COVER SHEET

This is the author version of article published as:

Balancing the Equation:
New Times & New Literacies = New LOTE Teaching Knowledge Base Demands

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Abstract

I was invited to the MLTAQ Conference, not as a LOTE specialist, nor even as a (competent) LOTE speaker, but to offer some perspectives and participate in conversations about the teaching of LOTE, in particular, the complexities that arise from 'New Times' (Hall, 1996a; Anstey, 2002) and 'New Literacies' (The New London Group, 2000; Anstey, 2002; Kalantzis & Cope, 2005). My presentation was founded on empirical research undertaken as part of my doctoral thesis (Exley, 2005) where I examined the knowledge bases of three Queensland teachers (two LOTE teachers and one Studies of the Society and Environment – SOES - teacher) providing EFL (English as a Foreign Language) instruction to secondary students in a village area of Indonesia. This research found that in current times, teachers drew on four interrelated professional knowledge bases: content knowledge, pedagogic knowledge, and knowledge of their own and their students' pedagogic identities. The currency of the study's findings for present debates in and about LOTE teaching in Queensland were explicated through an analysis of (i) Education Queensland's frameworks for literacy, 'Literate Futures: Reading' (Anstey, 2002), (ii) pedagogic knowledge, 'Productive Pedagogies' (Education Queensland, 2002), (iii) my experiences as the Japanese Internship coordinator, and (iv) data from the three language teachers that focused on their own and their students' pedagogic identities. The plenary was presented as an auditing framework for LOTE teachers' professional knowledge bases. Teachers were invited to consider both their strengths and possible gaps and from this identify topics for future school- or association-based professional development.

INTRODUCTION

'New Times', a term coined by Stuart Hall (1996a), refers to the significant changes in the structure of the world's economic, political, social and cultural systems, both at the global and local levels, which have occurred in recent decades, and continue to occur in this first half of the opening decade of the new millennium (The New London Group, 2000; Anstey, 2002; Kalantzis & Cope, 2005). One significant shift has been from the importance of chemical and electronic-based technologies to new information technologies. Thus new times have created a burgeoning demand for programs in English and LOTE, both for their language possibilities and for the sharing of cultural knowledges. LOTE have been seen as important for Australia's attempt to globalise outwards, that is, tapping into and building multinational companies, but also for creating new understandings for multicultural living at the local level. This summary of new times highlights the plethora of interfacing factors that make teaching in new times very complex indeed.

So, what professional knowledge bases might LOTE teachers need to have available and ready for activation in these complex new times? My doctoral work (Exley, 2005) drew on Shulman's (1987) seminal work on teachers' professional knowledge bases and examined it through a range of case studies of Western teachers working in cosmopolitan and village areas of Indonesia. Data were collected via semi-structured interviews. In some cases these were one off interviews while in other cases participants were interviewed up to six times over an eighteen month period. Bernstein's (1996) theorisation of knowledge and pedagogy was used to construct a theoretical and analytical framework for data generation and analysis. The study concluded that teachers needed four professional

knowledge bases: *knowledge of content; knowledge of pedagogy; and knowledge of their own and their students' pedagogic identities.* Paralleling Shulman's (1987) earlier work, the study found that while some knowledge bases may be truncated or not drawn upon in particular instances of teaching, teachers needed to have the capacity to activate each knowledge base as was warranted by the situation. Teachers who had gaps in their knowledge bases were deemed as being under-prepared for their work as teachers. Each of the four knowledge bases will be introduced and explicated in terms of the possibilities and challenges they present for Queensland LOTE teachers working in complex new times. Ten self-auditing questions are provided so readers can consider their strengths and identify possible themes for future professional development.

1. TEACHERS' CONTENT KNOWLEDGE

Teachers' content knowledge refers to the substantial knowledge, syntactic knowledge and beliefs about the content (Shulman, 1987). Recollections of my LOTE learning experiences vis-à-vis more current philosophies for teaching literacy serves to make explicit the choices teachers can exercise in relation to subject content knowledge. It was not until I entered the first year of secondary school in 1979 (Year Eight in Queensland) that I commenced formal lessons in a LOTE. Like all of my Year Eight peers, I learnt French for three lessons a week for six months, then German for three lessons a week for six months. In Year Nine all students had to select either French or German. I chose French, but was unable to continue it into Year Ten (Junior Certificate) as, if my memory serves me well, only three out of approximately 320 Year Ten students wanted to study French (ie. < 1%). As eight students wanted to continue learning German (ie. ~ 2%), German was the only LOTE on offer for Year Ten students at my school in 1981. Such statistics make a strong statement about the perceived importance (or rather lack of) of LOTE in general and European languages in particular in my community in the early 1980s. Of greater importance is my recollection of the content knowledge transmitted during the year and a half that I studied French: vocabulary building (eg. cardinal numbers, days of the week, formal and informal greetings), sound/symbol relationships, syntactical structures (eg. adjectives after nouns and the '*e, ese, ons, ez, ent'* endings for verbs), and superficial cultural aspects (eg. the French eat frogs' legs).

Current times have seen the adoption of a literacy document for all Education Queensland schools: 'Literate Futures: Reading' (Anstey, 2002). Core to this document are the following two foundational principles:
- All teachers are teachers of literacy; and
- Literate individuals have to have available and be able to draw on code breaking, meaning maker, text user and text analyst resources (Luke & Freebody, 1997; Freebody & Luke, 2002).

The important point is that LOTE teachers are responsible for providing explicit instruction that aids students' development of the four resources required for being literate language users. So what are the four resources and how might they be articulated through LOTE content?

Code Breaker

Code breaking resources refers to breaking codes of the semiotic systems used in texts. In the subject of LOTE code breaking content could include learning new written scripts and their associated graphophonic codes, vocabulary lists and new syntactical structures. My LOTE experiences in Years Eight and Nine, as I recall them, involved a lot of code breaking, but as Luke and Freebody (1997) and Freebody and Luke (2002) insist, 'code breaking is necessary BUT not sufficient' for producing literate language users. In short, my LOTE learning experiences were never going to make me LOTE literate.

Audit Question 1 — Are you doing more than code breaking practices?

Meaning Maker

Meaning maker resources requires language users to make literal and inferential meaning of texts based on prior experience and knowledge (Luke & Freebody, 1997; Freebody & Luke, 2002). Students' disparate social and cultural backgrounds and varied worldviews poses a challenge for the development of students' meaning making practices. For example, the concept of a narrative is a Western concept. Some cultural groups do not have such fictions; their cultural stories are based on 'belief'. Furthermore, the notion of three as being significant in Western stories (eg. three wishes) has no significance in some cultures; other numbers or symbols hold significance.

Meaning maker potential is also connected to experience and knowledge of the text type being used. Students may have more experience and thus proficiency with some text types than others. Thus students may not have a shared knowledge of the structural and language features of a particular text type. Thus the onus is on LOTE teachers to explicitly teach the structural and language features of the texts used in learning episodes and in assessment tasks. Specifically students need to know how to infer, evaluate, generalise, make predictions, sequence, compare, classify, recount and summarise information from texts and their social, cultural and reading experiences in order to make meaning.

Audit Question 2 — Which meaning making reader roles are an explicit part of your LOTE content base?

Text User

Text users access and construct texts for reasons, such as being able to complete the task associated with text engagement (Luke & Freebody, 1997; Freebody & Luke, 2002). Take for example, menu ordering; in particular, different menus for different contexts (see Anstey, 2002, p. 35). A take away food shop may expedite customer turnover by displaying the menu on a chalkboard with food titles and prices. The procedure is that customers use the text to decide on their order, then join a queue at the counter to lodge their order and make their payment. In comparison, a la carte restaurants prioritise personal service. A wait person may visit customers at their table and present the menu orally or hand deliver a menu written on presentation paper. The menu may detail the origin of ingredients and descriptions of preparation processes. Prices may or may not be included. Aside from these contextual factors, social and cultural differences may influence how menu texts are used. For example, a man may order for a woman, or a particular hand may be used for handling food and receiving money (Anstey, 2002, p. 35). These examples show how use of text types can vary across contexts and as a result of social and cultural factors.

Audit Question 3 — How do you bring text user reader roles into LOTE for ALL students?

Text Analyst

Fundamental to the text analyst reader role is the notion that texts are social products; they are not neutral constructions (Luke & Freebody, 1997; Freebody & Luke, 2002). Texts re/construct the world, and shape and convey ideologies. Text analyst work involves readers in understanding how texts work, why they have been constructed, who benefits from their construction and who controls access to them (Luke & Freebody, 1997; Freebody & Luke, 2002). Text analyst practices give readers power to make informed decisions about how to use texts and what authority to accord them. Students who use text analyst practices are critical readers who have the power to transform or redesign social futures. However, text analyst work is difficult work. Values contained within texts can be hidden, so students need deep knowledge of how texts are constructed and can be re-constructed. Moreover, text analyst work isn't reserved for students who are 'capable and fluent readers' of written text or well versed in English. Rather, ALL students, regardless of their preferred linguistic resource or level of achievement with print based text, should be skilled as text analysts (see, for example, Education Queensland, 2000).

Some of the questions that help engage students as text analysts are (Anstey, 2002, p. 36):

- What kind of person, with what interests and values, produced this text?
- What are the origins of this text?
- What is the text trying to make me believe and do?
- What beliefs and positions are dominant?
- What beliefs and positions are silenced or absent?
- What do I think about the way this text presents these ideas and what alternatives are there?
- Having critically examined this text, what action am I going to take?

Audit Question 4

Which text analyst reader roles are part of your LOTE content base for which groups of students?

2. TEACHERS' PEDAGOGIC KNOWLEDGE

Pedagogic knowledge includes principles and strategies of classroom management and organisation particular to content areas, knowledge of the materials and programs that teachers write and use and knowledge of educational contexts (Exley, 2005). The productive pedagogies, adopted by Education Queensland in a number of trial schools (Education Queensland, 2002) team well with multiliteracy projects (The New London Group, 2000; Kalantzis & Cope, 2005) where students have a genuine problem to solve, an issue to explore or a project to undertake. Aside from the ever popular but financially expensive cultural exchange, some worthwhile projects might include students:
- producing an advice booklet for younger students getting ready to start learning a LOTE;
- producing a multi-media presentation to bust myths about cultural stereotypes; or
- problematising notions that cultural accounts are often Western versions of non-Western cultures.

The 20 productive pedagogies are framed by four overarching but interrelated strands: intellectual quality, connectedness, supportive classroom environment, and recognition of difference. Each of these strands will be elaborated upon in turn.

Intellectual Quality (encompasses six sub-strands):

- *Higher Order Thinking*: where students synthesise, generalise, explain, hypothesise and arrive at some conclusion. In contrast, lower-order thinking occurs when students are receivers of knowledge, have to recite factual information, or only undertake procedural routines.
- *Deep Knowledge*: where students get to make relatively complex connections with substantive knowledge. Put another way, students become an expert at something.
- *Deep Understanding*: developed when students sustain a focus on a significant topic, or demonstrate understanding of the problematic nature of knowledge.
- *Substantive Conversation*: between students, students and teachers (beyond the IRE – Initiate, Respond, Evaluate) about substantive topics where the interaction is reciprocal.
- *Knowledge as Problematic*: involves an understanding that knowledge is not a fixed body of information; rather it is socially and culturally constructed, and hence subject to political, social and cultural influences and implications.
- *Metalanguage*: is the language used to talk about language. To allow the students to maximise their metalinguistic knowledge and skills across content areas, it is advantageous for a common metalanguage to be agreed upon by content area teachers.

Audit Question 5

- What significant problems are your students answering/solving?
- Who is doing the talk? What is the talk about?
- How do you get your students to critique texts, ideas and knowledges? Do your students access multiple, contrasting and politically conflicting forms of knowledge? How do you facilitate the explication of multiple views of opinion within your class?

Connectedness (encompasses four sub-strands):
- *Knowledge Integration*: across the KLAs (key learning areas). While pragmatic issues such as timetabling and remembering to extend invitations to the LOTE teacher need to be solved, knowledge integration assists in the connectedness between learning experiences. LOTE teachers have specialised knowledge about other cultural groups and can make a tremendous contribution to SOSE, not only in the culture and identity strand, but also to topics of families, forms of government or methods of environmental and ecological sustainability. LOTE teachers can input into discussions about the disparate ways particular cultures understand the ethics of science. Administration must ensure appropriate time is made available and a means of coming together is prioritised so LOTE teachers' knowledges can be utilised to full effect.
- *Background Knowledge:* of students, including their linguistic, cultural and world knowledge.
- *Connectedness to the World:* making a connection to the larger social and cultural contexts in which students live.
- *Problem-based Curriculum:* where problems have no pre-specified solution, requiring knowledge integration, and sustained attention beyond a single lesson.

Audit Question 6

- How are you working with teachers from other KLAs to maximise the effects of knowledge integration?
- Does the work have value and meaning beyond the institutional context?

Supportive Classroom Environment (encompasses five sub-strands):

- *Student Direction:* where students input into activities and tasks, either individually or in groups. Typically involves students assuming responsibility for tasks.
- *Social Support:* is characterised by an atmosphere of mutual respect and support among teachers and students where both contribute to developing shared expectations.
- *Academic Engagement:* where students are engaged and on-task during lessons.
- *Explicit Quality Performance Criteria:* where the criteria for judging the range of student performances is made explicit.
- *Self regulation:* where students' behaviour is self-regulatory and where teachers' talk is not consumed by disciplinary statements. A high level of student engagement assists with self regulation.

Audit Question 7

- What do the students what to get from their LOTE studies?
- How are students who demonstrate less proficiency in LOTE encouraged and valued?
- What are your most successful strategies for ensuring a high and productive level of academic engagement?
- Are you working with teachers from other KLAs to maximise the effects of knowledge integration?
- What percentages of your directions are linked to regulative discourse vis-à-vis instructional discourse?

Recognition of Difference (encompasses five sub-strands):

- *Cultural Knowledges:* where non-dominant cultural knowledges, such as languages, beliefs, practices and ways of knowing are valued.
- *Narrative:* where the teaching style has sustained conversation and teachers draw on narratives to explain complex concepts.
- *Inclusively:* where all students are participating.
- *Group Identity:* where a sense of community and identity exists and where difference is positively recognised and developed beyond the simple politics of tolerance.
- *Active Citizenship:* where all individuals have the right and responsibility to engage in the re/creation of a democratic society.

Audit Question 8

- How are non-dominant languages, beliefs, practices and ways of knowing valued?
- How do you increase the participation of the range of students?

3. TEACHERS' KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR PEDAGOGIC IDENTITY

I first became consciously aware of the social and cultural construction of pedagogic identities during the 1990s, when, as a classroom teacher, I coordinated the school-based Japanese Internship program. This was in an era when studies of LOTE were not compulsory in Queensland primary schools. The

program involved mentoring Japanese cultural ambassadors as 'work experience' teachers for up to 10 months each. I hosted four interns over an eight year period. Three of the interns were aged in their 20s and one intern was in her 60s. All four interns were fluent English speakers, university educated in fields other than education, and affluent enough to buy their way into an international internship program. We spent many hours talking about the students and our teacherly work. However, the most striking conversations were about our cultural and gendered identities as women of different nations. It was the conversations with the mature intern that had the most profound effect upon me. In her hometown of Yokohama-Shi, she was a community advocate for world peace and community subsistence farming. She provided free English lessons to Japanese women of all ages so they could enter into global discussions about issues that affected them. Her husband was an executive producer of documentaries and she often travelled with him. She would regularly ask me candid questions, such as, 'How did I feel about being an Australian person and having a Japanese person in my classroom and my home?' Knowing what the Australians said about the Japanese who bombed the north Australian city of Darwin in 1942 was a constant line of questioning. She apologised on behalf of the Japanese who released the bombs. Did she somehow feel accountable for their actions? Was she responding to the many demands Australians made for apologies from the Japanese for their actions during World War II? Other aspects of my pedagogic identity intrigued her. For example, she wanted to know, 'How was it that a young woman co-ordinated this international program?' In her country, responsibility would have been given to a senior male. At my school, positions of this ilk were always given to women because we were perceived as being 'maternal' and able to accommodate the personal needs of offshore female visitors.

Throughout our conversations, she made my very familiar world very unfamiliar. I had an overwhelming sense that interpretations of history, cultural 'norms' and social characteristics (such as my age, gender and citizenship) re-constructed my pedagogic identity. I came to understand that I could either accept, reject or modify these re-constructions through a process of negotiation. Hall (1990, p. 225) explains how an individual's identity 'belongs to the future as much as the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture'. Hall (1996b) elaborates how identities are 'never unified and, in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiple[,] constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions'. Fairclough (1992) terms these sorts of social practices as 'discursive events' and explains that they are 'ideologically loaded' in that the discourses that are implicated, can help 'produce and reproduce unequal power relations between (for instance) social classes, women and men, and ethnic/cultural majorities and minorities through the ways in which they represent things and position people' (Fairclough & Wodak, 1995, p. 258).

Thus various aspects of my 'identikit' (Luke, 2001), that is, my gender, ethnicity, nationality and social class, were either foregrounded or backgrounded by significant others or by me in various contexts. In other words, my age, gender, ethnicity, nationality and class did not always give me a firm location as a teacher, and moreover, my identity was, at times, contradictory and unresolved. I could not always control how I would be recognised or positioned. Hall terms this dislocating of the subject as a 'crisis of identity' (Hall, 1996a).

Audit Question 9

- Are you experiencing a crisis of identity?
- Are you accepting the cultural and social identities made available to you in the pedagogic act by your colleagues, students and their parents?
- Are you contesting them? If so, how

The questions listed in Audit Question 9 became part of an interview schedule for my longitudinal examination of Australian language teachers' understandings of their pedagogic identities whilst teaching EFL to Indonesian students in a village area of Indonesia (Exley, 2005). Two of the teachers, Rosalind and Will (pseudonyms), were highly qualified and experienced Queensland LOTE teachers who were fluent in Indonesia's National Language, B'hasa Indonesia, and had spent considerable periods of time travelling in Indonesia. The third teacher, Dennis (pseudonym), was a secondary school Head of Department for SOSE. He was also highly qualified and experienced, and an avid traveller, although not fluent in Indonesia's national language. Extracts of data from their semi-structured interviews showed that they too entered into negotiations over the construction of their pedagogic identities. Dennis' extract, below, was typical of the responses from all three language teachers.

Extract One: Dennis

Dennis:	*I wanted to be seen as an individual person who had certain ideas about teaching a native language and I was going to take it seriously and I wanted the students to take it seriously and I wanted the staff to take it seriously too…I think first of all I had to show them that I was a human being. I had to break down the student types of what they perceive as Westerners…I wanted to go there and I wanted to show them that I didn't speak in an American accent, that I was a nice person and that I was an individual and I didn't represent what they see on TV. [I did this] firstly by working with the Head of Department and showing her my weekly program, and my long term-planning. Activities and assessment programs and such as that, and attending meetings with the teachers and wearing the uniform. By insisting that all the students do a test with me…I did that twice over a period of two weeks. So I wasn't there just for fun or Mickey Mouse games. I'd do it seriously and gave the Head of Department the results. Whether she wanted to use them or not was up to her.*

This extract is important for the way it shows how Dennis negotiated the construction of his pedagogic identity. He wanted to contest some of the dominant identities that were circulating about white Westerners. In another part of the same interview, Dennis continued to talk about the establishment of his pedagogic identity: '*I arrived at school early so that I could put in some preparation and regularly showed the Head of Department my work programs'.* He said that '*these were the same strategies I employed to establish my professionalism in my Australian school'.* He explained that he '*wanted to win the Head of Department's confidence and let her know that I'm not just a free-wheeling sort of fellow'.*

In her own words, Rosalind said that she promoted her professional teacher status by '*projecting myself as a teacher who prepared students for their exams'.* Thus, these teachers were aware of their role in establishing their pedagogic identities.

4. TEACHERS' KNOWLEDGE OF STUDENTS' PEDAGOGIC IDENTITIES

The interview extracts from the longitudinal data collected from the three Australian language teachers working offshore showed how over time and through direct experience, they each changed their perceptions of Indonesian students as particular types of learners. One extract from Will, a Queensland LOTE teacher who had been to Indonesia approximately ten times – nine times as a tourist and once for an extended professional development Indonesian LOTE workshop – was typical of the re-constructions of pedagogic identities for Indonesian students made by each of the three teacher participants.

Extract Two: Will

Will:	But the Muslim girls, I'm really, really amazed at how I have them misconstrued. Every time I've come to Java on holidays I had seen them as being totally suppressed. Just totally under the thumb. Horribly bound women that probably weren't game to open their mouths and all this sort of thing. But having now taught some of them for two weeks, they are liberated. They do not have any sexual harassment. They do not have to worry about their looks or who's looking at them. Or they don't have to worry about what the boys are going to think if they say this. They're the smartest. They're the most diligent. Very, very hardworking and they're the most intellectually focused. The other girls in their tight jeans and their tight t-shirts, you can see them after class talking about movies and about spunks, and this sort of thing. And Muslim girls are talking about novels and on a really intellectual level. And I just think if I was a Javanese woman, I would wear that costume because I see that now as a sign of liberation rather than a sign of suppression.
Interviewer:	…This sounds like a very fascinating shift to me. The West has often constructed Muslim women as being incredibly oppressed and their husbands keep them bound and all of that…What was the shift for you?
Will:	Talking to them. Simple as that. Talking to them. As a tourist you don't often meet with the families. Um, often you're out at night or something like that. Having just spoken to these women just has made me realise they are not these little shy things. They are very, very confident. Very strong women. Also the jilba is a choice thing. They choose to wear that and there's just no problem. They're not inward. They're really outward women.

In Extract Two, above, Will showed his misunderstandings of Indonesian cultural identity through two contradictory lenses: a tourist's lens and a teacher's lens. He acknowledged that his earlier assumptions of traditional Muslim women were misconstrued. Here he viewed cultural identity as relatively enduring, coherent and bounded. However, he seemed to become aware of the problem of these mis/understandings during his involvement in the 10 month offshore teaching program. The data showed how views of 'the Other' from a tourist's standpoint made it difficult to know the complexity about another's identity. When he taught the Muslim women he revised how he constructed and positioned them as learners.

This extract of data, and those like them from the other two case study teachers, makes two important points. Firstly, teachers have to have an appropriate knowledge base of each of their student's pedagogic identities. Secondly, as LOTE teachers also teach about the cultural habits of the native language speakers, are these teachings unwittingly mis/producing popular stereotypes?

Audit Question 10

- Do you have a sufficiently deep knowledge base of your individual students?
- Are you merely reproducing popular cultural stereotypes when teaching about the cultural habits of the native speakers of your LOTE?

CONCLUSION

So, how are new times and new literacies affecting your professional knowledge base equation? Congratulations and well done for those areas deemed to be your strengths. This is no mean feat in these complex new times. Maybe you need to share your journey or your realisations by writing for professional association journals or offering to host locally based LOTE Latté afternoons where you can

facilitate conversations amongst teachers who are developing their awareness and skills of a particular professional knowledge base. Any gaps in your knowledge base should not be read as being unprofessional or disinterested in your vocation. It could be that the gaps have arisen out of these complex new times and you would not be alone in needing to have them filled. Speak up about these gaps. Seek invitations to school- and system-based professional development sessions where 'Literate Futures', 'Productive Pedagogies' and topics addressing pedagogic identities are on the agenda. Or pass your identified needs onto your professional association, who would probably be more than willing to tailor sessions to members' needs.

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