done* and you can see that in the next lesson maybe they choose to do something different. [. . .]
DAN [a few minutes later]: that sounds exciting
LENKA: Thanks Simon
SIMON: It works for me now.

(Fifth meeting)

Simon discusses the idea that during the research lesson the students could work in small groups, and "choose what [they] want to do" and "decide how much [they] want to do." And in future lessons, the teacher would be able to see "if they did more," or if they chose "to do something different." For Simon, being able "see how much this person has done" is crucial to meeting his condition that this activity should somehow measure responsibility. Although Lenka never agreed that responsibility could be measured, she and Dan are interested in the idea of presenting tasks to their students that the group will design.

The participants, led by Simon, go on to discuss adding functional language to the selection of tasks they will offer the students. In the following excerpt, Simon

comments on giving students formulaic language (which he calls "phrases") that will help them summarize the reading with their peers in class.

SIMON: *I think if you give them the choice I mean do you want to use these phrases or not. That's also giving them autonomy*. And *the people who really take responsibility for their own learning will use those phrases*, whereas the people who don't give a shit they won't.

RESEARCHER: right

SIMON: and then <u>maybe</u> if they come into class *and they see ok these people are using this language I'm <u>not</u>*, then maybe that'll prompt them to do it in the next lesson. [. . .]

SIMON [a few minutes later]: I think also still it has to be has to be worthwhile I mean, *we don't just what them to read we want them to get something out of reading*.

(Fifth meeting)

Simon believes that giving students the choice "to use these phrases or not" is also "giving them autonomy." And this for Simon would be a clear indication that students "who really take responsibility for their own learning will use those phrases." Developing responsibility is more than developing an interest in reading; he wants students "to get something out of reading." He suggests that if students find value in what they are doing, they will continue the practice, and over time build a greater sense of responsibility toward their learning.

For the group generally, and for Simon specifically, encouraging student responsibility entails more than giving students a voice in choosing reading material and the tasks they can do (or even don't do), being invested in the activities, and developing a habit; it now expands to include helping students become better learners through developing language skills and functions (grammar, vocabulary, summarizing, etc.) and then peer-teaching those skills in class. In essence, the teachers believe that encouraging student choice and helping them become more critical readers will eventually lead students to take more responsibility for their learning. For the teachers, what constitutes evidence that the students are beginning to take responsibility for their learning during the research lesson is the students' decision to do the task(s) (and the peer-teaching in class) and use the associated language.

In the following excerpt, the structure of activity students will do during the research lesson changes once more. Dan argues that the set of tasks the students could choose to do should not be focused on language skills, but on the character, plot and events of the story.

DAN: so just the thing that occurs to me um, the student might be more interested might be able to do it that *instead of giving them ok you can work on grammar vocab summarizing, you give them you can work on plot character events*

LENKA: mm

DAN: *design the tool* so it uses, one or more or all of these things. So if they they can pick the characters they can use the [graphic organizer when] they use the

vocabulary. Um or something like that or if they do events then they use a timeline and then they kind of summarize uh

LENKA: mhm

DAN: their opinions of the events or whatever their opinions of the character. something like that. so turning it kind of sideways

LENKA: yeah that sounds interesting

DAN: so *it's kind of focused more on the elements of the story instead of the parts of language*

LENKA: mhm

DAN: but using the parts of language

LENKA: And *that makes more sense because they read primarily not because of grammar, for grammar and vocabulary but for the story.*

(Fifth meeting)

Dan comments that the tasks the students could do should be "focused more on the elements of the story instead of the parts of language, but using parts of language," and Lenka agrees with this because students "read primarily not because of grammar . . . but for the story." Dan's insight challenges the group to consider shifting the focus from more form-based tasks to more meaning-based tasks. Even though Lenka readily agrees to this change, Simon never does so explicitly; however, although not shown in these excerpts, all the participants were satisfied with the artifact they created for the research lesson. Although the creation of the tasks took another meeting to complete, the format established above (five tasks on one sheet of paper the students could choose to complete at home while they were reading) was adhered to (see Figure 13.4).

Plot Summary
Before class: Make a timeline of the events that happened in the chapter(s) you have read.
In class: Summarize the part of the story you have read for your group using your timeline and the useful language below. Then ask your group to predict what they think will happen next.
□ The first thing that happens is . . .
□ After that . . .
□ In the next part of the story . . .
□ The last thing that happens in this part is . . .

Figure 13.4 One of Five Tasks Designed to Potentially Mediate Student Reading.

With the completion of the tasks the teachers would later use in their research lesson, the most challenging part of the lesson study process was behind them: creating classroom activities that instantiated the teachers' conceptualization of how learners might begin to show they are taking responsibility for their learning.

The teachers believed the artifact they created could be modified and applied to other teaching contexts, as seen in the following excerpt.

LENKA: it would just be a worksheet that would be the same I *I mean you could do with any class.* and once you generate it it's there and they can if it's general
SIMON: use it
LENKA: enough you can use it again and, *if it's something we get going then it's something they can really use* and I think this could be some kind of, what do you call it,
SIMON: outcome?
DAN: *artifact.*
LENKA: yeah *mediating artifact*
SIMON: *mediating artifact*

(Fifth meeting)

Lenka believes that "if it's something [the participants] get going," they could use this "mediating artifact" "with any class." The teachers saw the potential in using this artifact for other groups they were teaching. The teachers believe that student choice and working with this kind of artifact could over the long term begin to encourage students to be more invested and more skilled learners who take more responsibility for their learning and thus have a greater chance of success in their English language learning. This is a significant realization because, for the first time, the teachers see beyond the research lesson to how they could implement this mediating artifact, language they themselves adopted, to scaffold all their students' learning.

Conclusion

The focus of this chapter was the extent to which engaging in the initial stage of the collaborative, teacher-driven process of lesson study leads to changes in the way the EFL teachers conceptualize learner responsibility. In collaboratively creating the overarching goal and the artifact for the research lesson, the teachers were continually challenging themselves to re-think how they could potentially assist their students in beginning the long process to developing responsibility for their own learning.

The next stages in teaching the research lesson, critically evaluating and modifying the lesson and writing the final report about the outcome, were also important in reshaping teacher thinking about student responsibility, but most of the significant changes in their thinking took place through the teachers' interaction and negotiation in the first five meetings. However, the outcome of the teacher–student co-construction, most likely judged differently by each teacher, could determine whether the teachers ultimately choose to internalize the new mediating artifact into their teaching practice.

The dialogic process of teacher reconceptualization of student responsibility, triggered by a collective exploration of a contradiction between teacher and student expectations for English language learning, was only gradually realized in a series of externalized partial solutions through extended teacher negotiation. While their search for solutions was jointly constructed, each teacher contributed something different to the process.

One of the principles of Activity Theory is that it is multi-voiced, which means that an activity system is "always a community of multiple points of view, traditions and interests . . . the participants carry their own diverse histories" (Engeström, 2001, p. 136). For the EFL teachers, this was their first experience in a sustained collaborative effort with other teachers. By moving from an isolating environment that encouraged teachers to be independent, to a learning environment that encouraged collaborative exploration to solve a common problem, the teachers achieved an outcome they would not have achieved working alone. Although each teacher conceptualized "taking responsibility" differently, each contributed to the content of the mediating artifact they jointly produced. The dialogic process the teachers engaged in during lesson study was instrumental in harmonizing the teachers' divergent voices in the collaborative construction of the artifact.

Participation in lesson study has the power to transform the way teachers conceptualize student learning because the issues they investigate are meaningful to their local teaching context. Teacher educators who become lesson study coaches have the opportunity to mediate teachers' transition to the role of researcher, while preserving the teachers' voices in determining the issues the group should explore, and the solutions they should pursue.

Part V

Navigating Educational Policies and Curricular Mandates

Chapter 14

Ten Years of CLT Curricular Reform Efforts in South Korea

An Activity Theory Analysis of a Teacher's Experience

Eun-Ju Kim
Hanyang Women's University

Since the late 1990s, communicative language teaching (CLT) has been the buzz word on everyone's lips in the Korean English education community. Unsatisfied with traditional English teaching approaches and needing to meet the increasing demand for competent English users, the Korean Ministry of Education introduced the Communicative Language Teaching Policy (CLT) as the core of the secondary school English curriculum. To implement CLT more effectively, the government also announced the Teaching English Through English (TEE) policy (Lee, 2001). Compared to previous secondary school English curricula based on either grammar-translation or the audio-lingual method, the introduction of CLT and TEE posed significant challenges for English teachers in South Korea (Choi, 2000; Li, 1998).

With the consensus that curricular innovation is an extremely complicated process (Carless, 2001; Fullan, 2000; Markee, 1997) and that teachers play a critical role in its success (Markee, 1997), this chapter explores the complex relationship between a teacher's understanding of and instructional practices within the broader context of the CLT and TEE policies in her Korean middle school. The fundamental questions raised are how this in-service teacher has constructed her perceptions of and practices within these curricular mandates and, at the same time, how these same perceptions and practices serve to construct the contexts from which they have been derived.

CLT as Defined by the Korean Middle School English Curriculum

Since CLT "has no monolithic identity, and no single model of CLT is universally accepted as authorative" (Li, 1998, p. 698), it is necessary to articulate how CLT is characterized by any educational community. To do this, this study carried out a document analysis (Patton, 1990) of the middle school English curriculum manuals (1998, 2008).[1] Through this analysis, it was possible to understand how the government, as a policy maker, perceives, defines, and further elaborates CLT in its official documents and its expectations for English language instruction in middle schools. Four categories that emerged from the document analysis characterize the government's view of CLT:

Dissatisfaction with Existing Teaching Methods

A reoccurring theme in the curricular manuals is disappointment with instruction that focused solely on the structural aspects of English, resulting in an overemphasis on the teaching of grammar and translation. The college entrance exam, which assesses grammatical knowledge and reading comprehension, is cited as the reason for the continued popularity of the structural approach to English education. Resultantly, Korean English education tends to create students who are good at grammar (language usage) but poor at its application (language use). In order to overcome these weaknesses, CLT is believed to be a necessary alternative.

> The introduction of the communicative approach in English education is a practical reaction to the previous English education where students experienced trouble in competent communication although they were knowledgeable of the English grammar. (The 7th Middle School English Curriculum, 1998, p. 18)

Communicative Competence as Instructional Goal

Complying with the utmost goal of CLT (Canale & Swain, 1980; Savignon, 1997), learners' communicative competence is the major goal in this new curriculum (Ministry of Education, 1998). The development of communicative ability as a goal of English education is not new in South Korea. However, the introduction of the concept of communicative competence and the movement toward functionally focused English language instruction are new and thus noteworthy. Introducing Canale & Swain's (1980) and Bachman's (1990) classification of communicative competence, the curriculum embraces components other than linguistic competence as legitimate parts of language use and as outcomes of language learning. By paying attention to discourse and encouraging teachers to focus beyond the sentence level during language instruction (Ministry of Education, 1998, p. 86), the curriculum elucidates the pragmatic aspects of language and clearly regards language as a tool for dynamic interaction.

Student-Centered Communicative Activities as Essential Classroom Activities

The curriculum also proposes that middle school English classes should adopt communicative activities as key classroom activities. This proclamation was based on the belief that communicative activities play a critical role in developing learners' communicative competence.

> A learner's communicative competence is not developed through grammar knowledge, mechanical practice, or rote memory. Communicative competence or ability is rather developed through communicative activities in which (learners) use English in a given situation. (The Revised 7th Middle School English Curriculum, 2008, p. 23)

Communicative activities are to be adopted while a class is involved in speaking, listening, reading, and writing activities (Ministry of Education, 1998). Most noteworthy is that through these activities, students are expected to learn language functions in addition to language structures, the traditional foci of English instruction (Ministry of Education, 2008). Language functions and structures are prescribed by the government while textbook writers are expected to comply with the government's recommendations.

As a specific example of communicative activities, task-based activities are provided in the curriculum as creating opportunities for learners to use their linguistic knowledge in various contexts. The rationale for task-based activities is stated in the curriculum as follows:

> As a way for students to learn English naturally with interests in the language, the seventh middle school foreign (English) language curriculum recommends students to perform tasks and activities rather than teacher's unilateral explanations. (The 7th Middle School English Curriculum, 1998, p. 9)

The curriculum argues that through participating in diverse task-based activities students will be more motivated to learn the language. To do this, the curriculum argues that instruction should revolve around student-centered language learning activities, in which students are expected to play an active role in using and learning English while teachers are positioned as a monitor or resource supplier (ibid. p. 10). In the Korean educational system where teacher-centered instruction is prevalent, assuming the role of collaborator, monitor, or resource supplier places teachers in novel and unfamiliar roles.

Teaching English Through English (TEE) Policy

Given that communicative and task-based activities are ultimately designed to assist students to use English, the curriculum claims that English should also be the medium of instruction. Pointing out the importance of teachers' use of English in classrooms, the curriculum states:

> A teacher's use of classroom English have advantages in that it can be communication experiences to students as well as more English input and listening practices for them. (The 7th Middle School English Curriculum, 1998, p. 9)

Whereas the use of English was only recommended in the previous curriculum, in 2000, the government mandated the Teaching English Through English (TEE) policy. Since then, many English language programs have been implemented to improve local English teachers' proficiency. However, the TEE policy was so unexpected that it received intense public attention, and imposed tremendous pressure on teachers to change their instructional practices.

Activity Theory and Human Activity Systems

Activity Theory (Leont'ev, 1978, 1981) was adopted as the primary theoretical framework for this study and is compatible with the goals of this study given that it examined a teacher's perceptions of the CLT and TEE curricular mandates and how these perceptions played out in their daily instructional practices. Activity Theory can be used to "define and analyze a given activity system, to diagnose possible problems and to provide a framework for implementing innovations" (Thorne, 2004, p. 18). That is, investigating certain human practices from an activity theoretical perspective provides a holistic view of various human practices as well as human agency within these practices. Looking into human practices holistically also lets us find contradictions in these practices, and ultimately determine possible solutions for decreasing or removing such contradictions (Rohrer-Murphy, 1999; Thorne, 2004).

Data Collection and Analysis

Hee-Won is a female English language teacher at a co-ed middle school in a city in South Korea. She had been teaching English in schools for two years and six months at the time of data collection. Hee-Won was teaching five 7th grade English classes, all of which were high-proficiency classes at her school. Two of her classes were female classes; the other two, male.

Data collection involved the researcher observing two of Hee-Won's classes for eight weeks and taking field notes. A total of thirty-four lessons were observed and both audio and video records were collected. Among recorded classroom data, four lessons were shown to Hee-Won in stimulated-recall protocols (SRP). The purpose of SRP is to gain access to information about Hee-Won's classroom decision making and thoughts while teaching (Gass & Mackey, 2000). All stimulated recall comments were audio and video recorded and transcribed by the researcher.

In addition, four semi-structured interviews were conducted. During the first interview, Hee-Won was asked about her teaching philosophy, attitude toward learners, her beliefs about language learning and teaching, and her perceptions of current teaching contexts and others. During the second interview she was asked about her perceptions of and attitudes toward the current educational policies. For the second interview, four segments taken directly from the English curriculum manuals were presented to her and she was asked to react to them as well as answer other questions regarding these policies. Two more interviews were performed to gain additional information about the questions that arose during the observations.

Finally, interviews with Hee-Won's student Min-Ju were conducted three times. The first two semi-structured interviews were conducted to obtain Min Ju's general perceptions and beliefs. One SRP was then conducted to get more situated thoughts of the participant. All interviews were transcribed in detail.

As the first stage of data analysis, the researcher carefully read and analyzed the data using Engeström's (1987, 1993, 1999) human activity system model. This

process was conducted to identify the components of Hee-Won's English teaching classrooms as an activity system. Simultaneously, the origins of the depicted components of Hee-Won's activity system and complex relationship among the components were further examined through a grounded content analysis of the data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). More specifically, to understand the meanings of the data, the procedures of the constant comparative method (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007) were adopted. Emerging themes were coded throughout the interactive process of data reduction, verification and further data analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The converged themes were then framed along the layers of inner contradictions (Engeström, 1987).

Findings

The Instructional Activity System

Hee-Won, as the subject of the activity system, had three objects in this activity system. First, covering the content of the textbooks was an object as her instructional goals were defined by the textbook. Second, given that the content of the textbook was linked to school exams, enabling her students to pass the school exams functioned as an additional object of this activity system. School exams played a crucial role in Hee-Won's lesson preparations for two reasons; first, they were the primary reason for covering the textbook; and, second, for her, they were the only valid way to gauge student learning. Therefore, both the textbook and school exams functioned as important objects around which Hee-Won's instruction was constructed. Third, since she was teaching high proficiency students, maintaining her students' elevated motivation was also an object in this activity system.

School exams likewise functioned as an implicit rule in the community of this activity system. Hee-Won did not need to use the exam to externally motivate her students, since they were highly proficient and generally obtained good scores on school exams. However, given that exam scores are of tremendous interest to students and their parents, preparing students for school exams still prevails as a powerful rule in this community. Closely related to exams, covering the textbook was another implicit rule in this instructional activity system. Since the school exams cover only the content in the textbook, she and other teachers in her school (community) focused only on the content in the textbook.

In addition to preparing for exams and covering the textbook, a third rule in this activity system was the interactional structure of Hee-Won's teaching, that of a traditional teacher-fronted classroom. Hee-Won's classroom interaction patterns consisted of presenting content, asking questions, and evaluating students' answers. Although students periodically initiated questions, the initiation, response, and evaluation (IRE) interactional pattern dominated her instruction.

Another component of this instructional activity system was the instructional materials which came directly from the textbook and accompanying CD-Rom. Hee-Won sometimes gave students homework assignments based on the textbook,

such as copying and translating texts. Exams also functioned as an important mediational artifact since the content of the textbook was almost identical to what was tested on the exams. Students were well aware of the kind of knowledge that would be assessed in the school exams and therefore limited their attention to preparing for the exams.

In addition to material tools, Hee-Won's choice of language that functioned as an artifact in this instructional activity system was noteworthy. Even though Hee-Won agrees that communicative approaches are needed in Korean English classrooms, she expressed her resistance to the TEE policy. In addition to her lack of confidence in English proficiency, Hee-Won mentioned that her own attempt to conduct lessons in English turned out to be meaningless for both her and her students:

> It is possible to conduct a lesson only in English at the beginning [of a semester]. However, once trying to teach English with a textbook, it is impossible [to speak only in English] . . . Even while teaching speaking skills, I should give Korean clue and check students' understanding. Thus, I came to think speaking only English is meaningless. (Hee-Won, Interview I)

Subsequently, Korean was the dominant language of instruction between students, and between Hee-Won and her students. Finally, several communicative activities such as creating sentences, playing games such as Jeopardy, and information gap activities functioned as instructional tools in her instructional activity system.

Hee-Won's community included a colleague who was teaching the same grade level, and other colleagues, especially friends from college who agreed on the need for the communicative approach as well as the implausibility of the TEE policy. When Hee-Won heard that her friends were experiencing similar difficulties in teaching English communicatively and in English, she felt relieved.

> When I talk with my friends, we agree to each other about it [the TEE policy]. That is, although it is the government's policy, we do not feel [the needs] in the field and actually conduct the class mostly in Korean. While talking [with my friends], [I came to know] they are also doing the same. That's what I found from the talks [with my friends] and it comforts me. (Hee-Won, Interview II)

Finally, Hee-Won's students were also part of her community since their participation was critical to her instruction. The local cram schools that many of her students attended, many of which used the school textbook, influenced both her perceptions and her instructional choices.

Contradictions in Hee-Won's Instructional Activity System

Hee-Won repeatedly mentioned dilemmas that emerged as a result of conflicts she experienced in her teaching context. For instance, she wanted her students to learn

English through various activities and considered herself to be a facilitator of student learning. While talking about her attitude toward the students, Hee-Won mentioned:

> I want to give many opportunities for students to do the [learning] activities in person. My role thus would be a helper who encourages them to be interested in and learn from the [learning] activities. Even though it is impossible to do the activities every day, it would be very hard both for me and students if I am the only person who talks during class hour. (Hee-Won, Interview IV)

Contrary to what she said, however, it was observed that, instructionally, Hee-Won tended to control students' learning rather than facilitate it. Hee-Won actually expressed her hesitancy to use activities beyond the textbook since her students would not be tested on them. As a reaction to the government's suggestion for introducing communicative activities in class, Hee-Won mentioned:

> If I do only those [communicative activities], it is impossible to compete [with students in] other schools. The listening test [students took today] is a nationwide one, so I need to cover the content of the textbook so that students can listen and perform on the test. (Hee-Won, Interview I)

Conflicts were observed and stated in Hee-Won's instructional activity system, and the contradictions that emerged are summarized in Figure 14.1

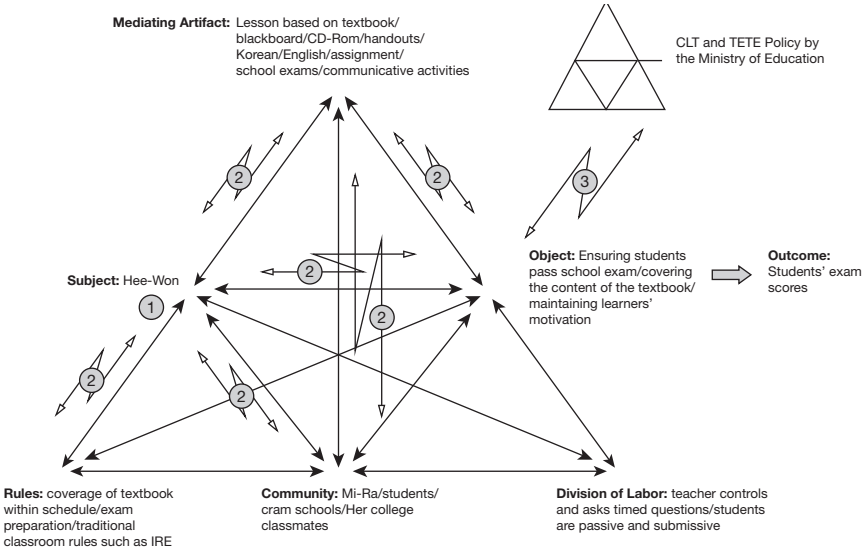


Figure 14.1 Layers of Contradictions.

Tertiary Contradictions

A tertiary contradiction occurred between Hee-Won (subject of a central activity system) and the government's TEE policy (culturally more advanced activity system). When she was expected to use English as the medium of instruction, Hee-Won resisted this policy because the government imposed TEE without what she perceived as proper teacher training and created a huge burden for all English teachers:

> As a matter of fact, if the government intends to implement TEE policy [successfully], I argue that either college education should have made [us] native-like proficient through certain programs or when new teachers are hired, the government should have sent them abroad for a year to learn English. (Hee-Won, Interview I)

Fundamentally, this attitude was related to her perception that her English was not native-like resulting in her lack of confidence in her English: "I am quite not confident about my English" (Interview I).[2] Her negative attitude toward the TEE policy was thus grounded in her belief that neither the Ministry of Education nor her pre-service teacher education programs succeeded in enabling her or her colleagues to become proficient speakers of English.

On the basis of her previous experience with using English to teach English, Hee-Won pointed out several limitations. She specified that English did not have an authentic communicative function in her instruction, and that most authentic communication with her students occurred in Korean. For instance, Hee-Won mentioned that if she said "Be quiet" in English, her students would not listen to her (Interview I). Hee-Won further believed that within the Korean instructional context, teachers were unable to engage in meaningful communication with 40 students. Interestingly, she believed if she communicated with one student, the other 39 would be left out resulting in no learning for them (Interview II).

> If I call on one student and ask him to perform, the rest thirty-nine students do nothing but sit in the chair. So, I do not feel comfortable [with working with one student]. (Interview II)

In Hee-Won's mind, that is, all students should have the same opportunities to learn in her class. As a result, Hee-Won admitted that she ignored the government's TEE policy. During classroom observations, Hee-Won used English only when she read from the textbook but not when she interacted with her students. This resistance to the TEE policy created a tertiary contradiction—between herself (the subject of the central activity system) and the government's policy (culturally advanced activity system).

Secondary Contradictions

Secondary contradictions emerged between (1) subject and tool, (2) subject and object, (3) subject and rule, (4) artifact and rule, (5) artifact and object, (6) subject

and community, and finally (7) community and imposed artifact. These secondary contradictions are especially noteworthy in that Hee-Won experienced them while still attempting to adopt a more communicative approach in her teaching. The first secondary contradiction emerged between Hee-Won (subject) and the required textbook (artifact and object). Hee-Won wanted to introduce some communicative activities in her classroom since she believed that they would provide opportunities for students to use the language as well as motivate them to learn. However, Hee-Won did not believe that the textbook activities (artifact and object) were communicatively oriented but instead mechanical (Interview II).[3] Hee-Won also believed that only the "Let's Talk" section of the textbook could be expanded into communicative activities, while the other sections of the textbook could not. She thus continued to use teacher-centered instructional activities from the textbook but then spent extra hours creating and organizing supplemental activities to use with her students.

Hee-Won expressed concern about students' insincere attitude toward communicative activities. This concern revealed another secondary contradiction in this instructional activity system, that is, between the teacher (subject) and the students (community). In spite of her efforts to integrate more communicative activities into her class, Hee-Won expressed doubt about whether or not her exam-oriented students would regard these activities as relevant.[4] The data from one classroom observation in which a student, Hyunmi, dropped out of an information gap activity provides evidence substantiating Hee-Won's concern that students will not complete activities that they know are not directly related to their grades or to school exams.[5] Later, this same concern was verified by a student, Min-Ju, who pointed out that Hee-Won's communicative activities were not important to her English learning because they were irrelevant to the school exam (Min-Ju, Stimulated Recall Protocol II). This secondary contradiction simultaneously revealed another contradiction between the communicative activities (artifact) and the students (community), since exam-oriented students did not see these activities as meaningful.

This secondary contradiction is also related to a contradiction between Hee-Won (subject) and the school exams (rules/object) and between communicative activities (artifact) and the school exams (rules/object). Hee-Won agreed that the school exams would be based only on the content of the textbook and would not include any supplemental activities. Consequently, because students' engagement in communicative activities was never measured on the school exams, Hee-Won remained uncomfortable with her decision to use such activities. Her uncertainty, along with the other secondary contradictions, then created a primary inner contradiction.

Primary Contradictions

The most striking primary contradiction emerged between Hee-Won's efforts to use more communicative activities in her classroom and her beliefs about teaching language structures. She wanted to improve students' language learning through more communicative activities and envisioned herself as a facilitator in the

classroom. She also believed that actually using the language for communicative purposes was the best way to develop communicative competence. While articulating the limitations of learning English in an EFL context, Hee-Won expressed her belief about the best way to learn the language:

> Our students do not have place to practice what they learned or memorized from school English learning. To compensate this limitation, some students attend private English schools or make study groups. So I think that the best way to improve English is consistently practice English by using it. (Hee-Won, Interview I)

Hee-Won expected communicative activities would provide chances for students to practice English more as well as maintain their motivation to learn English. At the same time, ironically, Hee-Won also supported the use of mechanical practice as well as rote memorization of grammar rules, revealing another major primary inner contradiction:

> Only when [students] know the basic framework [grammar], can they apply it, right? Then, memorizing the framework and repeatedly practice them in different contexts are—They are the ones in the textbook but they are negatively viewed here [the curricular manual]. However, it is impossible for my students to speak competently in diverse contexts. (Hee-Won, Interview II)

Here, Hee-Won refutes the argument of the curricular manual because she perceives that memorizing grammar rules through repetition is also necessary to be competent in the English language. This inner contradiction is closely related to her own learning experiences. Because in her own schooling history she had only experienced mechanical, rote learning Hee-Won believed these non-communicative activities had helped her do well on her own exams. Moreover, since school exams primarily focus on discrete knowledge of English, Hee-Won struggled with whether or not to spend time creating supplemental communicative activities for her very exam-oriented students. Because Hee-Won's institution measured student learning through exams and did not test actual language use, Hee-Won remained skeptical about the instructional value of communicative activities. As such, her instructional "reality" challenged her "vision" of language teaching and created a primary inner contradiction.

Discussion

Hee-Won expressed both positive and negative attitudes toward the mandated CLT and TEE policies. Like other Korean English teachers, she agreed that English education reforms were needed and desirable. Her opinion was based on both her own experiences as a language learner through grammar-translation and audio-lingual methods and her awareness of the value of English in Korean society. Her colleagues in her pre-service teacher education program shared the same critique

of these teaching methods, indicating that her dissatisfaction was not solely personal but permeated throughout the South Korean English education community. In addition, Hee-Won's vision of herself as a teacher aligned with the CLT curriculum reforms which require teachers to actively engage students in language learning through a variety of meaning-based experiences.

Although Hee-Won believed in and desires this change, she simultaneously resisted the current curriculum reform efforts. She doubted her ability to implement the mandates because she did not feel competent about her own English proficiency. Hee-Won placed the blame for her inadequacies on her pre-service teacher education program and the Ministry of Education for having not fully prepared her to teach according to the new curriculum. As a result, she simply ignored the TEE policy confirming Engeström's (1987) point that tertiary contradictions, which occur when a new object is imposed on a central activity system by a culturally advanced activity system but not infused enough to cause secondary contradictions in the activity system, are either resisted in favor of or subordinated to the existing forms of the activity.

In spite of her negative attitude toward the curriculum mandates, however, Hee-Won acknowledged that she tried to incorporate some aspects of the communicative language teaching in her instruction. Several factors, both individual and institutional, made this possible. Both Hee-Won's own determination to move beyond the grammar-translation method and her vision of herself as a teacher to create a more activity-based learning environment were significant personal factors. Hee-Won's highly proficient students also contributed to her ability to adapt her instructional practices toward more communicative activities.

A recurring primary contradiction emerged when Hee-Won tried to implement more communicative activities in her classroom. She expressed a lack of knowledge about communicative activities, and in fact most of her activities were teacher-centered, although at times they did trigger meaningful negotiation among students or between her and her students. More importantly, Hee-Won remained uncertain about how helpful CLT was for her students in this instructional activity system.

She also experienced many secondary contradictions; most of which were present when she attempted to adopt more communicative activities. Contradictions between the artifacts Hee-Won used to teach and the exam-oriented community made her reluctant to try out communicative activities. Contrary to Engeström's (1993) point that secondary contradictions can be a starting point for change, the secondary contradictions Hee-Won experienced made her cling to what she learned from her own "apprenticeship of observation" (Lortie, 1975).

The community rules embedded in this activity system also shaped what Hee-Won thought was possible in her classroom. In South Korea, where the public passionately embraces education, high test scores are paramount. Without exception, in Hee-Won's current teaching context where students' achievement is evaluated through paper and pencil exams, she preferred to stay with more traditional modes of instruction. Therefore, the secondary contradictions Hee-Won experienced while trying out more communicative activities did not push her

to fully adopt more communicative activities in her instruction. Viewed at the macro-level, the main foci of Hee-Won's instruction were grammar-translation and vocabulary along with the memorization of dialogues based on audio-lingual methods. Any communicative activities that did occur remained on the periphery of her instruction.

The fact that inner contradictions revealed in Hee-Won's instructional activity system were interdependent on individual, institutional, and social factors made local-level implementation of the CLT-based curricular mandates improbable. The contradictions within the observed activity system highlight the challenges that Hee-Won and other South Korean secondary school English teachers who attempt to adopt CLT and TEE face under the curriculum mandates and societal demands for effective English education.

Conclusion

Analyzing teachers such as Hee-Won in their own classrooms through the theoretical lens of Activity Theory provides valuable insights for those involved in curriculum reform. In this study, the beliefs of the teacher contradicted the mandates of the Ministry of Education, and the teacher was left to determine how to deal with those contradictions. According to Engeström (1987, 1993, 1999a), many of the contradictions Hee-Won experienced are considered to be secondary contradictions. Given that secondary contradictions are the "moving force behind disturbance and innovation and eventually behind the change and development of the system" (Engeström, 1993, p. 72), one would have expected to find transformations in English classrooms in South Korea. Cole & Engeström (1993) suggest that people can overcome contradictions through "reflective appropriation of advanced models and tools" (p. 40) and transform their activity systems (cited in Daniels, 2004, p. 189). In spite of their exposure to "advanced models and tools" in terms of the Ministry of Education's curriculum, pre- and in-service teacher education programs, and revised textbooks, Hee-Won's instruction did not align with the mandated curriculum. She was unable to overcome several secondary contradictions and thus unable to reorient her teaching activities toward more communicative-oriented instruction.

This suggests that the "reflective appropriation of advanced models and tools" is even more important for teachers in the midst of curricular reform. As shown, Hee-Won did not appropriate the basic underlying premises of the curricular reform efforts in the same way that the Ministry of Education expected. For successful curriculum implementation teachers faced with curricular reform need to gradually reorient their teaching practices which may eventually reorient their beliefs. Specifically, a community of practice (Wenger, 1998) in which teachers are encouraged to accommodate what to them are novel practices, through reflection as well as having tangible support for implementing the CLT curriculum, plays an important mediational role by influencing the rules and division of labor of any community (Engeström, 1999a). However, because the activity systems that Hee-Won participated in provided no supportive community to scaffold her learning

and/or teaching, her teaching activity remained unchanged in spite of the curricular reform.

Engeström (in Ryder, 2006) argues that the "mediational role of community and that of social structures including the division of labor and established procedures" is embedded in any object-driven human activity system. In other words, the subject of an activity system mediates what the community of the system believes, values, and pursues. The norms and rules of the community also function as psychological artifacts for the members of the community, including the subject. In the case of the South Korean educational community, like many Asian educational communities, schools measure academic performance based on exam scores (Hiramatsu, 2005; Li, 1998; Pennington, 1995). Therefore, in this community where the zeal for higher education as a must-have for financial and social success is extraordinary and where the result of exams is critical, high scores on exams is the dominant objective of study in secondary schools. To obtain this goal, teacher-centered language instruction is a preferable and pervasive rule that defines the division of labor between teachers and students. This attitude also supports the notion that the meaning of language as well as consciousness is formed in collective activity (Leont'ev, 1978). That is, collective activity is apparent in the meaning of what is "real learning" in the South Korean educational community; schools, community members, teachers, students, and parents have co-constructed this unique but mutually shared meaning of "real learning" and "pedagogical value" in their unique social and educational context.

This study shows that curricular reform is a complex process indeed where so many different factors are closely connected and influence each other. Separating the investigation of an individual factor within curricular reform—a teacher in this chapter—could not render a holistic and realistic picture of what is happening regarding reform efforts. Only when we see the experiences of individuals within multiple activity systems where such reforms are being implemented is it possible to understand those individuals' actions and perceptions regarding the reforms. The contradictions emerging while individuals are engaged in implementing curricular reforms enable us to see what is needed for the success of curricular reform efforts. In this sense, Activity Theory and Engeström's human activity system model are quintessential for us to understand why CLT-based curricular reform in South Korea has been unsuccessful and offer an analytical tool to help fashion the possible next step to ensure the success of future curricular reform efforts.

Notes

1. The curriculum published in 1998 provides a comprehensible prescription of CLT in middle school level. The one published in 2008 follows the main tenets of its precedent curriculum adding a little revision in subparts.
2. Her lack of confidence in English can also be a source for a primary inner contradiction caused by the policy.
3. In this sense, this can also mean the contradiction between the textbook designers and government which proposes the communicative activities as an important medium for

achieving communicative competence. However, since it was impossible to make access to both parties, it is excluded from the focus of this study.
4. This also caused a primary inner contradiction within Hee-Won. See the primary inner contradiction section (p. 234) for further elaboration for this issue.
5. It might also be possible that the task itself might be too challenging for the student.

Chapter 15

Learning to Teach under Curricular Reform

The Practicum Experience in South Korea

Kyungja Ahn
Seoul National University of Education, Korea

Curricular reforms based on communicative language teaching (CLT) have been implemented in numerous English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts in order to develop more proficient English speakers. In the South Korean context, CLT-oriented curricular reforms, replacing the predominant grammar-translation and audiolingual methods, were announced in the 6th National Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 1994) to develop students' communicative competence. Extending the communicative approach of this curriculum, the 7th National Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 1998) introduced task-based language learning and teaching, learner-centered instruction, and teaching English through English (TETE). The revised 7th National Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2006) provides more detailed guidance for proficiency level-specific classes, continuing to stress the principal directives of CLT and teaching English in English (TEE), similar to TETE.

Numerous studies, however, demonstrate that Korean English teachers' perceptions of these educational reforms and their classroom practices remain firmly based in traditional teaching methods due to various factors involving teachers, students, and their instructional contexts (Choi, 2000; Guilloteaux, 2004; Jeon & Hahn, 2006; E. J. Kim, 2008; S.Y. Kim, 2002; Li, 1998). These studies reported that teachers' limited English proficiency and low confidence in using English as the medium of instruction were major barriers to enacting CLT and the TETE policy. Because of this entrenchment in traditional teaching methods and teachers' limited abilities to use English, teacher education programs have been challenged to prepare teachers to meet the new instructional demands.

Challenges in Pre-service Teacher Education

Pre-service teacher education generally takes place in university coursework and the practicum. However, student teachers often have difficulty integrating what they have learned from the coursework into their classroom practices, finding discrepancies between theoretical coursework and actual classroom teaching. While the practicum is believed to be one of the most significant experiences in the developmental process of learning to teach, this "apprenticeship model" of teacher education typically socializes new teachers into the existing norms and culture of

teaching that represent the status quo in schools (Maynard & Furlong, 1993; Staton & Hunt, 1992; Wallace, 1991). If structured and supported appropriately, however, the practicum can enable student teachers to actualize newly acquired concepts of teaching within their university coursework, including concepts embedded in CLT-oriented curricular reforms.

Survey research on student teachers' general practicum experiences in various secondary schools has shown some of the challenges student teachers faced when attempting to implement CLT (S. Kim, 2008; S. Lee, 2007). Results reveal that student teachers learned about the realities of classroom instruction and thus modified their idealistic views of teaching into more practical ones (S. Kim, 2008). Some participants doubted the effectiveness of CLT in large, multi-level classes, and with pupils having low English proficiency and a lack of motivation. Such perceptions were reinforced by their mentor teachers, and some participants' attempts to use CLT in their classroom teaching were even discouraged by mentors who advocated a more traditional teaching approach.

In order to address the urgent need for effective pre-service teacher education programs in the context of educational reform, more in-depth research needs to examine individual student teachers' development in the practicum as well as various individual, social, and sociocultural factors, based on the current realities of English classrooms in Korea. In response, this study examines how CLT-based curricular reforms are implemented in a pre-service teacher education program in South Korea, by tracing one student teacher's concept development in her practicum teaching. To do this, this study employed activity theory (Engeström, 1987, 1993, 1999a; Leont'ev, 1978, 1981) and the notion of inner contradictions to explore to what extent the student teacher internalized the curricular reform concepts, what elements support and/or restrict her development, and what kind of macro-structures may need to be addressed and/or changed for this student teacher to be able to more completely embrace the mandated curricular reforms.

Methodology

Setting and Participants

The practicum data were collected in 2006 at a Korean laboratory middle school. The pre-service teacher education program provided by the College of Education at a prestigious national university was composed of three parts: (1) university coursework; (2) class observations; and (3) a practicum held in the lab schools. The coursework consisted of general education, ELT, and English linguistics and literature and other courses. During the first two weeks in their second year, student teachers observed English and other classes in one of the three affiliated national laboratory secondary schools. Finally, student teachers were able to observe and actually teach classes in the four-week practicum in their senior year.

This program follows a typical pattern of pre-service teacher education of coursework and the practicum but also includes extensive classroom observation. Moreover, the lab school is responsible for enacting educational policies in an

advanced and systematic manner by, for example, adopting the new textbooks and teaching systems according to the curriculum and giving feedback to the Ministry of Education.

At the time of the study, the school had more than 160 student teachers in ten subject areas. Thirteen English student teachers were organized into four teams of one mentor teacher and three to four student teachers. Although four student teachers were investigated in a larger study, the focus of this chapter is a student teacher named Bohee. Bohee was born in Korea, and when she was seven years old, her family immigrated to Saipan, a capital city in one of the U.S. commonwealths. She studied in elementary and secondary schools where English was the primary language and thus spoke English fluently. She was a senior in the department of English language education at the time of the study.

During the practicum, Bohee taught four different classes, two for the advanced 8th graders and two for the low 9th graders. She worked in a team of one mentor teacher and three student teachers. Her mentor teacher, Mr. Baek, was in his mid-thirties. Although he had less than two years of teaching experience in secondary schools, he was considered to be a creative and energetic young teacher by his students, peers, and the administration.

Every day during the first week of the practicum, Bohee observed more than three different classes taught by the school teachers in English and other subjects. From the second to fourth week, she submitted lesson plans and taught her mentor teacher's classes with other peers on her team. In addition, she submitted a daily journal every morning, and at the end of the practicum, she created a formative test based on what she had taught. At the end of almost every day, she participated in a team conference for an hour (twelve times in total) to discuss the classes that the student teachers had taught and future classes they were supposed to teach. She also participated in three meetings between all of the mentor teachers and the student teachers in the English division, including an orientation meeting and two meetings after observing the model classes taught by the representative mentor teacher and the head student teacher respectively; and two meetings of all student teachers to plan the head student teacher's model class.

Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

The data include an interview and stimulated recall session with Bohee, classroom observations, team conferences, journals, and lesson plans. An interview with the mentor teacher, Mr. Baek, was also collected. Bohee taught eleven class sessions with six different lesson plans; that is, she taught five diverse lessons twice and one lesson only once. Among them, three classes were observed with two audio-recorded and one video-recorded. The video-taped lesson was used for the stimulated recall interview. Other class sessions and conferences were reviewed through the specific sections assigned in the daily journal and confirmed during the interview. In addition, the researcher took field notes during the classroom observations.

Each dataset was read thoroughly and analyzed based on the principles of ethnographic semantics in which the meanings that people give to their

verbal expressions are the primary focus of investigation (Spradley, 1979; Spradley & McCurdy, 1972). The constant comparative method was used to develop an understanding of the data (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Goetz & LeCompte, 1981). Based on a grounded content analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998), the data were examined to uncover the participating student teacher's understandings and instructional practices as she understood and experienced them within the contexts in which they were situated. These themes were then analyzed within Engeström's activity system model (1987, 1993, 1999a) to expose the activity systems of her practicum experiences as being interwoven with individual, social, and other contextual factors. This allowed the researcher to identify important components of the activity systems from the student teacher's perspective. Additionally, it enabled the researcher to investigate how inner contradictions emerged within and between these components and how they were resolved, and to trace the participant's development in her practicum teaching.

English Learning/Teaching and Practicum Experiences

Bohee had prior experiences of living and studying abroad and favorable language learning and teaching experiences with communicative approaches. She recalled that she had experienced project work in small groups, had active classroom interactions, and received positive feedback and encouragement about her work. When she learned about teaching methodology in her university coursework, she recognized that some methods, such as communicative approaches, were used in her schooling. She learned about the current curricular reform mandates and various teaching methods and materials through her university coursework.

Bohee had several experiences teaching English in Korea as an undergraduate student. She tutored several pupils in English in an international school and taught English at several private institutes. She worked two summers at English language camps for elementary and secondary school students. She taught communication skills through debates, presentations and other communicative activities. Bohee noted that in her prior experiences, she had taught advanced pupils with high motivation, and she had had more extensive freedom about what and how to teach. Nonetheless, she thought these teaching experiences were helpful because they built up her confidence in teaching in classroom settings, in her classroom management skills, and teaching methods (Interview, June 8).

The practicum activities created multiple opportunities for Bohee to try out ideas and activities advocated by the curricular reforms. Although she liked Mr. Baek's flexible mentoring style, she did not feel that he provided sufficient guidance, stating "I don't think my mentor teacher helped me a lot . . . I guess he somewhat trusted me. I'm sure he trusted me [he felt I could succeed] after he observed my first, a few lessons" (Interview). Likewise, Mr. Baek, in the interview, expressed that he could not provide his student teachers with appropriate expert

and experiential knowledge as a novice mentor teacher, leading him to be flexible in his mentoring. During the conferences and class observations, Bohee was exposed to institutionalized lesson goals and teaching methods such as teaching the content of the textbook for school exams and using traditional approaches (e.g., grammar-translation method). Furthermore, she became aware of a range of institutional constraints such as large classroom size, the need for classroom management, and the existing norms for pupils' classroom participation and English use.

The Instructional Activity System

Based on Bohee's spoken data (interviews, conferences, and classroom interactions) and written data (journals and lesson plans), the configuration of the instructional activity system from her perspective and the contradictions in the activity system are illustrated in Figure 15.1.

She had three different objects. She wanted to foster pupils' participation in lessons, specifically using instructional tools such as communicative activities and/or game-like interesting activities. She also wanted her students to use English more often. These two objects were closely related to her own beliefs about language learning and teaching. The third object was to achieve the goals stated in the lesson plan, which was particularly valued in the model class

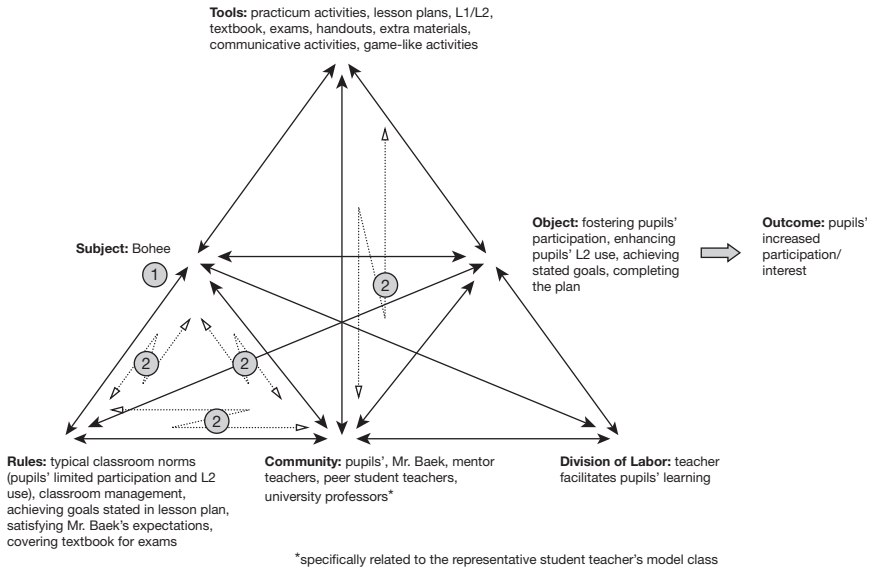


Figure 15.1 Configuration and Contradiction in the Instructional Activity System.

Note: The zigzag arrows represent inner contradictions that emerged within the activity system and the numbers 1–2 are the levels of contradictions. (The emboldened text indicates the components involved in the secondary contradictions.)

that she taught as a representative student teacher. Along with classroom management, this object functioned as a rule of this activity system imposed by Mr. Baek through the practicum activities (e.g., conferences) and required by the practicum.

Another prominent rule was related to one embedded in typical Korean English classrooms: pupils' limited participation and English use since they are socialized into learning an L2 (second/foreign language; English) through their L1 (first language; Korean) as passive learners. Covering the textbook for exams was another noteworthy rule stressed by Mr. Baek and the English division. The last rule of this activity system was meeting Mr. Baek's expectations which included some rules represented in this activity system (classroom management and completion of the stated goals in the lesson plan) and some others specified in his mentoring (e.g., attempting new, interesting activities). Although Mr. Baek supported Bohee's trying out new ideas, his authority as a major evaluator of her practicum experience still remained.

The mediational tools of the practicum activities (conferences, observations, and journal) and other instructional tools enabled Bohee to achieve the outcome of her activity system, namely, pupils' increased participation and interest. The practicum activities allowed her to understand the norms of English lessons in the school context and to what extent she could implement her own vision of teaching. Korean and English were important tools as the medium of instruction for her lessons. She believed that teachers' use of English inside and outside the classroom would improve their pupils' English-speaking ability, maintaining that teachers should use English in the classroom and that they need to encourage students to use English (Journal, May 2nd). While her dominant language was English in the classroom, she also used Korean to check low-level pupils' understanding and to facilitate their participation. The textbook was an important artifact because her lessons were based on the textbook sections, whereas school exams as an instructional tool had minimal impact on her instruction, being primarily used to get the attention of low-proficiency level pupils. Since Bohee noted pupils already learned the content of the textbook from cram schools, she frequently used communicative (game-like) activities and authentic materials to facilitate their learning (Journal, May 8th). Lesson plans allowed her to organize her lessons in advance. While most of the time she used them flexibly, she adhered to the one in her model class to show the community her ability to complete successfully what she had planned for the class.

Concerning the division of labor of the activity system, Bohee mostly functioned as a facilitator for her pupils' learning. The community of this activity system consists of pupils whom she taught and Mr. Baek with whom she worked while planning and reflecting on her lessons. It also included mentors and peers in her own and other teams: mentors modeled lessons; she and peer student teachers exchanged lesson ideas, observed each other's lessons, and gave feedback. Specifically for the event of the model class, the community was more expansive than that of other student teachers and included university professors who observed and discussed the model class.

Contradictions in the Instructional Activity System

Contradictions in the instructional activity system from Bohee's perspective were primarily secondary contradictions between different components of the activity system. Engeström (1987, 1993) posits that these secondary contradictions are important to understand the transformation of an activity system. While a few primary contradictions were observed, tertiary and quaternary ones were much less noticeable.

Primary Contradictions

As the subject of the activity system, Bohee experienced a primary contradiction within herself when she sought to provide interesting activities for her pupils and simultaneously was concerned about the level of noise in her classroom. After experiencing non-responsive and quiet low-proficiency pupils in her reading class (May 17th), she found that integrating engaging activities was a better way to encourage student participation despite the students' increased volume (Journal, May 18th). Plus, she thought she could control the noise level through proper classroom management.

Another primary contradiction appeared within herself due to the gap between her beliefs about pupils' use of English between themselves and the reality of their language use. She had positive attitudes toward pupils' communication in English with one another while engaging in small group activities, but she noticed pupils in all levels mostly used Korean in small group activities in the way they had been socialized (e.g., excerpt on p. 249). Even high level pupils did so, although they frequently communicated in English with their teacher in a whole class. As this contradiction occurred only within the subject, the student teacher, she rarely asked them to try to use English among themselves.

Interview (June 8th)*

As you know, **L2 communication between teacher and pupils was possible in my class. I used English only and could ask my pupils to answer in English. But L2 communication between pupils in class did not occur in class**. It would be my dream to have pupils to do this. {I see} But **I think my advanced pupils could do that**. {Have you ever tried?} No. I didn't try it (in the practicum teaching).

* All the interviews were conducted in Korean, and for this chapter, the interview excerpts were translated into English. In presenting the interview and classroom excerpts here, the utterances given in parenthesis indicate implied meaning, but were not actually given in Korean. Statements are bolded for emphasis. The utterances in {} were made by the researcher.

Secondary Contradictions

Manifold secondary inner contradictions occurred in this instructional activity system between (1) subject and community, (2) subject and rule, (3) community and tool, and (4) community and rule.

Pupil's Participation in English

An important secondary contradiction occurred between Bohee (subject) and her low-level pupils (community) in terms of their use of English. Since her pupils were reluctant to express their ideas in English, but willing to do so in Korean, her attempts to encourage her pupils to use English more frequently were unsuccessful. That is, although her pupils participated in class, their participation in English was quite limited. This contradiction resulted in her allowing her pupils to use Korean as they had been socialized into using Korean in English lessons throughout their school lives. This contradiction simultaneously uncovered other contradictions: (1) between Bohee (subject) and pupils' socialization into learning an L2 through their L1 (rule), since she wanted to overcome the way pupils were socialized in their language use; and (2) between pupils (community) and use of the L2 (tool) because they intended to maintain their familiar way of using Korean in English lessons.

These contradictions are illustrated in the following pre-reading activity for the low-proficiency pupils. For this activity, she modified an activity from the textbook about the most frequent scoldings from pupils' parents and complaints about them:

Lesson (May 16th): Scoldings and Complaints ("Before You Read")*
Low level, 9th Grade, Lesson Plan 2 (1st for Low Level)

((1–33: Bohee introduces activity; asks pupils to repeat scoldings and complaints and checks their meanings))
((34–40: explains more about Part A and asks pupils to raise their hands to answer))

41	Bohee:	OK. OK. Uh Uh. *Hand, hand.* Up. Hand
42	P2:	*Can we answer in Korean?*
43→	Bohee:	*It would be better if you could speak English.* OK/ (xxx) (xxx) OK/ *I have (treats) for you.*
44→	Bohee:	Right hands? No hand? OK. Then. In Korean. *In Korean.*
45→	P3:	*In Korean?*
46→	Bohee:	Yeah.

((47–102: Using Korean, P3 and P5 talk about the top five scoldings they get from their parents))
((103–131: P6 talks about the first complaint: give me more pocket money))

132	Bohee:	One more/
133→	P6:	*More time* (xxx) Free time (xxx)
134	Bohee:	Free time/
135	P6:	*Yes.*
136	Bohee:	What free time/*Do you mean "give me more free time?"*

((137–162: Pupils make noise; Bohee asks them to listen to P6; P6 mentions three more complaints))
((163–228: shows three English sentences and asks if each goes under a scolding or a complaint))

229	Bohee:	So what's this? It's just too easy. You (xxx). P7/ Do you
230		wanna try this?
231→	P7:	Don't watch TV, don't watch TV
232	Bohee:	Don't watch too much TV. Everybody, repeat after me.

((233–240: repeats the sentence and sees if this goes under a scolding or a complaint))
((241–280: works on two more examples))

* In the classroom excerpts, "P" stands for a pupil, and the number is added to identify an individual pupil. In (()), various contextual events are noted, usually only when they affect comprehension of the surrounding discourse. "/" indicates rising intonation, "[" overlapping speech, "(xxx)" inaudible utterance, and "(. . .)" long pause. The italicized writing is the English translation of the Korean. Arrows indicate the lines that need attention since they may be discussed within the text.

Despite her frequent use of English and attempts to reward students for using English (line 43), Bohee was not successful at getting them to use it. When allowed to use Korean (lines 44–46), however, students did participate in class (lines 47–131), and she valued this participation even if it was not in English. While one pupil tried to express an idea in English (line 133), most of the pupils used Korean except when they read aloud (line 231). In addition, the pupils' low proficiency level and reluctance to speak English discouraged her from trying to expand upon their ideas. Instead, she showed six examples and tried to engage them by determining which entry should go under a scolding or a complaint (lines 163–280).

Overall, although her belief that it is important to provide more opportunities for learners to use English was consistent with a goal of the reform mandate, Bohee did not have much success in getting the pupils to use English more actively. Most likely, this was, she believed, due to the way they were socialized into learning English through Korean.

The Model Class: The Nature of Communicative Activities

When the model class that Bohee taught as the selected representative student teacher was planned and discussed within the community, several noticeable contradictions emerged. She combined the more normative ways of implementing the curricular reforms with her own approach to English language teaching. The following shows the highlights of her model lesson and then diverse contradictions between her and her community, including her peers and mentor teachers.

The model class was composed of three sections: greetings across cultures as a warm-up pair activity, discussion of three instances of cultural differences between Korea and the U.S., and a writing activity in small groups. In the following excerpt of the warm-up activity, Bohee illustrated a different cultural aspect by showing the greetings of eight countries or cultures, and encouraged her pupils' participation in a short pair exercise focusing on these greetings:

Model Class (May 25th): Greetings ("Let's Write")
High Level, 8th Grade, Lesson Plan 5 (2nd for High Level)

((1–8: greetings; Bohee introduces today's lesson about cultural differences and a writing activity))
((9–20: checks Korean equivalents of culture, difference, and cultural difference respectively))

21	Bohee:	We'll study um (xxx) among many countries and how
22→		they are different in greetings. Do you guys know
23		what greeting is? What's greeting?
24→	P1:	Saying hello.
25→	Bohee:	Saying hello. Very good. All right. All right.

((26–103: asks pupils to focus on slides; they practice greetings used in Korea, China, India & Spain))
((A slide shows a way of greetings in America, saying hello or shaking hands))

104→	Bohee:	All right. Who do you see?
105→	Ps:	Hello.
106→	Ps:	America.
107→	Bohee:	Very good. America. Americans/ What're they doing in the
108		picture?

((109–116: the class talks about American way of greetings: saying "Hi", shaking hands, and waving))

117→	Bohee:	OK. Very good. Waving. OK. All right. And what do they
118		say?
119→	Ps:	Hello.
120→	Ps:	How are you?
121→	Bohee:	Hello, hi, how are you? OK. So, with your partners, let's
122→		try the American way of greeting.
123→	Ps:	Hi. ((pairs of students practice the greeting))
124→	Ps:	Hello.
125→	Bohee:	Say hi, hello.

((126–182: Bohee and pupils work on greetings used in France, Eskimo, and Hawaii))

Bohee used English throughout the class, and although her pupils' answers in English were short, there was a good deal of interaction (lines 22–25, 104–125). She always accepted her pupils' answers positively (e.g., *very good*), repeated their responses back to them, and often recast their responses (line 107).

After the warm-up activity, Bohee explained three cultural differences between Korea and the U.S., including the use of public bathhouses, eye contact, and how to address one another. Then, one of the three topics was assigned to each group of pupils to write about in a diary. As in the lesson plan, she introduced the activity, showed the model writing, and asked the pupils to do small group work. Since she intended to do

a semi-controlled writing activity, she particularly stressed that the pupils should include two structures they learned in the previous student teaching lessons (relative pronouns "who"/"which" and the "I think that" phrase). The following classroom excerpt shows how the pupils were engaged in the small group work:

Model Class (May 25th): Writing about Cultural Differences ("Let's Write")

((386–407: Bohee reviews the three cultural differences; introduces the writing activity))

442	Bohee:	((pupils work in groups)) You guys should be creative, OK/

((443–449: pupils work on the group work and Bohee emphasizes that this is group work))

450→	P10:	Why are you wearing? *Can I write like this?* ((to peers in group))

((451–454: pupils work on the activity and Bohee asks them to write on a transparency))

455→	Ps:	*How can we say to "rub dead skin" in English?*
456	Bohee:	Rub. *To rub dead skin.* Dead skin.

((457–462: pupils continue working and Bohee asks them to write on the transparency again))

463→	Ps:	*Teacher, how can we say "(Someone) had to do something" in English?*
464	Bohee:	In uh- however (xxx) let me see what you (xxx)
465		((looks at worksheet)) Excuse me. And we are (xxx)
466→	P14:	*How can we say "(Someone) had to walk" in English?*
467	Bohee:	Ah, when I have to, and when I have to (xxx) OK. ((looks at P14's draft))

((468–482: pupils ask some questions to Bohee and she answers. Bohee walks around the classroom, and encourages them to write their work on the transparency))

483	P16:	Strangely.
484	Bohee:	Strangely.
485→	P16:	Spelling strangely "e" *Should we take out "e" from "strangely"?*
486	Bohee:	Yeah, E. L. Y. ((spells out))

During this small group work, the pupils primarily spoke Korean. Interestingly, they talked about how to put their ideas into English (line 450) and asked Bohee for English words or expressions (lines 455, 463, and 466) and word spellings (line 485).

After the small group activity, Bohee asked each group to present their paragraphs in English. Due to time constraints, only two groups presented. Most groups did express their ideas about the given topic in English, with some groups revealing their limited understanding and over-generalization about American culture (e.g., addressing grandparents by their first name).

The model class contained several features of the curricular reform mandates. Bohee used English exclusively as the medium of instruction and frequently interacted with the pupils in English. She encouraged her pupils to engage in oral practice rather than having them just listen to her lecture. Moreover, through her small group writing activity, they wrote in English to express their ideas and she felt satisfied with their writing.

Conflicting contradictions, however, emerged between Bohee and her community, including peers, her immediate mentor teacher, and the other mentor teachers, about the model class. First, a contradiction arose between Bohee (subject) and some of her peer student teachers (community) in terms of pupils' participation in the warm-up activity (the greetings of eight countries or cultures). In a student teacher conference for the model lesson planning, many of her peer student teachers responded negatively to her idea of the activity, suggesting that her pupils would be reluctant to participate in this activity because they might consider it too childish. However, she believed that having her pupils participate in the short pair exercise included within a whole class activity would make the lesson more engaging. This contradiction was resolved in a way that encouraged pupils' participation, which was successful (excerpt p. 248). This contradiction is related to another contradiction between peer student teachers (community) and pupils' low participation (rule).

Although Bohee was able to overcome challenges from her community (peers), the next two contradictions reveal the power of her community for her, and her acquiescence to the norms of her community. The following contradiction appeared between Bohee (subject) and her peer student teachers (community) over what communicative activities should look like. While she believed interesting game-like activities could enhance pupils' participation and learning (e.g., quiz shows), some of her peer student teachers believed communicative activities should be more serious with more tangible outcomes (e.g., writing activity) and illustrate what they had learned from their coursework (interview). When she planned the model class, her fellow student teachers' perceptions became more influential than her own preferences. Thus, the contradiction was resolved only because she complied with the more normative ways of conducting activities in a Korean classroom setting as her peers recommended. This contradiction also revealed another contradiction between peer student teachers (community) and game-like activities (tool) since they did not think these activities would be appropriate for this context.

Another secondary contradiction occurred between Bohee as one of the student teachers (subject) and Mrs. Ma, another mentor teacher (community) about appropriate writing topics and the positioning of pupils in their writing. The student teachers wanted to have the pupils express their own opinions about

cultural differences, adhering to the authenticity of pupils' identities as writers. Mrs. Ma warned that some students might suggest that one culture is superior to the other in their writing, and recommended that a particular topic and stance be given to the pupils (a Korean U.S. immigrant's experiences of cultural differences in Korea) to ensure that the pupils wrote more extensively using their knowledge about Korean culture. The resolution of this contradiction was that she followed Mrs. Ma's suggestion seemingly due to a combination of valuing the mentor teacher's experiences in teaching in this context and agreeing with her ideas about possible problems that the earlier writing prompt may cause and advantages of the one that she recommended (interview).

Three additional contradictions were found during the debriefing session. The contradiction between Bohee (subject) and Professor Sohn, a university supervisor, (community) occurred when the latter suggested the teacher should create more opportunities for pupils to speak English. Also, the contradictions between Bohee (subject) and Mrs. Cho (community) and between Bohee (subject) and Mrs. Doh (community) were apparent when these mentor teachers proposed more choices for pupils about writing structure and topics. Since the suggestions by Professor Sohn and the mentor teachers were made after the model class at the end of the practicum, they did not influence Bohee's instruction. These contradictions were not really resolved then, but Bohee justified her instruction by pointing out that she had met the requirements of the model class including proper classroom management and achievement of stated lesson goals.

Interview (June 8th)

(In the conference after my model class), Professor Sohn critiqued the fact that students rarely spoke English in my class. I planned the class that way on purpose. **Since it was the model class, I often asked them closed-ended questions . . . I had to predict and write the pupils' responses** [in the detailed lesson plan]. **If I asked them their opinions, I couldn't [guess] in advance**.

These contradictions simultaneously uncover another contradiction between Professor Sohn, these mentor teachers (community) and the practicum teaching requirements (rule), since they suggested she give pupils more freedom that would challenge some rules of this instructional activity system.

Overall, secondary contradictions often emerged between Bohee and her community over English use and the nature of the communicative activities of the model class. While some of them were resolved in ways which aligned with the curricular reforms, others were resolved as she conformed to the normative ways of conducting activities in this institutional context.

Tertiary and Quaternary Contradictions

Tertiary and quaternary contradictions were rarely observed within the instructional activity system from Bohee's perspective. Due to broader macro-structures, that is,

contextual constraints such as low-level pupils' limited participation in English communication, a discrepancy occurred between her teaching and the TETE policy. Since she mostly aligned her instructional practices with the policy in other classes (e.g., in high level classes), it is hard to say that a tertiary contradiction emerged between her current teaching (the central instructional activity system) and the government's policy (the culturally advanced activity system).

Contextual restrictions also created a gap between her current instruction and her previous teaching and her coursework. Due to her pupils' low proficiency level, she sometimes found it difficult to apply her learning from her prior instruction to her present practicum teaching (e.g., English communication between pupils). In most cases, she was willing to apply her knowledge from her previous teaching into her current classroom (e.g., game-like communicative activities). Thus, a quaternary contradiction did not seem to appear between a central activity system (instructional activity system in her practicum) and its subject-producing activity systems (activity systems in her previous teaching and her coursework). In fact, Bohee's instructional practices were compatible with the curricular reform, and her previous teaching and learning history were useful to her current teaching.

Conclusion

Bohee's vision of teaching English, developed through her learning and teaching history, was encouraging pupils' engagement in interesting communicative activities in order to stimulate pupils' L2 use. By using English extensively in the classroom and communicating with her pupils in English, she was able to challenge her pupils' socialization patterns of learning L2 through L1. In spite of this, her pupils used English sparingly. Because she wanted students, above all, to participate, she at times used Korean herself and allowed pupils to use Korean, especially when she found that her own use of English and having the pupils use English restricted their participation.

The findings support previous studies in L2 teacher education that highlight the crucial influence that previous experiences and beliefs have on a teacher's instruction (Borg, 2006), and are particularly important, given that the teacher was teaching within the curricular reform context. Her beliefs and experiences served as an internal resource that she drew on in the practicum teaching, overall supporting her implementation of the reforms in ways that generally aligned with the reform mandate. Such influence was also powerful when the practicum activities and mentoring experience exposed her to the normative ways of teaching English in this institutional context and attempted to socialize her to them, with little explicit guidance in how to implement the curricular reforms.

According to activity theory, the personal history and past experience of the subject of the activity system should be understood first for a more complete understanding of her present practices and development. The results of this study show how critical what the subject brings with her to the activity system is, and can be explained through the notion of *ontogenesis*, the development of an individual (Wertsch, 1985). While the typical activity system model (Engeström, 1987, 1993,

1999a) assumes the importance of the subject, the model could be improved by making the ontogenetic nature of the subject more explicit. For example, in spite of Bohee's personal history being compatible with the curricular reforms, pressure to complete the immediate practicum teaching mandated by the community at times constrained her from carrying out her conceptualization of creating more opportunities for pupils' L2 use. The collaborative planning for the model class also had her comply with the normative way of English teaching in Korean classroom settings. In spite of these constraints, she was given license to actually teach as she wanted and thus was able to regain her agency and confidence in teaching.

The results draw attention to how the broader macro-structures, such as contextual constraints embedded within the activity system in which Bohee was learning to teach, acutely influenced her practicum experience. While previous research has suggested that Korean teachers' limited spoken English is the root cause of their inability to implement the curricular reforms (Kwon, 2000; Nunan, 2003), the findings from this study provide some conflicting evidence. Even though Bohee has near-native proficiency, she still struggled in her ability to enact the curricular reforms in her instructional practices due to the contextual constraints related to the practicum and the socialization pattern of pupils in schools. These macro-structures, the rules of the activity system, must be addressed in order for a new teacher like her to fully overcome the contradictions she faces in her initial classroom teaching experiences. Without addressing these broader macro-structures that shape the nature of activity within the context of "real" English language classrooms in "real" schools, the goals of the curricular reforms set by the Ministry of Education are sure to fall short of expectations.

This chapter has shown the descriptive power of activity theory in research on the professional development of pre-service teachers in a CLT-based curricular reform context in that it explains more specifically what interferes with a teacher's ability to reach the desired outcome of that reform. The particulars of this context bring to light the possibly transformative power of activity theory based research: key participants in this activity system could work collaboratively to implement targeted interventions in teacher's professional development within an educational reform setting that seeks to overcome the secondary contradictions. The challenge for second language teacher educators then is not only conducting further research to enhance our understandings of teacher learning within mandated reforms, but to use this research to influence the implementation of such reforms and to affect change within the activity systems responsible for developing teachers.

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List of Contributors

Karen E. Johnson is Kirby Professor in Language Learning and Applied Linguistics in the Department of Applied Linguistics at The Pennsylvania State University, and Co-director of the Center for Advanced Language Proficiency Education and Research. Her research interests include narrative inquiry as professional development, teacher learning in second language teacher education, and sociocultural research and perspectives on teacher professional development.

Elizabeth Smolcic is Assistant Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at The Pennsylvania State University, and Director of the ESL Certificate with Immersion Abroad. Her research interests include teacher learning about diversity, the development of intercultural competence, and applications of sociocultural and activity theory to teacher learning and development.

Davi Schirmer Reis is Assistant Professor in the Department of Instruction and Leadership in Education at Duquesne University. His research interests include second language teacher education, NNESTs-related research, sociocultural theory, narrative inquiry, and critical applied linguistics.

William Dunn is Associate Professor in the Department of Secondary Education at the University of Alberta. His research explores intercultural inquiry in second language teacher education, innovation and change in language teaching, and the connections between second language learning and social inclusion.

Sharon S. Childs is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Applied Linguistics at The Pennsylvania State University. She is also Project Associate with the LEGACY: Strengthening Afterschool Programs research project in the Center for Diverse Families and Communities at The Pennsylvania State University. Her research interests include teacher learning and professional development, specifically in second language teacher education.

Heather Willis Allen is Assistant Professor of French and Second Language Acquisition in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures at the

University of Miami where she also serves as Director for the French Basic Language Program. Her research interests include sociocultural perspectives on language-learning motivation and the professional development of future foreign language professors.

Gretchen Nauman is a Foreign Expert in the Foreign Languages College at Yanshan University in Hebei, People's Republic of China. She has extensive experience in teaching English to tertiary students as well as guiding teachers in teaching methodology and research methods in China. Her research interests are in the areas of foreign language literacy, conceptual development in teachers, and appropriate methodology.

Paula R. Golombek is Clinical Associate Professor of Linguistics at the University of Florida where she also serves as the Coordinator for the Undergraduate TESL Certificate. Her research interests include narrative inquiry as professional development, sociocultural theory and L2 teacher learning, and teacher–mentor and teacher–learner relationships.

Tatsuhiro Yoshida is Associate Professor at Graduate School of Education, Hyogo University of Teacher Education in Japan. He has been interested in a sociocultural approach to teaching and learning EFL and language teacher education. His research interests include curriculum design, narrative inquiry in teacher development and the use of e-portfolio as a professional development tool.

Deryn P. Verity is Professor of English in the Department of International and English Interdisciplinary Studies of Osaka Jogakuin College in Osaka, Japan. She has taught English and educated teachers in Poland, Slovenia, the former Yugoslavia, Thailand, and the United States. She is interested in the ways that sociocultural theory illuminates expert activity.

Ekaterina Arshavskaya is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Applied Linguistics at The Pennsylvania State University. Her research interests include the role of mentoring in novice teacher learning and the implications of sociocultural theory for teacher professional development.

Priya Poehner is Assistant Professor of Language Arts and Literacy in the Department of Elementary and Middle Level Education at The Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania. Her research interests include teacher professional development, pre-service teacher education, literacy development and international education.

Thomas Tasker is a Senior English Language Fellow at the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, Ukraine. He works within the framework of cultural-historical activity theory to explore second language teacher learning using inquiry-based approaches to professional development.

Eun-Ju Kim is a full-time Lecturer at the Department of English in Hanyang Women's University. Her research interests include EFL teacher learning and

professional development, sociocultural perspectives on foreign language learning and instruction in the classroom, and academic writing.

Kyungja Ahn is a full-time Lecturer at Seoul National University of Education, Korea. Her research interests include L2 teacher education, L2 classroom discourse, language planning and policy, sociocultural theoretical perspectives on language learning and teaching, and L2 writing.

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