The potential of dialogic interaction as a tool for mediating learning during pre-service English language teacher preparation

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Abstract

This research explores the ways in which an emphasis on dialogic interaction may be beneficial to pre-service second language teacher education that is conducted in the context of a UK University degree award. The qualitative research methodology draws on concepts of Action Research and employs tools from sociocultural and classroom discourse analysis, as well as thematic analysis, to analyse the findings. Data were collected from transcribed interactions recorded from feedback sessions taken over the course of a six-month practicum that final year students undertake as part of their TESOL minor degree. Findings from these sessions were triangulated with data from semi-structured interviews conducted after the practicum with seven learner teachers. In addition, data were collected from the seven participants' reflective journals and from observation notes that were taken during the teaching episodes.

The findings of the research reveal the ways in which dialogic teaching can promote learning through the creation of opportunities for peer-peer interaction, as well as through dynamic assessment during teacher-led scaffolding. Results also indicated the importance that a linguistic and methodological knowledge base plays in the development of effective dialogic interaction. A number of challenges faced by learner teachers in enacting a communicative approach to language teaching are also uncovered as well as contextual obstacles such as the tension over assessment. The findings support the contention that an extended course of pre-service SLTE affords the time and opportunity for exploratory discussions to facilitate engagement and learning through providing opportunities for the learner-teachers to articulate their emerging understandings while concomitantly addressing their pre-formed pedagogical beliefs. It is argued that dialogic interactions are able to assist in bridging the theory-practice divide by allowing the learner teachers to consider and review the declarative knowledge from their course of education in light of their classroom teaching and learning experiences.

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1.1   Research topic

This investigation explores the ways in which an emphasis on dialogic interaction may be beneficial to pre-service Second Language Teacher Education (SLTE). Dialogic interaction is claimed to be effective both in bringing about, and possibly helping reveal, cognitive development in English language learner teachers. The research findings and theoretical arguments that are outlined below strongly suggest that increasing the opportunities for articulating and exchanging pedagogical understandings and ideas can play a major role in mediating the development of rounded practitioners.

From the field of teacher cognition, there are convincing theoretical arguments for making explicit learner teachers' prior beliefs about the language learning and teaching process; in other words, for providing the space for learner teachers to talk about what they are experiencing (Calderhead 1996, Freeman and Johnson 1998, Richards 1998). Evidence from a number of studies seems to suggest that such explicit meaning-making does indeed effect changes in teacher thinking (Breen, Hird et al. 2001, Richards, Gallo et al. 2001, Phipps and Borg 2009). Others argue that the identification of a novice teacher's beliefs about language teaching and learning is central to effective teacher education since it better enables the teacher educator to establish and work within the learner teacher's current comprehension, understanding and ability (Warford 2011). Indeed, Warford (ibid.) asserts that it is only through allowing student teachers the opportunity to articulate and reflect on how their beliefs may clash with TESOL theory and practice, that real development can occur.

Such articulation and reflection can, as the theoretical underpinnings of this study suggest, be enhanced through the provision of space for dialogic interaction. As the

following pages will reveal, theorists hold different conceptions of what is meant by dialogue. Before the various descriptions are unpacked and the theoretical underpinnings outlined, it may be worth reflecting on the description put forward by the physicist David Bohm (2004) who saw dialogue as "something more of a common participation in which we are not playing a game against each other but *with* each other. In dialogue, everybody wins" (ibid: 7). Numerous terms, labels and definitions have been employed by researchers attempting to explore the field of dialogic interaction and cognitive development. Some of the most frequent and useful categorisations include *dialogic instruction* (Nystrand 1997); *dialogic inquiry* (Wells 1999); *dialogic teaching* (Alexander 2005); *dialogic pedagogy* (Skidmore and Gallagher 2005) and *collaborative dialogue / exploratory talk* (Barnes 1976, Mercer 1995). What unites most of this research are the foundations of Mikhail Bakhtin's (Bakhtin 1981) theory of dialogism and Lev Vygotsky's (Vygotsky 1986) theories on the importance of social interaction for learning and development. Previous research into dialogic education and its theoretical foundations are explored further in chapters two and three but at this point it may be wise to note how such labels are employed in this thesis. Two types of dialogue, in the context under study, are constantly referred to and these are educator-led dialogue and less structured peer-peer talk. That is to say, the labels *dialogic teaching* and *dialogic instruction* refer to dialogue which is consciously mediated (by the educator) through purposeful questioning arising from interaction. Conversely, the labels *collaborative dialogue* or *exploratory talk* are employed in this thesis to refer to a more symmetrical, inquiry-based dialogue in which the educator either plays no part or is not consciously mediating the interaction. The overall approach of encouraging articulation and allowing more space for both kinds of talk is referred to as a *dialogic pedagogy.*

A number of researchers employ sociocultural theory in highlighting the importance of dialogic pedagogy in both second language teaching and SLTE. Drawing on work by Lev Vygotsky (1986), dialogic teaching is seen by theorists such as Lantolf (2008, 2009) and Johnson (2009) as the primary means by which new concepts experienced in the social environment can come to be meaningful with regard to a student's pre-existing everyday concepts on phenomena. This notion is explored more fully in chapter two where the study focuses on how mediation can be used to bridge the gap between what a learner teacher brings to a course of education, the theoretical notions encountered and the actual process of effective teaching.

Researchers from the field of teacher education have also called for greater emphasis to be placed on talk. The importance of the quality of talk during the post-teaching feedback sessions (Mann 2005, Brandt 2006, Copland 2010) is a recurring theme in SLTE. Researchers from both mainstream education and SLTE have proposed various frameworks that attempt to describe how dialogic teaching may be employed to scaffold cognitive development (e.g. Freeman 1982, Mercer 2000, Alexander 2005, Engin 2013). These frameworks are also detailed in chapter two and are employed in the data analysis of recorded talk from the feedback discussions.

The notion of reflection as a central tenet of practitioner development aligns itself very closely indeed both with theories that emphasise the role of interaction and those that stress the criticality of addressing prior beliefs. For example, Dewey (1933) warned that any 'new' knowledge must be considered in the light of existing beliefs about practice while Johnson (2009) refers to a number of studies (e.g. Freeman and Richards 1996, Edge and Richards 1998) that demonstrate the importance of reflection and inquiry as vehicles for change in an individual's classroom actions.

In addition to, and consolidating the growing realisation of the importance of dialogue and reflection in teacher education, is the fact that many believe TESOL to be entering a post-method, globalised era (Kumaravadivelu 2006, Kumaravadivelu 2012). As a consequence, contemporary thinking regarding a TESOL knowledge base is beginning to recognise the importance of context in teacher decision-making (Wedell and Malderez 2013). This, in turn, suggests that in order to adhere to current notions of good practice in ELT, teacher education needs to prepare practitioners who are extremely adaptive and able to make decisions based on reflection and analysis of the contextual factors of their teaching situation. With that in mind, it is *education* not *training* that is key in the development of effective language teachers. For example, Wright and Bolitho (2007) argue that exposing learner teachers to the current knowledge base that exists around language learning and teaching is fundamental to education. However, it is important to also note their warning that that it is only through creating opportunities for teachers to personalise theories (i.e. connect the theory to their practice) that cognitive development can take place. As detailed above, many voices argue that a dialogic pedagogy can facilitate such development.

In the attempt to create an effective process of teacher education, it should be evident from the arguments presented here, and which are explored in later chapters, that accessing learner teacher' beliefs by means of reflection on situated practice may be a key component in teacher education. Furthermore, a dialogic pedagogy may allow the space for both theoretical knowledge and the classroom experience to be considered in the light of teachers' beliefs and pedagogical experiences. Johnson (2009: 15) suggests that viewing teacher education in such an interpretive manner is desirable since it enables teachers to *"… reorganise their experiential knowledge and this reorganisation creates a new lens*

through which they interpret their understandings of themselves and their classroom

practices."

This research, then, seeks to investigate the attempt to employ a dialogic pedagogy in the post-teaching feedback discussions, aiming to:

1) Develop a critical review of an attempt to facilitate a dialogic approach to teacher learning and evince any cognitive development that may result.

2) Investigate and identify what factors in a formally assessed course of teacher education may work to promote or inhibit the efficacy of such an approach under the model studied.

The perspectives on teacher education prompted a number of subsidiary questions

for this research:

Related to Research aim one:

1) Is the employment of a dialogic approach possible in the context of study?

2) How do the patterns of exchanges fit with theoretical conceptions of dialogic teaching and exploratory talk?

3) Can any learning be evidenced from analysis of multi-party dialogic interactions?

4) Can learning be evidenced from teacher-led dialogic instruction?

Related to Research aim two:

1) What learner factors were evident that promoted or inhibited the efficacy of dialogic teaching or exploratory talk?

2) What declarative knowledge based factors were evident that promoted or inhibited the efficacy of dialogic teaching or exploratory talk?

3) What practical (or procedural) factors emerged as being important with regard to employing dialogic talk with pre-service language teachers?

4)   What contextual factors were evident that promoted or inhibited the efficacy of dialogic teaching or exploratory talk?

The rationale for the adoption of these subsidiary questions is outlined in chapter 3. The following section provides details on the setting, context and participants. It also briefly outlines the notions of good practice in English language teaching (ELT) that underpin the knowledge base of the course of teacher education that provides the context for this research.

1.1.1 Background and setting

The aim of this section is to enable the reader to become familiar with the context of this research and to gain an understanding of the current knowledge base of ELT. I have included this very short account of ELT since, naturally, my own beliefs about language teaching and learning inform the content of many of the discussions that are analysed later in the study; my overall ontological and epistemological positions are documented in chapter three. The first section of this chapter provides detail on the overall degree award and the modules that the learner teachers study, together with a brief outline of the learner teachers who participated in the research. Information is also provided on the language learners who attended the classes taught by the learner teachers (LTs). The second section outlines my understanding of current notions of good practice in ELT. The principles of communicative language teaching are outlined and their relationship to learning materials and teacher education are also briefly discussed.

The research setting

The degree award within which this research was conducted is a Minor Award, that is, approximately one third of a LT's degree comprises TESOL modules. The remaining

modules that participants study are either English language and Literature modules or Modern Foreign Language (MFL) modules such as Spanish or Welsh. This involves learner teachers taking two TESOL related modules in each year of their degree programme along with four other modules each year, that contribute to their main or major award. UK university students generally take six modules in each year of their degree course. This means that for TESOL students, approximately four to six input hours in each week of their three-year university study is concerned with developing knowledge and skills pertaining to TESOL. An overview of the TESOL award is provided in appendix seven.

The TESOL modules

The first year involves developing the learner-teachers' language awareness through the study of grammar and lexis, along with an introduction to English phonology and its relevance to language teaching. Intercultural awareness is fostered through project work which involves the LTs interacting with non-native speakers. Between twenty and thirty students enrol on the two TESOL modules during the first year. For a number of reasons, not all students opt to take the TESOL modules in the second year. An aim of the School of English (in the Faculty of Humanities) is that first year students 'try out' modules from different subject areas within English. However, second year students who did not complete the first year TESOL modules are not allowed to enrol on second year TESOL modules. For TESOL modules, the preceding year's modules are a pre-requisite.

The two second year modules are divided into intertwining theoretical and practical strands. In the theoretical or input-based module, *Introduction to TESOL*, the content is focussed on aspects of classroom management, lesson planning, teaching techniques and so on with various teaching methods and approaches introduced. The module is organised on a workshop rather than a lecture basis with many opportunities for the students to

discuss the language teaching methods and to reflect upon how these may chime or clash with their own experiences of learning or their own beliefs and values about good teaching. The students are given access to much course-book and other published ELT material and are encouraged to begin analysis of the merits and drawbacks of pre-designed tasks and activities. The accompanying practical module, *Observation and Peer Teaching*, attempts to make teaching real for the students through the activity of peer-teaching and by facilitating the observation and reflection on the classroom actions of experienced ELT practitioners. The LTs devise lessons and teach each other throughout the year with each student undertaking two paired teaching episodes of 20-30 minutes and two solo teaching episodes of fifteen to twenty minutes. The teaching slots allow students the opportunity to focus on a number of different teaching areas (e.g. teaching a grammar point, scaffolding the stages of a lesson, teaching songs, teaching through games, teaching vocabulary, integrating skills, and so on) and also on the craft skills of teaching such as teacher use of language, classroom management, board work, use of technology, pair and group work, pace, eye contact, rapport and so on. Each of the peer-teaching classes (in which two to three 'teaching slots' may be delivered) are conducted in the spirit of "trying out" the issues that have been read about, discussed and presented in the associated theoretical module and also in the full knowledge that the learners in an authentic class would provide an entirely different type of challenge. The slots are followed by thirty to forty minute discussions that allow the students the space to reflect on aspects of the theoretical module and how different the reality of teaching is from the theoretical perception (Farr 2010: 447). How the learners experienced the tasks and activities is very important to these reflections and also discussed at this point. The students are also required to produce a reflective portfolio account of their developing understanding of language teaching and

learning which allows them to draw parallels between the theoretical and practical aspects of teaching. In addition, the students are required to construct an account of the extent to which their observation of an experienced teacher had parallels with topic areas encountered on the theoretical module. Each year the students report that the experience of peer-teaching makes the TESOL award '*become real'* for them and allows them to make informed decisions as to whether or not they wish to progress to the third year and undertake 'live' teaching.

Throughout their final year, the LTs attend taught modules of TESOL which involve content such as theories of second language acquisition (SLA), the history of English as a foreign language (EFL) methodology, TESOL testing and assessment, and so on. In addition, the importance of individual factors such as age, motivation, attitude etc. are also introduced as factors that a teacher needs to consider in his or her decision making. The LTs also continue to observe experienced teachers and are required to undertake project work intended to aid understanding of the realities of classroom practice, intercultural issues and so on. As in the first two years, the modules are taught as workshops rather than delivered in the more conventional lecture format. This means that tasks are planned to encourage student input and reflection with activities designed around dialogic principles. For example, as part of the history of EFL methods, students are tasked to work in groups with each cohort teaching a short lesson that employs tasks and activities from different approaches. Following such sessions, discussion is facilitated around how the practice chimes with the LTs' own language learning experience, what they thought were its merits / drawbacks and so on. A number of students also choose to undertake a teaching practicum which, if successfully completed, gains the LT a TESOL Certificate. And it is the

feedback discussion that follows this live teaching, around which this study revolves. The practicum sits within the module "Teaching Practice" and is detailed below.

The Teaching Practice module

From a social-constructivist view of learning, it is logical that teaching practice sessions are employed on a course of pre-service teacher education. Indeed, teacher educators have pointed out that rather than viewing the practicum as a culminating experience, learning can be better facilitated by incorporating the practicum, with guidance from a teacher educator, throughout formal study (Smith 2001). More than simply an opportunity to demonstrate basic teaching skills, the practicum can be seen as the vehicle that allows the space for discussion and reflection upon the LTs' growing understandings of the reality of the classroom and how the experience ties in with and is consolidated by theoretical issues. In an extended course of teacher education, the practicum offers much scope for overcoming the theory-practice divide. On the module around which this investigation is based (EN3 S013 – Teaching Practice), the assessment of the teaching performance only carries fifty per-cent of the total weighting. The remaining fifty per-cent is attributed to the submission of a reflective portfolio which the LTs complete throughout their practicum. Primarily assessing observable behaviour is conventionally the method employed in native speaker SLTE contexts. However, it is argued that placing greater emphasis on teacher cognition, portfolios and similar reflective documents represents a fairer mode of assessment (Freeman, Orzulak et al. 2009). The portfolio consists of all the lesson plans and materials that the LTs have used, developed or designed during the module. However, more importantly, the portfolio also contains reflective accounts of each of the LTs teaching practice episodes. These accounts, each approximately 500-1000 words are designed to give the LTs further opportunity to consolidate their developing understanding of TESOL

through reflecting on both their actual practice and their growing familiarity with TESOL concepts. Edge (2010:117) describes this fusing of theory and practice as "praxis" arguing that heightened awareness of self-in-action contributes to its development. In other words, the encouragement of teachers to become ever more mindful of why they are making certain decisions, "*allows us to explore the experience of craft learning and intellectual learning in mutually interpretative ways*". Appendix four contains an original sample portfolio reflection from one of the participants**.**

The Learner Teachers

For their teaching practice, each student is required to teach at least six classes to authentic English language learners (see below). The learner teachers are usually arranged into cohorts of four to six LTs for the practicum and are expected to be present and observe all classes, even on days when others in their cohort are teaching. Organising the practicum in this way allows the LTs to observe others teaching, to take part in the feedback discussions that follow and thus to reflect on and articulate ideas from not just their own, but also their peers' classroom experience. Each cohort of LTs is usually assigned one cohort of language learners for the first half of their practicum and a different group, which usually involves a change of learner level / class size / location / needs etc. for the second half. Three of the participants are now teaching English abroad (Italy, Spain and the Philippines); three undertaking further teaching qualifications and one is employed in a non-teaching related post. Further details on the participants are detailed on table 3.1.

The Language Learners

For this study, one of the language learner cohorts that LTs taught consisted of intermediate and upper-intermediate mixed nationality undergraduate students from a

variety of subject areas. Class numbers varied between six and twelve with all the learners aged between approximately 18 and 25. The learners in this cohort attended the classes voluntarily and expressed a desire to improve their English communicative ability. The second cohort consisted of approximately five to seven learners of all ages and a variety of levels. This cohort included post-graduate students and also members of the community who spoke English as a second Language.

1.1.2 Good practice in English language teaching

This research does not aim to present an argument for the overall organisation, or the declarative content, of a course of SLTE; the focus of this research is on the importance and employment of a dialogic pedagogy. However, an understanding of the knowledge bases that the learner teachers are exposed to and that the researcher believes constitutes good practice will, I believe, be of enormous help to the reader in engaging with the rest of this document.

Teaching Principles

The search for a 'best method' in language teaching resulted in various methods and approaches becoming dominant at one time or another during the twentieth century. Since the late 1980's, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has been widely considered to offer the most plausible basis for language teaching (Richards and Rodgers 2000). CLT holds that language teaching should be less concerned with teaching learners to form grammatically correct sentences and more concerned with enabling them to use language appropriately in a variety of contexts (Hymes 1971). Advocates of the strongest form of CLT see communication as the necessary and sufficient condition for language learning to take place. In other words, there is no need to overtly draw students' attention to the

grammatical or structural aspects of language. From a CLT perspective, importance is placed on getting one's message across, and developing competence in linguistic exponents for notions and functions such as 'agreeing', 'offering', 'arranging' etc. A communicative language curriculum defines language learning as, "*learning how to communicate as a member of a particular sociocultural group*" and a communicative methodology will exploit the classroom, the classroom culture and most importantly the learners, as a resource for communicative potential (Breen and Candlin 2013: 10). In contrast, a so called, "synthetic" syllabus (Wilkins 1976), focusses primarily on grammatical tenses, verb patterns, conditional structures and so on and pays little heed to the social context for learning. For this study, it is important to note that the synthetic syllabus is how most participants reported experiencing language learning and thus a communicative view of language may well clash with how language has been presented to the participants in their own learning histories.

Many educators have noted how a syllabus based on the presentation and practice of a series of isolated linguistic structures is incompatible with what is becoming known about language acquisition (Long and Crookes1992:30-31). A Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) approach draws on behaviorist notions and cognitive skills theory. It looks to develop competency by presenting language in a context, practising it in a controlled activity (e.g. drilling) and then allowing learners to 'produce' the language in a freer task. However, Long (2011) draws attention to research that highlights how learners can only learn when they are developmentally ready to do so. This has echoes of Corder's (1975) argument that learners follow their own 'in-built' syllabus, irrespective of what they are taught; it also resonates with Willis' (1994:56) criticism of a pre-planned syllabus:

> In helping learners manage their insights into the target language we should be conscious that our starting point is the learner's grammar of the language. It is the learner who has to make sense of the insights derived from input, and learners can only do this by considering new evidence about the language in the light of their current model of the language.

These perspectives on language and language teaching and learning are incorporated into the course of teacher education under study. In other words, alternatives to viewing language teaching as the presentation of pre-packaged structures are introduced to the LTs. However, as will be seen in the literature review, many argue that such concepts only come to have meaning when they are reflected upon in the light of concrete practice; that is to say, when the LTs are faced with the reality of dealing with language issues as they emerge.

Teaching Methodology

The gradual movement away from grammar-focussed instruction to a more fluency-based approach has led to some commentators arguing that the theoretical base for a PPP approach has now been discredited. Skehan (1996) argues that findings from SLA research mean that belief in the learning of isolated grammatical forms in the order in which they are taught no longer carries credibility in linguistics or psychology. This attention to language or grammar points in a pre-determined manner is commonly labelled *a focus on forms* (FoFs). However, teachers often have to or choose to deal with unplanned issues. These could be linguistic, cultural, disciplinary or any of the other myriad issues that emerge during a lesson. With regard to language, such spontaneous attention is, a little confusingly perhaps, labelled *a focus on form* (FoF) (Sheen 2002) and it is argued that learning may well be enhanced when teachers are alert to such unplanned opportunities (Fotos, Nassaji et al. 2007). Indeed, a number of educators see the ability of teachers to

be alert to manifold learning opportunities (which emerge from learners' contributions to the classroom dynamic) as being a key component of effective teaching and of the quality of life for all in the classroom (e.g. see Wright 2006; Allwright and Hanks 2009).

 In other words, learning may be facilitated when teachers provide the type of reactive or incidental feedback that centres on the language and knowledge that the learners bring to the classroom (Spada and Lightbown 2008). From this perspective, Long (1991:45-46) advances an argument for a focus on form (FoF), describing how *"Focus-on-form… overtly draws students' attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication."* A FoF is claimed to better represent the learners' internal syllabus, making it more engaging for the learner as the language has come from themselves, not a prescribed syllabus or course-book (Long and Doughty 2011). Contemporary approaches to teaching that are seen as embodying the principles of CLT such as Task Based Learning and Teaching (TBLT) or Dogme, appear to offer the best 'fit' for the type of unplanned FoF that Long advocates.

Moreover, from a more holistic viewpoint, educators such as Wright (2006) and Allwright (2005) have outlined an "*opportunity view of classroom management*" (Wright ibid: 71) which highlights the importance of focusing on the quality of life in a classroom and the need for teachers to be able to respond to unplanned learning opportunities while "*dynamically managing classroom life*" (Wright ibid: 73). This view of good practice places great importance on exploring the ways in which teachers and learners can be emotionally engaged in a class in order to increase participation and raise the quality of the learning experience.

What should be noted is that how a teacher goes about his or her profession within a communicative, humanistic methodology often differs in profound ways from what novice teachers perhaps expect or have come to understand as the role of teacher following their "*apprenticeships of observation*" (Lortie 1975). The roles of facilitator, monitor, organiser, guide and "seer of potential" (Breen and Candlin 2013: 17) often entail unpredictable classroom episodes that may overwhelm even the most confident and capable learner teachers. What is more, spur-of-the-moment intervention not only concerns guiding learners to use language more accurately, but also entails the teacher possessing the ability to identify linguistic gaps in the learners' language use as well as to identify the aforementioned opportunities for improving the quality of experience in the classroom. This is a complex and highly skilled activity, calling on a number of knowledge bases. It is, without doubt, an extremely challenging activity for novice and expert teachers alike, and one which calls for good social skills and a great sensitivity and awareness of language use. Analysis of the feedback discussions and how they are conducted may well provide greater insight into how such practices may be best introduced to novice teachers at this stage in their career.

Teaching Materials

Despite such shifts in how language learning is perceived, the production of materials for ELT has, to a large extent, continued to be based around traditional concepts of language learning. Commentators (e.g. Block and Gray 2012) have argued that financial rather than pedagogic motives drive the methodological approaches enshrined in the mass produced course-books that exist in ELT and Lin (2013: 525) warns that:

> Language teaching is increasingly pre-packaged and delivered as if it were a standardised, marketable product [...] this commodifying ideology of language

teaching and learning has gradually penetrated into school practices, turning teachers into "service providers".

Others have argued that we are now not in a post-method era, but rather an, "…*era of textbook-defined practice*" (Akbari 2008:647) in which teaching methodology is determined by course-books. Waters (2012: 447) in a study of methodology in course-books found there had been "…*no significant changes in methodolgy*" over the two decades that he analysed. This suggests that the more teacher-centred, transmissive, PPP approach still forms the basis of the course-book approach. Indeed, most course-books certainly do follow a standard grammar syllabus alongside the teaching of a variety of pre-determined, discrete language items. It is an approach which, through necessity, ignores the individuals' interlanguages and which, when followed strictly, arguably stifles the chances of authentic communication taking place that advocates of CLT believe to be essential to language acquisition. Nevertheless, the course-book is still central to ELT across the globe. Indeed it can be argued that in parts of the world that do not have access to comprehensive teacher education programs, course-books and teacher manuals are essential tools that can provide much needed guidance and assistance to unprepared teachers. In a post-method landscape, it seems likely that a course-book led methodology, despite the criticism of their learning philosophy, will often be the most likely approach a novice teacher encounters when embarking on their professional career. In this study, it will be interesting to explore the effect that dialogic interaction may have on facilitating an understanding and appreciation that there are alternative, if more challenging, options to merely 'teaching to the book'.

Given the direction of thinking that the above discussion has illustrated, there is understandable concern about the way in which educators opt to go about developing teachers' awareness of the methodological options available to them and to how the language awareness of LTs is fostered during pre-service teacher education. Many aspects of pedagogical practice, such as error correction, grammar presentation or a focus on emergent language needs, will be directly affected by the language awareness skills and confidence of the novice teacher. Teacher preparation that is geared towards a course-book led methodology, ubiquitous in ELT all over the world, needs to put emphasis on preparing teachers for implementing prescribed practice of the four skills and to follow a linear grammatical syllabus. Some educators have argued that an alternative focus needs to be developed in order to truly prepare professional teachers. For example, Wright (2002) believes that it is of the utmost importance to develop teachers' sensitivity to language and thus a primary goal of SLTE should be the development of expert language awareness. He argues that:

> A linguistically aware teacher not only understands how language works, but understands the student's struggle with language and is sensitive to errors and other interlanguage features. The linguistically aware teacher can spot opportunities to generate discussion and exploration of language for example, by noticing features of texts which suggest a particular language learning activity.
> (Wright 2002: 115)

Leading educators (e.g. see Wright and Bolitho 1993) have been emphasising the importance of developing pedagogical language awareness during language teacher preparation for quite some time, yet until recently, language teacher *knowledge about language* was neglected in research on teacher education. Widdowson (2002)

sees this issue as crucial in teacher education and believes emphasis should be placed on educating novice teachers to see language in such a way that they are able to determine what is important for learners to know. He draws attention to the importance of the sociocultural context of language use and the criticality of making language meaningful for learners. In other words, teachers need an awareness of language so that it can be made real for learners, rather than an awareness of the manifold labels and rules of use that a conventional, descriptive grammatical knowledge entails.

There is no clear research evidence for any one approach to ELT (Ellis 2012) which, in turn, leaves the teacher educator with little concrete support for one form of action over another. What can be done, however, is to raise awareness of the procedural alternatives and perspectives available, and the theory that underpins them. Taking a dialogic, reflective approach to live teaching and peer teaching can facilitate this and thus "*provide experiences that can trigger a deeper understanding of teaching through processes of critical reflection*" (Richards and Farrell 2011: 7). Expecting novice teachers to be able to enact all of the features of good practice described here, would demand much of a novice teacher. Yet if they are taken to represent the accepted wisdom or, in sociocultural terminology, *the scientific concepts* of the field of TESOL, then SLTE approaches must explore how learner teachers can be best prepared and informed, at the point of pre-service education.

1.1.3   Chapter summary

This chapter has outlined the background to the research topic, described the context and setting of the research and also outlined a brief account of the ways in which the educator understands good practice in ELT and how adherence to a communicative approach to

language learning and teaching may be challenging to novice teachers. In the literature review that follows models of teacher education, teacher training and teacher knowledge are explored and the ways in which talk may be organised during feedback discussions to best promote teacher learning are discussed.

Chapter 2　　Literature review

2.1　　Chapter overview

The decline of behaviorist theories of learning alongside the emergence of the field of

teacher cognition contributed to new ways of understanding teacher education and

teacher knowledge and these issues are considered in the first section of this chapter.

Different models of teacher education are discussed later in the chapter and the roles of

reflection and dialogic interaction in contemporary SLTE are examined. The practical issues

involved in a practicum are also outlined along with the contextual factors that may

influence teacher learning. Sociocultural theory and how that perspective can be usefully

employed to both facilitate and investigate cognitive development is discussed in the final

part of the chapter. It should be noted that the broad yet interrelated fields covered in the

literature review are pivotal in providing an overall context to this thesis. Since so many

fields are covered, only the most relevant work to this study has been focussed upon.

2.2　　Background to language teacher education

In the decades following the Second World War, most models of teacher education were

centred on behaviorist views of learning and language learning (Richards and Rodgers

2000). This empirically based approach posited the mastering of a set of techniques and

behaviours as being the fundamental aim and purpose of teacher education. With direct

consequences for language teacher education, the behaviorist view of learning led to a

widely, if not universally, adopted methodological practice termed Audiolingualism.

Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011) provide a straightforward account of this method of

language teaching. In brief, they describe the clear and detached teacher and learner roles

and how language learning is viewed as being concerned with the mastery of grammatical

segments of language. Acquisition of the target language is believed to result from activities such as the drilling and memorization of isolated chunks of language. From such a viewpoint, teacher education was perceived as the preparation of novice practitioners to implement a specific approach to teaching which was prescriptive and, in general, independent of any institutional or cultural context. However, theorists' attitudes towards this behaviorist approach to language teaching and learning changed quite dramatically during the latter part of the twentieth century and this transformation in turn affected the way language teachers were expected to operate.

Before this era, researchers had focused primarily on looking at teachers in action. Teacher competence and excellence was judged by their level of expertise in applying the techniques and actions prescribed in the prevailing methodology. However, with doubts arising regarding the efficacy of behaviorist theory, some researchers started to question and contemplate why teachers did what they did (e.g. Kagan 1992; Freeman 1991). Despite this shift, however, the teachers' own experiences and their views of teaching and learning still remained largely hidden and unquestioned (Freeman 2002). Freeman (ibid.) drew attention to the significant notion that under the predominant behaviorist perspective, new teachers were viewed as having no prior knowledge of teaching. Classroom decision-making, therefore, depended not on the teacher's own cognitions or the context in which the learning was taking place but on the application of appropriate methodology. In other words, the adoption and operation of prescribed behaviours, actions and techniques was seen as being of key importance. Other factors, such as the learners' needs, wants, interests, or prior learning, the institution where the teaching was taking place, stakeholder demands, and so on, played little or no role in teacher preparation at the time. The "mental lives" (Freeman 1991, Freeman 2002) of the LTs, that is to say, their reflections and

cognitions about teaching and learning, were not regarded as being important in the process of SLTE. The learner teachers were simply expected to master the techniques and methods that distant others had deemed appropriate.

In the 1970's, pedagogic research began to question the soundness of a behaviorist theory of learning and, in consequence, the validity of the prevailing thoughts on the methods and approaches that teachers at the time were being encouraged to adopt. Conceptions of teacher education during the last thirty years of the twentieth century altered quite dramatically as a growing body of research findings and theoretical arguments began to take hold. Research began to focus more on the teacher as an independent decision maker and illuminated ways in which beliefs about teaching and learning were likely to be powerfully influenced by past experiences (Lortie 1975). Richards (1998:65) describes various conceptions of teaching that appeared following dissatisfaction with these behaviorist approaches and highlights, in particular, the emergence in SLTE of seeing the teacher as an individual. From this alternative understanding of good teaching, sound pedagogy is not viewed from the stance of the implementation of a pedagogic theory or where teaching principles are dependent upon empirical findings. Instead, the perspective of seeing the teacher as an individual focuses on the metaphor of teacher as thinker, where teaching expertise is seen as a process which involves the teacher, "...*actively constructing a personal, workable theory of teaching*."

In a review of the literature on teacher cognition research stretching back to the mid-eighties, Borg (2006) looks at how the academic conception of teaching shifted from the behaviorist, product-focused model referred to above, to one that puts greater emphasis on teachers' mental lives. Drawing on research conducted by Calderhead (1996), he discusses developments in cognitive psychology which recognised that teachers-as-

individuals played a greater part in the education process and were not simply cogs in the schooling machine. In addition, he also notes how there was, at the time, a growing general dissatisfaction with existing models of teaching and teacher education.

Throughout the nineties, numerous studies in the field of language teacher education built on the research that had started to take place in the previous decade. In a far reaching review of literature on beliefs, Pajares (1992:324) devised a framework of fundamental assumptions that can be made when initiating a study of teachers' educational beliefs. The assumptions point to the importance of addressing beliefs for cognitive development and also highlight their obdurate resistance to change. A seminal study by Johnson (1994) includes a more condensed set of assumptions and suggests that educational research on teachers' beliefs shares three basic premises. Firstly, that beliefs influence perception and thus decisions on classroom action. Secondly, that such beliefs affect how teachers understand new information about education and teaching and, finally, that understanding beliefs is key to facilitating effective teacher education. Johnson's findings represented a major departure from a type of teacher-training which focused on telling LTs how to behave in a classroom setting. They provide powerful arguments that LTs need to be conscious of their own, probably tacit, beliefs about what constitutes effective learning while at the same time being made aware of alternative pedagogical approaches that are available.

As a greater understanding of teacher-learning developed, Freeman and Johnson (1998) called for a reconceptualizing of the knowledge base of language teacher education. They demanded a move away from focusing on what good teachers do when they teach languages to a more constructivist view of how people learn to teach. Wright (2010:266) in his review of second language teacher education, sees this move toward a more constructivist view of teacher education as a shift from SLTE that was concerned with

methods and techniques to one which is more concerned with learning to teach. But despite the growing empirical and theoretical arguments that conventional approaches to education were not proving to be effective, teacher preparation programmes were still, and in many contexts, still are, being delivered along models that are organized to promote the transmission of subject and craft knowledge. In other words, teacher-training often consists of a limited pedagogical input that is comprised of a core set of techniques and behaviors thought to promote language learning.

The study of teacher beliefs and their incorporation into teacher learning is, of course, key if we accept that one of the central tenets of a constructivist view of education is that people make their own sense of the ideas and theories presented to them. The pedagogical alternatives to personal, tacit understandings and beliefs, as Johnson described above, must be articulated and contrasted with existing understandings if development is to occur (Roberts 1998) and more recently, scholars have repeated calls for greater emphasis to be given to teacher cognition during teacher education. For example, Burns and Richards, (2009: 6) describe the influence sociocultural theory has come to have on teacher education, with the mental lives of the teachers playing a central role. They outline how:

> ...rather than teaching being viewed as the transfer of knowledge, a sociocultural perspective views it as creating conditions for the co-construction of knowledge and understanding through social participation.

Typical learning tools that are concomitant with a sociocultural theory of mind such as dialogic interaction, reflection, mediation and the concept of a Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) are all ones that involve a focus on the hidden side of teaching – the practitioner's mental life. The studies described above report on educators' claims that in order to produce more effective, autonomous teachers, ones that may be transformed by a course of teacher education in the long run, what an LT thinks and believes needs to be

made explicit and addressed throughout their pre-service education. Wright (2010) summarises what he views as the main features that have appeared in the field over the last quarter of a century, all of which represent a radical departure from the earlier prescriptive approach to teacher education. His three strands are *reflective practice* and its importance for autonomous decision-making; *teacher knowledge* and *school based learning* involving the use of mentoring in teacher education. These elements suggest that a consideration of new knowledge which is brought to bear on actual practice is what best represents the shift that has occurred in teacher education. The following section examines in further detail the theoretical and empirical arguments that support this shift and how the employment of dialogic interaction may be an appropriate tool for effecting cognitive change.

2.2.1   Teacher cognition

The twelve or more years of formal schooling that most people undertake can have a powerful effect on one's perception of what constitutes good teaching. Lortie (1975) explains how teachers come to have ideas about teaching following their lengthy experience as pupils in an 'apprenticeship of observation'. Lortie (ibid.) highlights the fact that by the time students begin teacher preparation courses they had already observed thousands of hours of teachers in action and he argues that many of the beliefs that students hold about teaching stem from this extended period of observation. This assertion has important implications for teacher education since studies have shown that teachers' beliefs are shaped by their experiences as learners (Johnson 1994). In other words, the effect of the apprenticeship of observation, of so many thousands of hours of observing teachers in action, an experience not gained by trainees or novices in other professions,

may be profound. It may well deeply ingrain how teachers should act in the mind of novice teachers.

The implication is that courses of teacher education that pay no attention to such deeply held, even subconscious, beliefs will be unable to effect cognitive change in novice teachers and thus perpetuate the continuous cycle of transmissive behavioral patterns (Johnson 1994). From a constructivist perspective of learning, being able to form understandings from the old to the new is crucial for development and Borg (2009: 164) notes that from such a viewpoint:

> Teacher learning occurs through interactions between prior knowledge on the one hand and new input and experience on the other (and) ignoring pre-service teachers' prior cognitions is likely to hinder their ability to internalize new material.

What Lortie's extended period of observation does seem to impart to learner teacher is an (incomplete) sense of what teaching entails and what is perceived as good or effective teaching. During a period of training for other professions such as medicine or engineering, students may have a keen sense of the limitations of their skills or knowledge, having, in all probability, spent little time observing such practitioners in action. In contrast, LTs will have witnessed dozens of different teachers at work since early childhood. What is important for Lortie, however, is that they are more than likely unaware that what they have observed over their many student years only represents one aspect of a teacher's job. These are the public roles of, monitor, manager, instructor, lecturer etc. that would have been witnessed repeatedly over the months and years of schooling. Conversely, the other side of a teacher's job, the planning, decision-making, selection of materials, assessment design and so on would have remained hidden.

Tomlinson (1999) surmises that this partial exposure to the role of teacher may lead to LTs owning a set of 'default options', actions and strategies that they can revert to and which they have come to believe constitute good teacherly behaviour. These options provide, in essence, models and parameters of how they believe the act of teaching should be carried out. Borg (2005:2) recognises that this process results in a situation where "…*students gained little sense of the pedagogical principles underlying teacher behaviour during their pedagogical apprenticeship"*.

Some researchers have attempted to explore the process of how beliefs change over a course of teacher education. In tracking four students on a PGCE, Almarza (1996) has observed that behavioural change and cognitive change are rooted in the pre-training cognitions of teachers. She found differing levels of acceptance of the prescribed teaching behaviours that were proposed on the course. Almarza (ibid.) suggests this is a result of difficult to shift, previously held, beliefs about teaching, learning and language and speculates that the behavioural change in the form of classroom actions and decision-making is due to the need to conform to certain teaching standards, to demonstrate specific skills etc. in order to satisfy competency-based assessment criteria. The implication is that without addressing the deep-rooted cognitions that Almarza refers to, novice teachers are likely to revert to previously held assumptions about teaching and learning – in spite of any contextual factors that may diminish the effectiveness of any universal set of actions, techniques or behaviours.

Kagan (1992) believes that previously held beliefs of the teachers may come to act as filters through which they view the models and receive the content of the teacher education course. In her review of studies on teacher beliefs she argues that the students used content on the courses to reinforce rather than challenge prior beliefs, concluding that a

candidate's personal beliefs and images govern how each individual views training. In other words, each LT constructs their understandings based on their own pre-existing experiences and beliefs. A number of other studies also seem to support Kagan's early findings that certain pedagogical beliefs are extremely resistant to change (Peacock 2001, Borg 2005).

There is, then, a growing realisation that the role of teacher cognition during pre-service education needs to be addressed. For example, Freeman and Johnson (1998:401) made one of the earliest calls for a more social-constructivist view of teacher education and of language learning. They note how the empirically based findings of much SLA are of limited use and applicability in the reality of the classroom. In stressing the importance of teachers' mental lives, they argue for a more social-constructivist approach to learning, emphasising that:

> We now know that teachers' beliefs about teachers and teaching are instrumental in shaping how they interpret what goes on in the classroom...and as teacher educators now acknowledge that prior knowledge is a powerful factor in teacher learning in its own right, one that clearly deserves our attention and study if we mean to strengthen and improve, rather than simply preserve and replicate, educational practice.

They go on to insist that teacher educators must instil in novice teachers, "*…a questioning stance toward the complex social, cultural, and institutional structures that pervade the professional landscape where they work"*. This reference to the context is also an important and recurring theme in teacher education. Indeed much more recently, Ur (2013) has argued that teacher education should resist pushing methodologies onto LTs since language teaching would benefit from being based on principles derived from a teacher's practical, situated experience. In place of methodological favouritism, Ur (ibid.) calls for an approach that encourages novice teachers to develop their own situated theory and

practice of good learning that depends on their particular teaching context and that is enriched by relevant research findings and theory.

The clear suggestion in the literature is that without addressing the LTs' mental lives it is possible that very little real development may occur. When teaching, LTs may well automatically, even subconsciously, employ approaches, techniques, mannerisms and so on that closely reflect the way they themselves experienced teaching. For development to stand a chance, it seems that the learner teachers need opportunities to experiment with and experience pedagogical alternatives introduced during their teacher education. Furthermore, their conceptions of pedagogic approaches, teacher roles, student roles and so on, need to be discussed and articulated in order that deeply ingrained prior cognitions can be challenged, amended or otherwise examined.

2.2.2   Teacher learning

Owing to the fact that conservative, transmissive approaches to teaching have been predominant for a number of decades, the more inductive, student centred, social-constructivist approaches to teaching and learning will probably be less prominent within a learner teacher's pedagogical knowledge base (Warford 2011). In other words, their apprenticeship of observation would have been formed on witnessing pedagogical behaviour that does not always align itself with notions of good practice in language teaching. But if these obdurate beliefs reflect the style of instruction that the LT has experienced, then a course of teacher education that does not take the learner teachers' cognitions into account seems doomed to ensure its graduates replicate instead of improve, educational practice.

Warford (ibid.) argues, as do Freeman and Johnson (1998) and Freeman (2002), that what is essential in facilitating learning is to establish pre-service teachers' beliefs in order to

make their tacit assumptions about teaching and learning explicit. In other words the heart of the issue lies in the raising of awareness about beliefs and their subsequent use at the core of the educative process. Warford contends that it is only when such assumptions are thrust into critical consciousness that learning or "ontogenesis" can occur (ibid: 253). Teacher education activities such as the production of critical reflective portfolios and the creation of opportunities for extensive exploratory talk become key tools when teacher development is viewed in this way. Indeed, Warford (ibid: 253) warns that failure to get LTs thinking about their own experiences and beliefs, failure to really engage LTs in reflecting on their beliefs only serves to perpetuate the approaches by which the LTs themselves experienced learning.

Further recent studies also support this fundamental view that accessing, engaging with and making explicit LTs' mental lives can play a crucial role in teacher education and that programmes which ignore the need to make prior beliefs explicit may be less effective at influencing teacher development (Borg 2003). Indeed, Wright's (2010:271) review of studies in this field points out that:

> ... practices such as more explicit engagement with student teachers' beliefs in SLTE programmes, under supportive interpersonal and emotional conditions, are likely to have a positive impact on student teachers' beliefs and, therefore, their practices as teachers.

The addressing and making explicit of beliefs was not, of course, the only aspect that impacted on the effectiveness of SLTE courses. Wright (ibid.) draws attention to the importance of factors such as the participants' relationships, the pedagogies that the teacher educators model and the learning experiences on the course and stresses how these areas, taken together, can also have a major impact on student teachers' cognitions.

Teacher cognition and classroom practice

From the preceding pages, it is clear that what teachers do in the classroom will probably be governed by what they believe and this is a view supported by the majority of commentators in the field of SLTE e.g. see Richards (2008), Farrell (2012) or Freeman (2002). In his review of studies on teacher cognition, Borg (2003), contends that teachers' beliefs, whether those held pre-course or beliefs that have emerged as a result of their SLTE course, appear consistently as having a strong influence on classroom practice. In a study with practising teachers, Johnson (1994) reports that in the majority of cases in her study, teachers' classroom actions were consistent with their beliefs about teaching while Smith (1996) also details research that suggests what teachers do in the classroom seems to be highly consistent with their stated beliefs about teaching and learning.

Borg's (ibid.) review cited numerous studies that highlight the 'symbiotic' relationship between classroom practice and teacher beliefs. In other words, if a student teacher believed, for instance, that acquisition of grammatical structures in a second language (L2) was most effectively undertaken through an inductive approach (i.e. by students working to figure out a rule themselves) then their teaching approach would reflect this. That would involve him or her setting the learners a contextual example of the target language and through careful structuring of a sequence of instructions, facilitate the processing of the language and the 'discovery' of the rule by the students. If, on the other hand an LT's stated belief was that the teacher should be the 'knower' and that, for instance, grammatical instruction was best conducted through clear teacher instruction and explanation (deductively), then his or her classroom practice, ability permitting, would contain instances that reflect this.

However, there are also numerous studies that reveal a divergence between stated beliefs and actual teacher behaviour in the classroom. A number of commentators (Freeman and Johnson 1998, Burns and Richards 2009, Phipps and Borg 2009) have stressed how context is fundamental to decisions taken in the language teaching classroom. The study of what influences decision-making is incredibly complex and a wide range of factors can oblige teachers to perform in a manner that runs contrary to, or at least not consistent with, their beliefs. For example, the need to accommodate individual learner styles, to prepare students for success at formal assessments, a class size, student expectations and so on. Most teachers are familiar with the issue of having to teach in conditions that present challenges to how they believe learning should ideally be organised. For example, Johnson (1996) reports on the struggle of a teacher who is unable to adopt the type of teaching practices that reflect her personal view of good practice because of the heavy workload that she has to contend with.

A factor which emerged during this research which is interesting to note at this point, is that it is also possible that inadequate pedagogical, practical knowledge may prevent a teacher organising and managing the classroom in a manner that he or she believes to be most effective. Upon coming into contact with teaching approaches not previously experienced, learner teachers may be convinced of the efficacy of this 'new' approach, yet not have the pedagogical or procedural knowledge to implement it. Phipps and Borg (2009) touch upon this point in suggesting that the mismatch between pre-service teachers' stated beliefs and their classroom actions on the practicum present opportunities to explore teachers' practices in the context where they undertake live teaching. It is, in other words, an example of the juncture where the old meets the new.

The background to perspectives on language teacher education has been provided in this section and the emerging focus on teachers' mental lives has been traced. The ways in which beliefs can affect what a teacher actually does in the classroom have also been outlined. Knowledge that is considered important for learner teachers is detailed in the following section and how the knowledge base has been reconceptualised in recent times is also discussed.

2.2.3   Teacher knowledge

The following pages provide an overview of the debates in TESOL as to what constitutes an appropriate knowledge base for EFL professionals. The ways in which the traditional boundaries of procedural and declarative knowledge are becoming blurred and the consequences this may have for how courses of SLTE are organised and delivered are outlined.

The short, intensive courses of SLTE that currently predominate pre-service SLTE in the UK were originally developed in the 1960s. These were based on models from industry that aimed to instil in its trainees the practical classroom skills that were deemed necessary for carrying out particular teaching methods (Burns and Richards 2009). Little or no reference to a knowledge base for teachers was included in such models of teacher preparation. Teacher training was focused primarily on equipping teachers with the ability to enact the actions and techniques necessary to deliver various methods of language teaching. As mentioned earlier, the predominant language teaching approaches at the time were those based on behaviourist theories of language learning (Tsui 2002). The field of applied linguistics also emerged during the Sixties and provided language teaching with broader areas to consider. Applied linguists began exploring how languages may be best taught and learned with themes such as language analysis and learning theories being investigated.

Knowledge of language required by teachers was considered in terms of its lexis, grammar, phonology and so on with almost no attention paid to the learners or the context (Graves 2009). In general, until the 1970s the knowledge base for educating language teachers was compartmentalised into a content component and a methods / skills component with both being taught and assessed separately (Graves ibid.).

Burns and Richards (ibid.) portray such developments as the springboard for ongoing debate that has been central to SLTE ever since, that of the distinction between teaching skills, in other words *procedural knowledge* and teaching academic subject content, in other words, *declarative knowledge*. Such debate has often been centred on the role that theory should play in teacher training and education and also how evidence collected from SLA research can or should be used to promote effective language teaching.

Conventional thinking on teacher education courses, especially at masters' level, seemed to be that exposure to content knowledge or declarative knowledge somehow directly informs teaching behaviour. That is, lecturers who taught specialist modules on SLA research and theory or on methodology or discourse analysis, for example, may well have been subject specialists in these areas but had no pedagogical expertise (Singh and Richards 2006). Hence the learning of effective pedagogical practices may have traditionally been sidelined in favour of discussion about SLA findings and theoretical aspects of language learning. Bartels (2005) notes a number of such subjects that seem to be predominant. He reports that the study of lexis and phonology, discourse analysis, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics and the role of SLA research are commonly included as 'content' modules on courses of SLTE.

Most contemporary courses of SLTE also now include pedagogical subject areas such as materials exploitation, approaches to lesson design, assessment techniques, classroom

management and so on (Richards 2008). However, according to Ellis (2006:153) the content–pedagogy dichotomy is nevertheless problematic for TESOL. While the relationship between theory, research in SLA and language teaching pedagogy is still at the heart of the discipline, and even though the two areas may well be closely connected, no agreement on what the relationship between SLA and language teaching pedagogy actually is, has yet been reached. In other words, questions regarding whether research should lead pedagogy or whether theory should stem from practice are still being contested (Allwright 2005, Johnson 2009).

Rethinking teacher knowledge

Commentators have criticised post-graduate degrees that continue to organise the content of teacher learning into compartmentalized knowledge bases (e.g.Díaz-Maggioli 2012, Stanley and Murray 2013). Singh and Richards (2006) argue that designing SLTE courses around the transmission of SLA findings, theoretical modules and so on, not only downplays the issues of pedagogy and context, but also ignores how human learning is best facilitated through social interaction, reflection and experience. Bolitho et al (2003) contend that even when SLTE courses do include pedagogical content, the subject matter often has little or no direct link to teaching activity. This in turn, means that students usually undergo a fragmentary experience involving quite varied strands of input with the pedagogical implications largely left for the students to make sense of.

Although this study examines learning in an under-graduate degree, it is worthwhile considering some of the issues that surround post graduate teacher learning. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, as many of the issues that are reported can be applied to both contexts and, secondly, very little or no research has been conducted on theoretical input on an extended course of pre-service undergraduate teacher education. Many masters'

courses in SLTE have recently started moving away from predominantly focusing on areas of cognitively based applied linguistics to including modules of reflective teaching, action research and classroom research (Richards 2008, Díaz-Maggioli 2012). Nevertheless, recent research supports the contention that teachers still fail to apply much of the received knowledge (theory) included in SLTE courses (Bartels 2005). Student teachers criticize such theories and research findings for lack of relevance to the realities they face in their classroom contexts (MacDonald, Badger et al. 2001, Singh and Richards 2006). Further studies suggest that student teachers are sceptical of the theoretical aspects of their course provision and that LTs have problems in connecting the procedural and declarative aspects of their course provision (Singh and Richards 2006, Malderez, Hobson et al. 2007). Other recent research conducted on a four-week pre-service course also reports that the participants found the theoretical content somewhat irrelevant and they conveyed the impression that more practical preparation would have been preferential (Faez and Valeo 2012). Nonetheless, Borg (2013) notes that research and theories that may result from it can be valuable to teachers. Although not referring specifically to pre-service teachers, what he points out still holds true for novice teachers. For example, he argues that research can provide a discourse for talking about teaching, can identify ideas to experiment with in the classroom and help in examining one's own planning and decision making process.

Perspectives of theorists looking at SLTE from a sociocultural viewpoint are playing a growing role in focusing teacher educators' attention on how teacher learning is understood and conducted (Lantolf and Poehner 2008, Golombek 2009). A shift of focus has taken place from being concerned primarily with the 'what' of teacher knowledge, to consideration of the 'how' such knowledge is best presented to learner teachers. As mentioned earlier in this study, researchers such as Woods (1996), Freeman and Johnson

(1998) and Borg (2003) have pointed out how teacher decision-making should be seen as a key area to be addressed in teacher education and have called for a much broader epistemological view of SLTE. In addition, the notion of practitioner knowledge has received more attention as the reflective teaching, action research and situated teaching movements all highlight the importance of a teacher's classroom experiences (Johnson 2009). In order to make informed decisions, novice teachers need alternative options, ideas or possibilities to choose from but they also need to accept, understand and have confidence in such alternative ways of being in a classroom. What is more, they need to know when and how to choose suitable courses of action.

Ellis (2010) argues that in place of a transmissive approach to declarative knowledge in language teacher education, an interpretive view needs to be adopted where the goal is to help teachers develop their own personal theory of second language learning and the effect that formal instruction can have upon it. He describes how a course of theory in SLA may help to make explicit the learner teachers' personal theories which in turn will allow teachers to be better placed to examine and understand the principles that guide their teaching behaviour. Ellis (ibid: 138) believes that:

> In the transmission approach, SLA is seen as a body of knowledge that tells
> teachers how they should teach, in the interpretive approach, SLA functions
> a resource for promoting reflective practice.

Ellis' contention appears to suggest that it is the process of teacher education, 'how' it is carried out, that is important as opposed to the product of the education; the decontextualized theory, facts and findings. This viewing of research and practice as separate entities, which may result in a harmful dichotomy that is prejudicial to the effective promotion of pedagogic knowledge, is also supported by other educators. Kumaravadivelu (2012:13) contends that such an artificial division inhibits the

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opportunities for self-construction of pedagogic knowledge on the part of the teacher and that to have any local, situated relevance, knowledge must emerge from the practice of everyday teaching. Such knowledge and personal theory making can only be developed through reflection undertaken by the teachers themselves as they notice or are helped to notice the needs, levels, aims, and so on of their learners and the contextual conditions under which they are tutoring.

Domains of teacher knowledge

The distinction between procedural and declarative knowledge is common in mainstream educational research with Shulman (1987) differentiating between the *disciplinary* knowledge of a particular field and the *pedagogical* content knowledge that teachers need to master in order to facilitate student learning in addition to the *curriculum* knowledge. Richards and Farrell (2011) describe disciplinary knowledge as that which does not translate into practical skills, e.g. the history of EFL methodology or theories of learning. On the other hand, they describe pedagogical content knowledge as referring to knowledge that can provide a basis for language teaching such as teaching the four skills or reflective practice. Ellis (2010) uses the term *technical* knowledge to describe that which is explicit, codified and which can take the form of laws that can be applied generally. *Practical* knowledge, on the other hand, is procedural and is available for aiding decision-making in concrete situations. Shulman (1987) contends that whereas the technical knowledge is acquired through formal learning and curriculum knowledge through being informed of the materials, syllabus and so on, the practical, pedagogical expertise is acquired through direct experience. Traditionally, such procedural knowledge develops, as we have noted, both from the 'apprenticeship of observation' and through the trial and error of classroom practice (Kumaravadivelu 2012).

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More recently, researchers have suggested that the notions of *declarative* and *procedural* knowledge may be useful tools for evaluating teacher qualifications. Stanley and Murray (2013) adapted Bourdieu's (1986) model of capital to provide a framework of teacher knowledge that draws attention to the need to include both practical and technical knowledge when considering a teacher as qualified. This is an interesting notion to include in this discussion as much of the debate around teacher education centres around the areas of practical and technical knowledge, as Farrell (2012: 439) states, *"there is still no consensus in TESOL about what specific courses, and their connection (if any) to TP, should be included in SLT preparation programs"*. For this study, the term 'declarative knowledge' is used to refer to any type of scientific knowledge – be it *disciplinary* knowledge or *pedagogical content* knowledge whereas the term '*procedural*' knowledge is used to refer to classroom based skills and abilities (Woods 1996).

Shulman's (ibid: 12) work on teacher education was extolled as ground breaking at the time and he subsequently developed finer and more detailed descriptions of what teachers needed to know. However, despite his extensive work on teacher knowledge, Shulman himself advises that *"much, if not most of the proposed knowledge base remains to be discovered, invented and refined "*. In addition, his work has been criticised for its limited use to teacher educators in their quest to facilitate development in novice teachers. For example, Diaz Maggioli (2012: 23) points out that Schulman's conception of teacher knowledge is insufficiently detailed in its description of what teachers actually need to know and need to be able to do and thus is of limited use to teacher educators in their task of supporting LT conceptual development.

However, the gradual rethinking over the last two decades of what constitutes teacher knowledge has led not only to a blurring of the boundaries between declarative and

procedural knowledge. It has also led to an appreciation of the need to break down the traditional gulf that has separated them in order for effective teacher development to take place. In place of seeing knowledge as a series of topics to be understood and memorized, the focus has now shifted to the types of teacher knowledge that may be considered (Mann 2005). Contemporary conceptions of teacher knowledge, those that have arisen from a greater focus on the teacher as an individual, align themselves frequently with the Vygotskian notion of praxis (vide supra, p.101), as the domains of theory and practice merge. For example the constructs of personal practical knowledge (Clandinin 1992), practical knowledge (Golombek 1998, Golombek 2009) and situated knowledge (Lave and Wenger 1991), all attempt to describe how the theoretical, personal, practical, contextual and so on overlap with regard to teacher knowledge and learning.

The separation of the two areas is also seen as being rather crude and too closely tied to a transmissive and skills based model of learning (Malderez and Wedell 2007). In work that has parallels with many of the ideas from the sociocultural commentators discussed above, Malderez and Wedell provide a rather more detailed framework for considering teacher knowledge. They argue that the process of teacher education involves drawing on different types of knowledge as well as possessing the skill to be able to employ such wisdom at the optimum time. They suggest a framework that identifies three interrelated types of teacher knowledge (ibid: 19):

1.   Knowing *about* (what teachers know about and use in their thinking)

         Includes:

•   Their subject, the aims and roles of the subject within the wider curriculum;

•   How the subject is learnt, the existence of strategies to support learning;

- The school and its policies, accepted norms and procedures within the education system;

- The students, their backgrounds, their needs;

- Strategies for managing their own ongoing professional learning, the existence of professional organisations and support networks, and journals in their subject area.

This type of knowledge matches Ellis' technical knowledge or Schulman's disciplinary knowledge in that it is knowledge that can be verbalised or explained. However, Malderez and Wedell (ibid:23) also expand upon the knowledge base of knowing *about* to include the notion of *concept development.* They outline that most of what we know, we know because we were told it or have read it and that the information or knowledge we manage to absorb and use, we do so because it is personally meaningful, useful or interesting to us. However, in an insight closely aligned to the concept of scientific and everyday concepts, (vide supra, p.97), Malderez and Wedell (ibid: 23) argue that for concepts to undergo development, the starting point for learners will be that:

> …there is more to know, coupled if the motivation for learning is a practical one, with a feeling that their existing way of thinking (everyday concepts) is no longer sufficient for their needs. (brackets mine).

They argue that for development to occur, the learner needs access to alternative ways of thinking or information (scientific concepts) and engage in mental activity and effort to reconsider their existing concepts. Diaz Maggioli (2012:24) echoes similar sentiments in declaring that:

> …in prioritizing scientific concepts without promoting their interaction with spontaneous concepts, there is a risk that the aspiring teacher will not be able to own the new scientific concept, hence failing to incorporate them into her knowledge base.

In *knowing about*, Malderez and Wedell highlight the importance of knowledge of the subject matter (declarative knowledge), the context (and the manifold factors of its composition) and, in discussing concept development, how these knowledge bases are best developed in LTs. Knowing *how* turns to concern about pedagogical (procedural) matters.

2.   Knowing *how* (the expertise of teachers)

    Includes being able to:

- Use strategies to support pupils and their own learning;

- Notice important features of classrooms and organisations;

- Promote conditions which support the learning process;

- Assess learning;

- Relate to students, other professionals, parents and colleagues;

- Fulfil other professional obligations;

- Access and use new ideas and/or theories to think, plan and /or assess;

Malderez and Wedell (ibid.) outline the ways in which development of the knowing *how* ability relates to the learning of the skills that are required for teaching. They point out that this does not refer to a simple tick box set of competency skills such as efficient white board management / organisation of a choral drill etc. Rather, they refer to the skills that are needed for effective teaching and assessing (lesson preparation, staging of lessons, assessing learning, scaffolding learning, identifying learner needs, and learner levels and so on). They highlight the fact that effective employment of such skills is closely related to the *disciplinary* knowledge outlined in the knowing *about* domain. However they also draw our attention to the issue that by the time learner teachers enrol on a course of teacher education, they will already have subconsciously developed models of teacher behaviour due to the Lortie effect (vide supra, p.29). Such models can have a considerable effect on

how teacher learning is experienced and Malderez and Wedell urge, as did Freeman (1991), that the beliefs about teaching that the novice teachers' hold must be made explicit and conscious for any new concepts to impact on teacher thinking. Malderez and Wedell (ibid: 24-25) also contend that:

> There can be little point in knowing about things and knowing how to do things if you cannot actually use this knowledge / these skills in the right place at the right time, to support learning.

For this reason, they put forward a third domain of knowing.

3.   <u>Knowing *to*</u> (what expert, adaptive teachers should be able to do)

- Skilfully *notice* the multifarious aspects of classroom events that are continuously unfolding;

- Effectively and instantaneously assess and interpret what they see in order to make decisions about how to best promote learning.

They view this kind of teacher knowledge as being a product of the interaction of the other types in the context and following the experience of real practice. Diaz Maggioli contends (ibid: 25) that in the sense of *knowing to* teacher knowledge can be depicted as:

> … a process that informs aspiring teachers' new concept formation through their engagement in the construction and enactment of a repertoire of relevant professional, personal and collective knowledge and experiences of and about teaching and learning.

As can be seen from the preceding pages, the knowledge base for TESOL is experiencing a shift from a compartmentalised view of content and skills to one where the knowledge bases are seen to be very much overlapping and context dependent. The following section will outline how the preparation of ELT professionals has been influenced by these changing perspectives.

2.2.4   Teacher education or teacher training

The training / education dichotomy that exists in TESOL and the divergent perspectives on teacher preparation are described and discussed on the following pages. The role reflection may play in effecting changes in teacher cognition is also detailed and attention is drawn to the position that sociocultural perspectives take in more recent models of teacher education.

The preparation of language teachers may be looked at through the categorisations of teacher education and teacher training. Richards and Nunan (1990) view the former as a process that involves teachers developing their own theories of teaching whilst acquiring strategies for fostering self-awareness and self-evaluation. Training, on the other hand, is more concerned with familiarising LTs with the skills and activities they can use in the classroom. Many teacherly skills can be facilitated by training. For instance, the organisation and legible use of a whiteboard, the layout of classroom seating arrangements or the procedure for giving clear instructions. Checking learners' understanding can be modelled by an educator and practiced in peer and live teaching sessions as can a number of other classroom management techniques and skills such as the use of voice, eye contact, organising pairs or groupwork, and so on. Teacher education, however, is understood as involving not only the passing on of such tips and techniques but as a process that engages the novice teachers in theory, practice and reflection in order to help them deal with the complex and dynamic world of classrooms. It allows for unpredictability and involves "*situations which cannot be accommodated into preconceived patterns of response but which require a reformulation of ideas and the modification of established formulae*" (Widdowson 1990: 62)

Much has been written about the training-education dichotomy (Larsen-Freeman 1983, Richards 1987, Freeman 1989). Diane Larsen-Freeman offers a summary of the differences that aligns itself with Richards and Nunan's description given above. She sees training as being situation oriented, where the trainer transmits a set of desirable actions and behaviours that are specified and can thus be used to measure a LT's performance. This corresponds to the type of development undertaken on short-term training courses which follow a performance based philosophy (Hobbs 2013). Larsen-Freeman describes education, on the other hand, as being more individual oriented with objectives being more general and the learner teachers developing skills such as objective setting, problem definition and becoming able to make decisions, reflect on the outcomes and generate their own hypotheses (1983:265).

Such an understanding of practitioner development is supported by other educators in the field. For example, Larsen-Freeman's view of teacher education tallies, on many counts, with Malderez and Wedell's *Knowing about* and *knowing how* and also with Ur's (2013) recent call for practitioners to develop theory and practice in situated methodologies. She advocates a form of teacher education that promotes teacher decision-making based upon the local context and leads to personal theory making about what constitutes good practice (Ur 2013). Widdowson (2005) also makes reference to the importance of education in enabling teachers to be able to adapt to differing contexts. While acknowledging that teacher educators need to employ aspects of both education and training he stresses that:

> Practitioners have the responsibility to think critically about what they do…they need to be educated, not just trained that is to say, informed about theoretical ideas and research findings but not simply to accept them as fact or on faith but to subject them to careful appraisal so as to decide how far they are relevant to their own circumstances. (Widdowson 2005: 1)

The field of TESOL has traditionally dealt with the training and education dichotomy by offering distinct qualifications. The entry level EFL teacher qualification has, since John Haycraft's first International House crash course fifty years ago, been a certificate awarded for successful completion of a four-week, intensive teacher *training* course. As has been described throughout this study, this initial qualification emphasises the acquisition of a set of core teacherly actions, skills and activities. Bolitho (2009:3) draws attention to the "classroom survival" aim of such intensive courses pointing out that "*on such courses there is usually precious little time for attention to whole person development or even 'to kick start the process of becoming a reflective practitioner*."

Conversely, in general, the curricula of teacher development qualifications traditionally offered by universities (typically a TESOL Masters' degree) focussed on delivering modules of methodology, SLA research findings, phonology etc. with practical, pedagogical skills playing little or no part in the course content (Richards and Nunan 1990, Wallace 1991, Woodward 1991, Bartels 2005). No data could be found that referred to the content of undergraduate BA TESOL awards based in the UK. However, Murray and Crichton (2011) report that the majority of Masters' programmes in their study focussed on declarative knowledge areas such as theories of learning, the history of EFL and contemporary approaches and methods. Of importance to readers of this investigation is that the undergraduate, BA TESOL award that provides the context for this study fits neither of these traditional models of teacher preparation. To be clear, it involves much declarative knowledge as described above, alongside practical, teaching based modules. As far as the research for this study can ascertain, this makes it a quite distinct model of university-based SLTE.

2.2.5 Perspectives on teacher preparation

Various models of teacher preparation are described in the following section. They represent efforts made by educators to provide a framework for understanding what exactly such professional preparation should consist of and how it may be understood and organised.

A number of authors have categorised teaching along a continuum which at one end represents teaching as something 'magic', in other words an art or a craft competence. This conception sees good teaching as practice which is difficult to deconstruct or describe. Conversely, at the other end of the continuum, there is a view of instruction as 'science' (Wallace 1991, Jourdenais 2011). At this end, teaching is considered to be a discipline that can be deconstructed, understood and subsequently presented as fact. Richards (1998) focuses on the work of Zahorik (1986) in the classification of teaching into three main categories. A Science - Research conception; A Theory - Philosophy conception and an Art - Craft conception. Richards examines these conceptions with regard to English language teaching, exemplifying how each model leads to a different understanding of what constitutes effective teaching. Díaz-Maggioli (2012) expands on these conceptions to include the model of reflective practitioner and models from a sociocultural perspective (vide supra, table 2.1, p.62)

Science – Research conceptions

This conception of teaching, as the name suggests, is one that aims to be informed and validated by empirical research. Drawing on Zahorik's work, Richards (ibid.) provides the example of Audiolingualism being based on research findings from behavioural psychology. Teacher educators placing value in such an approach would hold the belief that teacher preparation should be concerned with getting their LTs skilled at implementing the various

techniques associated with Audiolingualism. These would include for example ensuring teachers were proficient at drilling, modelling of grammatical structures, teaching specific, predetermined vocabulary items etc. In a more recent example, Long (2011:386-387) bases his 'methodological principles' on evidence collected from wide ranging bodies of SLA research. The proposals for task based language teaching (TBLT) that he puts forward are drawn from research in fields such as philosophy, psycholinguistics and psychology as well as from evidence collected from numerous SLA studies.

 A science-research perspective represents a top-down philosophy of teaching in that once research, typically carried out by academics rather than practitioners, has identified, or claimed to have identified, an effective technique or approach, teachers are then expected to master and adopt it. Richards (1998) describes good teaching, according to this conception, as practice which is in conformity with the findings of research. In other words, such knowledge is disseminated on teacher education courses with the novice teachers subsequently expected to implement effectively the findings – regardless of the classroom context in which they are teaching.

Moreover, it has been argued that, with regard to the stronger versions of the applied science model, learner-teachers are assumed to enter teacher education programmes as blank slates, with no prior knowledge of teaching or its successful operation and, as such, it is the educator's role to transfer his or her declarative knowledge of the field into the participants' minds (Freeman 2002). It is the content of the course which is important from this perspective; the interpretation and appropriate application of the knowledge is a matter for the learner teacher. As is described previously, this approach to teacher learning has been criticised extensively over the last fifteen years or so, especially by those who see

teacher learning more from a process than product viewpoint (Malderez and Wedell 2007, Wright and Bolitho 2007, Burns and Richards 2009, Ur 2013).

Theory – Philosophy conceptions

Conceptions of good teaching, based on what type of actions and behaviours ought to work rather than on empirically based research findings, have come to be categorised under a theory-philosophy label. In other words, under a conception of teaching whereby the theory underpinning the method is ascertained through the use of reason or rational thought on moral, political or philosophical grounds. Richards (1998) gives the example of communicative language teaching (CLT) which radically changed approaches to ELT during the eighties. CLT arose as a result of the inadequacies of more conventional, grammar-based approaches and their failure in enabling learners to achieve communicative competence in their target language. That is to say, despite being presented with a great deal of knowledge regarding the metalanguage for word classes, verb conjugations, structures etc. language learners still could not operate smoothly or effectively in the target language. Logic supported the theory of many writers (Hymes 1971, Halliday 1978, Widdowson 1978) who were promoting a more communicative view of language and language teaching. It is a view that places emphasis on a student centred, communicative and meaning-focused approach to language learning and which moves away from a more deductive, structurally based view of language and learning.

What the theory-philosophy conception of teaching requires is for teachers to understand the theory in such a way that it is realised in the techniques and approaches undertaken by the practitioner. For example, in CLT, language is seen as communication and thus any activities that can be described as communicative may well come under its umbrella. However, such a broad view of language and teaching can pose problems for teacher

educators. For example, Edge (2010:16) highlights the dysfunctional effect the teaching of such theoretical concepts may have on teacher education. He draws attention to the aforementioned theory-practice gap and the irrelevance that some novice teachers feel such content has in their development as teachers.

Art-Craft conceptions

Richards (1998: 46) interprets an art-craft conception as an approach to teaching that aims to "*develop teaching as a unique set of personal skills which teachers apply in different ways according to the demands of specific situations".* He sees decision-making as being key in this approach and includes personal experience, methodological skills, language awareness and the identification of learner needs as being central to effective pedagogical actions. Richards describes the craft metaphor as one that is based upon teachers acquiring individual skills and techniques that may be unique to each teacher. Moreover, the application of such abilities would need to be in accordance with the demands of the context within which they are teaching. The ability, therefore, to take effective and instant decisions based on an assessment of the situation they face. In other words, from an art-craft viewpoint, teachers are encouraged to try anything that may work, in contrast to the previous two conceptions which aim to prescribe what good teaching should consist of. It is then, a conception that places value in the importance of context and the skills of the individual practitioner in being able to identify and gauge what is needed for learning to take place.

 However, other educators see a craft approach from a different viewpoint. Wallace (1991) highlights the criticism that the craft model has received with commentators understanding its aim to be the facilitation, imitation and reproduction of instructed behaviours. Furthermore, Edge (2010), describes the craft conception of teaching in a

slightly more limiting way, seeing it as treating teaching as a set of actions and behaviours that can be modelled by a more expert practitioner. It is certainly true that teaching does involve, as Edge points out, numerous instances where such modelled learning is possible and beneficial. Indeed, viewing teaching from a craft approach also has the advantage of keeping teacher learning real, in other words, connecting the theory with what actually goes on in the classroom. The downside, as Edge (ibid: 15) sees it, is that:

> There is no obvious place for personal growth or professional innovation to enter the system", and that the "strict replication of given patterns of behaviour (in society) …is becoming less and less common.

Seen from Edge's interpretation, reliance only on the craft approach to teaching is unsatisfactory in that the learning of a limited set of skills is inadequate in the multicultural, multifarious, context-dependent world of TESOL. Indeed, the preceding sections of this chapter suggest that the general movement in TESOL is toward a focus on more professional autonomy and situated personal judgement. It would appear, therefore, that the teaching of a certain set of actions and behaviours that can be used regardless of context is becoming less defensible (Richards and Nunan 1990, Kumaravadivelu 2006, Hobbs 2013).

In summarising these distinct models, Richards (1998: 48) returns to the theme of a continuum, describing how he sees novice teachers, at one end, needing the technical competence and the confidence to teach to principles that have empirical support. With experience, he suggests that teachers can begin forming personal theories and, as they develop, can move towards an art-craft approach that allows them more flexibility in adapting to the conditions of their particular teaching context. He views this as a move

from a top-down approach to a more individualistic, bottom up style of teacher development.

2.2.6   Reflective teaching

The ways in which reflective practice can facilitate learning and how its employment chimes with a sociocultural perspective of learning are discussed on the following pages. Two figures have been prominent in propelling reflective practice to its central role in education. Firstly, the renowned constructivist educationalist, Dewey (1933), who proposed his *Theory of reflective thought* in his classic work "How we think". Dewey's thesis was reworked half a century later when Donald Schön published his key text "The Reflective Practitioner" (1983) which encouraged critical thinking through a reflective process. Schön's work emerged from dissatisfaction with the kind of knowledge valued in higher education (theory) being out of sync with the kind of knowledge required to be effective in a professional workplace (practice). Not long after, Schön's notions began to have an impact in the world of language teacher education. Richards (1992) called for a move towards reflective teaching. He argued that teachers needed to move beyond the level of automatic or routinised responses to classroom situations and believed that by becoming more reflective, especially critically reflective, teachers may begin asking deeper questions about their actions and decisions. Such questioning would result, he believed, in teachers changing their perceptions about learning and the role that teachers play in the process. Over the last few decades, reflective practice has become a common feature in language teacher education programmes around the world. Occurring under a variety labels such as *reflective teaching* (Lockhart 1994*), *teacher as researcher* (Burns 1999), *a reflective approach* (Wallace 1991), it is an approach based on the assumption

that teachers can improve their teaching by consciously and systematically reflecting on their professional experiences.

Reflection in action and on action

Of importance to this study, are Schön's concepts of reflection *in* action and reflection *on* action. Schön's concepts have been criticised for lacking clarity with regard to what exactly goes on, psychologically, during reflection (Eraut 1994). However, there seems little doubt of the use of both notions in helping novice teachers understand the process they are going through. Reflection *in* action is sometimes described as 'thinking on our feet' and refers to episodes in a class when a teacher has to decide instantly about the direction of the lesson, for example to interrupt and correct or not, to engage further in dialogue with one learner or not, to provide feedback now or later – and so on. Experienced language teachers are familiar with the hundreds of such moments that occur in the classroom. These are the moments where a teacher has to make rapid decisions which involve calling on our linguistic knowledge, knowledge of learning, prior experiences, connecting with our feelings as to what may be plausible and also accessing our, perhaps subconscious, personal theories. They are the moments that Malderez and Wedell (2007: 25) refer to in their *knowing to* domain of knowledge, where, once again, teachers need to become skilled at noticing the multifarious aspects of classroom events and can therefore "*assess and interpret what they notice in order to make almost instantaneous decisions about what to do next*".

Edge (2010), suggests that it is through the exploration of such moments and through encouraging teachers to do so, that discoveries can be made regarding ways in which our personal histories and knowledge interact to affect our decision-making. Becoming aware

of this process, in turn assists novice teachers to mature into more critically reflective practitioners. As Roberts (1998: 207) notes, at pre-service level, learner teachers have not had enough experience to notice the same events, opportunities and upcoming problems that a more experienced teacher has. The learner teacher will likely be too focussed on managing his or her first ever teaching experiences to react to events as they unfold and expertly react in action. Nonetheless, facilitating discussion can "…*trigger awareness and act as springboard for them to explore their own beliefs and teaching in greater depth*" (Phipps 2007: 15).

However, organising discussions that attempt to promote a deeper understanding of teaching and learning processes allows LTs opportunity to reflect on the relationship between the focus to move away from viewing the practicum as an opportunity to demonstrate mastery of prescribed teaching behaviors. This deeper understanding can be stimulated through attempts to uncover decisions made by the LTs during planning as well as their classroom decisions made during the class; to reflect, in effect, *on action*.

Reflection *on action,* refers to a type of reflection that allows the teacher to explore why s/he acted as s/he did, what was happening in the class at the time and so on. In so doing, it allows the teacher the space to think about what can be learned from the episode and how this new knowledge may be applied or further explored in the future. It encourages teachers to develop sets of questions and ideas about their activities and practice. It may also inspire the teacher to explore the results of his / her planning and decision-making and theorize how these fit with their own theoretical learning and 'sense of plausibility'. And it is through facilitating opportunities for dialogic interaction that many commentators have argued that such reflection and learning can be optimised.

Reflective practice and teacher cognition

Earlier chapters of this thesis have described how, towards the end of the nineties, growing attention was being paid to the centrality of teacher beliefs in initial teacher preparation (Wright 1997, Borg 2001, Borg 2003) and it was seen how prior held beliefs do, indeed, have a major impact on the effectiveness of a course of teacher education.

For example, Almarza (1996: 73) contends that teacher preparation programmes should:

> ...aim to provide the space and means by which student teachers can bring up and examine their pre-training knowledge in order to see how it relates to teacher education knowledge so that learning is more meaningful.

As well as mediating the theory-practice gap, reflective practice is also an effective vehicle for addressing the role that prior beliefs may play in teacher thinking and development. Indeed, beliefs were central to Dewey's (1933: 9) work. This is illustrated, for example, in his call for teachers to undertake reflective inquiry that contains:

> *…*active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it and the further consequences to which it leads.

Powerful arguments also exist that reflective practice could be the vehicle that mediates development with regard to the perennial debate in ELT over the roles that theory and practice should play in SLTE. Crandall (2000:35) argues, in line with findings from research mentioned earlier, that decontextualized theory fails to address the multifarious nature and unpredictability of a classroom environment. In addition, the enormous variety of contexts that a teacher may encounter in their career renders insufficient any set of 'best practices' recommended as being appropriate for all contexts. She sees the growth of reflective practice and the attention to teacher cognition as evidence of the move away

from a top down *product* approach to SLTE to a more constructivist *process* oriented model.

The feedback event provides an effective vehicle for instilling in LTs the practice of reflection while at the same time facilitating immediate opportunities for cognitive development. Convincing theoretical arguments exist, therefore, that reflective practice may serve to not only provide a bridge to link the theory-practice divide but also as a vehicle that may be adopted to help overcome Lortie's "apprenticeship of observation" and thus allow real cognitive development (changes in beliefs) to occur. The dialogue that centres on reflection of a teaching episode is seen as key in this process, and the following pages outline a theoretical position that describes how such conversational interactions may expedite teacher learning.

Reflective practice and the sociocultural perspective

Reflection organised through dialogic interaction can be an effective way for learner teachers to make sense of declarative knowledge and the experience of learning to teach**,** as Vygotsky posited, "*Experience teaches us that thought does not express itself in words, but rather realizes itself in them*" (1986: 251)**.** Johnson (2009) refers to a number of studies (Edge and Richards 1998, Freeman and Johnson 1998) that have contributed to the legitimization of teacher knowledge by demonstrating the importance of reflection and inquiry as vehicles for change in an individual's classroom actions. Warford (2011: 6) also argues strongly in support of the perspective of knowledge as being one that is :

> Inherently situated and mediated (not transmitted) within an emergent and dynamic interaction... {and that}... consequently the curriculum should centre on establishing and promoting ongoing inner dialogues between prior experiences of teaching, the theoretical cannon and local practices.

The tools that curriculum designers can use to facilitate such dialogue are, of course, organised episodes of reflection on teaching and reflection on past learning experiences in the light of new knowledge. However, other activities can also be included in a course of teacher preparation that make possible such dialogues, and also encourage and direct the consideration and articulation of the LTs emergent understandings and beliefs. These include reports on classes observed, journals of personal learning, portfolios that reveal rationales for teaching plans based on current teacher-learner beliefs, and so on.

With the growing and recurrent influence of such social-constructivist and sociocultural perspectives on SLTE over the last decade, the process of reflective practice has continued to be a central component of teacher education courses. For example Smith (2001) draws on both Vygotskian and Deweyan theory in advocating that direct experience of teaching and observing in a constructivist manner should be central to teacher education programmes. She advises that such an approach, in which reflection plays a major part, is an effective way of introducing LTs to new pedagogy. Pennycook (2004: 6) also argues that learner teachers bring pre-formed views of teaching from their own histories and that mediated reflection allows educators to "*take into account our students' embodied histories of learning and teaching, the memories, pains and desires that have been written onto their educated bodies*". Reflective practice, when viewed from this perspective has much in common with a sociocultural understanding of teaching and learning.

2.2.7   Contemporary models: A TESOL community

Recent models of teacher learning have incorporated aspects of communities of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991) and sociocultural theory. Moreover, the ways in which thinking about how the goals of teacher education may aid understanding of the process have also surfaced as a means of understanding, organising and seeing teacher learning. Each of these contemporary models call on, to a greater or lesser extent, dialogic interaction and are the focus of the following pages.

Diaz Maggioli (2012: 13) has built upon the role of reflective practice in teacher education as well as on Richards' conceptions of teaching. In line with the sociocultural turn of the last few years, he adds the notion of "*participate and learn*" to models of teacher education and his view of traditions in teacher education below is outlined below:

Table 2.1 Participate and Learn Framework

	Look and learn	**Read and learn**	**Think and learn**	**Participate and learn**
Known as…	The craft tradition	The applied science tradition	The reflective tradition	The sociocultural tradition
Role of educator	Model	Resource selector and model	Facilitator	Community member (old timer) Change agent
Role of student teacher	Apprentice	Reader and applier of theory	Researcher and practitioner	Legitimate peripheral participant in community
Source of knowledge	Handed down theoretical / empirical fixed body of knowledge	Empirical and theoretical – research based fixed body.	Personal experience + empirical and theoretical research	Professional knowledge + personal knowledge + community knowledge + collective exploratory knowledge
Goals of education	Enhance knowledge of content through prescribed activities so everyone knows the same	Enhance knowledge of theory to guide practice	Enhance reflection in /on action to guide practice	Enhance participation in the community
Expected outcomes	DO teaching	KNOW about teaching	THINK like a teacher	BECOME a teacher
Orientation to training / education	Focused on teaching methods. Uniform procedures	Focussed on theory stemming from research. Prescribed ways of teaching	Focus on research anchored in action and reflection	Focussed on participation in the activities of the community and fostering the development of transformative intellectuals

Source for training	Uniform set of methods, techniques and procedures	Sets of related research literature - from applied linguistics, psychology and pedagogy	Personal action research projects derived from experience of teaching	Situated personal and collective experiences of the community of practice.
Theory – practice	Practice before theory	Theory before practice	Practice and theory	Theorizing practice and practicing theory

Diaz Maggioli's *participate and learn* perspective offers a sociocultural interpretation of teacher education. He refers to Lave and Wenger's (1991) notions of *community of practice* and *legitimate peripheral activity,* in describing how a more knowledgeable expert scaffolds the newcomer into the practice (Wood, Bruner et al. 1976). Diaz Maggioli (ibid.) suggests that this perspective is the most encompassing since it does not limit how learning takes place to knowledge from a teacher or, for example, from a syllabus reading list. Rather, all sources of knowledge, the personal (tacit and explicit beliefs), professional (TESOL theories and procedures) and community (the 'ways of doing') converge as the members construct understandings through the activities of teaching and learning.

The notion of communities of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991, Wenger 1999) is relevant to both teacher education and the importance that dialogue plays in its process. From a community of practice viewpoint, learning is a socially constructed activity not an individually based undertaking. Most people will belong to a number of 'communities' and the cultures of practice and language will naturally differ between these. Contrast a community of political activists with that of an amateur theatre group for example. Such communities may be made of groups of people who undertake a similar profession e.g. solicitors or nurses, or be made up of folk who share a similar passion or concern, e.g.

environmental protesters or birdwatchers. Lave and Wenger (1991) point out that communities can be comprised of old timers (experts) and newcomers (novices). The newcomers, who are learning the ropes, so to speak, begin as peripheral legitimate participants in the community and naturally engage in dialogue with the old timers. As Wenger (1999:45) describes, "*We interact with each other and with the world and we tune our relations with each other and with the world accordingly. In other words, we learn.*" From a communities of practice viewpoint, knowledge and learning are not the content of an individual's mind but the composite and aggregate understandings of a group that has a shared concern. Diaz Maggioli (ibid: 12) sees this as central to his perspective on how LTs become teachers, stating:

> Within a sociocultural perspective, professional knowledge (coded through theories and procedures), personal knowledge (tacit and explicit) and community knowledge (embedded in the day to day practices of the community) converge to help community members construct and reconstruct understandings through their involvement in the practices of teaching and learning.

Diaz Maggioli contends that from this sociocultural perspective, the problem of a theory-practice divide is overcome by seeing both as necessary in order to participate in the community of practice. There is constant interaction in both (theory and practice) as the novice teachers take part in the processes of teaching and reflection. At the same time, the LTs are also encouraged to draw on new knowledge and theories in demonstrating the reasoning and justification behind their pedagogical actions and decisions.

The goals of teacher education

A further way to conceptualize teacher education is put forward by Malderez and Wedell (2007). They ask what the 'goals' should be for teacher learning. This is a fundamental question for all who plan and design courses of teacher education but nevertheless is not

one to which a simple answer can be given. A complex mix of factors needs to be considered in order to reach a principled personal theory on such matters. For example, one's conscious or subconsciously held views on language, learning, language teaching and teacher learning may all contribute to how the content and process undertaken on a course of teacher education is organized. Moreover, external factors will also almost always affect the goals. For example, does the educational organisation need or want to confer a formal qualification and if so, who validates the learning? What are their criteria based upon? And so on. Malderez and Wedell provide a framework and identify five possible goals of teacher education:

Producing good teachers
In this, the goal is on instilling confidence and belief in LTs – ensuring they feel prepared enough to survive in a classroom situation. The emphasis, as they see it, is on fostering the teacherly qualities and interpersonal skills of the learner teachers. This would include areas such as developing the ability to empathize with students, to build rapport, construct relationships with students and colleagues etc.

Producing good teaching
 Wedell and Malderez highlight the complex nature of teaching referring to the notions of context, activity type, teacher roles, creativity and flexibility. When good teaching is the primary goal, then, as noted above, much depends upon how one conceives good teaching. Some educators in the post-method world of TESOL may pinpoint areas such as class-management, the ability to identify learner needs, the ability to scaffold learning and so on, as indispensable features of effective practice (Scrivener 1994, Harmer 2006). As we have seen, others may prefer to focus on the ability to produce reflective

practitioners (Farrell 2007) or be concerned about raising LTs awareness of a more critical

agenda in TESOL (Pennycook 2004, Crookes 2013).

Producing teaching professionals

The importance of fitting the model of professional teacher may, according to Wedell and

Malderez, be very important for a teacher starting out. The implications of a model that

does focus on producing professional practitioners include, amongst other factors,

understanding to whom they are accountable, obtaining specialist and recognizable

qualifications, belonging to professional bodies, attending conferences and so on. Leung

(2009: 55) argues that given the varied social and political circumstances in which ELT

takes place, and diverse professional environments which teachers have to contend with,

teacher education programmes should offer student teachers the "*opportunity to develop*

a professional orientation that takes account of both sponsored and independent

professionalism" and contends that this means:

> … inculcating a cast of mind that is capable of critical reflection on
> one's daily work that can lead to a considered view of one's
> professional activities, alternative perspectives and follow-up activities
> where appropriate.

Teachers as technicists

With the technicist goal, teachers become adept at the techniques and tasks that are

deemed important to perform in the role that the target methodology demands. A

technicist teacher needs to be skilled and comfortable in implementing the procedures

and using the materials that others have designed. Although an apparently rigid,

inflexible, top-down directed goal, Malderez and Wedell recognize that educational

systems and novice teachers may well see this goal as desirable at least as preparation for

the initial stages of a career in language teaching. With regards to educational (or national

and international) systems, having a set of materials and procedures that can be followed

may well tick accountability boxes and, to some extent, provide a form of security against damage limitation. Prescribed approaches, materials, techniques and so on may, in the eyes of some stakeholders, prevent teachers from straying too far away from a prearranged and approved syllabus. In my own experience of teaching at more than a dozen institutions in various countries, such approaches to the organisation of teaching certainly are commonplace. Indeed, such control is reported later in this thesis by a participant who recounts her experience of teaching at a UK summer school. However, training teachers to be adept in the techniques and approaches of any one method, in a post-method TESOL world, now seems a dated and rather limiting objective (Kumaravadivelu 2006, Ur 2013).

Teacher as reflective practitioner

Malderez and Wedell highlight the central role that reflection has come to play in SLTE. They pinpoint the importance of understanding why an activity or action may have promoted learning and contrast such thoughtful activity with the blind adherence to a set of prescribed techniques and behaviours. They do, however, draw attention to how the notion of reflective practitioner has, perhaps like the notion of CLT, come to mean rather different things to different people.

Kumaravadivelu (2006: 182), believes the goals of teacher educators should be to construct a model of teacher education that is dialogically constructed by participants who "*think and act critically*". Such a model, he contends, should incorporate a number of "*macrostrategies*" which involve the teacher educator attempting to cover a number of pedagogic bases such as fostering language awareness, contextualising linguistic input and raising cultural conscience. However, also included are somewhat ambiguous

strategies such as the need to *maximise learning opportunities* and to *promote learner autonomy.*

The teacherly qualities described by contemporary commentators such as Diaz-Maggioli, Malderez and Wedell and Kumaravadivelu represent a crucial shift in how teaching may be conceived. To differing degrees, they have further developed the reconceptualization of teacher knowledge that Freeman and Johnson (1998) called for, two decades ago. They have downplayed the importance of demonstrable technical skills and actions that have conventionally been used to discuss teaching skills, proficiency or expertise. Instead, the focus has shifted toward the learner and on equipping novice teachers to view the learning process in such a way that encourages them to decide upon a course of action appropriate to the time and context (Murray 2009).

This chapter has, so far, discussed the role that a greater research emphasis on teacher cognition has played in bringing about a reconceptualization of teacher knowledge as well as a reconceptualization of how second language teacher education may be organised. Wright (2010) notes that the shift towards constructivism, identified and detailed a decade earlier by Crandall (2000), has indeed continued, with social-constructivist and sociocultural perspectives increasingly being used as frameworks for understanding language teaching pedagogy. In an attempt to frame how these changes may be perceived, Wright (2010: 273) identifies four characteristics that appear to be emerging in SLTE pedagogy.

1)   An emphasis on the student teacher LEARNING to teach and becoming a THINKING teacher.

2)   The programming in to Teacher Education courses of a great deal of REFLECTIVE

ACTIVITY on learning experiences.

3)   The above also entails a commitment to student teacher INQUIRY into one's own

beliefs and narratives and into the professional contexts of teaching and learning

for which student teachers are being prepared.

4)   The appropriation of pedagogies from mainstream adult education whose central

idea is learning from experience (Kolb 1984: cited in Wright ibid).

Wright (ibid: 274) highlights how contemporary models of SLTE pedagogy bear

resemblance to Kolb's (1984) learning cycle which focusses learning around the

constructivist tenets of learning by doing, the centrality of reflection, the importance of

dialogic interaction and the key roles of past experience and beliefs in understanding and

processing new information (Golombek 1998, Farrell 2007, Malderez and Wedell 2007,

Wright and Bolitho 2007). The themes identified by Wright also correspond to the reasons

for dialogic teaching and exploratory talk becoming a growing feature in SLTE literature.

2.2.8   Dialogue in teacher education
Much literature in teacher education discusses the role of dialogic pedagogy, both with

regard to the Vygotskian concept of scaffolding as well as the with regard to the

Bakhtinian notion of the benefits of open, collaborative interaction.

Kumaravadivelu (2006: 182) argues that in order to avoid teacher education that merely

passes on a syllabus of declarative knowledge, a model needs to be adopted that is

"*dialogically constructed by participants who think and act critically*". The employment of

reflection, through talk, in mediating development is central to a sociocultural theory of

mind as Johnson (2000: 4) has described:

> Learning to teach is ultimately a reflective process, but it is also extremely complex. When teachers and teacher educators honestly and openly engage in deliberate reflection on and critical enquiry into their own experiences and practices, they become open to true learning...

Other commentators also make reference to the importance of dialogue to teacher education. Allwright and Hanks (2009), in discussing the notion of exploratory practice, suggest that a focus on the mechanics of teaching during initial teacher preparation can reinforce the idea that ELT expertise consists of the acquisition of core observable skills and that such a focus excludes an appreciation of the more subtle aspects of teacher knowledge. They view the feedback discussion as an ideal opportunity to access trainees' thinking on teaching ideas. They concede that such discussions are rarely straightforward but that, nonetheless:

> It is precisely during feedback discussions, however, that we might expect beliefs about learners to emerge. Powerfully, from trainers and trainees alike given the immediacy of the preceding classroom experience. It is a key opportunity in trainees' professional lives for their developing ideas to be analysed and accepted, adapted or rejected and for trainers to suggest their own pedagogic ideas and their own view of learners, with all the authority of their position as trainers. (ibid. 77)

Golombek (1998: 461) has also stressed that new knowledge or theory must be discussed in light of students' *"experiential knowledge"* and thus learner teachers should be guided into considering and assessing the knowledge and ideas that they bring with them to a course of education. Singh and Richards (2006: 166) point out that through participation in discussions that reflect on teaching, *"teachers can come to validate their own knowledge and beliefs or reshape them through dialogue with others"*. Farr (2010: 10) reaches a similar conclusion and argues that providing learner teachers with the space to articulate their experience plays a key and central role in teacher learning. She describes how such articulation *"allows the student teachers to*

take ownership of their own experiences and feelings vis a vis a more authoritative

figure…"

Farr notes how judicious prompting can promote learning when talk is mediated by an alert *more knowledgeable other*. Such interaction helps in identifying and working within a novice LT's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and consequently guides the educator in providing appropriate scaffolding (Wood, Bruner et al. 1976). She refers to an interesting quote from Wertsch, which highlights how interaction *"…may also help to reduce the problem of different interpretations of reality and of the difficulties associated with discerning motives behind actions"* Wertsch (1998:15). This notion is crucial to this study since it is not difficult to envisage how an experienced ELT educator may well interpret things very differently to a learner teacher undertaking his or her first ever teaching experience. The issue revolves around the concept of intersubjectivity (van Lier 2004) and is discussed in further detail later in this chapter.

Within the Vygotskian framework, the practicum is the catalyst that allows the essential blending of the declarative (scientific) course content with the everyday concepts held by the learner teachers. Warford (2011: 2) accentuates the importance of engaging LTs in dialogue during the practicum, noting that great care must be taken in uncovering the novice teacher's tacitly held beliefs about effective pedagogy in *"helping them to weave expert and experiential knowledge"* and argues that *"failure to do so will only result in perpetuating the dominant transmission approach"*. He recommends that a teacher education curriculum should *"centre on establishing and promoting ongoing inner dialogues between prior experiences of teaching, the theoretical cannon and local practices"* (ibid: 6). In outlining a theoretical framework that describes Zones of Proximal *Teacher* Development he stresses that a mediational rather than checklist approach to

teacher education is critical. The theoretical underpinnings for the importance of talk in learning are detailed in section 2.4 of this chapter.

2.3   The practicum

The reasons for the practicum forming a core part of teacher education are outlined on the following pages. Three recent studies that focus on the feedback discussions and which address the importance of the style and manner of the feedback discussion are considered. The final part of the section addresses the problems that educators and researchers face in attempting to better organise and understand the practicum process.

The practicum is a key part of most teacher education courses with the observed live practice sessions and subsequent post-class feedback discussions forming a central component of the learning teaching process (Brandt 2008, Copland 2010, Engin 2013). Christopher (cited in Williams 2009) reports that on TESOL MA programmes in the United States and Canada, more than 80 per cent offer or require a practicum of some kind while Brandt (2006) points out that in the United Kingdom there are over 700 short intensive courses offered through institutions - with most including a teaching practice component. Practice classes on a short-course have traditionally allowed the teacher educator the space to help the novice learn the art and craft of teaching, the standard behaviours and techniques that may be needed for classroom survival. On a short-term course of teacher training, the feedback event provides the opportunity for educators to comment on matters of teacher performance and offer practical suggestions and advice on a tremendously wide range of topics. The guidance may relate to practical activities such as organising board-work and instruction-giving or be centred around more pedagogically

focussed matters such as grammar presentation techniques or approaches to error correction.

The opportunity to teach and to receive feedback on one's teaching seems a welcome, if nerve wracking, component of ELT preparation. In her comprehensive study of feedback on language teacher education programmes, Farr (2010:164) found that over 90% of LTs believe that feedback on teaching performance had an impact on their practice with approximately half the respondents reporting that the feedback had a positive only effect. However, half of the respondents also reported that the feedback has the potential to have both a positive and negative impact. This can be read, perhaps, as an acknowledgement of just how stressful initial teaching practice sessions can be for the learner teacher. It also suggests the need for a great deal of sensitivity, clarity of aims and realistic assessment of what is achievable by learner teachers.

The literature reviewed in this document supports the contention that learner teachers should be given the opportunity of undertaking a practicum and that in doing so, opportunities for reflection on what they have experienced are supported, encouraged and facilitated by the educator. Hence the practicum, as well as providing a vehicle for dialogic mediation, can be seen as the catalyst for instigating reflection and thus promoting opportunities to begin to develop the essential skills of *knowing how* and *knowing to* (Malderez and Wedell 2007). Although the post-observation feedback discussion has recently become the focus of attention of a limited number of researchers (see below), little seems to be known about the effects and implications that such a dialogic approach to teacher education may have on learner teachers.

2.3.1   Recent studies

Despite some claims of a scarcity of SLTE research conducted in this area, a number of studies have focussed on this aspect of teacher development (Vásquez and Reppen 2007, Copland 2010) and the following section discusses contemporary research that has concentrated on examining talk in the feedback discussions.

How scaffolding is conducted

In a study of an MA class of Turkish pre-service English language teacher LTs, Engin (2013) reveals how trainer talk in the post-observation feedback session can scaffold LTs' understandings of teaching. Undertaking a qualitative, case study approach, Engin transcribed twenty three feedback sessions and coded the transcripts, highlighting any interactions that seemed related to learning or scaffolding. The data revealed the complexities involved in the spontaneous provision of effective scaffolding. Her research highlights the difficulty of knowing when and deciding how to intervene during a feedback discussion in order to best guide an LT's emerging understanding of the learning and teaching process.

In examining her own feedback discussions through a sociocultural lens, Engin (ibid: 18) suggests that dialogic scaffolding can occur on a number of levels from open questions to direct telling. Acknowledging that the dynamic nature of dialogic guidance is a complex and far from fully understood operation, she identifies five levels of scaffolding talk (overleaf) that a trainer may employ during the practicum to "…*act as a point of reference for trainers while engaged in eliciting evaluation and reflection from LTs*". The levels run along a continuum in which a level one type question would be a general open question while at level five the trainer tells the novice teacher what to do. Levels two, three and four consist of specific, focused questions, closed yes / no questions and slot fill prompts which all

attempt to guide the novice teacher into an understanding of the teaching aspect under discussion.

Table 2.2 Levels of scaffolding

Level	Descriptor	Strategy	Example of trainer language
1	General open question	Trainer invites trainee to reflect on lesson.	"What would you like to say about your lesson?"
2	Specific "wh" question	Trainer asks trainee about specific part of lesson.	"How did you give your instructions?"
3	Closed "yes / no" questions	Trainer asks trainee a closed specific question to which the trainee is guided".	"Did you tell the students in the front row?"
4	Slot fill prompts	Trainer starts the response, and leaves the trainee to finish the sentence.	'You wanted the students to read for …?'
5	Telling	Trainer tells the trainee what the problem is. Often followed by a prompt from a different level.	'What do you think about the chapter?' is much too vague. What could the question be? 'Can you tell me?, for example, 'can you tell me…?'.

Engin (2013:17) suggests that the onus for effective scaffolding is on the educator and his or her ability to identify when and how to prompt the learner teachers into greater understanding. In consequence, such shrewd intervention is argued to propel the LTs into articulating their understandings and thus effect development. She notes that reflection in the LT was key and that "*there must be evidence of this in the response for the trainer to conclude that scaffolding has taken place*". Engin's study does not, however, make specific reference to any knowledge base(s) that the learner teachers may have access to or exposure to in order to facilitate their development. In other words, there is no clear

indication of the role declarative knowledge plays in assisting the teacher-led scaffolding or in the LTs' development.

Power and understanding

Copland (2010) undertook on a study of teachers attending a Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA) course. Adopting a linguistic ethnographic approach to analysing data, she collected fourteen hours of audio recorded feedback conferences and supplemented this data with information from interviews conducted with LTs and trainers. She conducted a micro-analysis on four extracts of feedback talk supported by interview extracts which "*embed the linguistic analysis and the discussion in descriptions of context of use*" (ibid: 3).

She found that tensions existed as a result of the different expectations between and amongst the trainers and LTs and contends that the differences are not primarily connected to the trainer's role in both assessment and development; rather they are a result of the participatory structures that exist in group feedback. In other words, the LTs may find the discussions opaque or may not contribute much during post-teaching feedback sessions, as they do not understand how to. Copland (ibid.) suggests that the strictures of time and assessment could also play a part in hindering development and advises that greater trainee preparation for the group feedback event could result in opportunities for more effective, exploratory discussion.

Expanding on the theme of the feedback conference in a later paper, Copland (2012) posits that even though feedback discussions may be conducted in an informal atmosphere, the context of undertaking a formal course of education means that "*there are clear expectations about who is allowed to speak, to whom, about what and whose knowledge counts*" (2012:16). She observes that the trainers' views on pedagogy are expected to be

taken on board, even if the LTs disagree with them and records how teacher trainer advice is often transmitted through long turns and characterized through self-selections and interruptions.

With regard to the shape of the feedback event, Copland describes the structure and conventions that she found prevailed on the short-term course of her study. In line with Engin's study on a post-graduate course, she found that that the teacher educator dominates the discussions and identifies the following phases of interaction. Although not rigid, she reports that the order of the phases was, in general, constant (Copland 2008: 16).

Table 2.3 Phases of interaction

Phase 1	Trainee asked to comment on lesson	Self Evaluation Phase
Phase 2	Trainer asks about particular sections of lesson	Questioning Phase
Phase 3	Trainer gives positive and negative feedback	Trainer feedback Phase
Phase 4	Trainer asks other LTs to comment	Peer feedback phase
Phase 5	Trainer provides summary of strengths and weaknesses	Summary Phase

Politeness and hedging

Vásquez (2004), analysed recordings from feedback discussions that took place during six post-observation meetings of teaching episodes that were taught by students on an MA TESOL course in the United States. The students were already teaching assistants and the observations and feedback discussions took place each semester in order for the course administrators to offer guidance and support to the assistants. Vasquez (ibid: 37), in attempting to compensate for the "*paucity of literature currently available on the interactional dynamics and language used in teaching training / mentoring contexts*", examined the discourse of the teacher / supervisor interactions. She collected primary data from a transcription of the post-observation meetings and supplemented this with secondary data from interviews. Taking a pragmatic approach, she adopted a mixed method analysis of the data, employing both qualitative and quantitative techniques.

Her findings reveal that a variety of politeness strategies were employed by the teacher supervisors in guiding and advising the assistants. These included lexical hedging, complimenting before criticising, using modal auxiliaries and a range of other techniques that aimed to both save face and reduce the social asymmetry of the participants involved in the discussions. Vasquez reports that this resulted in the assistants possibly forming the impression that they received little advice or constructive criticism during the meetings. An interesting finding with regard to this study is that Vasquez found that by and large, only minimal responses were produced following the guidance and suggestions offered by the supervisors during the feedback sessions that followed episodes of teaching. She suggests that the lack of engagement and clear advice may leave teachers thinking that there is no room for improvement. She recommends that further research may focus on investigating

the ways in which such limited interaction and minimal responses during discussion can be overcome by teacher educators.

All three studies outlined above focus on the moves taken by the educator to scaffold learning and highlight, in one way or another, the lack of intersubjectivity (van Lier 1996) that can cause difficulties during the practicum. None of the studies focus on an attempt to promote a more dialogic pedagogy; in other words, an attempt to facilitate co-constructed talk with individuals or freer talk within the learner teacher cohort. Chapter four records findings from this research which records the attempt to promote not only educator-led dialogic teaching but also co-constructed, exploratory talk (Mercer 1995) that involved all the participants. That is to say, not only talk which is guided and governed by the educator but a form of talk in which peer-peer interaction may be seen to be advantageous in facilitating learning. It is extremely challenging to attribute conceptual development, or learning, to specific areas yet the theoretical arguments presented in this thesis, that advocate providing opportunities for this type of reciprocal scaffolding (van Lier 2004), are convincing.

However, it is also important to note not just the structure and organisation of feedback but also how the feedback is conducted. A number of researchers (Freeman 1982, Díaz-Maggioli 2012, Soslau 2012) have considered this area in some detail and contend that the style of talk, not the shape or content alone, may play a large part in teacher learning, as the next section examines.

2.3.2 The style of talk

All three of the studies described above are calling, in one way or another, for increased interaction and certainly greater understanding between the educator and the learner teacher and a number of academics have looked at how the style of talk may influence or

assist in this objective of mutual comprehension during the discussion. For example, Freeman (1982) advocated non-directive talk as an approach to feedback more than thirty years ago. He advises a move away from an authoritarian orientation and describes three approaches to teacher observation/supervision:

 1) The supervisory approach (with the supervisor as the authority figure)

2) The alternatives approach (with the supervisor as a provider of alternative perspectives)

3) The non-directive approach.

Freeman, as well as many others (Mercer 2000, Kumaravadivelu 2006, Lantolf and Poehner 2011) describes effective interaction as that which includes not just teacher input but also peer contribution. Taking a non-directive approach is understood by educators to allow an atmosphere of trust and support to develop since LTs are encouraged to contribute to discussions and to question ideas and arguments put forward by the educator and others (Gebhard 1990). Such conditions are argued to result in the novice teachers feeling freer to try out their own ideas and more fully immerse themselves in the thinking behind teacher decision-making. It offers more opportunities for the LTs to express doubts, uncertainties, or, for example, to clear up any incongruities between their theoretical, personal and practical knowledge bases.

 Soslau (2012) also puts forward a description of supervisory styles that may be employed during the feedback event (overleaf). She draws attention to the fact that the type of discourse that emerges is influenced by the supervisory style employed. She maintains that getting students to merely recount what happened in the lesson, without justification or critical analysis, results in missed opportunities to develop a deeper understanding of teaching and learning. Similarly, a supervisory style that involves mostly 'telling', i.e.

offering tips and advice on how things should be done would also lead to lost opportunities for understanding how the teaching and learning process may be perceived. The table below offers a list of styles identified by Soslau.

Table 2.4 Supervisory styles

Supervisory style	Description
Telling	Supervisor offers tips, suggests areas for improvement, offers opinions and judgements
Active coaching	Supervisor makes systematic interventions in the student teachers' reflections on practice, allows student teachers to articulate their experience and sifts out significant features, values and assumptions. Supervisor challenges student teachers' versions of events and examines alternative possibilities.
Guiding	Supervisor is a critical friend and focuses on pupils' learning rather than teaching performance. Questioning revolves around asking "why" rather than "how" or "what" of teaching performance. Supervisor drives the process by examining and challenging the planning and intentions of the student.
Inquiry	Supervisor and student teacher operate together, through co-inquiry, to investigate the causes or possible solutions and to look for new situations in which to test ideas. They both draw on the evidence from the classroom. Supervisor allows the student to take the lead in the evaluation.
Reflecting	Supervisor probes, questions and, while providing a fund of relevant contextual knowledge and experiences of their own in relation to critical reflection, allows the student teacher to engage in reflection and reflect on conditions and contributory factors.

Soslau's table reveals ways in which a far more dialogic environment seems to be the aim. Her 'systematic interventions' are in line with Engin's emphasis on the educator identifying opportunities for scaffolding, yet the '*focus on learning rather than teaching performance'*, suggest that Soslau's concern is for cognitive, long-term development as well as the more immediate focus on observable teacherly behaviors. She describes an approach that

appears deeply concerned with articulating reflection that bears down on both declarative knowledge and practice and in which interaction is jointly constructed by both the educator and LT rather than exchanges which are guided solely by the educator.

Diaz Maggioli (2012) also points out that the style of supervision is crucial and his *participate and learn* notion that was detailed on table 2.1 (vide supra, p.62) similarly draws attention to the importance of the manner of interaction together with personal, practical and pedagogical knowledge. Yet he strongly supports the contention that the *way* in which the feedback is given during the post teaching conference is as important as the content (2012: 93). He views the feedback given to aspiring teachers, both in the planning process and following a teaching slot, as being central to the learning process and uses the metaphor of C.A.R.E to construct a framework for providing formative feedback.

Table 2.5 Formative feedback framework

| **C.** CLARIFY: The feedback giver asks questions about things that are not clear or points that have not been   properly illuminated. |
| **A:** APPRECIATE: The educator states what he has found effective, strong, impressive or innovative. |
| **R.** REFLECT: Both the giver and receiver of feedback engage in reflection about the potential problems or challenges found. This dialogic interaction will provide clarification and also point out possible future directions. |
| **E.** EMPOWER: During the last phase of the interactive process, suggests ways in which concerns can be addressed. |

Interestingly, this framework focuses on one area, the reflection stage, where dialogic interaction may most effectively take place. The teacher educator, having made explicit in the learner teacher's mind the need to adopt a certain process / technique / approach etc. is freed in the empower stage to pass on his old timer's "*knowing how*" knowledge

(Malderez & Wedell 2007). It seems to be at this point, where the educator has accessed a novice teacher's beliefs and when intersubjectivity (vide supra, p.109) has been achieved through judicious prompting, and sharing of understandings, that the learner teacher's mind is most malleable to cognitive development (Bruner 1999).

Kurtoglu-Hooton (2008) argues that research from social psychology can be useful in understanding the learning that takes place during the feedback event. She highlights the importance of not only *corrective* feedback but also, in line with Diaz Maggioli's *Appreciate* stage, the notion of *confirmatory* feedback. Where the former implies that there may have been a more effective approach or technique that the novice teacher may have utilised, the latter involves positive comment on aspects of the planning, teaching or decision-making that have worked well. Kurtoglu-Hooten suggests that such confirmatory feedback is often "*perfunctory*" (ibid: 39) and that learning opportunities are possibly missed when the reasons behind praiseworthy actions are not fully explored or made explicit. This seems to be an especially valid point in the context of group discussions where participants are afforded the opportunity to learn from one another.

2.3.3 Problems of the practicum

The challenges that two recent researchers (Farr 2010, Soslau 2012) encountered in studying a teaching practicum are detailed on the following pages. Corroboration from other findings is also provided. These issues are crucially important to any investigation wishing to better understand the process of development during a teaching practicum.

In her study from general education, Soslau (2012: 778) found that in order to facilitate more "*adaptive teaching expertise*" teacher educators on the practicum need to employ far more non-directive approaches to organising the feedback event. With reference to

experienced teachers she explains how expert teachers are able to adapt their behaviour to their context because:

> …they think deeply about their justifications for decision-making, notice pupils' needs in real time, are capable of making adjustments to their planned decisions, in action and for future action, and are able to balance their own experimentation with potential risks to their pupils.

It would be unrealistic to expect learner teachers to act in such a manner at this initial stage of their development, yet making the LTs aware of how expert teachers think and behave may well be beneficial to long-term development. Soslau (ibid.) draws attention to three obstacles novice teachers commonly face during the practicum component of their teaching education that can prevent their development of adaptive expertise and argues that a more critical, dialogic approach to the feedback event may be more beneficial to the novice teachers.

The first problem she outlines is that of *unquestioned familiarity.* In an account that resembles the sociocultural description of *everyday concepts,* and Lortie's Apprenticeship of Observation*,* Soslau (ibid: 770) explains how, on the practicum, teachers often revert to teaching in ways in which they themselves were taught. They may be imitating a technique or procedure modelled by the trainer, but, as Soslau points out "*the student teacher is not privy to the cooperating teacher's internal rationale".* This means they fail to make instructional decisions based on any pedagogic justification that is related to the learners' academic or social needs. They are missing *any* learning that may help them take steps towards Malderez and Wedell's "knowing to"(2007). Indeed, they have missed the opportunity to bridge the learning that can link the scientific and everyday concepts.

The second problem of the practicum that Soslau identifies concerns what she terms t*he dual purpose pitfall*. She points out how expert teachers learn by experimenting and

varying their teaching while at the same time being mindful of their students' needs and learning. Conversely, novice teachers are predominantly focussed on their own teaching and not, primarily on helping their students to learn and, as Soslau explains, opportunities to practice balancing such dual purposes are often missed.

The final problem she alludes to is the way in which novice teachers, once again possibly as a result of the Lortie effect, fail to understand the complexity and highly diverse nature of the classroom and thus base their decisions on superficial understandings of a classroom dynamics. That is, novice teachers often fail to realise that the pedagogical decisions that they need to take to ensure successful lessons depend to a very large extent on the teaching *situation* in which they are taken; in other words, on the multifarious learner variables and sociocultural context of the class. The novice teachers are often unable to respond to or identify emerging classroom needs and opportunities; they do not yet have access to the type of complex understanding detailed under Malderez and Wedell's (2007) *knowing to* domain of knowledge. Neither do they yet have, in most cases, the pedagogic or language awareness expertise to operate so spontaneously. Soslau (ibid.) highlights the fears many novice teachers have of "going off script", of departing from their planned series of activities and tasks regardless of the pedagogic advantage that may be gained from doing so. As with many other writers cited in this study, Soslau believes that it is in organising the feedback event in such a way as to prompt the learner teacher to use critical and justificatory discourse that best aids the development of adaptive expertise in the long run.

While the creation of conditions favourable to dialogic interaction may well be the recommendation of many contemporary theorists, the process of supervision on the practicum and the subsequent feedback discussions are areas that are replete with

problematic variables. It is therefore useful to look at such variables using the categories that Farr (2010) identifies as emerging from literature on the supervision of teacher education.

Conflicting agendas

A recurring theme in teacher education is the conflict between assessment and learning (Holland and Adams 2002). Whereas the teacher educator may be aiming to create a collaborative environment in which all are encouraged to share open and frank views, the novice teachers, perhaps eager to gain good marks in their degree award, most often view the process from the angle of what they have to do to get high grades. The reality in most teacher education settings is that assessment procedures must be in place in order to satisfy the various stakeholders involved in any process of formal education. The feedback event, therefore, and the way in which it is organised, may well be based on ensuring the LTs improve aspects of their practice in order to satisfy appraisal criteria issued by awarding bodies – rather than be based on views of how teacher knowledge may be facilitated or how teacher learning may best take place etc. (Copland 2010, Hobbs 2013). What is more, the dual roles of mentor and assessor mean that even though the practicum and feedback sessions are a crucial and valued aspect in learning teaching, they can also be problematic and a source of tension on teacher education courses (Brandt 2008). Moreover, Copland (2010) describes how friction and missed learning opportunities may arise between trainer and trainee as a result of differences in understandings and expectations of the feedback process. She draws our attention to the fact that tensions may emerge not only from trying to balance evaluation with developmental discourse but also from the educators' attempts to facilitate collaborative learning environments. She describes findings that highlight the pressures of taking part in peer feedback along with

the difficulties that may be involved in enabling learner teachers to publicly reflect on the teaching episode they have just undertaken. Copland (ibid.) suggests that greater effort and time need to be dedicated to preparing learner teachers for the feedback process as well as the introduction of a variety of feedback structures such as paired feedback and card feedback.

Farr (2010:24) also guides us to consider the issue of misunderstanding between the educator and learner teacher. She refers to situations where a poor technique or lesson plan may be seen by the educator as an LT's inability to grasp a skill or process while the novice may have actually been teaching the class in a manner that chimed most closely with his / her beliefs about how an aspect of teaching and learning should be conducted. It is difficult to resist surmising that greater intersubjectivity (vide supra, p.109) achieved through increased opportunities for interaction, may be an effective tool in overcoming such incongruities; avoiding what is described by Wertsch (1998:15) as "*a mismatch of reality*".

Expectation versus reality

Farr (ibid.) points out that many of the suggestions that commentators make regarding how best to conduct the feedback event may often be unworkable in practice. Organisational and financial constraints combined with practical issues such as arranging language-learner cohorts or co-ordinating teacher-student timetables mean the practicum frequently operates under less than ideal structures. Farr also notes that learner teachers often face feelings of disillusionment and subsequent drops in motivation when they find their survival in the classroom must take precedence over their effective delivery of any teaching approaches or techniques that they have been studying as part of their preparation. Moreover, the desire to take risks and experiment with emerging understandings of what

constitutes an effective language classroom may, understandably, be muted if it is the case that each teaching episode may count towards a final summative assessment.

Paradox of facilitator roles – assessor and helper

The conflict between the learners' desire for good grades and the educators' desire to produce competent practitioners has been described above. Yet the issue is complicated further if one takes the view, as many do (Brandt 2006, Engin 2013, Hobbs 2013, Stanley and Murray 2013) that evaluating teaching cannot be reduced to a set of tick box competencies. Commentators advocate that good practice in SLTE involves arming novice teachers with the skills and tools to be able to make informed methodological choices in their situated context and be able to apply others' theories and ideas in an appropriately critical and reflective manner. It is an approach that Edge (2010: 11) advises, "*enables teachers to transcend simply repetitive practice*".

Others add the warning that post teaching comments that are too focussed on ensuring teaching practice meeting assessment criteria run the risk of squeezing out opportunities for genuine reflection during the feedback sessions (Copland, Ma et al. 2009). Further, teacher educators have reported on the difficulties of awarding and discussing grades during feedback (Mann 2005). Allocating learner teachers a summative mark after each teaching practice episode can have a detrimental effect on learner teachers' motivation. However, some research findings suggest learner teachers feel the main point of the practicum is for evaluation purposes and that to be graded against a set of standard criteria is their right (Farr 2010: 26).

Attributes and Behaviours of Supervisors

It seems clear that in a profession that is based in no small part on the social skills of its practitioners, the relationship between the educator and novice teacher will have a strong influence on how much learning takes place. Indeed Diaz Maggioli (2012) as detailed earlier, strongly believes that the quality of the interaction, the atmosphere within which feedback is conducted and its impact on development during the discussion is connected to the participants' attitudes toward feedback. Farr (ibid.) cites studies that identify teacher educator attributes that LTs indicated were important for their education. Perhaps unsurprisingly, these included qualities such as being enthusiastic, helpful and knowledgeable and also behaviours such as guidance in the form of sharing experiences, checking lesson plans and providing more opportunities for teaching.

Temporal Considerations

The final variable that Farr (ibid.) draws attention to is the impact on timing of feedback and the effect that instantaneous or delayed feedback may have on the novice teacher. Most feedback has traditionally been undertaken following a teaching episode, with the educator "*sitting mutely in the corner taking notes on the various teaching slots*" (Thornbury 2011) and the feedback taking place immediately *afte*r the slot. Farr puts forward arguments that suggest feedback given sooner is better for development since the longer it is delayed, the longer it may take for any modification of behaviour or thinking to occur. Taking things one step further, Thornbury (ibid.) draws on both cognitive learning theory and the notion of scaffolding to argue the case for providing formative comment and direction while the teacher is actually teaching his / her class. Farr, while able to see the benefits of this approach, nonetheless highlights the problems that may arise when learner teachers are given feedback during their teaching episode. These include some

predictable issues such as a feeling of being undermined in front of the language learners and the loss of instructional momentum in the lesson. Although Thornbury does not provide suggestions for how to overcome such feelings, it is interesting to note that the teaching practice sessions on the course of TESOL preparation which Thornbury runs are not assessed. Instead, evaluation is placed on the novice teachers' *"capacity to learn from experience"*.

From the preceding pages a number of conclusions may be reached regarding the organization and successful running of a practicum. Firstly, that the overseer's role (be it as educator, assessor, teacher-trainer, facilitator, old timer or researcher) must be an extremely reflexive one. In other words, the potentially different aims, agendas, understandings and so on, must be kept in mind throughout the process. Secondly, the teacher educator must develop a realistic sense of what learner teachers can be expected to achieve in a classroom at this very early point in their career. Finally, in addition to making efforts to create conditions favourable to exploratory dialogue / genuine reflection, the overseer must be sensitive to the challenge that all learner teachers have to tackle in undertaking an observed practicum for the first time.

The final section of the literature review details the theoretical perspectives of learning and teaching that underpin this research. Examining teacher-learning from a sociocultural perspective of mind allows consideration of both the social and cognitive process involved in teacher education. Taking a sociocultural viewpoint of learning can, as Johnson (2009: 1) puts it:

> … enable our field to trace the inherent complexities that make up the sum of L2 teachers' learning and teaching experiences, and make visible what those experiences ultimately lead to.
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2.4   Theoretical underpinnings

The arguments for how teacher education should best be carried out have been informed, certainly over the last few decades, by constantly developing theories of teaching and learning. These arguments have been supported by a growing body of evidence that has led to proposals for a reconceptualization of how teacher learning is best understood and conducted (Freeman 1991, Freeman 2002, Larsen-Freeman and Anderson 2011). Leading scholars have advocated moving away from a transmissive, behaviorist view of learning to argue first for a constructivist, then a social-constructivist and, most recently, a sociocultural view of how teacher education can best be understood and carried out. The following section examines the theoretical ideas that underlie such views of teaching and learning and details the ways in which dialogue has a central role in this view of education.

Social constructivism

Over the last thirty years, the traditional, teacher centred model of education, in which information is 'transmitted' to students, has, as we have seen in the reviews earlier in this study, been replaced by a model of learning that is generally termed Constructivism. The central theme of such a model of education is the belief that knowledge is built up by guiding and supporting students as they learn to construct their understanding of the culture and communities of which they are a part (Cobb 1999). This key notion suggests that students are not empty vessels, passively waiting to be filled. Rather, they interpret information through a filter of their existing knowledge and beliefs; lending weight to the understanding that beliefs, knowledge and conceptions play a major role in the learning process.

Constructivism, however, does not provide one unified theory of mind or education and neither, therefore, does it provide a clear set of pedagogical rules or principles. Two variations, cognitive-constructivist and social-constructivist are common in constructivist literature (Rogoff 1999). Cognitive constructivists, in general, base their perspectives on the ideas of Piaget while social-constructivists tend towards the ideas of Vygotsky (1986) and Bruner (1999). Yet both theories emphasise the importance of social interaction. Von Glasersfeld (1995: 480), proposes that the most appropriate metaphor for a social-constructivist approach is that of *persons in conversation*; persons in meaningful linguistic and extra-linguistic interaction and dialogue. Conversely, cognitive constructivism focuses on individual, separate minds that construct knowledge from experience in the world (Roth 1999). However, the notion of the individual learning in isolation has been increasingly challenged and there has been a growing interest in the role of the social in learning, where development is viewed as being embedded in social, cultural and interactional settings (Wertsch 1998). Commentators taking this social-constructivist position write from a Vygotskian perspective and see cognitive development as originating in and emerging out of social participation (Vygotsky 1986).

The perspectives may appear to be incompatible; learning is seen as either situated in the head or in the individual-in-social action. However, Cobb (1999: 145), in a comparison and contrast of the two models, concludes that although the two perspectives address different problems and issues, there is much complementarity between them. He gives the example that a sociocultural analysis of a classroom episode might locate it within a broader activity system that takes account of factors such as the function of schooling as a social institution and factors such as dialogic interactions between a teacher and student. In contrast, he describes how constructivists are primarily concerned with understanding how individuals

learn, in other words, a more micro approach. Cobb (ibid.) refers to how the two standpoints can be seen to overlap and describes the complementarity as if *"one perspective constitutes the background against which the other comes to the fore"*.

2.4.1 Vygotsky, Bakhtin and dialogue

The basic tenet in both a Vygotskian and Bakhtinian view of language is that language is "…always immersed in a social and cultural context, and its central function is to serve as a medium of communication" (Marchenkova 2005). Both standpoints are of use in the examination and exploration of a dialogic approach to second language teacher education. Indeed, One way of defining dialogue is to see it as the type of interaction that results in what Bakhtin called "active responsive understanding" (Bakhtin 1986: 71). It is interaction which allows the interlocutors to co-construct their understandings of the unique world views that each individual holds. In other words, active participation in dialogue can assist in incorporating another's interpretation into one's own, thus developing and deepening understanding. In order to facilitate such learning, it is crucial that greater space be given over to dialogue since, as Stewart (2010: 5) notes:

> Examining the individual cultural frames of reference that influence the words people choose as they seek to communicate with one another cannot occur without allowing multiple voices to be present in classroom dialogue.

From a Bakhtinian perspective of language, these *multiple voices* are essential since one's assumptions or opinions are not only revealed through the words we use but are tied up with their historical and social use. That is, the words we choose to use are not taken from a dictionary but from the mouths of other speakers and so the words carry with them the voices of those who have used them before (Bakhtin 1981: 294). Mercer (1995: 137) in drawing on Bakhtin's view of language, notes how what we read or hear provokes us to formulate our own responsive point of view (understanding) and "appropriate" ways of

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using language from the people with whom we interact (Mercer: ibid). Wilson (2008: 367) in taking a Bakhtinian perspective on language learning, explains how the notion of appropriation comprises far more than the straightforward adoption of a word or idea. Rather, the process of making a word or concept one's own must involve speaking or writing and "…*involves reflection, critique, analysis, reconstruction and, above all, engagement*". Having developed an understanding of a new concept, idea or activity, the peripheral participant (Lave and Wenger 1991) is able to employ their new appreciation to engage in further dialogue. Gieve and Miller (2006: 31) note how, from a Bakhtinian perspective, interaction means far more than the cognitive meaning-making from the exchange of words. Rather, *"…it is particular people expressing meaning (milking language to get meaning out of it) together with other people, who are anticipating their words.*"

These concepts have similarities with Vygotsky's (1986) notion of intermental and intramental dialogue (described in detail later in this chapter) in which learning takes place on two planes: first through dialogue in social interchange with others (interpsychological dialogue) and then as personal cognitive development (intrapsychological dialogue).

Despite these similarities, however, it should be noted that a number of educators interested in the field of human communication understand there to be major differences in the way that Bakhtin and Vygotsky view the notion of dialogue. For example Wegerif (2008: 17) argues that resemblances between the ideas of Bakhtin and those of Vygotsky have led to *dialogic* being conflated with *dialectic* within a single neo-Vygotskian, 'socio-cultural' paradigm and contends that "dialogic presupposes that meaning arises only in the context of difference, whereas dialectic presupposes that differences are contradictions leading to a movement of overcoming". Marchenkova (2005: 179) also notes how:

> In Bakhtin's case, dialogue is a concept describing communication of equals in the sense that both or all participants have equally important things to share with one another, whereas Vygotsky addressed explicitly the interaction between the student and the teacher who cannot be seen as equal contributors to their mutual communication.

Nevertheless, they can be seen as being mutually complementary in the fundamental sense that both theorists understood culture as being a product of social processes formed by human interaction. Moreover, it can be argued that each theorist's ideas may be more applicable to certain patterns or types of interaction. For example, Vygotsky's notion of mediated learning can be used to explore and understand teacher directed scaffolding. In contrast, more symmetrical, inquiry based collaborative talk may be more fully investigated from a different perspective. As Wegerif notes, "Exploratory Talk as a creative space of reflection, implies the dialogic perspective of Bakhtin" (2008: 16).

Many of Bakhtin's concepts can be useful for analysing the interactions that take place in the context under study in this research, yet he was not principally concerned with developing or proposing an explicit theory of learning. For that reason, while Bakhtinian notions are employed at various points throughout the thesis to help interpret and understand the observed interactions, the principal tool for exploring dialogue as a tool for mediating learning, is sociocultural theory.

2.4.2 Sociocultural theory (SCT)

As emphasis continues to be placed on the role of the social in learning, teacher education is being viewed increasingly as dialogically constructed practice where cognitive development occurs through social interaction e.g. Kumaravadivelu (2006), Johnson (2009), Johnson and Golombek (2011) and Wenger (1999). Since his earliest writings began

to be translated into English in the 1960's (he died in 1934), Vygotsky's sociocultural theories of child development have been promoted by many psychologists and development theorists such as Jerome Bruner (1999), James Wertsch (1998) and Barbara Rogoff (1990). His theories provide a clear break with the information processing or transmission view of education with Vygotsky himself stating, "*Direct teaching of concepts is impossible and fruitless*". With regard to Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and second language teacher education, his theories have, since the turn of the twenty first century, been used by a growing number of prominent educators in the search for a better understanding of both SLA and SLTE (e.g. Burns and Richards 2009, Johnson and Golombek 2011, Lantolf and Poehner 2011, Díaz-Maggioli 2012). At the core of Vygotskian theory on development is the notion that "*any higher mental function was external and social before it was interna*l". That is to say, in order for learning or cognitive development to take place, the individual needs to undergo a process of social activity. Lantolf and Johnson (2007:878) are explicit in their understanding of this notion. They state in clear terms what they see as important in human learning in arguing that "*It is not that social activity influences cognition...but that social activity is the process through which human cognition is formed.*"

Everyday and scientific concepts

A sociocultural viewpoint on cognition and development presupposes that it is the sociocultural activities themselves that are key to learning. How an individual learns will depend on complex factors such the learner's prior experiences, the sociocultural context in which the teaching and learning take place and the quality of reflection and dialogue that accompany social activity. One way of looking at a learner's prior beliefs or understanding of something may be to view them as what Vygotsky (1986) termed *everyday concepts*. By this, he was referring to an individual's unanalysed or unexamined understanding of an

issue, topic, subject etc. Earlier sections of this chapter detailed how research on beliefs has pointed out that student teachers, following long years as pupils, have deeply ingrained, pre-formed ideas regarding how teachers should act and behave (Lortie 1975). Those findings appear to share close similarities with what is understood by the notion of *everyday concepts*. As we know, LTs have spent thousands of hours, during formative years, observing the actions of numerous 'teachers'. The everyday concepts are considered to develop as a result of such day to day lived experiences, and in relation to SLTE, Johnson and Golombek (2011:2) warn:

> ...such everyday concepts are limiting in that they are based solely on observations and generalisations gleaned from a surface level understanding of what language learning and teaching is all about.

They contend that everyday concepts can be misleading and thus may operate as obstacles to effective practitioner development. In other words, pre-formed ideas as to what teaching is all about could be detrimental to the development and formation of new teachers.

Vygotsky (1986:145) used the example of young children's minds not being blank slates, but rather as young children whose minds had already noticed and possibly arrived at explanations for, the various phenomena that they had experienced. The formation of what he termed *Everyday concepts* were the result of such explanations. *Scientific concepts,* on the other hand, according to Vygotsky are systematic and not bound to a context, unlike the *everyday concepts* which are unsystematic and situated in a context which is experientially rich. Vygotsky argued that reflection and articulation that involves the amalgamation of the *everyday concepts* (the previously held beliefs) and *scientific concepts* (the validated thinking of a professional community of practice) is what allows real

development to occur. He also emphasised that such reflection must also be connected in some way to concrete social activity – some form of real experience. Although there are clear differences between scientific and everyday concepts, Vygotsky viewed both as important in developing higher order thinking, or learning. He saw the activities and processes that mediated the two concepts as being absolutely crucial to cognitive development.

Everyday concepts are spontaneous and formed from broad generalisations on something that has been experienced; conversely, *scientific concepts* are based on information that has been arrived at following a systematic observation of activities. In other words, scientific concepts are those that result from knowledge that has been empirically constructed or theoretically thought through – in contrast to a type of knowledge that has been gleaned through one experience in one context. Both concepts have a role to play in development, as Lantolf and Poehner (2008:6) describe, "*The unity formed by concrete experience of the world and scientific experience of the same world is essential for full development of human consciousness.*"

 Vygotsky maintained that one without the other leaves development incomplete. With regard to teacher knowledge and teacher learning, this has major relevance.

Johnson (2009:21) also refers to the critical importance of both concepts. She argues that it is in coming to learn about and understand scientific concepts that allows learners to move beyond an understanding that has been reached only through their personal everyday experiences. The scientific understandings thus allow learners to form understandings and make decisions in a wider range of circumstances and contexts. Johnson (ibid: 63) states that:

> When teaching creates opportunities in which learners can participate in activities that provide them with direct experiences in the use of new psychological tools and in ways that make the evolving histories and functions of these tools explicit, such tools have the potential to advance cognitive development.

In other words, effective educational experience needs to integrate abstract, declarative knowledge with concrete physical experiences, in order to produce the type of awareness in teachers that is desired. Lantolf and Poehner (2008:12) expand on the importance of properly integrated scientific concepts in a course of teacher education, reasoning that:

> ...they liberate us from the constraints of context specific everyday experience and allow us to function appropriately in any concrete circumstance in which the concept may be relevant.

The notions of everyday and scientific concepts are extremely useful with regard to thinking about and understanding teacher education. As documented later in this study, LTs certainly do bring with them a variety of assumptions about what constitutes good teaching. Most if not all of these, it is safe to assume, have been formed during their own apprenticeships of observation as they develop complex everyday concepts throughout their, largely transmissive, experience of formal education.

Some researchers have employed the notions of scientific and everyday concepts in attempting to examine the theory-practice divide in teacher education. For example, Johnson and Arshavskaya (2011:170) suggest that, from a sociocultural viewpoint, it is the responsibility of teacher educators 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.

They argue that teacher development needs to be viewed as a holistic endeavour with the way in which teacher education is organised and undertaken being as important as the

content. In other words, ways and means need to be developed to enable teachers to link theoretical knowledge to their own teaching experiences and from this, new understandings emerge which Johnson (2009:23) suggests:

> …enables teachers to reorganise their experiential knowledge and this reorganisation creates a new lens through which they interpret their understandings of themselves and their classroom practices.

Scientific concepts and professional discourse

Fostering the use of linguistic and pedagogic discourse may well be the catalyst itself for learning to take place. As Freeman (2002:12) observes, '*One needs the words to talk about what one does, and in using those words one can see it more clearly*." Wedell and Malderez (2013: 59) also point out that "*All academic education is about providing labels, a 'language', or tools for students to think about and make sense of the surrounding world*". One of the conclusions reached by a study undertaken by Freeman and Richards (1996) was the criticality of novice teachers becoming adept at using specialized language. They argue that the development and use of a professional discourse of language teaching provides the schemata and metaphors which influence how teachers articulate and *come to understand* their teaching experiences. Such experiences, in turn, shape their classroom actions.

From a sociocultural perspective, an aim, in attempting to facilitate professional development, is to supersede the traditional theory-practice dichotomy with the more fluid notion of praxis (Johnson 2006, Edge 2010). Under such conditions, teacher education places more emphasis on how theory and practice may inform one another, rather than on what theory says should happen. Johnson (2011:98) explains how when theory and practice are seen as praxis, novice teachers are able to reconceptualise the way they recognize effective teaching and learning through the transformative process of

understanding their prior classroom experiences (everyday concepts) through the professional discourse of the TESOL community (scientific concepts). Put simply, through the introduction and adoption of professional discourse, educators may provide the LTs with the linguistic tools, *the scientific concepts*, to help them in this (re)organisation of thought.

Internalization

As stated, one of the central themes of a sociocultural view of learning, based on Vygotsky's writings, is the importance of learning being socially situated (Vygotsky 1986). A key question, when cognition is viewed as a fundamentally social construct, is how these external forms of social interaction become internalized, psychological tools for thinking. The process, according to Vygotsky, occurs through mediation. In his perspective, knowledge from the social setting (interpsychological) is transformed (to intrapsychological) through mediation and it is principally through the use of language that human cognition is mediated. He refers to the *internalization* of psychological functions to explain how social interactions are reconstructed into internal tools of cognitive development (ibid: 56). Johnson and Golombek (2011:3) describe how they view the transformation from the external to the internal as a process which takes prolonged and sustained participation in goal directed social activities. They see concept development, or learning, as a process which happens over time and which depends on complex factors such as contextual constraints and the agency of the learner. For these reasons, they point out the crucial role that mediation plays in the development process.

Mediation

Lantolf (2007, 2008, 2011) argues that education, to be effective, should involve the integration of conceptual knowledge and practical activity with the goal of stimulating change or *concept* development. Indeed, Lantolf and Poehner (2008:272) state that, *"Education then, is the systematically organised experience of ascending from the abstract to the concrete".* In SLTE, it is the teacher educator who is responsible for organising and facilitating this mediation of knowledge.

Mediation is the process of utilising a cultural construct to facilitate cognitive development; art, arithmetic, computers, books and so on are all described in SCT as culturally constructed mediating tools but the most important, by far, is language (Lantolf and Thorne 2006). With regard to formal instruction, e.g. in a school or university setting, dialogic mediation is seen by sociocultural theorists as the primary means by which scientific concepts experienced in the social environment can *come to be meaningful* with regard to a student's pre-existing everyday concepts on a phenomena. As Johnson (2009:63) explains, teacher education models must have opportunities for such talk at their core since it is through dialogic interaction that:

> ... learners' everyday (spontaneous and non-spontaneous) concepts (actual developmental level) are made explicit and reflected upon, and scientific concepts are introduced, experimented with and used in various meaningful and purposeful activities (potential development level) with the ultimate goal of advancing learners cognitive abilities so that they can accomplish goals or solve problems on their own (cognitive development).

Thus it is clear that from the perspective of a sociocultural theory of mind and learning, the feedback discussion offers a unique opportunity to engage in meaningful discussion that can mediate learning. It provides the space and time for interaction that takes place following a concrete social experience alongside a period of formal instruction. Within this

conception of learning, the notions of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and joint productive activity are crucial to successful mediation and are described below.

The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

According to Vygotsky (1986) The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is the difference between what a learner can achieve on his / her own and what can be achieved under the guidance of a more capable peer. Johnson & Golombek (2011:6) describe the ZPD as "*the metaphoric space where individual cognition originates in the social collective mind and emerges in and through engagement in social activity.*"

They depicted the ZPD as a space where one (the tutor or more capable peer) can see or sense what an individual may be able to achieve, not alone but with help. This metaphor, according to Johnson and Golombek (ibid.), illustrates how the discovery of what a novice teacher can comprehend or do on their own, informs us of what they are capable of with assistance. Working outside the space of the ZPD renders new skills unachievable. However, by identifying and knowing more about a novice teacher's beliefs, attitudes and knowledge about teaching and learning, we can more closely identify their individual ZPDs and design and tailor activities, and our talk, to promote more effective learning. Whilst thoughtful dialogue is clearly essential with regard to the ZPD, it is also important to note that the ZPD refers to an individual's, as opposed to a groups', current learning or understanding. This study examines the outcomes of dialogic interaction in individual and group situations. Teacher scaffolding, in relation to the ZPD, in this study refers to the educator scaffolding individual LTs. However, as van Lier's (2004) version of the different contexts that may be assumed within an expanded version of the ZPD (p.106) suggests, mediation may well be possible through and as a result of, peer interaction.

Johnson and Golombek (2011) refer to several studies that describe teacher educators' attempts to identify the limits of their learner teachers' ZPD. They note how the process may commence by "*encouraging the teachers to verbalize their current understandings of whatever concept, skill or disposition is the focus of study*". This "verbalisation" takes the form of journal entries, reflections on teaching practice, reflections on textual input or through dialogic interaction with an expert other, during, for example, the feedback discussion. The point is that by making the cognitive state explicit, it becomes open to dialogic mediation that can promote "*reorganisation*, "*refinement*" and "*reconceptualization*" (Johnson & Golombek ibid: 8).

Scaffolding

Much has been written and discussed in general and teacher education literature regarding what constitutes the effective scaffolding of learning (e.g. Mercer 2000, Lantolf and Poehner 2008) and from an SCT perspective the notion is intertwined with the ZPD. Johnson (2009:22) describes it thus:

> Scaffolding is conceptualized as a psychological tool, one that reduces the cognitive load required to perform a particular task…moreover the nature of that scaffolding must have the goal of cognitive development otherwise it remains as assisted performance.

She points out how the notion has been criticised for being too vague and all encompassing, and thus misrepresenting the semantic character of scaffolding. As a result, the terms dialogic interaction or collaborative dialogue have been employed by researchers in the field of second language acquisition. In general education, scaffolding has been defined as help, principally with regard to dialogue that enables a learner to complete a task that s/he could not have done alone. Wood et al. (1976) describe how scaffolding is not a unitary construct but a response to students' needs and thus looks different in different contexts

as it responds to the particular learner's needs. They describe six main functions that scaffolding can perform:

- Recruitment – engaging learners in a task or project.

- Reduction – dividing up a task into manageable, achievable stages.

- Direction – ensuring learners stay on track during the task.

- Marking – drawing attention to those aspects of performance which are most critical for success in a task.

- Control – managing the task so that it is within a learner's ability yet still challenging.

- Demonstration – modelling possible ways that tasks may be approached or undertaken.

van Lier (2004) offers a different interpretation of the possibilities of scaffolding within the ZPD. He suggests four distinct contexts that allow a form of scaffolding to mediate learning. His framework is illustrated overleaf.

Fig. 2.6   Expanded ZPD

"If one member of a dyad undergoes developmental change, the other is also likely to do so" (Brönfenbrenner 1979:65)

scaffolding, modeling

assistance from more capable peers or adults

interaction with equal peers

SELF REGULATION

inner resources: knowledge, experience memory, strength

interaction with less capable peers

resourcefulness. self-access

'Docendo discimus' (We learn by teaching)

From the above we can see how;

- Learners can work with someone who has a higher level of understanding or development with the regard to the subject matter

- Learners can work together with peers who share a similar level of understanding. Also labelled reciprocal scaffolding (Díaz-Maggioli 2012)

- Learners can work with someone at a lower level of understanding. This offers opportunities for articulation and verbalisation of new concepts and hence promoting the more expert peers' understanding simultaneously.

- Learners can work alone calling on their own internalized practices and inner speech

Although he was referring to language learning, the contexts he refers to can also be useful for understanding teacher learning. Gallimore and Tharp (1990), for instance, highlight how the terms *novice* and *expert* are not contingent upon age, status or role. Rather, a novice in one context may well find him/herself to be the expert in another as the context for learning shifts. This concept, as does van Lier's characterization, becomes important when we consider the role of peer discussion in teacher education, as Johnson (2009:23) states:

> This extension of the scaffolding framework to include peer interaction is especially important in L2 teacher education where inquiry based approaches to professional development are grounded in sustained dialogic mediation among teachers as they collectively struggle through issues that are directly relevant to their professional lives.

In summarising what he feels are key tenets of a sociocultural perspective to learning, Mercer (2000) highlights the centrality of the dialogic process in scaffolding. He refers to the importance of scaffolding that allows learners, through dialogue, to make intellectual achievements that they would be unable to make without the accompaniment of a more

expert peer or tutor. In other words it is directed talk that is conscious of a novice's ZPD that facilitates what Mercer (1995) phrases *the guided construction of knowledge*.

Scaffolding and knowledge construction

It will be fruitful to briefly outline at this point how knowledge may be constructed following both educator-learner interactions and learner-learner interactions. In the exchanges transcribed for this research, a common pattern for the educator-LT interactions was what Rojas-Drummond, Torreblanca et al. (2013) describe as *spiral initiation-response-feedback (IRF) exchanges*. In such interactions, the educator's feedback in the third turn, the feedback turn, leads to a further string of utterances related to the topic, and that is designed, spontaneously, to advance the student's reasoning and understanding. These contrast with 'loop IRF' sequences in which the educator's feedback provides some form of evaluative comment which effectively closes the loop and enforces the asymmetrical nature of the interaction. Although the IRF structure of teacher-student interaction may be seen as being minimally dialogic, in that it is the educator who is always initiating or setting the agenda, it can, as van Lier (2001:97) notes, *"… be used as a preparatory step toward more emancipatory forms of discourse; it may be valuable not for what it is but rather, for what it may lead to.".* In her classic study on gender and conversation, Edelsky (1993) contrasts a singly held floor with a collaborative one. In the former, one person usually holds forth as the others respond and listen while in the latter all participants feel free to contribute and appear to be operating on the same wavelength. These are notions which chime quite closely with Soslau's co-inquiry style of talk and systematic intervention (vide supra, table 2.4, p.81). Indeed, with regard to enacting a dialogic pedagogy, as understood in this study, exploratory talk, in which learners have opportunities to control the discourse, can provide a basis for identifying and determining

the kind of scaffolding that the LT needs. Subsequent guided discussion that employs *spiral IRF* sequences may then be enacted by the educator to help mediate further the LTs' development.

From a Vygotskian perspective, we have seen how understanding and knowledge are socially constructed through collaborative talk and interaction in and around activities that fall inside the individual's ZPD. Learner teachers may develop their skills and understanding by participating in joint activities, with more knowledgeable others able to assist the learning and understanding of the LTs. The following section will provide further theoretical argument for the judicious use of talk in education and the merit of dialogue as a focus for action research.

Intersubjectivity

Collaboration in joint productive activity, from a sociocultural perspective, has been described as a common undertaking or shared endeavour in order to achieve a task or to better understand something. Such integrated activity depends on the participants having a common understanding of the goal or problem. For example, in the case of SLTE, the issue in question may be when, how or even whether corrective feedback should be enacted. These understandings, of course, can only be arrived at through communication – principally through language. This is related to an understanding shared between peers as well as between a novice and a more expert other. The term 'intersubjectivity' is used to describe this shared comprehension of the group undertaking and its maintenance is crucial to successful collaboration (Rogoff 1990, Wertsch 1991). van Lier (1996:184) articulates why he sees the notion of intersubjectivity as an important concept in education:

Such contingent interactions evidence an intersubjectivity and sharedness of perspectives that set up expectancies for what may come next, validate (value and respect) the preceding and the following utterances, and help ensure continued engagement.

However, it is not just in individual interactions that intersubjectivity may be sought. Bruner (1999) sees the notion of intersubjectivity as a particularly human ability to understand the minds of others. In viewing language as the tool that facilitates this, he believes it crucial that education should provide the spaces for intersubjectivity to flourish and thus for peers to assist one another in learning. In expressing his view on the "*more knowledgeable other*" and intersubjectivity he states:

It simply implies that the teacher does not play that role as a monopoly, that learners 'scaffold' for each other as well. The antithesis is the transmission model…often further exaggerated by an emphasis on transmitting 'subject matter'. But in most matters of achieving mastery, we also want learners to gain good judgement, to become self-reliant, to work well with each other. And such competencies do not flourish under a one-way transmission regime. (Bruner 1999: 162)

Participants in joint productive activity do not just use dialogue to communicate messages but will, in effect, be "*interthinking*" (Mercer 2000). Thoughtful mediational strategies may be able to make LTs' thinking explicit in various ways, enabling them to become more conscious of their classroom actions and decision-making.

Talk as 'conversation' may also provide valuable opportunities for interthinking and thus for learning to take place. van Lier (2001:98-100) refers to the notion of *contingency* where talk has symmetry or equal rights. In other words, rather than exchanges whereby all turns are directed at the teacher, all participants in a conversation feel free to contribute and their input is valued. When talk is contingent it has the features of conversation (as opposed to a lecture, instruction, seminar, etc.) and so "*utterances are constructed on the spot rather than planned in advance*" (van Lier: ibid.). When education is organised in such

a way as to give both the teacher educator and the learners (in this case, learner-teachers) opportunities for such interthinking then language can be seen as a tool that mediates our thinking. For intersubjectivity and contingency to occur, they clearly depend on a dialogic pedagogy that promotes exploratory talk. As van Lier theorises:

> Learning takes place when the new is embedded in the familiar, so that risks and security are in balance… Conversational interaction naturally links the known to the new. It creates its own expectancies and its own context, and offers choices to the participants. In a conversation, we must continually make decisions on the basis of what other people mean. We therefore have to listen very carefully… and we also have to take great care in constructing our contributions so that we can be understood. (1996: 171)

A number of studies argue that for successful intersubjectivity to occur participants must share the same ideas about what is relevant and important and all must be clear about the ultimate aim of any discussion. In other words, what is trying to be achieved needs to understood by all participants. This demands a degree of explicitness that would not be present in everyday exchanges and according to Mercer and Howe (2012:16) it is "exploratory talk" which most closely resonates with these forms of interaction. Mercer and Howe (2012:14-19) look at talk from a sociocultural perspective and see exploratory talk, especially, as "*a form of co-reasoning in language, with speakers sharing knowledge, challenging ideas, evaluating evidence and considering options in a reasoned and equitable way*." Talk of this kind, does, in effect "*constitute the more visible pursuit of rational consensus through conversation*" and Mercer and Howe (ibid.) are careful to point out that such talk consists of much more than simply an exchange of views or information. Rather, it is a "*cultural and cognitive tool for enabling conceptual change*" (ibid: 19)*.*

Golombek (2011:125) also stresses the important role of interaction in intersubjectivity and states that "*the mediator meeting the teacher learner where she is at, hinges on the concept*

of intersubjectivity". At this point, it is perhaps useful to note how the differences between the Vygotskian notion of educator-directed scaffolding and the more Bakhtinian-leaning notion of collaborative dialogue (or exploratory talk) may seem to become somewhat opaque. However, in a description that has echoes of van Lier's *preparatory step* (p. 108), Skidmore and Gallagher (2005: 5) suggest that a balanced perspective would view teacher-led dialogue as:

> … one moment in a dialectical process of enquiry, which may shift at different times along a continuum between the poles of teacher direction and student self-activity depending on the degree of understanding and competence evinced by student performance.

The procedure of attempting to reach a shared understanding is clearly closely connected to the concept of a ZPD and to strategic interventions by a teacher. Such practices have been termed Dynamic Assessment (DA), where a mediator is continually assessing and checking the learner's understanding of an issue, in order to decide on and carry out an appropriate level of mediation (Lantolf and Poehner 2011). Golombek (ibid.) likens DA interaction to a dance and stresses the difficulty for the educator in carrying out effective DA since it involves responding spontaneously, and with deliberation to the needs of the learner.

The mediator is trying to gauge 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. (2011:125)

In better identifying an individual's present state of knowledge, Warford (2011) also underlines the importance of verbalizing current understandings. He emphasizes the

importance of attempting to establish teachers' understanding of concepts before connecting them to the larger story of how researchers have approached teaching and learning. In doing so, the learner teachers are assisted in combining such expert and experiential knowledge into their own personal narrative. Failure to approach teaching and learning in this way, would, according to Warford (ibid: 2), perpetuate the dominant transmission approach and thus be like:

> …skipping pebbles on the surface of a pond, pouring on the prescriptions, the potpourri of practical tips seem to generate momentum, then ultimately sink into the abyss.

Theoretical descriptions of intersubjectivity, joint productive activity and scaffolding described here and in the preceding pages posit that language, principally talk, is the key tool in mediating cognitive development. Both with regard to planned, directed interaction as well as with regard to peer interaction, it is purposeful talk and two-way communication that is seen to facilitate learning. From this sociocultural perspective of mind, we may posit that when a learner teacher produces a scientific concept (declarative knowledge) for the first time, in dialogue or in in reflective writing, then some form of development may have taken place. The learning subsequently occurs when the notion or item of professional discourse etc. has become internalized or from a Bakhtinian perspective, *appropriated*. Evidence of this may be obtained by demonstrating use of such knowledge that is produced independently e.g. in a reflective journal, interview, spontaneous conversation and so on.

2.4.3 Models of dialogic interaction

The themes discussed above are identified by Alexander (2005:12) in pointing out that a dialogic approach to teaching demands both student engagement and teacher intervention. Alexander argues that education must provide the linguistic opportunities

and encounters that allow learners to think for themselves and that "*what is said needs actually to be reflected upon, discussed, even argued about*" and he believes that creating the conditions that allow such interactions is central to a dialogic pedagogy (ibid: 21). Researchers from the field of general education also support such a view of interaction and learning and two useful typologies are noted here. Alexander (2005:42) uses the label *dialogic teaching* to describe a pedagogy that is collective, reciprocal, supportive, cumulative, and purposeful. His view of knowledge is that of an entity that is problematic and open rather than given and closed. He identifies certain features of such pedagogy:

- Questions are structured so as to provoke thoughtful answers.

- Answers provoke further questions and are seen as building blocks of

  dialogue rather than its terminal point.

  Individual teacher-pupil pupil-pupil exchanges are chained to coherent

  lines of inquiry rather than left stranded and disconnected.

- Pupils also ask questions – and are encouraged to do so.

- Pupils understand that learning involves mistake making and are viewed as learning

  opportunities.

Mercer (1995, 2000, 2004) offers a similar typology to analyse the ways in which people respond to each other in a dialogue. He contrasts and categorises three forms of what he terms 'social modes of thinking' and what Wegerif (2012: 12) labelled "intersubjective orientations" and these are outlined below.

1) Disputational talk

   This is talk defined by disagreement and little collaboration. There is little

   constructive criticism or useful suggestions in the discourse. An atmosphere of

   competition rather than cooperation dominates the talk with positions taken to be

defended against others and where conversation is seen as having winners and losers.

2) <u>Cumulative talk</u>

In this description, everyone accepts and agrees with what others have said. It is characterised by repetitions, confirmations and elaborations but with little or no critical evaluation. It is talk which avoids anything that may be disruptive to the group solidarity such as explicit challenges.

3) <u>Exploratory talk</u>

In contrast, this is talk which is characterised by constructive critical engagement with each other's ideas. Information is shared but ideas may be challenged with suggestions offered for joint consideration. There is an atmosphere of trust in the talk which engenders a sense of shared purpose where ideas and opinions can be treated with respect. Participants feel free to change their minds and / or admit not understanding. Reasoning is more visible in exploratory talk and there is more 'wondering aloud' in this type of talk.

Mercer's third category, exploratory talk, entails a move away from a directive, transmissive approach to interaction. It aims to promote cognitive development and thus teacher development through the tools of articulation, reflection and thought. Dialogic interaction that fits the description of exploratory talk seems more likely to stand a chance of challenging preconceived notions that result from the 'Lortie effect' that was described

in earlier chapters; as Bailey, et al (1996: 16) note, "*conscious knowledge of our histories may help us to overcome the tendency to imitate, unwittingly, the behaviour of others*". Indeed, from a sociocultural viewpoint of learning, it is an approach that stands a far better chance of having a greater impact on teacher thinking and decision-making. To be clear, it is a move away from what Freire (1970:58) termed 'the banking model'; one where knowledge is transferred from those who know best to those who know nothing.

Despite convincing theoretical arguments for the potential of dialogic interaction with regard to the organisation of teacher education, little research evidence exists that demonstrates either efforts to enact such an approach or the results of its implementation. The challenge for teacher educators who wish to explore this practice is centred on the facilitation and maintenance of the desired inquiry-led conditions, while the challenge for researchers is to then document and interpret the outcomes.

2.4.4   Communities of practice

The notion of communities of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991, Wenger 1999) is relevant to both teacher education and the importance that dialogue plays in its process. From a community of practice viewpoint, learning is a socially constructed activity not an individually based undertaking. Most people will belong to a number of 'communities' and the cultures of practice and language will naturally differ between these. One could contrast a community of political activists with that of an amateur theatre group for example. Both may be made of groups of people who undertake a similar profession (e.g. teachers) or share a similar passion or concern (e.g. Humanism) and so on. Lave and Wenger (1991) point out that communities can be comprised of old timers (experts) and newcomers (novices). The newcomers, who are learning the ropes so to speak, begin as peripheral legitimate participants in the community and naturally engage in dialogue with

the old timers. As Wenger (1999:45) describes, "*We interact with each other and with the world and we tune our relations with each other and with the world accordingly. In other words, we learn.*" Indeed, researchers such as Mercer (1995: 138) have noted how the recycling of language that is heard or encountered during this learning of the ropes, (in other words, appropriation) may be an important way of assimilating the collective ways of thinking of a community of practice.

The theory of communities of practice views knowledge and learning not as the content of an individual's mind but, as the composite and aggregate understandings of a group that has a shared concern. As with Bakhtin and Vygotsky, Lave and Wenger (1991: 3) also offer a social theory of learning and their notion is one that "*placed learning in the context of our lived experience of participation in the world*". The concept of communities of practice is useful for understanding the process of initial teacher education. The teacher educator mediates the legitimate peripheral participation of the learner teacher into the community of language teachers. The mediation is undertaken by organising modified forms of participation (scaffolding). In such a process, the teacher educator is offering neither a craft model of apprenticeship nor a scientific model (What Diaz Maggioli termed 'look and learn' and 'read and learn', (vide supra, table 2.1, p.62). Rather, the educator mediates learning by helping the LTs reflect on and articulate their actual teaching experience (practical knowledge) by drawing on the interrelationship of their everyday concepts (existing beliefs) and the scientific concepts (declarative knowledge) encountered in their formal learning. Moreover, from the perspective of communities of practice, it is not just the educator that scaffolds the learning. As Hedgcock (2009: 149) notes, in working in an atmosphere of joint inquiry with fellow novices, pre-service teachers come to know the

professional discourse necessary for participating in the community thus, "*shifting their status from that of peripheral participants to legitimate members of the LT community*". In such instances, it is collaborative dialogue or exploratory talk rather than direct dialogic teaching which is propelling development.

2.4.5 Chapter summary

In this chapter I have described the field of knowledge and literature that has informed and resulted in my research questions. The chapter demonstrates how my research is relevant to the current debates in the field of TESOL and how the findings of this investigation may add to the understanding of the process of language teacher education. The reconceptualization of both teacher education and teacher knowledge has been detailed and, following these shifts in thinking, perspectives from sociocultural theory have been drawn on to support the notion that both declarative and procedural knowledge are crucial to conceptual development. I have illustrated how concepts of dialogic interaction are at the very heart of effective pedagogy and that its judicious employment can serve to facilitate reflection on and in action which, in turn, promotes teacher development. The following chapter details the conceptual framework that is derived from the research and theory that has been discussed, together with the research design that underpins this investigation.

Chapter 3   Establishing a research design

3.1   Chapter overview

The conceptual framework that underpins this research is described in this chapter. The ontological and epistemological positions taken by the researcher are outlined and the aims together with the substantive and subsidiary questions that are addressed by this investigation are detailed. The reasons for situating this qualitative study in the framework of Action Research are discussed and the measures taken to ensure research validity are also outlined. The rationale and tools employed for the collection and analysis of the data are also considered in detail. This includes an analysis of why transcriptions of feedback sessions, reflective journal entries and interviews were appropriate methods of data collection. The ways in which a thematic approach to data analysis as well as sociocultural discourse analysis tools were employed in making sense of and interpreting the data are also discussed.

3.2   Conceptual framework

As stated earlier in this thesis, my concern for wishing to prepare learner teachers in a manner that avoided merely passing on a series of recommended activities or approaches led me to investigate alternative ways of organising teacher education. Applying a conceptual framework to the study of dialogue during the feedback discussion on a TESOL practicum can accomplish several aims. In line with the reconceptualization of teacher

knowledge, it focuses research on the learner-teacher and his or her cognition rather than concentrating on their ability to perform certain actions or techniques (Freeman 1991, Freeman 1996, Johnson 1996, Freeman 2002). Complemented by artefacts such as reflective journals and data gathered from post-course interviews, the transcribed feedback discussions are also methodologically accessible to the action researcher and the complete data set lends itself to rich qualitative study (Burns 2009). Moreover, the study of interactions in the feedback discussion offers the potential of gaining greater insight into ways of overcoming the theory-practice gap that has long been seen as problematic in TESOL; it thus helps illuminate how declarative knowledge can be usefully incorporated into a pre-service course of teacher education (Freeman and Johnson 1998, Kumaravadivelu 2006, Warford 2011). Taken together, it is hoped that this exploratory investigation will allow a fuller understanding to be reached as to how dialogic interaction may advance cognitive development and thus help develop the onset of a sense of professional identity during initial teacher education. By investigating the mediation of reflective practice through dialogue and the use of written artefacts, the framework allows an examination of the predominant features of the feedback as well as an analysis of how the employment of professional discourse by learner teachers may enhance their legitimate peripheral participation in the TESOL community of practice.

A small number of studies have looked at the effect of interaction on teacher learning during the post-observation feedback discussions (Farr 2010, Copland 2012, Engin 2013). However, these studies have been undertaken on short-term intensive programs that generally involve one-month practicums. No research on TESOL feedback discussions could be found that had been conducted in a UK University setting at undergraduate level. Nor, in this context, could data be found that considered the personal, social or contextual

factors that may impede or constrain the creation of the favourable conditions that can affect the quality of dialogic interaction. Given the originality of the context, two obvious initial research aims therefore emerged from the early literature review, namely that the study should:

1)   Develop a critical review of an attempt to facilitate a dialogic approach to teacher learning and evince any cognitive development that may result.

2)   Investigate and identify what factors in a formally assessed course of teacher education may work to promote or inhibit the efficacy of such an approach under the model studied.

The substantive research questions which help to address my concerns about teacher education, and guide the action research, evolved from these initial aims and are dealt with later in this section.

The importance for validity purposes of making explicit one's ontological and epistemological position has been well documented in literature on research traditions (Bryman 2012). The following pages provide an overview of the traditions that guided the design and undertaking of this study. Later in the section, the significance of each data source is also discussed with regard to this research.

The ontological understanding of teacher learning adopted by this study is the result of social, historical and educational cultures experienced by the researcher. This includes my personal career history and continual professional development through the study of formal qualifications. Reflection over time has permitted a growing understanding of my experience of teaching English in five countries around the world over the last twenty years (in order to aid transparency, a full researcher profile can be found in appendix two). My perception of both language-learning and learning-teaching reflects the particular

influence of sociocultural theory (Lantolf and Poehner 2008, Johnson 2009) and the principles of communicative language teaching (Hymes 1971, Kumaravadivelu 2006, Littlewood 2011, van Lier 2011). Since language teacher education is directly influenced by one's view of language, the following paragraphs attempt to briefly articulate my position on both language and language teacher education.

Divergent views of language can be observed in the field of TESOL. Most course-books and other published material are designed around a linear, compartmentalised understanding of language and language learning. From this perspective, language may be understood as a set of distinct, unconnected linguistic forms that can be presented by the teacher and learnt by the student in a progressive, pre-determined fashion. However, a contrasting ontological perspective of language is taken by the researcher in this study. Language is not seen as an external body of facts to be labelled, classified and transferred to the learner; nor to be transferred to the learner teacher throughout his / her course of education as s/he attempts to develop a pedagogical language awareness. Rather, language (and language learning) is understood as something far more dynamic, inextricably linked to culture and context of use. The same ontological perspective is taken with regard to the education of language teachers. There is no unifying theory of language learning (or teaching) and from the perspective taken here, the context of language use is of central importance in its teaching and learning. What is crucial therefore is that learner-teachers are not simply trained to be capable of applying a set of prescribed actions and behaviours or transmitting a selection of linguistic chunks regardless of their learners' needs or wants. Rather, they should be educated to make decisions based on reason, knowledge of alternative courses of action and reflection on their context. Consequently from such an ontological perspective, the focus of the research explores whether and how the dialogic

approach taken here to SLTE appears to facilitate the development of such thinking and reflection; what the learner-teachers' perception of the process is; and the relationship between the two.

The epistemological perspective links directly to one's ontological stance. In this study, the researcher's ontological view of knowledge as subject to interpretation means that knowledge or cognitive development is attained through personal meaning-making. In a positivist practice, knowledge is arrived at through the gathering of facts that provide the basis for formulating laws. In this tradition, the purpose of theory is to generate testable hypotheses that can be conducted in a way that is value free (Bryman 2012). With knowledge being viewed as generalizable, objective and measurable, quantitative research methods are predominantly employed in this tradition. A Likert Scale questionnaire, for instance, may well be employed in a quantitative study that viewed the phenomena under study as measurable or calculable. However, the study of the social world, in this case pre-service teachers in the setting of a classroom, necessitates an approach that goes far deeper than numerical or statistical data can provide. As Bryman (2012:28) describes, "*The study of the social world requires a different logic of research procedure, one that reflects the distinctiveness of humans as against the natural orde*r."

Thus, a positivist approach may look to describe human perception whereas an interpretivist one seeks to understand it. This study therefore adopts an epistemological stance that is based on an interpretivist framework. Richards (2003: 35) outlines two extremes between which all positions are to be found. Firstly, the objectivist position which sees truth as something that exists in the world, awaiting discovery. In other words, "*all objects in the world exist apart from any consciousness and they are, essentially, just as they are*". A subjectivist position, on the other hand, would take the view that the external

world is nothing but a mental construct. That is to say, all observations, perceptions and understandings of social phenomena are subjective constructs. Constructivism, also labelled constructionism, (Bryman 2012), takes the position that human consciousness is a far more complex and multifarious entity than perhaps it may appear. Constructivism (as shall be used henceforth) implies that social phenomena and their categories are given meaning by the social interactions between the actors. Not only does it indicate that it is in social action that meaning is forged but that such phenomena are in a constant state of flux and renewal. Once more, given the nature of this investigation, an interpretivist, constructivist position is the stance this study logically adopts. The focus on exploring participants' understandings and views on the experience they are undertaking means that a qualitative, interpretive approach allows for a far richer, deeper and more meaningful study than an objectivist, quantitative one could impart.

An emergent design

For the sake of transparency and to aid the reader's understanding of the methodological process, I explain here how the research evolved and what it entailed. A detailed discussion of the data collection and analysis is presented in later sections.

In responding to calls to investigate a more dialogic approach to SLTE, this investigation was, in effect, breaking new ground since there was no prior research to refer to that had been conducted in a similar context. A direct result of this is that there was no complete research design to follow, before the data collection began. Despite numerous educators suggesting that a more dialogic approach to teacher education would be beneficial (Brandt 2006, Copland, Ma et al. 2009, Tasker, Johnson et al. 2010, Block and Gray 2012) and despite theoretical arguments for the use of dialogue as a tool of mediation (Johnson 2009, Warford 2011), there was no research published on what adopting such practices actually

entailed. Therefore, the origins of this investigation lay in my attempts to undertake a more dialogic approach throughout the whole of the course of SLTE that provides the context for this study. The actual data collected for this study derives from a key moment in teacher learning – the practicum. Transcriptions made of the feedback discussions that follow live teaching practice document my efforts to encourage exploratory talk and reflective thought through promoting conditions favourable to dialogic interaction such as those defined by Mercer (1995). The original aim of collecting this data had been to compare the patterns of interactions to the typologies of dialogic interaction that had been put forward by theorists such as Mercer (2000), Alexander (2005) and van Lier (2004) and possibly highlight any issues that resulted. From the outset I had also planned to conduct interviews in order to gather data on the participants' perceptions and attitudes towards the approach they had experienced as learner teachers. Before the practicum had begun, although I had wished to uncover any contextual factors that appeared to promote or inhibit the approach, I was unsure, at that early stage, of how I would be able to document any outcomes or identify any issues. The first stage of data collection was therefore the recording and transcribing of the feedback discussions. As described in more detail below, the analysis of the data was a cyclical process. While transcribing a number of discussions from the first term, I examined them as planned, using sociocultural discourse analysis tools such as Mercer's (2004) framework of typologies and Rojas-Drummond et al's (2013) spiral IRF patterns in order to explore the ways in which my approach tallied with or contradicted theoretical descriptions of dialogic interaction. However, what became clear to me, during this early analysis, was that the quality of dialogue was quite closely influenced by the declarative knowledge that the participants had available to express themselves. This was an important insight and in order to gain further data regarding the

ways in which declarative knowledge was employed by the learner teachers when they were reflecting on their learning, I decided to collect all the reflective portfolio entries of the participants and this was done once they had completed their university study. To be clear, the feedback discussion transcripts, by the end of the study, had been examined for two different purposes and using two methodological tools; the first, to investigate their 'fit' with theoretical frameworks of dialogic interaction and using tools from sociocultural discourse analysis; the second, to triangulate the content of the discussions with the themes that emerged from the reflective portfolios and the interview data through inductive, thematic analysis. The semi-structured interviews, which were the final data set to be collected, were guided by initial analysis of the content of the discussions and a thematic analysis of the data allowed triangulation across the sets.

Inferring the success or otherwise of any given approach to education, especially to the field of language teacher education is not a straightforward matter. Research which attempts, at least in part, to ascertain how teachers learn will be dependent on the research methodology it employs to gather data within its framework. Freeman's (1996: 366) distinction between first and second order research is useful for explaining how the methodology complements this research. He notes how first order research deals with phenomena that can be observed and data from such activities (e.g. turn-taking in a discussion) are relatively clear to document. However, second order research, "*shifts the focus to examine participants' perceptions of phenomena in the world*". In this study, the reflective journal accounts and the interview data constitute second order research while the first order research is represented by the analysis of interactional features that were evident in transcribed interactions of the feedback discussions. What this emergent approach allows, therefore, is the production and documentation of different insights into

the process of learning teaching that, taken together, may help provide an account that satisfies the research aims.

The study has taken an inductive approach to the relationship between theory and research. The ultimate aim is to be able to draw expedient inferences out of the observations made from the data collected. Such an approach is customary in qualitative research (Bryman and Burgess 1994) and the general inductive approach directly influenced both the emerging data collection methods and the analysis and categorisation of the themes that were evident in the data itself. In addition to the transcribed recordings of the feedback discussions along with notes from the observations of live teaching sessions, which may be described as first order research, data from journal entries and semi-structured interviews, the second order research, were the principal methods of data collection.

Following the process of data collection described above, a number of subsidiary research questions evolved at different points throughout the collection and analysis and these are listed below.

Subsidiary questions for Research aim one:

1)   Is the employment of a dialogic approach possible in the context of study?

2)   How do the patterns of exchanges fit with theoretical conceptions of dialogic interaction and exploratory talk?

3)   Can any learning be evidenced from analysis of multi-party dialogic interactions?

4)   Can learning be evidenced from teacher-led dialogic instruction?

Subsidiary questions for Research aim two:

1)   What learner factors were evident that promoted or inhibited the efficacy of dialogic or exploratory talk?

2)   What declarative knowledge based factors were evident that promoted or inhibited the efficacy of dialogic or exploratory talk?

3)   What practical (or procedural) factors emerged as being important with regard to employing dialogic talk with pre-service language teachers?

4)   What contextual factors were evident that promoted or inhibited the efficacy of dialogic teaching or exploratory talk?

3.3   Action research

The research methodology can be located in the concepts of Action Research, which have helped to structure the process of this investigation. The idea of a teacher researching his or her own classroom context was first put forward by Stenhouse (1975) who observed that:

> It is difficult to see how teaching can be improved …without self-monitoring on the part of teachers. A research tradition which is accessible to teachers and which feeds teaching must be created if education is to be significantly improved. (Stenhouse: 165)

Bailey (2006) notes that much research about language teacher supervision deals with pre-service teacher education and much of this enquiry is conducted by university lecturers who supervise LTs (e.g. see Richards and Nunan 1990, Freeman and Richards 1996, Johnson and Golombek 2011). Such works have assisted in the development of this methodological framework since this investigation has also been conducted by a practitioner using his own site as a focus of research.

It is important to note that this study, while featuring many characteristics of ethnography such as interviews, questionnaires and observation, may not fit all descriptions of an ethnographic study. Ethnography does indeed involve the researcher immersing him or herself in a group or community for an extended period of time, as was the case with this

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research. However, the term ethnography often refers both to a method of research and to the form of its written product (Bryman 2012: 432). While this study features the use of ethnographic tools such as document collection and immersion in the group setting, along with those mentioned above, it is not intended to be a full ethnographic account of the learner teachers' or the educator's experience of pre-service teacher education.

Action Research (AR) has been described as a combination of both *action* and *research* whereby educators adopt an exploratory, investigative approach to their own professional context (Burns 2009, Edge 2010). The *action,* in this study*,* is located within a particular sociocultural context, in this case the SLTE classroom, and involves modifications or developments in practice (the attempt to adopt a more dialogic approach) aimed at bringing about greater understanding, improvement and so on. As stated above, no prior research had been conducted on an extended course of pre-service ELT development in the context under investigation but I was extremely keen on understanding more about the process of teacher learning and what could be achieved. Action Research thus provided both a structure and also the security of knowing that other researchers in the field of TESOL had employed it as a framework.

The research, as Burns (2009:290) describes:

> …is located within the systematic observation and analysis of the developments and changes that eventuate in order to identify the underlying rationale for the action and to make further changes as required based on findings and outcomes.

Followers of Action Research, see observation on action and subsequent reflection as key tenets of the philosophy. For example, Richards (2011:208) notes that intervention in order to bring about change is the fundamental requirement of all action research and Burns (2005) proposes that such practitioner action research is

best set within a qualitative, interpretative paradigm. A number of commentators argue that the reflective teaching movement has legitimized the practitioner knowledge that emerges from teacher inquiry into their situated practice (Johnson 2009, Edge 2010). It is worth noting, also, that TESOL educators have long been calling for the legitimization of action research as 'real research', and it has been argued that reliability and validity of the research for the context under study can be established since external validity (e.g. arguing from samples to populations) is not a concern of AR (Nunan 1993). Moreover, over thirty years ago Stenhouse (1975: 143) argued convincingly that for teachers to develop and improve their own work, they must be involved in researching their own class contexts for it is difficult to see how "…*teaching can be improved or curriculum proposals can be evaluated without self-monitoring on the part of teachers*".

However, a number of drawbacks to this *teacher as researcher* (Stenhouse 1975) approach should be noted. The criticisms include a possible lack of objectivity and also that, given the researcher's proximity to the data, it can be difficult for anything new to be uncovered or identified. Moreover, particularly from the perspective of *teacher as researcher*, it may be argued that there is divergence in occupying the dual roles of observer and assessor. A further criticism of action research that is important to bear in mind its capacity to be overly inward looking. In wishing to avoid the marginalisation of the profession, and in striving to remain connected to the wider social world (Breen 2007), action research must expand perspectives that "…*connect to critical explorations of social justice, politics, power, identity, diversity or gender*"(Burns 2011: 248). Moreover, despite its capacity to improve local practice, researchers need to be mindful of the need to "…*incorporate initiatives*

that can bring about more fundamental contributions to the theory and practice"

(Burns: ibid.)

These are important factors to acknowledge, address and make transparent. The efforts undertaken in this research to limit such criticisms and to ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the investigation are discussed in detail in this chapter.

Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) produced a description of the AR process and the following points outline how this study fits with such a description:

1)   Develop a plan of critically informed action to improve what is already happening

    As stated, the aim here is to attempt to promote dialogic interaction and reflective practice through efforts to employ dialogic teaching as well as to engage participants in exploratory talk based on their personal histories, teaching practice and developing language awareness, TESOL methodologies, theories and so on. The plan draws on theoretical works outlined in a conceptual framework.

2)   Act to implement the plan

    The feedback discussions employed in this study record the effort made to engage participants in articulating and reflecting on their actions in light of their developing TESOL expertise. The reflective journals provide the framework, space and opportunity for the learner teachers to further articulate their emerging understandings.

3)   Observe the effects of the critically informed action in the context in which it occurs.

    All data sets for this study were collected from the researcher's actual teaching context.

4)   Reflect on these effects as the basis for further planning, subsequent critically informed action and so on, through a succession of stages.

This thesis is, in effect, the result of prolonged reflection and analysis on the employment of dialogic teaching in the SLTE context under study. The effects that the outcomes of this study have had on practice are discussed later in the thesis.

Kemmis and McTaggart's four phase model of action research does indeed broadly mirror the stages of this study and a number of changes to the course of teacher education upon which this study is based have already been planned as a result of the findings of this research project.

3.4   Data collection

The following section provides information on the participants involved in this research and details the reasoning behind employing transcripts of conversation, reflective journals, observation notes and interviews as data sources.

The primary data source consists of transcribed interactions recorded from feedback sessions taken over the course of the six-month practicum that final year TESOL students undertake as part of their TESOL minor degree. Findings from these sessions are triangulated with data from semi-structured interviews, which were conducted after the practicum with seven participants. In addition, data were collected from the seven participants' reflective journals and from observation notes that were taken during the teaching episodes**.** In sum, data was collated from the following sources:

- Transcribed records from fourteen, sixty-minute feedback discussions.

- Semi-structured interviews with seven pre-service LTs

- Notes made during the observations that precede the feedback

- Written artefacts from the seven learner teachers' reflective accounts

A note about participants

As can be seen above, data were collected from the interviews and reflective journals of seven learner-teachers. All seven participants feature predominantly in the transcriptions analysed in this study and further information about them is provided in Table 3.1 below. However, LTs who were neither interviewed for the study, nor had their reflective journals analysed also feature in the feedback discussions. In order to assist the reader in identifying which participants were interviewed and had their journals analysed for this research, I took the decision to assign *pseudonyms* to the core participants and *numbers* for those who have been included in the transcriptions only. Participants who took part in only the discussions (*the numbers*) also gave their written permission for their participation to be included:

Table 3.1   Participant information

Name / number	Initials used in thesis	Teaching experience / qualifications
Annie	AN	Two months summer school. No qualifications
Sian	SH	None
Kim	KI	None
Tara	TA	None
Susan	SU	None
Mary	MA	One year as teaching assistant in Spain. No qualifications
Rachel	RA	None
LT 8	-	None
LT 9	-	One year as teaching assistant in Spain. No qualifications
LT 10	-	None
LT 11	-	Two months teaching assistant in Italy. No qualifications
LT 12	-	One year as teaching assistant in Spain. No qualifications

All but one of the LTs were female, aged between twenty one and twenty five and were full time undergraduate students. Of the seven participants interviewed for this research, two studied TESOL with a foreign language while the others studied TESOL with English. Five of the participants had never taught prior to beginning the practicum while one had spent a year as language assistant in Spain as part of her degree and one had taught English, unqualified, at a UK summer school.

The decision on which LTs to include was principally determined by logistics. I was researching my own practice and therefore needed to base the study on the LTs who were in 'my' cohort since these were the novices who would be taking part in the recorded feedback. To be clear, my cohort in each term (Oct – Dec 2012 and Jan – March 2013) consisted of six teachers thus, over the two academic terms upon which this study was conducted, a total of twelve teachers were recorded while taking part in the discussions. Once the practicum had been concluded and all reflective portfolios had been submitted, I needed to decide how many of the learner-teachers I wished to interview and thus how many reflective journals to include in the study. I decided to interview four LTs from each cohort. Once again, this was a decision based principally on what I had calculated would provide sufficient data and the first four from each cohort who responded to requests to carry out the interview were included. Unfortunately, once again, it emerged later in the summer that technological issues had resulted in one of the interviews not being recorded adequately and was not subsequently involved in the data set. Initial plans to re-do the interview at a later date were not realised. The following pages discuss the three principal data sets.

Source of data 1 - The feedback discussion

Fourteen feedback discussions were recorded and transcribed during the six-month period in which the practicum was running at the university. The discussions took place immediately after two teachers had each taught a fifty to sixty minute class and were recorded using a Dictaphone device and an apple iPhone. Three or four learner teachers from the same cohort also observed each TP class and thus also took part in the discussions. The data collected was essential in order to explore the nature and shape of the discussions following my interventions and efforts to promote a more dialogic approach. It was not collected in an attempt to analyse or identify how learning progresses historically.

For reasons of good practice, each cohort of learner teachers is observed by at least two different lecturers during the practicum. For instance, one cohort may be observed for their first three lessons by one teacher educator and then by a different educator for the subsequent three observed lessons. This means that for this study, feedback discussions from two separate cohorts of LTs have been used as part of the data collection but the researcher was the tutor / observer / assessor in both cases. From October 2012 to February 2013, I observed and led the feedback discussions for around twenty, two-hour teaching sessions however due to technological mishaps and a decision not to record the first teaching session of each cohort, fourteen of the feedback discussions have been recorded and transcribed for analysis.

As explained previously, one of the aims of the feedback discussion was to promote self-reflection and encourage collaborative talk, or what Mercer (2000) terms 'interthinking'. In other words, the teaching episode was the vehicle to advance dialogue about teaching and learning. There was no set script or traditional overt criteria to run through during the feedback, rather, the discussions represent an attempt to foster professional 'praxis'

(Johnson 2006, Edge 2010). The objective was to create an environment which encouraged the LTs to think about the teaching and learning process and experience and also to prompt the reasoning behind actions taken in the classroom and during planning (Wellington 2000). It was not to run through a list of visible skills such as board work, achievement of aims, eliciting techniques or concept-checking ability with the intention of instilling any one correct procedure or method.

Source of data 2 - The reflective accounts

The reflective accounts provided a tremendously useful insight into the 'mental lives' (Freeman 1991) of the LTs and provided valuable data on the concerns that emerged as they undertook their practicum. Each of the seven participants produced six reflective accounts – one for each teaching practice session. The accounts required that the LTs made attempts to both justify their lesson planning in light of theoretical input on their course as well as reflect on any issues that emerged during their lesson. The learner teachers were also encouraged to articulate how their beliefs about the practice of effective teaching were influenced by their actual experience in the classroom. The reflections, I reasoned, provided another means of observing how aware the LTs were becoming of issues related to procedural aspects of their course and the role declarative knowledge may play in assisting and facilitating their understanding. Burton (2009: 303) notes how writing is recognised as an important means of reflection pointing out that "*writing can document reflection in and on action. So in itself writing has the potential to function as a uniquely-effective reflective tool.*" What's more, from Bakhtinian perspective (Bakhtin 1986), crafting the accounts provided the LTs with further opportunity to articulate their emerging understandings and *appropriate* the discourse of language teaching. Wong (2006: 99) draws on sociocultural views of learning in pointing out that development is initially

regulated externally and socially and that "*consciousness emerges through a dialectical and recursive process of teaching*". Yet time is needed for reflection and journal writing provides opportunities for reflection that "…*involves shifting through and interpreting and reinterpreting how we "read" or understand the voices and discourses of our students and of ourselves"*.

Source of data 3 - The interview

Interviews are among the most important and common methods for data collection in qualitative studies. Much literature has been devoted to best practice for their design, implementation, examination and interpretation (McDonough and McDonough 1997, Bogdan and Biklen 2003) and many other SLTE studies have used semi – structured interviews as a format for data collection in studies on teacher education (e.g. see Tsui 2002, Borg 2004).

The broad aims of the interviews, conducted after their university studies had been completed, were to ascertain the learner teachers' thoughts on the educational experience they had just undergone and to possibly evince, in their responses, any learning that may have taken place during the course of SLTE. In tandem, it was hoped that the interviews would uncover further data regarding the second research aim, i.e. to learn more about the factors which affected the efficacy of a dialogic approach. As mentioned previously, questions put to the LTs in the semi-structured interview were guided, in part, by themes and issues that emerged from early, initial analysis of the feedback discussions and of the reflective journals. That is, they were designed to explore the participants' impressions about the dialogic approach and to understand more about their declarative knowledge base. Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that taking such an emergent design enables researchers to base their enquiries on the realities and viewpoints of those being studied,

and such perspectives might not be apparent at the outset of a study, as was the case in this exploratory investigation. In this way, the interviews sought not only to gain a better understanding of the learner teachers' perceptions of the feedback but also on topics such as methodology, corrective feedback, language awareness and other issues that emerged from the cyclical examination of the feedback discussions and reflective journals.

The interviews were conducted with seven of the LTs following the completion of their undergraduate award. As stated in the previous paragraph, it was hoped that conducting the interviews after completion of the practicum, a more holistic impression of the experience could be investigated during the conversation. Each interview lasted between thirty to sixty minutes and was recorded using either a Dictaphone or an iPhone recording app and transcribed using standard orthography. A semi-structured format was adopted as this lets a more natural series of interactions to unfold, allowing the dialogue to develop more spontaneously. This in turn enabled the researcher to enquire further into themes which emerged during the feedback discussions. An overly structured format would have allowed little opportunity to explore more deeply the issues identified from the analysis of the post teaching discussions. Mann (2011) makes the case that a fuller interactional context and interview transcripts need to be made available in order to ensure that potential researchers are not impoverished. To that end, details on the participants and researcher are available in this document and an example of a fully transcribed interview is documented in appendix five.

Source 4 - The observation

Data from twenty eight lessons, each approximately fifty to sixty minutes long were collected for this investigation. Each feedback discussion covered the two separate sixty-minute lessons that were taught consecutively each week. Borg (2006:232) lists eighteen

studies in which all observers described their role as non-participant and overt. While the LTs taught lessons, I was not a participant but was overt and was also performing the role of observer and assessor during the teaching episode. In the course of the feedback discussion, I was both a participant and researcher and made efforts to create an informal, exploratory atmosphere where everyone was encouraged to contribute and take part. However, this does not allow us to avoid the unintentional manipulation, during both the lessons and the discussions, that Labov (1972) notably coined 'the observer's paradox' whereby, "*observing people's behaviour we often alter the very behavioural patterns that we wish to observe*" (cited in Bailey 2006:116). Even so, this is an issue that action research has to grapple with and efforts were made throughout the collection, analysis and discussion of the data to be mindful and reflexive.

Despite its problems, observational data are nevertheless important, as a basis upon which to focus the exploratory discussions, for two other additional reasons. Firstly, data from the observational notes may help illuminate data obtained from the other sources. In other words, a record or reminder of what took place in the class can be useful for better understanding the context and focus of the feedback discussions. Secondly, as mentioned previously, comparison between data sets helps to confirm or weaken initial theorising. The observational data may serve to further increase the validity of the findings as there is a well-documented disparity between stated beliefs and observed instructional decisions made in classroom conditions (Richards, Gallo et al. 2001).

3.5 Data analysis

In undertaking the analysis, the focus was threefold. It was an exploration of what resulted from attempting a dialogic approach in the feedback event; an analysis of how such an

approach may contribute to learning through triangulation of the exchanges with data from the reflective accounts, interviews and classroom actions; and it was also an investigation into what elements appeared to hinder or contribute to dialogic interaction taking place. Research that had been conducted on feedback during the practicum in language teacher education was reviewed while planning the data collection and also during the thinking behind which mode of analysis would be most efficacious. The three studies described in chapter two that had examined feedback discussions employed a variety of approaches to data interpretation and provide clear examples that there are now a range of methods available for analysing such talk (Mercer, Dawes et al. 2004). However, none of the methods they employed would have provided the type of holistic understanding of what dialogic talk in pre-service SLTE looks like, what the outcomes may be and what the contributory factors to the efficacy of the approach are.

Thus, following the emergent nature of the study, as described earlier, the three data sets were analysed using an inductive thematic approach after the crucial realisation that the value of the shape and pattern of the interactions could not be disentangled from their content. I was interested in learning more about the nature of the exchanges, yet realised that I needed to know more about the content of the discussions and learner reflections together with how the LTs reacted to such an approach. It was the effort to promote an interactive, dialogic pedagogy that adhered to the descriptions of exploratory talk, and the outcomes produced, that were of interest; not the specific language that was used to enable it. So, following an investigation into the methodological tools available, I decided to initially examine the transcripts for evidence of exploratory talk. The taxonomy offered by Mercer's Sociocultural Discourse Analysis (SDA), although originally devised for exploring talk between a teacher and children, was suitable since it can function as an

appropriate heuristic device for identifying the patterns of talk that are of interest to the research questions (Mercer 2004: 146). This, in effect meant the feedback transcriptions being subjected to two layers of analysis, in what was really a cyclical, iterative process. Firstly using the descriptions of exploratory talk from SDA for identifying and classifying dialogic interaction and then through inductive thematic analysis.

The systematic collection and review of the data resulted in an iterative strategy (Bryman 2012:26) being adopted as part of both the data collection and subsequent analysis. For example, early examination of the shape and pattern of interactions alerted me to the fact that the participants were often attempting to use terminology and notions from their developing declarative knowledge base (not always accurately). This revelation subsequently led to the collection of the reflective journals as a data source and also affected the shape and direction of the semi-structured interviews that were conducted upon the course's completion. The thematic analysis was then chosen to analyse all three sets as it permitted the identification and categorisation of important themes and the relationships amongst them. It also allowed the deliberation and reflection of their possible meanings to be considered through the comparison of the data sets. In other words, the issues that the participants chose to address, deliberate over or articulate in their reflections and interviews, and during the feedback discussions, were emerging as being crucial in affecting the quality of dialogic interactions and thus needed to be investigated and identified. Other researchers have also found that taking a holistic view of the data collected allows for greater insight but that it is essential to move "…*beyond the codes, categories and data bits back to what the 'whole' picture is or may be"* (Coffey and Atkinson 1996: 46).

Through a process of data reduction (Thomas 2006), a limited number of categories emerged as being significant to the research aims and led to the development of the subsidiary questions listed earlier in this section. For the first research aim, it became clear that the discussions seemed to be promoting learning through *teacher-led scaffolding* and also through opportunities for *peer-peer scaffolding* which resulted from the educators more emancipatory rather than evaluative third turn in the IRF loop. What also became clear was that in the educator-led probing and prompting, *dynamic assessment* became an important issue. With regard to the second research aim, it emerged that the domains of *declarative knowledge* together with *social a*nd *cultural* factors had a large influence on the success and quality of the dialogic interactions as well as the quality if the LTs' reflections. This systematic approach aided an understanding of the meaning contained in the data by allowing the themes and categories to further develop through the aforementioned system of data reduction. A more detailed discussion of these analytical tools is discussed on the following pages.

Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within data that can also be employed to interpret various aspects of the topic being researched (Braun and Clarke 2006). One of the main reasons for choosing to undertake a thematic analysis approach in this study is its flexibility, as Braun and Clarke describe (2006:8):

> The term thematic discourse analysis is used to refer to a wide range of pattern type analysis, ranging from thematic analysis within a social constructionist epistemology (i.e. where patterns are identified as socially produced but no discursive analysis is conducted), to forms of analysis very much akin to the interpretive repertoire form of Discourse Analysis.

Unlike interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), grounded theory, discourse analysis and so on, thematic analysis is not bound to any pre-existing theoretical framework and so

can be used within different theoretical frameworks and be used to do different things within them (Braun and Clarke 2006). Moreover, while constructivist or critical thematic analysis certainly does recognise the organic, essential nature of language and discourse, it does not generally entail a micro analysis of language use. Thus, it performs a different task compared to the more fine-grained analysis involving the discourse typology from sociocultural discourse analysis that was applied initially to the feedback discussion transcripts.

Braun and Clarke (2006:9) explain how a thematic analysis can be an essentialist or realist method that *"reports the experiences, meanings and realities of the participants"*, or it can be a constructionist method – whereby the " *events, realities, meanings, experiences and so on are the effects of a range of discourses operating within society*". Braun and Clarke (ibid.) also describe a 'contextualist' method that sits between the poles and which:

> …acknowledges the ways individuals make meaning of their experience and, in turn, the ways the broader social context impinges on those meanings, while retaining focus on the material and other limits of reality.

It is this third, 'contextualist' perspective which aligns itself most closely to the sociocultural theoretical approach I have taken in interpreting the data.

In analysing a data set, Braun and Clarke (2006) note how themes can either be identified in an inductive or 'bottom up' way or in a theoretical or deductive 'top down' way. With the former, an inductive approach, the themes identified are strongly linked to the data collected. Patton (1990:514) makes a number of suggestions for easing the path to an effective, inductive, analysis of qualitative data. He advises being open about multiple possibilities and ways of thinking about a problem – '*side-tracking*' and '*zigzagging*' in the attempt to make connections. In taking such an approach the themes that are identified

may have little to do with the actual questions that were put to the participants and would not be driven by the researcher's theoretical interests. Alternatively, a theoretical thematic analysis would "*tend to be driven by the researcher's theoretical or analytic interest in the area and is thus more explicitly analyst driven*" (Braun and Clarke 2006:12).

Researchers also draw attention to the 'level' at which themes should be identified and distinguish between semantic and latent themes. While the former focuses on the explicit or surface meanings of the data, the latter seeks to identify the underlying ideas, beliefs or patterns that gave it that particular form and meaning. They point out that latent thematic analysis tends to be found under constructivist paradigms and overlap with forms of thematic discourse analysis. Thus broad assumptions, structures, meanings and so on are "*theorised as underpinning what is articulated in the data*" (Braun and Clarke 2006:13). Thus the description of a latent thematic analysis is in line with the interpretive and reflexive analysis that is presented in this research. Braun and Clarke (ibid: 36) argue that theory and method need to be applied rigorously and detail a checklist for good thematic analysis. A detailed description of the stages of data analysis adapted from this checklist can be found in appendix six.

Coding

Thematic coding is a form of qualitative analysis which involves recording or identifying passages of text or images that are linked by a common theme or idea allowing you to index the text into categories and therefore establish a framework of thematic ideas about it (Gibbs 2008). For the thematic analysis, I decided to maintain the categorisation at the level of theme and subtheme rather than employ a potentially decontextualized use of coding. Modifications and developments of the categories were cyclical and undertaken

throughout the analytical process until the data could be organised in a meaningful way. In undertaking a thematic analysis of all three data sets, issues pertaining to areas such as methodology, teacher identity and knowledge became evident. The actual process, while systematic, was also rather complex and recursive involving written notes on the hard copies of text, and also the use of a file system using Microsoft Word 2010. The process was certainly an iterative one '*weaving back and forth between data and theory*" (Bryman 2012:26) but also back and forth between data sets as I was becoming deeply immersed in examining the relationships between the effects of dialogic teaching and exploratory talk, the reflective accounts of the participants and the sentiments they offered up in their interviews. Hammersley and Atkinson (2005:213) state that in comparing and organising codes:

> …theoretical ideas, common-sense expectations and stereotypes often play a key role. Indeed, it is these that allow the analyst to pick out surprising, interesting and important features in the first place.

Certain categories, such as LTs' preoccupation with student engagement, concerns about language knowledge and enjoyment of lessons emerged early across all data sets. What was fascinating was how, in analysing the data, interpretation and categorisation of each data set was facilitated by the information contained in or observed on the other sets. Although I received training to use Nvivo software, I decided against using it in the analysis of the data for the simple reason that I felt, in the stance of observer as participant that I was closer to the data than any software tool could possibly be. As I was living and breathing the research both in my work and personal time, I could see no advantage to organising the use of Nvivo for this research project. For example, the software would not be able to infer any meaning from the data that was related to or deduced from observation of a learner teacher in action.

Sociocultural discourse analysis

Much of the theoretical grounding behind the calls for greater dialogic interaction is based on the Vygotskian and Bakhtinian conceptions of language as a social, cultural and psychological tool. As Mercer and Howe note:

> Generally speaking, disparities between the ways collaborating students, or teachers and learners, make sense of observed phenomena will only emerge if they talk about them. Moreover, such disparities or conflicting conceptualizations are only likely to be reconciled through dialogue, and particularly the kind of discussion we have called exploratory talk. (Mercer and Howe 2012:19)

Taking this perspective, a micro-analysis of selected parts of the feedback discussion was conducted that utilised aspects of Mercer's (2004) methodological tool of sociocultural discourse analysis (SDA). A sociocultural perspective of education raises the possibility that success may be based not on the inherent qualities of the individual students or teachers, but rather, to a certain extent, on the quality of the dialogic process. That is, the quality of the connection between language and thinking. Mercer (2004: 141) stresses the need for an examination of the pursuit of joint intellectual activity and a *"concern with the lexical content and the cohesive structure of talk"* because these can *"represent ways that knowledge is being jointly constructed"*. When language and learning is viewed in this way, the need for analysis of such a critical episode as the feedback discussion becomes obvious, and Mercer's framework is appropriate as an aid to interpreting and understanding processes occurring in the feedback discussions. His categorisation of the different types of talk allowed greater exploration of issues pertaining to the understanding of how dialogue may contribute to development. These included issues such as dynamic assessment (Lantolf and Poehner 2011), intersubjectivity (Wertsch 1998) scaffolding (Díaz-Maggioli

2012) and how cognition is mediated from the external *interpsychological* to the internal *intrapsychological* – most notably by language (Vygotsky 1986).

As with other approaches to discourse analysis, such as conversational analysis (Seedhouse 2004) or critical discourse analysis (Fairclough 1995), in utilising a SDA approach, interpretation of research findings is illustrated by transcriptions of selected exchanges. This methodology differs from standard qualitative research tools such as thematic analyses in that there is focussed interest on the shape of the conversation, the structure of the talk – because word choices and cohesive patterning "*can represent ways that knowledge is being jointly constructed*" (Mercer 2004:141). However, SDA differs from more conventional linguistic analyses as well. This is because, in a sociocultural discourse analysis "*cognition and the social and cultural context of talk are considered legitimate concerns*". For example, the particular grammatical constructions or the level of formality and so on were not deconstructed in order to explore deeper significance or clues regarding power roles etc. Mercer's SDA is not, in effect, only interested in the shape of talk, but in the development and outcomes of such joint verbal collaboration. To be clear, it is the role of dialogue in joint cognitive effort, and the learning outcomes that follow on, that are important. It is for this reason that using aspects of SDA methodology for the feedback discussion data set, most closely fits the needs of this study.

Mercers' SDA approach employs a number of methods to analyse and aid the interpretation of classroom based interactions. Two principal tools involve the analysis of the patterns of the initiation-response-feedback exchange (IRF) and examination of the discursive techniques that educators employ. Mercer (ibid.) also created a useful taxonomy that can be employed to make sense of the variety of interactions that can take place in a classroom setting. Described in detail in chapter two, the *disputational, cumulative* and

exploratory categories of talk that he puts forward can be an effective heuristic tool.

Mercer is careful to point out that they were not devised to be used as the basis for a coding

scheme since the reduction of the data to a categorical tally would remove involvement

with the contextualised, dynamic nature of the data. However, there are a number of ways

in which they can be useful analytical tools. Firstly, in perceiving which participants may be,

at any stage, behaving cooperatively or competitively and secondly, in identifying the

participation in critical reflection or mutual acceptance of ideas. In other words, the

typology may be useful in gauging the extent to which the talk is truly symmetrical,

exploratory and so on. It may also be useful for validating claims regarding the ways in

which talk may be promoting reflective thought. In applying Mercer's typography to the

feedback discussions, it became clear that the attempt to take a more dialogic approach

was resulting in different patterns of interactions. Principally, these were:

Teacher guided scaffolding

Symmetrically shaped exploratory talk or 'collaborative floors'

Thus the reflexive approach (Edge 2010) to both data collection and analysis resulted in a

hermeneutic circle that led, in turn, to the narrowing focus of the subsidiary questions.

Establishing the reliability of a project's findings are important criteria in judging its worth

and various terms and categories are suggested in the literature with regard to assessing

the value of qualitative research. For example, Guba and Lincoln (1998) advance the terms

trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability while Yardley

(2000) suggests sensitivity, commitment, transparency and impact as standards for

measuring the quality of qualitative studies. Newby (2014: 18) posits three criteria that

determine the validity of research to others, arguing that in order to be valid, research

needs to be *representative* of the issue under investigation; it needs to be as *complete* as possible, which comes from familiarity with the field under study, and finally it needs to be *transparent* because "*ultimately transparency is read as a statement about your honesty as a researcher*". However, it is important to note that the notion of validity for this study is not based upon generalizability of the results. Rather what the following pages attempt to demonstrate are the efforts undertaken to ensure methodological rigour and professionalism during the research process so that researchers in similar contexts may "*process the resulting discussion according to their own interpretative process*" (Woods 1996: 46).

Unfortunately numerous meanings and interpretations are often ascribed to the various terms suggested by theorists, and as Richards (2003:284) points out, "*As with so much else in qualitative inquiry, the waters are muddied by the confluence of positivist concepts and naturalist concerns*". As a new researcher, I empathise with Richards' sentiments and, taking these various labels, categorisations and suggestions into account, I feel that the general notions of transparency and methodological rigour provide suitable, overarching categories for evaluating the quality of research. To that end, I have listed below the various measures employed in order to ensure the validity of this study.

Firstly, as can be seen in the following section, I have taken steps to acknowledge the issues of reflexivity, subjectivity and researcher bias that are pertinent to this study. I have also detailed my ontological and epistemological stance in the conceptual framework which will hopefully make clear the perspective I take throughout the study. In addition to this, I have attempted to provide as much detail as space will allow of the setting, the participants and the context that this study is based upon.

Secondly, with regard to the data collection and analysis, I have also attempted to detail as full a description as possible of the way in which the data were managed, organised and analysed. The process of thematic categorisation that was undertaken for the inductive analysis of all three data sets has been specified while the typology of discourse patterns adopted from Mercer's Sociocultural Discourse Analysis (2004) have also been outlined. In order to avoid what Silverman (2005: 211) terms "anecdotalism", comparison between data sets was a constant process throughout the data analysis.

Thirdly, the extracts used to evidence the findings were based on their relevance to the overall research aims and to their significance in illustrating findings that helped to better understand the issues contained in the research aims. The initial identification of thematic categories helped avoid the random selecting of utterances or extracts merely to support possible emerging theories. In addition, an examination of the transcriptions through the lens of theoretical frameworks and descriptions of exploratory talk put forward by theorists allowed the researcher to relate the pattern, shape and content of the discussions to existing research literature. Further, triangulation of data sources ensured methodological rigour during the final stages of the analysis. Woods (1996: 44) draws attention to the fact that in his research, it was the relationship between the categories that emerged as important in his attempt to interpret meaning from his data – rather than the categories themselves. This was particularly true in this research as interpretation and coding of the interview transcripts and reflective journals was directly connected to my knowledge of what transpired during the teaching episodes and feedback sessions. In other words, it was the totality of the data that illuminated, for instance, the importance of professional discourse as a tool to articulate emerging understandings during dialogic interaction.

Fourthly, a number of validity issues needed to be considered with regard to conducting the interviews. The most pertinent include factors such as subjectivity and how the context may affect the interviewees' answers. To an extent, these issues have been discussed on the previous pages yet it is still worth noting the efforts that needed to be made during the data collection. For instance are respondents too keen to give the 'right' answer? Do they hesitate in stating what they really believe for fear that such a response may be prejudicial in some way to their success on their course of teacher education? Clear and repeated attempts were made to ensure the participants absolutely understood that the interviews had nothing whatsoever to do with their university assessment or evaluation. Furthermore, it was stressed that attending an interview was entirely voluntary and it should be noted that the interviews all took place after the practicum had been concluded and all formal university assessments had been completed. Another validity issue relates to the wording of the questions themselves and researchers need to take care to ensure that questions are not overly 'leading' in any way. This is a tricky process in reality and I frequently found myself instigating quite long pauses during the semi-structured interviews as I searched for further probing questions that were not too obvious or directive. Borg (2006:208) refers to a transcript that depicts a research student's interview technique. Although the researcher had planned a semi-structured format for the interview, their unfamiliarity with the process meant the data gathering exercise had clearly been unsuccessful. The style, wording and approach of the researcher only resulted in short, quite possibly defensive responses from the interviewee allowing little, if any, useful inquiry to take place. All these issues were considered before undertaking the interviews for this study.

A transcript of one of the interviews is provided in appendix five.

Reflexivity

The notion of reflexivity is particularly important in this study as the researcher also takes on the roles of tutor, assessor, mentor and so on. Qualitative researchers have highlighted the advantages that participant observation can add to data collection. These include an improvement in the quality and interpretation of data over non-participant stances as a consequence of the fact that as the observer becomes known to the members under study, the facilitation of the research process is eased (LeCompte and Schensul 1999). Moreover, being an insider, and one very familiar with the field and context, can often aid the understanding and significance of the phenomena observed or analysed (e.g. see Campbell, McNamara et al. 2004). Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, being exposed to data in its entirety is crucial for identifying and exploring the links among the categories that emerge which, according to some (DeWalt and DeWalt 2010), may result in improved validity as theory is drawn from a position of knowledge

The term reflexivity has several meanings in the social sciences, two of which are of relevance to this investigation. Firstly, Bryman (2012:393) notes how the term is used by some to refer to the way in which speech and action *"are constitutive of the social world in which they are located".* Sentiments, thoughts, understandings and opinions that go to make up the data from the reflective accounts and the interview transcriptions are, of course, highly subjective. This is not necessarily as problematic as it might at first appear since it is the outcome of the dialogic approach to teacher education that is the focus of the research – and that precisely involves examination of the learner teachers' subjective ideas, understandings, beliefs and assumptions. However, a further aspect of the learner teachers' subjectivity that needs to be highlighted and made transparent is the fact that, given the researcher's role as tutor and assessor, the learner teachers, quite

understandably, will likely wish to present themselves in a positive manner. This is applicable to all three data sets and means that how they act and behave during their classroom practice, what they reveal in their reflective portfolios and the answers they provide in their interviews may not always mirror what they would do, write or say in a different situation. The researcher was sensitive to these issues of subjectivity at all stages of the research process. This was especially so with regard to the presentation of the findings, the data collection and how they were analysed and interpreted. The unavoidably asymmetric nature of the roles of all participants in the context under investigation was given consideration continuously with regard to the analyses and interpretations made in this study.

Bryman (ibid.) explains a second understanding of reflexivity noting how it "*entails a sensitivity to the researcher's cultural, political and social context*" and describes how knowledge from a reflexive position "...*is always a reflection of a researcher's location in time and space*". Decisions about what data are collected, how it is analysed, what can be inferred and so on are all affected by the researcher's own beliefs, background and experience together with his / her hunches, foibles and vanity. Tools and techniques such as triangulation, coding and thick description are employed by researchers to defend against charges of bias that these issues can provoke. However, According to Edge (2011: 36) reflexivity is not concerned with guarding against such criticisms of partiality or preconception as a result of the investigator's beliefs or background. Rather, what is important is "*noticing them, accepting them exploring them and making them part of the research*". This is yet another tough issue for the researcher to grapple with. Nevertheless, attempting to interpret data, actions and observations while being conscious of one's own preferences, history, beliefs and so on has provided much opportunity for reflection during

this research. In the interests of transparency, a profile of the researcher is provided as part of the appendices of this thesis.

Generalizability or transferability

It has been widely argued that generalizing from qualitative research is an impossible endeavour since no two cases or situations are ever the same (Lincoln and Guba 1985; Yin 1994). While the aim of this research is to improve understanding and practice in a very particular context, it may also have at least some influence or impact on others in *similar* situations or contexts. That is to say, the aim of this investigation is for the research described in this study to be sufficiently dependable to allow researchers in similar contexts to decide whether and how the findings may be applied to their sites of teacher education. Richards (2003:289), however, warns of the danger of worrying too much about the generalizability of a piece of research, suggesting that in thinking too broadly, we "...*miss the eloquence of the particular*". He proposes three rules to consider with regard to generalizing to which I have detailed brief answers relating to this study below.

1) Think about the sample - Is the situation typical, if so how? Is it exceptional, if so, why?

   The situation is *not* typical in UK. Most pre-service TESOL preparation is conducted on intensive one-month courses. UK BA TESOL degrees do not, as a rule, include teaching practice. When TP is included it is often in the form of a one-month intensive practicum added on at the end or in the middle of the university award. However, this is not the case worldwide, where there exists a wide-range of undergraduate and postgraduate SLTE courses. The actual participants included in the data collection are, however, typical of the cohort that studies on the TESOL modules for this degree award.

2)   Aim for thick description - Is the description sufficiently detailed and richly

articulated to allow readers to respond?

As far as space allows, detailed description has been provided regarding the

participants, the learners, the educator, the context and the BA degree award. Extra

contextual information is also supplied in the appendices.

3)   Look for connections - Are there connections with other research, other situations

and other cases that can be pointed to?

Attempts have been made throughout the discussion and conclusion sections to explain

connections between the different data sets and to theorize on connections to practice. In

addition, connections between the findings presented in this research and others in similar

fields have also been highlighted.

Williams (2000:215) suggests that what qualitative research data may be able to provide

are "*moderatum generalizations*" which, in line with Richards' points above may allow

researchers to make limited and tentative generalizations by drawing comparisons with

other groups or with findings by other researchers. What I have attempted to do

throughout this investigation is enable readers to engage with the situation and context

under study. Hopefully this has been achieved through efforts to fully describe the context

and participants, through attempts to relate arguments put forward here to existing theory

and through striving to communicate in a clear, accurate and honest manner.

Transcription

Transcription provides researchers with a very real dilemma over what degree of detail to

describe when analysing recorded conversation. There is much to consider regarding the

detail of transcription yet ultimately, what is important is the ability to defend one's

transcription decisions. Richards (2003:199) proposes three relevant criteria for the presentation of transcribed script. These guided the presentation of the feedback discussion extracts in this study. His criteria are:

1. Fitness for purpose

Richards (ibid.) suggests that we begin making decisions about the interpretation of transcripts from the time we select specific conversations to research. He points out that the territory which most qualitative researchers occupy lies "*somewhere between a completely open mind and the perceptual constraints accompanying hypothesis testing*" and since there is no method of transcription appropriate to all studies of discourse, "*the analyst must decide on an approach that will best serve research needs*". Consideration of the type of information I wanted from the transcripts resulted in the level of detail appropriate for this study and is described at the end of this section.

2. Adequacy

A researcher describing his / her work as within a Conversational Analysis methodology will be expected to meet demanding standards of transcription that can involve complex levels of detail. Decisions need to be taken regarding the inclusion of numerous linguistic and paralinguistic features. These include, for example, questions such as the inclusion of intonation features, eye contact, gestures and overlapping utterances. Such a detailed transcription would not serve the purposes of this study although that does not mean that many other issues need not be considered. For example, perhaps one of the most basic questions facing the researcher regarding transcription is whether or not the words should be transcribed using standard orthography or in a form that seeks to capture how they sound yet without resorting to phonemic transcription. E.g. should 'want to' be transcribed

as 'wanna' when it is heard as such? These choices are problematic for the researcher. However, Coates and Thornborrow (1999:595) suggest that transcription of a word or chunk in a manner that deviates from standard orthography serves to draw attention to or mark the words in some way and recommend that unless such highlighting is relevant to the study, then standard orthography should be employed.

3.   Accuracy

Richards (2003: 202) makes the point that many writers have noted how 'correct' transcription is an illusion as different people will transcribe data in different ways. He recommends that the researcher should "*seek to establish the most honest representation possible, given the resources at our disposal*", while others accept the difficulty of a task in which there is a tension between "*accuracy, readability and representation*" (Roberts 1997:168).

Taking the above into account, I decided to attempt to transcribe all the words uttered during the feedback conferences by all the participants. Following analysis of the transcriptions, the exchanges selected for use in the study were then transcribed in further detail using standard orthography. I have added conventional punctuation to aid understanding and have only included information about pauses, overlapping speech, and other non-verbal aspects of communication as I thought necessary for analysis. These basic transcription symbols are taken from Mercer (2000):

1: **When a speaker continues after an interruption is shown thus**:

LT 1: But they were enjoying the activity…

LT 2: Billie looked like he was.

LT 1:… and he said after the class

2: **Simultaneous speech is shown thus**:

Educator: If we had made it a little more student centred they [may have

LT: [I thought it was.

3: **Emphatic speech is underlined:**

LT: I messed up the language focus <u>again.</u>

4: The location of inaudible words or passages is shown thus:

They seemed to (…) does that affect our mark?

5: **Gestures and other non-verbal actions are explained in italics**:

Educator: What have we learned? *(Long pause)*

The interview transcriptions were not analysed using tools of SDA nor were they examined for their dialogic features or capacity to promote exploratory talk. Given that they did not need to be as detailed as the feedback discussions, they were transcribed, verbatim, using standard British orthography.

In the feedback discussion, and throughout this study, I refer to myself as the teacher *educator* rather than the perhaps more common categorisation of teacher *trainer*. The reasons for this are both epistemological and etymological. I believe that the development of capable and rounded practitioners, who are at a pre-service point in their professional careers, demands a great deal of preparation; and in order to achieve this, what is required involves more that the *training* of teachers to produce a set of prescribed techniques or behaviours. Given that university based, pre-service TESOL teacher preparation is an emerging academic endeavour that involves significant facilitating of reflection, along with declarative *and* procedural knowledge, I feel that the label *educator* is more appropriate than traditional description of *trainer*.

Pseudonyms, codes and the educator

It is also worth noting the following in regard to the transcribed extracts that follow. For the participants who were interviewed, and whose reflective journals were analysed, pseudonyms (Annie, Sian, Kim, Tara, Susan, Rachel and Mary) have been used. For the other interlocutors who appear in the transcriptions, a code (LT8, LT9, LT10, LT11 and LT12) has been used. I appear in the transcripts as *Educator*. Further details on the participants are provided on table 3.1.

Ethical considerations

For direction on ethical considerations and procedures, the guidelines offered by BERA (2011) provided a useful framework as to what issues needed to be taken into account when undertaking research. The research project was also granted ethical approval by the University Faculty Research Programmes Committee. In the general literature on research ethics, there are numerous codes and standards which, if followed, attempt to ensure that ethical principles are upheld during qualitative research. Four broad areas that appear in many ethical frameworks (e.g. see Richards 2003, Bryman 2012) refer to the importance of avoiding harm to participants, making certain there is informed consent, avoiding any invasion of privacy and ensuring there is no deception involved. Moreover, with regard to action research in particular, Nolen and Vander Putten (2007) point out that issues such as consent, power relations and confidentiality may be more problematic than in traditional research due to the nature of the context and the asymmetry of a student-teacher relationship. Considering my role of both educator and researcher, ethical issues were crucially important to this investigation and the actions taken to address the aforementioned areas are discussed overleaf.

Consent

All participants, and all learner teachers involved in the feedback discussions, were asked for their permission before the recording of each discussion. The participants were made fully aware of the researcher's dual roles of researcher and tutor and I was conscious of the fact that the power dimension might have made it difficult for the learner teachers to withdraw consent. However, all efforts were made, repeatedly, to inform and assure all concerned that their participation in the research was in no way connected with their university performance or assessment. This was not too difficult to achieve since I had known the participants for two years – having been their lecturer on modules during their first and second years of university. Indeed, the relationship with the learner teachers was professional yet also friendly and very supportive. The participants were keen to help and also possibly motivated by the fact that their efforts to learn about pedagogy were taken seriously enough to warrant research being conducted upon it. Written consent for data contained in the reflective journals and interview transcriptions was also sought. The participants were, of course, advised that they could withdraw from the research at any point, if they so wished. I openly acknowledge the ethical implications of conducting research on students who perceive me as their tutor and assessor. However, these roles are constant whether the discussions are recorded or not and this action research is concerned with implications for practice in this context. In other words, the power dimension on a formally assessed course of education is largely unavoidable. Nevertheless, my attempts to ensure vigorous reflexivity were documented earlier in this chapter.

Anonymity

Only pseudonyms have been used in the writing up of this thesis in order to protect the identities of the learner teachers. In addition, all the recordings, observation notes and data

collected for the study were kept secure so that only I could access the material. I assured the participants that I would do my utmost to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. No covert methods of data collection were employed during the research. All names of language learners transcribed in the discussions are also pseudonyms.

Honesty

Richards (2003) notes that no representation of informed consent is ever complete since one does not want to give so much information as to compromise the research . To that end, I made an effort to make it clear to the participants that I was researching ways to improve teacher education yet did not draw attention to the fact, whilst asking permission to record the feedback each week, that I was looking at dialogic interaction or uses of professional discourse, for example, in particular. Before each interview, I presented the broad aims of the study to each participant individually and made sure that they all felt free and comfortable to ask any questions they may have had.

Harm

Burns (2011: 248) notes that in undertaking action research, there is the potential for "*the primary objective, that of student learning, to be obscured*". However, I do not believe the participants were negatively affected by this research as their assessment had no connection at all to the research. That is, their contributions in the feedback discussions, or the issues that they chose to articulate in their reflections, for example, were not included in their formal assessment. I was collating data from conversations and documents that would have been produced whether research was being undertaken, or not. In introducing methodological or procedural amendments to a course of study, especially when one is unsure of the eventual outcomes, consideration must be given over

to any possible detrimental effects on the students who are enrolled on the module. Since not all students enrolled on the module were in my cohort, this meant that it may be justifiably claimed that not all the students (learner teachers) were receiving the exact educational experience. In order to meet ethical guidelines regarding this issue, two points need to be noted. Firstly, the increased focus on dialogic talk during the feedback discussions was not connected to any assessment of the LTs for the module. That is, the recordings played no part whatsoever in deciding the LT's final grades. Secondly, extensive discussions with both my TESOL colleagues and the external examiner for the award, resulted in agreement that investigating this aspect of would likely, one way or another result in improved practice in the long run and would be unlikely to jeopardise the learning experience of the learner teachers who were in my cohort. Newby (2014: 49) points out that if we genuinely believe that a modification or change in our approach may well be worthwhile in the long-term, any disadvantage to students to not experiencing the same approach is "*outweighed by the advantage to all other students in the future*". In addition to their support and agreement of my colleagues and external examiner, I was also alert to the LTs' responses and engagement throughout the practicum and would have been able to change my methodological approach if I had noticed any unusual difficulties or stress in the participants' behaviour.

3.6.1 Chapter summary

This chapter has outlined the conceptual framework of the overall study and detailed both the research aims and subsidiary questions that have lead this exploratory investigation. It has demonstrated the philosophical position of the researcher and explained the reasoning for situating the study in the evolving paradigm of action research (Burns 2005). The attempts made to ensure the feasibility and trustworthiness of the research outcomes have

been described and the rationale behind the methodological tools employed in the data collection has been outlined. The way in which approaches from both thematic analysis and sociocultural discourse analysis were necessary in order to pursue investigation into the overall aims of the research have also been illustrated. Ethical issues that needed to be addressed during this research were also detailed in the final section of the chapter.

Chapter 4   Findings - research aim one

4.1   Chapter overview

This chapter reports findings from the data with regard to the first research aim:

To explore an attempt to facilitate a dialogic approach to teacher learning and evidence any cognitive development that may result.

The over-arching research aim resulted in three broad categories that aid the interpretation and analysis of the findings. These broad categories are utilised as an aid to structuring this chapter. In the first section, the role of multiparty interaction in the co-construction of knowledge is demonstrated. In the second section, evidence of exploratory talk and dialogic teaching (teacher scaffolding) is presented. Having examined the patterns of interactions and their possible effects on cognitive development, the final section

contains findings that relate to the conditions that may be desirable for dialogic interaction to thrive.

At a number of points in this chapter, I indicate areas that I feel are important to the pedagogic issues that underpin this research and draw on concepts from sociocultural theory to validate these points. However, a more detailed discussion of the implications of the findings is presented in chapter 6.

4.2   A dialogic fit?

The extracts presented in this chapter reveal the ways in which the attempt at dialogic interaction fits with theoretical frameworks presented earlier. The notions of co-constructed knowledge, intersubjectivity and exploratory talk or collaborative dialogue are employed to interpret the data together with an examination of the type of professional discourse that is used by the learner teachers. As previously noted, the aim of collaborative dialogue is to create opportunities for the type of talk in which "*speakers are engaged in problem solving and knowledge building*" (Swain 2000:102). The data that emerge suggests patterns of interaction quite distinct from conventional modes of feedback that have been documented in previous studies of pre-service English language teacher education.

The first extract from the transcribed feedback discussions (below) provides evidence of the shape of the interactions and illuminates the type of turn-taking that predominated. The conversation involves me (the educator) and five learner teachers. One of the teachers (LT 9) had just taught a 60 minute lesson to a class of eight, mixed-nationality, upper-intermediate level adult students. The lesson involved a language focus on vocabulary for personal description and directed the learners' attention to the use of adjectives such as *conscientious*, c*onsiderate*, *diligent* and so on. The participants in the feedback discussion are jointly discussing the merits and efficacy of the materials that LT 9 chose to include in

the lesson and the methodology within which the class tasks and activities were carried out. Observation notes record that the language learners did not seem particularly engaged or challenged and that the class was a little monotonous.

Extract 1 (TP Wed 22nd Nov: 45.39)

1.	Educator:	Last couple of things – despite all that, again, they had a great afternoon. Uumm, we are being
2.		extremely critical and analytical here, in search of excellence . They have had such a good
3.		afternoon, again, I go home every Wednesday really happy, feeling satisfied . Then about the
4.		course-book one, I wrote a few questions to myself. I'm not sure of the
5.		answers. I'd like you guys to help think about this. (...) OK, my questions were, number
6.		one, we said to the students '*look at number one and find the answer*'. Thinking
7.		about technology and engaging students etc. How else could we have sold this and
8.		set it up to engage them a bit more (...)? Creativity comes in here (...) you guys are better
9.		here. They've got a bunch of adjectives and a gap fill, not an information-gap
10.		activity, a gap-fill. How could we have set it up in order to get them a bit more
11.		steamed up to complete the task?
12.	LT 10:	Could you get them to describe each other or...?
13.	Educator:	Personalise it. Get them to describe each other, possibly. There is no 'one' right answer in my head.
14.	LT 9:	Is that possible with adjectives like 'arrogant' and 'possessive' (...)?
15.	Educator:	Why <u>are</u> they used then?
16.	LT 9:	It's English, they are upper-intermediate and they are meant to be learning English (*laughs*).
17.	Educator:	Yeah – I mean to what end? In what context will they hear them? Do we use them ever then?
18.	LT 9:	Of course we use them – they're common words...
19.	Educator:	Ah, ok – in what <u>context</u> are they used?
20.	LT 9:	...to describe people
21.	Tara:	It could be in a conversation, couldn't it?
22.	Educator:	So if they <u>are</u> used and we create the realisation that '*ah these are useful*' then they are more
23.		likely to be motivated to take part. Could it be up to us to create that need...?
24.	LT 9:	It could be yeah, I guess, I know what you mean.

25. Educator: ...rather than say, you know, '*Fill in this out of context gap fill*'.

26. LT 9:   Maybe, but do you have to make everything you do, you know, that engaging?

27. Educator: Maybe I'm being overly]

28. Tara: [It's selling the task.

29. Annie: And it's talking about people which is what people talk about most of the time so I think...

30. LT 9:   So what would you do then to...to create a more ... *(pause)?]*

31. LT 12:   [Make it more interesting?

32. Tara: Have less of them or make it '<u>my</u> gap fill'.

33. LT 9:   Having fewer of them doesn't change it though.

34. LT 12:   Could you just use (...) flash cards with the adjectives or something and get the

35.   students to work-out together which ones go goes where or something?

(Conversation continues)

Attempts to jointly construct knowledge through a dialogic approach to learning, as described in the literature review (e.g. Mercer 1995) can be identified clearly in the passage above. There are examples of much idea-sharing, challenging and contributing from the learner teachers. There are also examples of authentic questions and 'we' statements to describe shared experience and reformulations on the part of the educator. In addition, with the authentic question that completes the first turn (lines 10-11), I was attempting to establish the participants' thinking and cognition on the subject while also trying to provide the opportunity for the LTs to engage in reflection and consider the conditions and contributory factors that affected the success or otherwise of the class. The discussion may, therefore, be justifiably described as exploratory rather than one-sided or disputational. Another example of the way in which the interactions fit with *dialogic* interaction is the fact that the participants feel empowered to challenge, contribute and make suggestions. They

are, in effect undertaking what is described by Diaz Maggioli (2012: 41) as *reciprocal scaffolding*. For instance LT 9 (line 24), in considering Tara's and Annie's contributions to the discussion asks for clarification of what alternatives to the approach taken are the others are heading towards (line 30). LT 12 (line 34) makes a suggestion and justifies it by explaining how her approach would "*get the students to work together*". LT 12, too, saw the class as being rather teacher-centred with the learners having little or no opportunity to talk during the lesson. The exploratory tone of the discussion seems to allow the participants to feel free to make suggestions, to call on their own thinking and also to feel that their ideas are respected, welcomed and valued. Although LT 9 (line 33) appears to doubt the others' suggestions, it is evident that all are deeply engaged in the issues surrounding student motivation and engagement.

An interesting feature of the passage is the way in which the discussion allows room for the LTs' various beliefs and assumptions about language learning and teaching, their *everyday concepts*, to be articulated. For example, in lines 14, 16 and 18 it may be reasonable to deduce that LT 9 is not convinced of the value or importance placed on creating student engagement. Conversely, lines 21, 28 and 32 suggest that Tara believes personalisation and creating meaningful activities are important to successful learning. Such glimpses of where LTs' thinking is at are vital in the co-construction of understanding since talk emanating from the LTs can provide opportunities for the type of dynamic assessment discussed in the literature review.

Lines 12-25 indicate how the dialogic nature of the exchange helps the educator to construct reasoned thought. In this case I was attempting to assess the LTs based on their articulations and thus to scaffold them through questions I judged to be appropriate (e.g. line 19). The closed question put to LT 9 in line 23 is an attempt to guide the LT's thinking,

to direct the teacher into *seeing* the issue from a new perspective. It is a type of scaffolding that Engin (2013) describes as a third level of assistance (vide supra, p.75) and is an area discussed in further detail later in this section. The passage demonstrates how the guided questions help LT 9 come to see that engaging students is both possible and can be pedagogically useful.

It is worth noting one final time that the passage contains many of the features central to exploratory dialogue as defined in the literature. For example, some of the qualities which Alexander (2005:42), described as being key to a dialogic pedagogy include learners asking questions, the answers to which "*provoke further questions*" and "*exchanges chained to coherent lines of enquiry*". Examples of the learner teachers feeling sufficiently empowered to ask numerous questions occur in lines 12 and 14 with the answers provoking further questions on lines 26 and 30 and 35. This type of interaction may be interpreted as illustrating joint inquiry in a community of practice (Wenger 1999). The educator's and LTs' reasoning is made visible and the exchange can be described as dialogic. The following extracts reveal how peer interaction became evident as a result of the effort to enact a dialogic approach.

Multiparty interaction

Chapter 2 summarized how intersubjectivity and the co-construction of knowledge are of particular importance with regard to understanding dialogic approaches to teaching. The literature review also outlined how conversation, perhaps prompted but ultimately unguided by an educator, may also provide valuable opportunities for interthinking (van Lier 2001) and dynamic assessment (Chappell 2013) to take place. Findings from this section are illustrated with regard to research questions two and three that were presented at the start of this chapter.

The following excerpt (overleaf) demonstrates how these concepts were evident in the data collected. The educator (myself) and four LTs are discussing how best to manage a multilingual class of intermediate, adult learners. In the lesson under discussion, the LT who had taught the class had found it difficult to interrupt a group work activity and bring the class together to report back on the outcome of the set task. Well-developed social skills are often necessary in order to effectively oversee a class of adult learners and the LT in the passage is, understandably given her inexperience, having problems in reconciling the roles of facilitator, guide, instructor and so on that are needed in order to manage the class in a desirable manner. Rather than giving direct advice I have attempted to generate discussion around the topic. This is because, as with most aspects of TESOL, the appropriate response will very often be dependent upon numerous socio-contextual factors. In other words, the learners' ages, level, numbers, learning background, reasons for studying and so on are all elements a teacher may, or should, consciously or subconsciously take into account with regard to classroom management decisions.

Extract 2 (TP Wed 1st December: 13.36)

1.   LT 10:   Any advice on how to stop students when they are really into something? (...) I'm like,' stop, OK
2.   we're <u>done</u>', but like how? I'm really rubbish at it. So, any suggestions, anyone?
3.   Educator: Have you seen me trying with you guys sometimes (*laughs*)?
4.   Tara: Perhaps get a bit firmer?
5.   LT 12:   Say their name as well, like, 'Lion, *shut up*!', should be in a nicer way but....
6.   Educator: You could do that .*(long pause)*
7.   Tara: If you say it nicely and they don't listen to you then say '*right OK*', then get a bit more stern.
8.   LT 9:   I try not to get stern (*disagreeing*)
9.   Educator: Me too.
10.   Tara: (...) But if you keep going 'ok, ok', then it's like you're a pushover.
11.   LT 12:   If you say '*shut up*'in general nobody pays attention but if you say their name it kind of
12.   embarrasses them a bit.

13.   Tara: Not in a bad way but it <u>does</u> work.
        (Conversation continues)

Features that identify this interaction as more dialogic and less centred around learning

how to do things in any one correct way, or for only assessment purposes, are apparent in

the turn (line2) by LT 10. Of note is that she feels comfortable enough to criticize an aspect

of her performance while also asking a question not specifically to the educator, but to all

the participants present. To be clear, the focus of attention is not toward the educator, the

assessor, but to the whole group with the participants comfortable enough, once again, to

offer up their own ideas and thoughts. While studies suggest that feedback on pre-service

courses tends to be between the educator and one trainee (Copland 2012), the interactions

presented here portray a different picture. This extract and the other data documented in

this study repeatedly reveal that multiparty discussions, rather than one trainee – trainer

exchanges, are closer to the norm.

I had hoped that my response (line 3) would both encourage contributions through the

informal utterance and also stimulate the students' thinking about how I myself go about

making interruptions in the theoretical based classes that I convene in addition to the

teaching practicum. This could be deemed successful as suggestions are then made by two

other participants (lines 4 and 5) with a third participant (line 8) confident enough to

challenge the suggestions and in doing so, demonstrate his own thoughts on the topic.

Lines 10-12 see the participants involved in attempts to justify their opinions and verbalize

their positions.

Open, multi-party exchanges such as these may also help reveal clashes or differences in

the beliefs of LTs regarding aspects of teaching and learning. In this second extract, clear

differences may be glimpsed as to how the various LTs view the role of teacher. This is a

critical aspect of SLTE since how one views the role of the teacher will, of course, have direct implications on decisions and actions performed in the class setting. From this short example, we can see that some of the LTs appear to view the teacher's role in a more humanistic (Stevick 1982) and less conventional way than others. This in turn suggests to me that the opportunity for exchanging views may indeed aid the process of interthinking by alerting LTs to alternative approaches to ones they may have come to believe are correct; to alternative ways of behaving and operating in the classroom. The conversation that the extract is taken from continues for a number of minutes and represents a typical example of sequences of talk that were transcribed in the data. Further instances of the type of reciprocal scaffolding (Díaz-Maggioli 2012) that occurs when LTs are given space to express themselves are demonstrated in the next extract.

Collaborative floors

In freer conversations, direct scaffolding undertaken by the educator plays a far less prominent role; it is the learner-teachers themselves who contribute the most during such sequences. An important yet not unexpected result of adopting a dialogic approach was the frequent emergence of such spontaneous conversations. This type of interaction occurs regularly throughout the data, usually following an initial prompt, and allows the emergence of what Edelsky (1993) terms a *collaborative floor.* The following extract provides an example of how attempts to foster intersubjectivity (vide supra, p.109) often result in the emergence of such collaborative floors.

The passage overleaf is a sample of the feedback discussion that followed a teaching practice session in which a learner had asked the LT (LT8) about the use of a past simple construction. Language teachers need to make dozens of on-the-spot decisions regarding the usefulness of a learner's question to the class and to its members. They need to

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consider when to spend time on language explanations, how much time to spend on discussing and practising any language issues which may arise, how to go about the explanation and so on. Naturally, language learners often ask unanticipated questions. Despite a teacher's meticulous planning and reading up on a language area that may be the planned focus of the lesson, the LT may well receive questions about an entirely different aspect of language. For example, an LT may have spent time learning about comparative and superlative forms; how best to pedagogically help learners understand their rules of use and so on, in order to best teach their painstakingly-planned lesson. However, as the class unfolds, the LT may well get requests to explain an aspect of language unrelated to her / his meticulous plan e.g. a question on the use of articles or a request to clarify a problem regarding auxiliary verbs. Such questions from learners are, in my opinion, amongst the most important factors in language learning and teaching since they demonstrate both learner engagement and reveal to the alert teacher important information on the individual learner's emerging language needs and capabilities. The excerpt below follows my question to the LTs on what factors we should consider when deciding how to answer such spontaneous queries.

Extract 3 (TP Mon 5th November: 33.01)

1. LT II: It's better to say I'll get back to you next week as we did with the preposition issue. To say next
2.   time I teach I promise I'll do a preposition activity because it's difficult. I couldn't remember why
3.   it was *to* instead of *-ing* and was trying to stall and say this is how it is type of thing.
4. Educator: One's brain stops sometimes when you are asked a question and the class are looking at you,
5.   expecting an answer. Sometimes, if you don't know the answer, I think let's do some examples and
6.   then it'll emerge. Other times I've done examples and still can't work it out and at that point have
7.   said, '*Yeah, I'll get back to you*', but, knowing when to go down a path is what we make decisions
8.   about and what we base that on is interesting. Is it useful? Can I do it?
9. Sian: Can I do it? That's what I think of first. (*laughs*) Do I even know how to do it?

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10. Educator: If you do know how to go about it and students seem interested]

11. Sian: [I think it's fine and human to say do you mind

12.   if I just look it up and get back to you? Or "*Hang on a minute, I'll look in my book*"

13. LT 8:   That's what I had to do.

14. Educator: I always take my copy of Swan; I've done that all my teaching life. None of you do that?

15. LT 8:   I bring the red grammar book with me…

16. Sian: (…) The Harmer one is good as it's got the timelines in it and how to explain it.

17. LT 11:   (…) But like you said, they know we're student teachers and Anna was saying they really appreciate

18.   how much work we put into it so they are going to understand if we don't know answers straight

19.   away].

20. Sian: [Yeah but that's not the same as if he was at the front and getting it wrong, I think they'd be rather

21.   annoyed because it's a different expectation.

22. Educator: Yeah, you're right. I agree entirely but I wouldn't make it up. I would just say "I don't know" (…)

23. LT 8:   That's what happened when she said about the past simple and past perfect. You could use either

24.   one and I was like, well there is a difference between the tenses but in this case it was just hard

25.   to explain.

26. Educator: So you're feeling a little bit dissatisfied that you weren't able to be clear …but we did say there

27.   are occasions when you could use both]

28. Sian: [And it's hard to explain and especially like with the prepositions with

29.   verbs. Mainly, there aren't many rules. It just <u>goes</u> with it – that's it.

Once again, there are a number of features that can be observed in this interaction that establish its fit with dialogic interaction. Three LTs make a contribution and are clearly engaged in the multi-party discussion. What is more, there is evidence of an atmosphere of trust and shared purpose (Mercer 2008) as demonstrated by the LTs feeling comfortable enough to admit when they have a difficulty or insufficient skill or knowledge to act effectively (e.g. lines 2, 9 and 24). During the feedback discussion, although I had wanted to guide the LTs' thinking into the issue of how to deal with learner questions, the focus quickly turned to an area that was obviously of more pressing importance for the novice

teachers; what to do when you do not know the answer to a linguistically based question. This conversation topic became the focus of all the participants. It became a collaborative floor that resulted in an agreement that, actually, it was OK not to know all the answers to all the questions (lines 1, 11 and 18).

It is also interesting to relate the above interaction to concepts of teacher cognition and the LT's everyday concepts of what a teacher should know. The LTs, quite possibly as a result of Lortie's apprenticeship of observation (vide supra, p.29) hold the everyday or folk concept that a good teacher must have all the answers, must be able to provide the solution to the learners' queries (even when, with regard to language learning, knowing a grammar rule does not equate to a learner being able to always accurately use that particular aspect of language). However, in talking about their experience following their activity, the LTs reached agreement that while not knowing everything is a perfectly acceptable position, it is important to recognise and note what the learners' needs are (e.g. line 1, line 11). The combined, accepted, declarative knowledge (or in SCT terms, s*cientific* concept) in the field of language teaching supports such a position. In other words, supports the position that a good teacher needs to be aware of where a learner is at and have the linguistic knowledge or access to such, to be able to best support future learning. However, what seems evident here is that it is in the doing, reflecting and discussing that this notion can be seen to become real for the learner teachers.

Alternatives

Creating opportunities for multiparty discussions may allow LTs to articulate and reflect on new concepts. Much interview data revealed that the LTs had not had enjoyable language learning experiences during their own schooling, or in subsequent language learning

environments. They voiced sentiments such as "*The lessons were boring it was all textbooks and things you wouldn't use in everyday life" (TA)*. This dissatisfaction with their past language learning experiences was a theme that was evident throughout the study. The participants often complained of their own language classes being largely teacher-centred and based on course-book methodology or the parrot-learning of discrete grammatical aspects of language. One respondent felt particularly negative about her school experiences, describing how she "*…really dreaded them, and think that's why I even now say I'm terrible with languages" (AN).* A lack of opportunity to use language was also cited as reason for disgruntlement with their learning experiences. A quote from one respondent on her experience of Welsh language classes reveals much: "*I literally remember being told to look at a poem and analyse it – I didn't speak the language" (SU).* These memories suggest that the everyday concepts, the observed images that LTs' hold regarding language teaching and learning may clash at many points with contemporary views of good classroom practice, based on a communicative view of language teaching, they encounter during their TESOL apprenticeship.

In the following discussion, the conversation is centred on the satisfaction that the LT feels following her teaching episode. She successfully managed to teach a very student-centred class. This was perhaps particularly satisfying for the LT since it was a language class unlike the majority of LTs had themselves reported as experiencing as language learners. Instead of being a course-book based episode, in which the teacher guides the learners through each activity, the LT had devised a more interactive class in which the learners played an active rather than passive role. The excerpt begins with encouragement to reflect on the experience:

1.   Educator: So what can we learn then? How can we increase the likelihood of that sort of feeling happening

2.   again?

3.   Tara: I took notes from other lessons I did of more like *'Can the students do that and not you"*.

4.   So I made it <u>more</u> on them then. The first warm up task I set up was, *'what's a presentation?*

5.   *what's good for it etc.?'*

6.   Educator: You did pairs into whole group and that worked well. A little classroom management technique.

7.   Tara: Uumm, introducing the weird and wonderful Japanese inventions. I was going through loads of

8.   ideas for lessons and then googled the website. It was interesting but then I watched Dragon's Den

9.   and <u>thought</u>]

10. Educator: [The clip, I thought was brilliant as it really got them into the mind-set of being judged on the

11.   presentation. Uumm, Any of you guys want to give any thoughts (...)? *(pause)*

12. Annie: It worked really well. Getting them to come up with criteria for what makes a good presentation,

13.   At the beginning, it worked very well. You could refer back to it and say ,*'well ,you are the ones*

14.   *said <u>that</u> was important'*, so they knew they had said it was a good way of doing it. They had to

15.   agree with it. They couldn't say, *'well the structure is not important*, when they had decided, as a

16.   group first, that it was one of the most important things. I think that was a good way of doing it.

17.   Did that make sense to you all ?

18. Tara: Yeah, basically If I had said, *'These are the top 5 important things for a good presentation'*]

19. Annie: [They'd be like

20.   *" Yeah, that's what <u>you</u> think"*

21. Tara: And I made it clearer there was no right answer or right order. What do you think?

22. LT 10:   They all seemed to have an opinion on it as well, about presentations. They all had something to

23.   say.

24. Educator: Yeah they did. Presentations are something in life we all have to do and they are important.

25. Tara: I feel like I made them think a lot.

26.   Annie: I liked how you began too, because they were like, *'Oh yeah, we have to do a presentation on*

27.   *Monday'.* So, like it <u>was</u> really relevant.

In this multiparty discussion, all four participants make contributions and it is interesting to

note the frequent attempts at intersubjectivity, evidenced, for example, through the

questions put by the LTs themselves (Lines 17 and 21) and the reasoning through talk that occurs in lines 12-23. Although I initiated this interaction, and thus set the agenda, the excerpt still fits a dialogic description as all the participants are involved, asking questions and, on occasion, justifying their agreement or otherwise. It provides, perhaps, an example of the initiation-response-feedback loop being used as a step towards what van Lier (2001) labelled, an emancipatory discourse pattern. The class, as the exchange conveys, had been lively and dynamic and enjoyed by the learners and LTs alike. By employing the type of probing, exploratory question that opened the discussion, the LTs appear to have had the opportunity to learn from one-another as Annie and Tara reflected on what had made the class so successful in their eyes. They appear to be beginning to see and value a communicative approach to language teaching; an approach that bears little resemblance to the experiences that many of the participants reported remembering from school.

In the following example, the perennial problem of error correction is the topic. The issues surrounding error correction and its role in the larger topic of the content of scaffolded talk are discussed fully in chapter 5. Nevertheless, although error correction is the topic of the passage below, the purpose of looking at the exchange at this point is to illustrate how open discussions permit the exploration and sharing of alternative viewpoints and actions. The exchange below also provides examples of LT tacit beliefs being made explicit as a result of opportunities for dialogue (e.g. lines 3 and 8-9).

Extract 5 (TP Wed 16th Nov: 9.08)

1. LT 12:   What about when they make a little mistake in every sentence –that's when I don't know what to do.
2.   I'm like, well, '*Do I stop you in every sentence?*'
3. LT 9:   I would say no you don't stop them after every sentence.
4. LT 12:   No, I know you don't really but then how do you choose which sentence you are going to stop them
5.   for? How do you say this verb is more important this verb (...)?

6. Educator: Yeah, these are decisions we have to make as teachers. Think of your Spanish class -How would

7.   you feel? We've got to make decisions all the time]

8. LT 12:   [But I don't want them to continue talking and thinking they are

9.   speaking correctly because we only correct them now and again. Do you know what I mean?

10. Educator: For practical purposes we can't …as a teacher…we can't. You are aware. Bit by bit – this is a

11.   real complex process. You should listen to my Spanish it's like that; errors in every sentence.

12. LT 10: (*laughs*) Same here!

All four participants present make contributions to the complex issue of correction. What the extract perhaps highlights is, once more, in experiencing an issue and then expressing the problem and reflecting upon it and their own experiences, it is possible to surmise that the LTs gain an understanding of how multifarious a topic, in this case error correction, can be.

Articulation

The next extract provides an example of how the now-established exploratory tone of the multi-party discussions prompts the LTs to think through pedagogical issues. The topic of conversation below is based around a lower intermediate learner who had been unable to complete a task successfully in the class that had been taught by LT 8.Following the 'telling' to the LTs that in the observed lesson the material had not been exploited, my concluding open question resulted in a discussion about how best to aid the learner in getting out of the habit of speaking primarily in the present simple tense. The conversation goes on for some time but the sample below conveys the idea.

Extract 6 (TP Mon 5th Nov: 14.34)

1. Educator: I looked at his work and thought, '*He hasn't got as much as he could have, we haven't exploited this*

2.   *as much as we could for him.*' Let's imagine he had stayed [for the second hour of the class], he'd

3.   written it almost entirely in present simple – (…) what could we have done?

4. LT 8:   Maybe asked him why?]

5. LT 11:   [Talked about the different uses between present simple and past simple…

6. Educator: Right…

7. LT 11: How the past is used with narrative speech?

8. Educator: …It gets complicated, doesn't it]

9. LT 8: [Or maybe read out one of the lines he'd written and compared that with

10. one of the lines in the story and said, '*Is this happening now? Was it happening then?*']

11. Sian: [And bring a bit of time-lines stuff…

Whereas the initial response (line 4) is not encouraging from the point of view of a motivated educator, it nevertheless allows a conversation, and intersubjectivity, to develop. In other words, I am able to ascertain the point of understanding at which the LTs are at. Not only am I thus better placed to dynamically assess the LTs but through opening up discussion, they once again have the opportunity to think and, at the same time, articulate their developing grasp of an issue. This is neatly evidenced, perhaps, by Sian's (line11) realisation of the use of visual timelines (Harmer 2006) as an aid to explaining a language point. She is, quite clearly, connecting theory and practice while discussing real, concrete activity. In addition, the other LTs through participating in the discussion may share her evolving understanding and, presumably, also benefit from her insight.

Power

In conclusion to this section, it should be noted that the findings, unsurprisingly perhaps, also document frequent long turns taken by myself, often at the start of the sessions. In the extract below, the lengthy turn I take may not at first appear to fit with the dialogic style that I am trying to incorporate. In the turn, I am relaying my thoughts about the teaching slots that had been taught by two of the four LTs present. The evaluative feedback comments relate to a lesson that created opportunities for the language learners to give and receive advice. The LT had given the learners, a mixed level group of multi-national graduates, a task that required the use of the second conditional in order for it to be successfully completed.

1. Educator: You are both now very sort of '*I'll take command here*'. There is no hesitation, and for both of you
2. this applies. The start, it is now very efficient and organised. Everybody knows what they are
3. doing, and that's great, you know. And it's the easy stuff, I guess, but even experienced teachers
4. still don't pick up on it. There were also different ways of keeping them enthusiastic. That's really
5. important for language teaching, there was a competitive element as well that you forgot to
6. mention, with the girls against the boys and asking, "*How many did you get right?*' They were so
7. into that. There was also the use of technology. Think about it. There was a large number of
8. elements that contributed to it being interesting and keeping them engaged. Then I thought there
9. were two major areas for development. And this is something to think about in China or Spain or
10. wherever you plan on going. That structure, [conditionals], or any other language structure or
11. aspect, and this is where you come back to me and say, '*No Mike it wouldn't have been possible*
12. *because of x or y*'. When we use that second conditional we mentioned '*would*'to them but the
13. other modal verbs are almost equally as frequent; 'could, 'may, 'might.

There are a number of features in this excerpt that merit comment. Primarily, the position

of power held by the educator (me) is clear in the length of the extensive remarks as well

as the evaluative nature of a number of observations within the utterance. Firstly, it is clear

that I value organisational ability (line 3) and that I see student engagement as integral to

my beliefs about good teaching and learning (line 5). However, in making the suggestion

that there were two areas for development (line 8) it is also clear who holds the power and

whose views, therefore, carry most weight. This is important. Such an exchange may seem

to run contrary to the espoused dialogic ideal which is collective, supportive, reciprocal,

cumulative and purposeful (Alexander 2004). However, it is logical that in this community

of practice I am the 'old timer' and can be expected to hold "professional (theories and

practice), personal (tacit and explicit) and community knowledge (embedded in the day to

day practices of the community as "ways of doing") (Maggioli 2012: 12). Such extended

turns, which contain evaluative and directional comment, may appear not to fit with an understanding of dialogic interaction as detailed throughout this study. However, commentators from both general education (Soslau 2012) and TESOL (Diaz Maggioli 2012) acknowledge the role such turns have in the provision of feedback, even within a dialogic approach. Soslau included a 'telling' role in her description of supervisory styles (vide supra, p.81) while Diaz Maggioli (ibid.) believes that the creation of dialogic spaces allows the educator to pass on an *old timer's knowledge* at the point when intersubjectivity can make such advice most effective.

As can be seen from these examples, despite the teacher preparation taking place in the context of formal, assessed learning, and despite the fact that the balance of power is clearly with the teacher educator, dialogic pedagogy is nevertheless relevant. That is, the lengthy turn taken by the educator in the previous extract was possible and could be rendered dialogic, since it drew on, and took account of, the intersubjectivity that had been created by the historical dialogic exchanges between the participants. In other words, I was able to assess and determine what concepts, ideas and so on were likely to connect with and make sense to the LTs, in large part as a result of the numerous dialogic conversations that had previously taken place. The exchanges presented so far illustrate the presence in the data of multi-party discussions in which the LTs have many opportunities to express their thinking, relate their understandings of the declarative aspects of their course and discuss their own learning experiences. However, unlike in more conventional 'round robin' approaches, they are not *obliged* to offer *evaluative* comment on their own or their peers' observable teaching performance. The participants certainly may comment on any aspects of the teaching episode that they feel worthy of comment but the point is that the thinking behind the process or the action is what it is important to uncover.

4.3 Evidence of learning

This section addresses findings that examine how teacher led, consciously *scaffolded* or *guided* talk may be used to promote cognitive development. The findings presented contribute to answering research question 4 in that they reveal ways in which, when viewed from a sociocultural perspective, the LTS may be argued to be moving beyond an understanding that they had previously reached through their personal everyday experiences. Evidence from the reflective journals, interview data and the transcribed feedback sessions is presented.

Scaffolding

The literature review detailed how novice teacher development during a practicum may be mediated through scaffolding measures undertaken by the educator. In examining her own feedback discussions through a sociocultural lens, Engin (2013) suggests that scaffolding can occur on a number of levels from open questions *level 1* to direct telling *level 5* (vide supra, p.75). Her fifth level of scaffolding is described as a strategy whereby the educator tells the LTs what the problem is and then usually follows up with a prompt question from one of the preceding levels. Such interactions were common in the transcribed data from the feedback discussions. These moves can be observed in a number of the excerpts described so far (e.g. extract 1 or extract 6). The following example, which occurred during a discussion about the relative merits of a LT's listening exercise, also exemplifies this type of scaffolding:

(Wed 12th December)

Educator (7.10): <u>After the</u> video stopped it all felt a bit flat and you said "Do you want to listen again?" The students all said "no" and it felt a bit sad. Don't worry, it's happened to me loads of times, it doesn't tell us anything, though, unless we <u>learn</u> from it. How could we have alleviated this sadness?

This utterance corresponds to a description of Engin's (2013) description of *level five* scaffolding and is one which occurs frequently in the data. It is also worth repeating that the general discussion which followed these exploratory probes for ideas often then took the form of a 'collaborative floor' and moved towards the categorisation of exploratory talk, as described in the previous section. Such a general discussion often resulted from this type of open prompt (e.g. see extract 4 or extract 5[h]). Other examples of this type of exploratory direction, taken from the transcriptions, are provided below:

So what can we learn from that?

How can we increase the likelihood of it (a lively discussion) occurring again?

How will this (experience) help you plan more student centred classes, if you think that's a wise way to go?

Do the learners have to understand all the text?

Why do you think forming a connection (with the learners) could be useful?

What could we do, then – at that point to take it (the conversation) a few steps further?

How would that have formed part of the building towards the rest of the class?

Does being able to "tell" learners the rules of grammatical use e.g. articles, does that help?

Scaffolding and beliefs

How teacher guidance through conscious dialogic choices can aid knowledge construction and how scaffolding allows learners, through dialogue, to make intellectual achievements that they would be unable or unlikely to make without the accompaniment of a more expert peer or tutor is considered overleaf. Earlier chapters detailed the arguments behind why it is that many commentators viewed the freeing of teachers from tacitly held beliefs as vital. It is reasoned that scaffolding opportunities must be created for the learner

teachers to address their previously held assumptions about effective pedagogy since they enter university with already formed (and likely analysed) ideas about what constitutes good pedagogic practice – formed during their lengthy apprenticeships of observation. Also noted earlier was that interview data strongly suggest that conservative, deductive, teacher-centred approaches have been the participants' dominant experience of language learning. Some LT's commented on their disengagement with the teaching and learning approaches they had experienced at school. One described the lack of engagement she had experienced in reporting that "*A lot of my teachers in school were like that. It was normal. In our classes we'd sit down and they'd talk at us not really with us.*" (RA) Another commented on how such experiences contrasted, both in school and in evening classes, with the view of teaching and learning encouraged on the TESOL degree award:

> *I think the way I was taught was the only way I knew – even when I learned Welsh, that was very similar to the way I learned at school …so now I have a knowledge of different methods.* (KI)

Throughout their three-year period of study, undergraduate TESOL LTs carry out numerous tasks that provide opportunities for reflection on the effectiveness of their own schooling experiences. The following passage evidences ways in which the findings revealed how teacher-directed scaffolded talk may help LTs weave new assumptions and understandings by bringing to bear their own beliefs (and developing declarative knowledge) on the practical encounters that they are experiencing during their practicum. The excerpt comes from a conversation that developed on the merits of giving learners a reason to listen to a piece of text. In other words, when providing learners with aural practice, received wisdom and common sense suggest there should be task or activity involved; a point to the activity.

The five-minute video used by LT9 consisted of a number of UK nationals discussing what Christmas meant to them. Prior to starting the video, observation notes record how the learner teacher had urged the class of upper-intermediate students to "*listen carefully as I'm going to ask you lots of questions afte*r". Whilst delivering these instructions he handed out a worksheet yet made no reference to it. The passage begins with my query to the class about the value of providing a reason to listen. In reading through the dialogue (as with the other passages), it is vital to keep in mind that the participants in the discussions are LTs undertaking their first ever experiences of managing the conditions for learning to take place.

Extract 8 (TP Wed 11th Dec: 8.47)

1.   Educator: What do you guys think?

2.   Annie: Yeah or at least if they had a look through the questions first then they'd know what

3.   they were listening out for, rather than kind of]

4.   LT 9:   [How do you, I mean if they've got questions, I mean

5.   they're going to be answering the same time like they were then. Do you know what I mean?

6.   Tara: But if you say to them don't answer them, just watch and listen.

7.   LT 9:   Yeah...

8.   Educator: If they were doing it anyway, what does it matter? All it means is we've enabled them to do so.

9.   LT 9:   Well, maybe I should have done it the first time. I just assumed they would need to watch it - then

10.   we would watch it again. I don't know. I just assumed that because that's how we usually do it in

11.   the classes we have in Spanish. We usually watch videos two or three times you know, even

12.   when they are boring *(laughs)* you know.

13.   Educator: OK everyone learns differently. Do you feel that's the most effective way? Did you feel, that from

14.   your experience today? That is what they would have wanted to do? To watch 2 or 3 more times?

15.   LT 9:   No, they wouldn't have wanted to. I don't think so because they didn't particularly like the video,

16.   did they? So no, they wouldn't have *wanted to.*

17.   Educator: OK, so my next question is, is interest, does it promote learning? Or should we make students

18.   listen again anyway?

19.   LT 9:   No, it definitely promotes learning, yeah, but it's hard to find interesting material so you

20.		can't make everything really interesting. Or maybe you can, but I don't think you can. You
21.		know, you're not going to love every video you see in a language class, right?
22.	LT 10:	But you say that every time. Most times you do a lesson you say it can't always be
23.		fun. I wonder if making it interesting is something you struggle with?

(Conversation continues)

A number of turns in this conversation extract point to its essential dialogic nature. For example, four participants make contributions; they are asking questions (lines 5, 16 and 23); encouraged to contribute (line 1) and reasons are given for challenges (line 2 and 3).Yet this passage differs from those in the previous section in that the majority of the turns are clearly directed at uncovering LT 9's thinking behind his teaching approach (lines 13-14 and 17-18). That is to say, in this case, I am concerned with an individual LT's thinking, rather than in the development of a collaborative floor in which the LTs make most of the contributions. In lines 9-12, LT 9 clearly demonstrates that at least some of his beliefs about how to teach stem directly from his own experience as a Spanish language learner. However, it is in response to the probing that follows (in lines 13, 14 and 17) that LT 9 appears to think more carefully about the nature of learning. In line 14, we can see an example of the kind of interrogative which can be employed to guide a LT's thinking. This type of question corresponds to Engin's third level of scaffolding in being a closed question which may be used to steer an LT into seeing the situation from the same viewpoint held by the 'old timer' or educator. In discussing his own, concrete experience of teaching a class, LT 9 begins to question the appropriacy of employing the approach by which he himself was taught and we may deduce that he comes to see the importance that interest and motivation plays in language learning (line 20). He is, in sociocultural terms, developing cognitively as a result of interaction on the social plane (interpsychological) which, in turn,

will be represented on the internal plane (intrapsychological). His development is being mediated through reflection on concrete activity.

Nevertheless, it could be argued that something equally as important is also facilitated through the dialogic interactions being played out above. Warford (2011) sees the practicum as being a critical and vulnerable point in teacher education. He views a mediational rather than checklist approach to the pre-service teachers' mismatching actions and beliefs as being critical. In other words, he argues that it is through talk, the probing and exploring of teachers' beliefs, experiences, knowledge and assumptions, and how they clash with actual practice, that real practical development can occur. It is often a struggle then, for the teacher at pre-service point in their career to actually be able to put their beliefs into practice and to teach the way they wish. But it is in the dialogue around this precise tension, that authentic teacher education is claimed by Warford to take place. In uncovering LT 9's thinking on motivation, effective learning conditions, classroom decision-making and so on, it became possible to identify much more clearly LT 9's understanding of the issue in question. When he utters "*you're not going to love every video you see in a language class*" (lines 20-21), he reveals that what he sees as important is the entertainment value of the video. In contrast, what I, as the educator, was concerned about was getting the LTs to see the importance of setting an appropriate learning activity to accompany the video. The video was just the vehicle; it was the task that was key. However, for the LTs, new to the world of language learning, the worth of videos, games, songs and many other 'communicative' materials they may consider during lesson planning seemed to be based, to a certain extent, on their entertainment value.

Uncovering such mismatches in focus is significant. Subsequent discussions and classes were able to address the issue of the importance of the language content and the learning

task and not simply the 'wow' factor of the material, when making planning decisions. Such notions became evident in the reflective journals with the following participant shrewdly observing her own developing understanding of this area:

Often we, as novice teachers, are too concerned with giving an entertaining, interesting lesson in which students will have fun. Authenticity can be lost when attempting to carry out these types of lessons all the time. (AN RJ4)

Another participant, reflecting on why a lexical based lesson didn't unfold as successfully as she had wished, questioned the reasons behind her use of technology and her emerging understanding tallies with the interpretation given above:

I think when planning this lesson, I was so determined to base it around the video that I had found, because it was such a good visual, that I didn't concentrate as much on the forms of collocations. (MA RJ5)

Uncovering beliefs

The following passage provides further illustration of how carefully scaffolded talk can address the beliefs and assumptions that LTs bring to a course of teacher education. The excerpt is a good example of the struggle that Warford (2011) refers to with regard to beliefs clashing with the problems encountered in reality. LT 10 is dissatisfied that her class did not seem to go as successfully as she had planned. She had envisaged far more student involvement and input than actually transpired. Her class was conducted in a very teacher-centred, conventional manner. For example, the students sat in rows in the classroom and each activity was designed to be reported back to the teacher who saw it as her job to give evaluative comment on the proficiency with which they had carried out each task and activity. The extract overleaf reveals my attempt at scaffolding the LT to come to

understand the reasons for the rather overly controlled class not unfolding as she had hoped. The exchange is centred on the alternatives available to working through the answers to a worksheet. In the class, the upper-intermediate level learners were required to report to the teacher items of vocabulary for a gap-fill activity. In other words, the teacher went around the table of adult learners asking each in turn to provide an answer for the numbered questions. Each learner was asked to read aloud a sentence with its gap filled by an appropriate lexical item.

Extract 9 (TP Wed Nov 7th: 24.35)

1. Educator: Did you feel that? That you were working hard it was all on you? That it was all centred towards
2.   you and you were the one receiving the information?
3. LT 10:   Yeah, but in some ways I did not know how to go about that in another way. I did have it all on a
4.   sheet and I said '*Would you like me…to give this to you so you can look at them*'. I don't know, like
5.   you said, yeah it did drag and it was all focused on me.
6. Educator: So if you felt it dragged, and let's not overplay this, I'm not saying it was like pulling teeth but if
7.   you <u>felt</u> it dragged and that you were the focus of attention, you had four headings, didn't you,
8.   you had uumm, phrases for agreeing]
9.   LT 10 :   [Ah, so I could have had them to come up to the board and write them or something…
10. Educator: You could have done that. You could have said "*Look at these four boxes you have 5 minutes in*
11.   *groups to fill them in*". Or you could have made teams each with a piece of A3 and four headings told
12.   them , '*Guys, I don't know what's in your head. I wonder if you could fill those in between you and*
13.   *once you have done so, swop and find out what's different*'. Suddenly, they have to do all the
14.   communicating and it's not all on you, sweating '*come on tell me more*', but on them. It's student
15.   rather than teacher centred. I can tell you that but how can I help you to think like that?
16. Tara: …Through these feedback sessions. I think it's going to be trial and error for us, isn't it? We have to
17.   make these mistakes. Not mistakes, these choices for us to learn what works and what doesn't.

In this exchange, LT 10 had conducted the activity in quite an authoritarian manner, an approach which, in all likelihood, she would have experienced herself as learner on many occasions. The learners had been given a text with twelve lexical items or chunks blanked out and then had to choose the correct item from a list at the bottom of the worksheet (linking devices, sequencers, language for contrasting etc.). The LT had hoped that through instructing the learners to discuss their answers, she would be facilitating a talkative, student centred class, yet the experience demonstrated how attempting to take a more student centred approach requires far more than simply urging learners to talk to one another.

It is only through activity and dialogue that the LT could have reached the crucial moment (line 9) of realising why her class had not panned out as she had wished. She had wanted to avoid conducting a "*boring*" class and had envisioned far more interaction in her session but the reality was more complicated and her frustration was evident from an earlier utterance in the feedback discussion, "*I kept saying 'argue with them – not me' but they just don't do it and it's really annoying*". However, before reaching the key point in line 9, a degree of intersubjectivity had been attained through scaffolding in that the reason for feeling dissatisfied with the class was probably a result of the conventional approach that was taken – "*...it was all focussed on me*". By line 9, we can see how the LT comes to understand that alternatives are available. She is able to reach this point of understanding through the help of a more expert other or, in the vernacular of a community of practice, 'an old timer'. She does not have to run activities as she herself was taught or as course-book methodology may prescribe. In effect, the dialogue up to line 10 was *crucial* in order for the advice provided in lines 10-15 to have any effect on cognition. Uncovering the learner teachers' feelings regarding classroom actions or moments that evolved were useful in helping to

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establish the LTs' point of learning or understanding and were frequent in the data, for example:

That turned into a discussion – how did you feel about that?

How did you feel doing that (error correction)?

How about going around the class doing the feedback- how did you feel doing that?

How would you have felt in your Spanish classes (about having every inaccurate utterance corrected)?

Did you feel the atmosphere change when there was one person reporting back at the end?

Probing

The following question was put to the LTs during an exchange in which, at an early point in the practicum, an LT had been teaching a one-to-one lesson with a Middle Eastern undergraduate law student. The language learner was keen to speak and although he was talkative and communicated quite well, his grammatical control was poor and he reverted frequently to using present tense constructions in order to get his message across.

Educator: If you really, linguistically pay attention, his tenses were all over the shop. Do you think... how can that inform us to future plan his lessons, to help him – or somebody using English as he did?

In place of telling the LTs about the difference between declarative and procedural knowledge (i.e. the difference between a learner knowing grammar rules and his or her ability to communicate accurately and fluently), the intention here was to get the LTs to 'see' the position the learner was in (he had spent years studying grammar yet continued to have great trouble with tense / conditionality etc.); to think about how being aware of his (or any learner's) language needs can help us plan his language classes. The example provides a clear demonstration of talk based on activity and such probing questions were also recurrent in the data. Their employment not only encourages thinking and

opportunities for articulation but also, as seen above, allows the educator to better ascertain the LTs understanding of a concept. This type of probing question is recurrent in the transcripts. For example:

Do the learners have to understand all the text?

Why do you think forming a connection (with the learners) could be useful?

What could we do, then – at that point to take it (the conversation) a few steps further?

Does being able to "tell" learners the rules of grammatical use e.g. articles, does that help?

Why are they (subjunctives) difficult?

Can you tell me again what you felt was wrong planning-wise?

When you say it went well – what do you mean?

Does it matter (that the lesson didn't unfold as planned)?

By giving them (the learners) a task that forced the use of the past tense, why do you think that is a good thing?

You (the LT's) wrote "*We could have used more error-correction*". Why?

 "Make sure the learners know the reason for each task". Why did you write that?

What are you judging that on?

You wrote "*get everyone talking*" – but how could we have facilitated that?

What have you seen today that makes you think about that (letting the plan go off topic)?

Scaffolding and knowledge construction

In the theoretical underpinnings, it was detailed how a common pattern for the teacher-student interactions was what Rojas Drummond et al (2013) described as "*spiral IRF exchanges*. In such interactions, the educator's feedback in the third turn, the feedback turn, may lead to a further string of utterances related to the topic that allow deeper exploration. This turn, dependent upon the LT's response, has to be designed spontaneously and with the aim of advancing the recipient's reasoning and understanding.

In other words, rather than supplying an evaluative comment, the educator may attempt to probe more deeply or widen the topic to facilitate broader thinking around a subject. Especially with regard to the ZPD, the IRF structure can be an effective way of scaffolding instruction to individuals as it enables the educator to more accurately identify a student's prior experiences and current thinking. It helps identify, so to speak, a point of departure, a glimpse of where the LT is at. The previous excerpts have already demonstrated how talking and exploring issues with students allows the educator to thus be better placed to introduce or refer to appropriate new knowledge or concepts to which the student may appear suitably ready to reflect upon.

In the following exchange, the LT has just taught a class to a small group of 6 upper-intermediate learners. Her class involved getting the learners to notice and practise the language used for giving advice and also for expressing regret. It provides a good example of how dialogic teaching can allow a spiral IRF pattern to be employed to scaffold conversation.

Extract 10a (TP Mon 14th Jan: 14.40)

1. Educator: How else could we do the language focus for this function, so that it wasn't so teacher-centred?
2. Mary: Could you get them to come up with it?
3. Educator: Yes you could – but you know that. (…) The thing is how would you <u>go about</u> doing that?
4. Mary: Well you could say your regret and then say "*What advice would you give me?*"
5. Educator: Certainly you could do that; you could have a few different scenarios. When you start thinking
6.   about it there are]
7. Susan: [Different possibilities.
8. Educator: Yeah, you could make a few – which statements are advice? Which are regrets? What's the
9.   difference? And <u>*they*</u> have to make it. Therefore they have a chance to talk, to think about it, rather
10.   than going to the teacher all the time. Even though it was clear and it was fine but if you are
11.   teaching every week or everyday, you may want to mix it up.
12. Susan: I was thinking when I was doing the planning I remember thinking that there was one stage where

13.   they, uumm, I gave my regrets, '*I really should have* ....'And then they gave theirs and I think I

14.   possibly did it, well not the wrong way around, I gave them the advice straight away and in my

15.   mind when I was planning the lesson I wanted to leave that uumm, until after I had first explained my

16.   regrets and then go back and when they were going to go into their groups and talk to the persons

17.   next to them saying "*oh I should have spent less money*" and when they have got those thoughts in

18.   their mind, when they'd exchanged information,(...) what I had wanted them to do was to give each

19.   other advice without me giving them the structure, you know like, '*What would you say to that*

20.   *person about their regret?*' And then to see what they would come up with themselves.

21. Educator: At this level '*You should* and '*You ought to*', they've got that, the past one though...?

22. Susan: [Should have.

23. Educator: That was just, right in their ZPD. They could do it with your help.

24. Susan: Yeah – they asked questions about that and I was glad they asked questions...

25. Educator: Yeah the advice bit was easy. Although one or two didn't have it, you're right.

26. Susan: ...So yeah – they could have worked a bit more out for themselves, I think.

27. Educator: Yeah, plenty of opportunities to make it a bit more student-centred.

(Conversation continues)

The learner teacher (Susan), despite being well prepared, confident with her linguistic knowledge and presenting the language very clearly to the learners, is, once more, not entirely satisfied with her class. In delivering her materials, she found that the learners already knew most of the vocabulary, structures, rules of use and so on for the language when used in a present-tense context ('You should...', 'Why don't you...', 'Perhaps you could...' etc.), whereas they struggled to express advice concerned with past regret ('You shouldn't have...', 'You could have...', etc.). However, although noticing this area of difficulty in the learners, and wanting to experiment with allowing the learners a freer rein to express themselves (line 20), she had difficulty in moving away from simply telling the learners which grammatical structure they needed. In other words the teacher was, understandably, not yet able to react to the incidental or spontaneous needs of the learners (Long and Doughty 2009).

Lines 1 and 3 demonstrate the type of dialogic approach that scaffold the discussion into the most important turn of the exchange, Susan's reflection in lines 12-20. The pattern here is one that fits into the spiral Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) structure. The initiating questions in lines 1 and 3 lead the participants, first Mary, and then Susan, to consider what options are available to them, with regards to providing a language focus for the learners. What we may deduce is that they lead to Susan's apparent conclusion that altering how she managed the class would have resulted in more productive, effective learning conditions, '*What I had wanted them to do was to give each other advice without me giving them the structure*'. The lesson had been rather teacher centred with much of the class taken up with the LT presenting the grammar rules for the language. However, the reflection had enabled the LT to see alternative courses action and it may be argued that the spiral IRF pattern was important in facilitating that development. A glance once again at earlier extracts reveals a number of examples of a spiral IRF sequence in evidence (e.g. extract 1 and extract 8 provide clear enough illustrations)

In the extract below, the observation notes record how the learner teacher, in only her second practice episode, is teaching a class to four pre-intermediate, adult learners, none of whom share a common first language. As soon as the four learners had seated themselves around the classroom, the learner teacher immediately began her class. This prevented any opportunity for the learners to relax by familiarising themselves with one another or with the teacher.

Extract 10b (TP Mon 5th Nov: 4.55)

1. Educator: Could we have done anything different at the very start?
2. LT 8:   (...) I did rush into it, I remember that...I maybe.. I could have spoken to them a bit more...
3. Educator: Well that's what I did have in mind...

4.   LT 8:   And just maybe set it up more – I rushed]

5.   Sian: [Maybe done a pre-task…

6.   Educator: Yeah, you could have done a pre-task…anything else?

7.   LT 11:   We could have moved the tables round a bit (I know at the beginning they had to work alone)

8.   but it didn't mean they had to sit individually – could have put them in a big table together…

9.   LT 8:   Yeah – I was thinking that but as they were reading alone I thought it was to best leave them.

10. Educator: Yeah, made sense – but – in my head the start was a bit rushed could we have said, '*Hi – how's it*

11.   *going?*' '*Could I check I've got your names right*' (…) It only takes a few seconds to make things

12.   human. Why do you think such a connection could be useful?

13. LT 8:   It gets students to feel comfortable with each other as well – so when they don't feel pushed into

14.   a task - they'll feel more comfortable with each other.

15. Sian: Yeah – it relaxes them a little bit too – and with them being relaxed they more likely want to

16.   speak –and not just short chunks but by elaborating a bit more …

(Conversation continues)

The extract illustrates attempts to scaffold the LT into appreciating the importance of seeing and treating the learners as individuals in a classroom – an issue which is viewed as highly important from the perspective of humanistic teaching approaches (Gieve and Miller 2006) as well as from the current notions of good practice in ELT (Crookes 2009). The interaction exemplifies the kind of spiral patterned IRF dialogue in which the third move (see lines 6 and 12) by the educator can serve to both establish where the student is at and also *draw out the significance* of a point. It is clear that participants do not necessarily build upon one another's contributions and they do not always justify evaluations or fully negotiate the meaning or value of a concept. However, it seems that in attempting to facilitate an exploratory, inquiry based atmosphere, for which spiral IRF is a useful tool, the potential for constructing joint knowledge is increased, as lines 13-16 seem to indicate. What is important to also note is how the final turn in lines 15 and 16 evidence the

participant's growing awareness of the importance of affect in language learning (Grundy 2004). Such realisation may not have come about in a more transmissive context in which learner teachers had no concrete experience upon which to bring to bear any 'new' knowledge.

Professional discourse

Another method that may be employed to help 'see' learning and thus assist in answering research question four is, of course, to look at their use of language. In reflecting on the teaching episodes, how they use the professional discourse of TESOL to articulate their thoughts can reveal much about the LTs' stage of development. Indeed, fostering the use of linguistic and pedagogic terminology may well be the catalyst itself for learning to take place. Through the introduction and adoption of professional discourse, educators may provide the LTs with the linguistic tools, *the scientific concepts*, to help them in their (re)organisation of thought. Much evidence from the data did indeed emerge that demonstrated how the LTs employed professional discourse in order to articulate their thinking. The feedback discussions, reflective journals and interviews contain numerous examples of how the LTs used such language that referred to concepts such as methodological approaches as well as technical discourse related to pedagogy and the description of language itself.

In the following dialogue from a feedback discussion that took place early in the practicum, the LTs, following a teaching slot, had spent fifteen minutes alone as a group to discuss their thoughts on what they had learned from that day's classes. They then wrote up their reflections on the classroom whiteboard which in turn was used as a springboard for discussion when I returned to the room. The passage overleaf starts with a prompt for

further explanation when one of the LTs mentioned that her slot included an example of *inductive* teaching.

Extract 11 (TP Mon 23rd Nov: 12.40)

1. Educator: Sian what did you write up?
2. Sian: "*Always ask students for knowledge and opinions before going ahead and doing a task*". So what I
3.   meant by that was,uumm... I guess it means inductive teaching.
4. Educator: Inductive teaching? Sorry, what do you mean in saying that?
5. Sian: Am I getting this the wrong way around between inductive and deductive? I keep on doing this.
6.   Inductive that means students are working it out themselves more. Yeah. So what I mean is
7.   eliciting and allowing students to (...) output rather than input. So the students, you're eliciting their
8.   knowledge and evoking their ideas. You're pulling out what you can from them first in these tasks
9.   even if, you know sometimes you've gotta go with it and see and let them carry on. Uumm, so that's
10.   what I guess it is really. That's what I mean.
11. Educator: What have you seen today, particularly, that makes you think about that?
12. Sian: Uumm well, in my tasks, I can't remember the exact example but they actually knew a lot more
13.   than I assumed which actually was brilliant and I'm glad that I then asked them instead of
14.   presuming and putting input, uumm, that knowledge that they already know, uumm, is therefore
15.   just a waste of time because they already know it. They are not learning anything new, that's
16.   what I mean.
17. Educator: And you experienced that today?
18. Sian: Yeah.
19. LT II: It's so nice when they surprise you and know more than you thought]
20. LT 8:   [Yeah. Like with the idioms...
21. LT II: Yeah. I was so happy that they knew those idioms. I was beaming.

The long turns taken by Sian in lines 5 and lines 12 clearly reveal her thinking through the notions of a student centred approach. It is almost possible, once more, to see her thought process as she recalls her planning and her class and connects her practice to her evolving

awareness of the notions of student centred approaches and inductive pedagogy. Without a grasp of the professional discourse used here, terms such as *"elicit"*, *"inductive"* and *"deductive"*, it would of course, have been extremely difficult for Sian to articulate her growing understanding of effective teaching. Sian's utterances provide a neat example of social interaction mediating private speech and reflect Bruner's (1986: 143) understanding that, *"Inner speech was for [Vygotsky] a regulatory process that in Dewey's famous words, provided a means for sorting one's thoughts about the world"*.

It is also interesting to note that the prompting and probing questions evident in lines 4 and 11 scaffold the LT into articulating what she has experienced. Such sequences of interaction cannot be planned but rely on the educator facilitating, once again, spiral IRF exchanges linked to coherent lines of inquiry. It is, perhaps, an example of 'the dance' (vide supra, p.112) that educators undertake in attempting to mediate learning through dynamic assessment.

The LTs also made recourse to much professional discourse and scientific language related to descriptions of language when writing up their reflective journals. In the following extract, the LT, in criticising a moment of her own teaching which she found to be overly teacher centred also inadvertently demonstrates (in bold) aspects of her own linguistic knowledge that has developed during her three years of TESOL university study as well as her understanding of the methodological options that are available to her:

*A student also asked about the **past participle** in 'should have....' and I should*

have given the floor to the class and asked them to get thinking about the

***structure and form** and hence adopted a more **CLT** type approach for*

discussing grammar. (SU RJ6)

While other excerpts refer to alternatives that they may draw on in designing lessons, for example:

*I based the majority of my lesson on **TBL** because I feel that this approach works well as the **students are actively involved** in the language learning process, and they are **using language** to complete the tasks*. (RA RJ3)

The majority of first year undergraduate TESOL students demonstrate very weak declarative knowledge with regard to language awareness. The manifold labels and complex metalanguage that accompanies linguistic descriptions of language are challenging for nearly all students. However, after studying TESOL modules in their first and second year at university, familiarity with the terminology begins to develop. By the time they engage in reflective practice and regular post-teaching discussions, the LTs appear to be able to call on this professional discourse as a tool for expressing their developing understanding. This is true not just for terminology related to language awareness but also a growing bank of pedagogical labels and metalanguage that help articulate understandings, comprehend concepts and so on. Examples emerged consistently in the LTs' journals and there can be little doubt that without employment of professional discourse, and without the *scientific knowledge*, the learner teachers would have had great trouble in articulating their emerging views of how to best to plan for and manage teaching and learning. The following passage provides another example of this, once more with the professional discourse and knowledge in bold:

*However, I do feel that my lesson was more **deductive** than I would have liked. I told the students the language instead of eliciting what they already knew. I should have given the students a **couple of minutes to discuss amongst themselves** the differences between the **future progressive** and the*

future perfect and given them the chance to answer before jumping in and

answering my own question. (RA RJ4)

In this extract, the participant is demonstrating her understanding of grammatical descriptions, the alternative methodological options available to her with regard to language presentation and also the pedagogical choices that she can consider with regard to teacher and student roles and activities.

The reflective portfolios contained many examples of participants' employment of what, in SCT terminology, could be labelled *scientific concepts* to describe their classroom management and teaching. The parts of the text in bold, in the passage below, demonstrate the student's understanding of a particular teaching methodology (CLT) as well as an understanding of the pedagogical choices available to her regarding whether to focus on developing the learners' procedural or declarative knowledge during a part of her lesson. It is not difficult to imagine that prior to the course of SLTE, a student might have described a class as simply boring or fun. She might well have reflected upon why certain classes were more enjoyable than others. However, without the available professional discourse and understandings developed through concrete activity, it is unlikely a learner teacher would be able to articulate and thus comprehend in detail, what pedagogical decisions had resulted in the class unfolding as it did. The utilization of such discourse is evidenced in reflections such as these:

*I believe that the speaking activity reflected **a CLT task**. This is because the*

*task was open to the students' experiences, thoughts and feelings; **they had***

more choice over what they could say,** and the task was more **fluency than

***accuracy based**. (MA RJ3)*

It was nice to be able to step back and see what the students came up with

*when helping their peers. For these reasons, I feel my lessons take on a **CLT***

approach**, wherein the students **negotiate and come to conclusions about

the language or tasks themselves** and my role as a teacher is **more

***inductive**. (SU RJ4)*

Whereas the LTs above are discussing their understanding of conversation based tasks, the opposite is the case for the following LT who reflected on the reasons behind her more conventional approach to teaching a lower level class:

*I set out to teach in style and method similar to **PPP**. I wanted to present the*

***language forms** needed for the tasks, and I wanted to give students plenty*

*of practise using them. I planned for this lesson to be more **accuracy based***

***than fluency**, assuming a somewhat **deductive style of teaching**. (SH RJ4)*

These passages provide an important glimpse into how the LTs really are relating the theoretical aspects of their teacher learning to their practical, real classroom experiences. The reflective journal entries build on topics that emerged in the post teaching discussions that follow the teaching episodes which, in a cyclical fashion appear to then support future teaching actions and decisions. In the following passage, it is difficult to see how the LT could have developed her belief that language learning needs to involve meaningful communication without the declarative knowledge of teaching approaches and professional discourse:

*My lesson took a **TBL/CLT** approach again. I think my lessons closely reflect*

*my beliefs about language learning as they are generally very **student***

***focused**. This particular lesson started with an **inductive activity**, which are*

common features of both TBL and CLT lessons. (AN RJ3)

Portfolio entries varied enormously as the learner teachers articulated their thinking about what they had experienced during their teaching experiences. Guided discussion that prompts reflection on experience appears to aid the development of the LTs' understanding of these concepts and influence their classroom decision-making. For example, the following extract reveals a LT's attempts to provide a hands-on approach to performing effective error correction for a class of low level learners.

> *As they are pre-intermediates, I accommodated my error correction to them, using eliciting, **miming, reformulation** and **recasting** to support accuracy when it was needed.* (SH RJ6)

With regard to teacher learning, the intersubjectivity that dialogue fosters may promote development by enabling participants to work together to reach a common goal or understanding. At the beginning of this section I noted that it may be pertinent to distinguish two ways in which talk may contribute to learning. Firstly through participants talking themselves into understanding and the opportunities that exploratory talk provided for reciprocal scaffolding. Secondly, through interaction with a more knowledgeable other (the teacher educator) who may be able to scaffold and guide LTs' emerging understandings. The next section turns the focus onto findings related to the conditions for dialogic interaction and thus the data contribute to answering the first research question of whether a dialogic approach is possible in the context under study.

4.4   The right conditions

In addition to posing exploratory questions and guiding learners into thinking more deeply about issues as they arise, the findings also suggest that attention needs to be focussed on creating conditions that are favourable to dialogic interaction. The LTs' sentiments towards

the feedback sessions are crucial in governing their level of reflection and involvement in dialogic interaction. If learner teachers are unhappy or in disagreement with the way the feedback discussion is organised, misunderstand its purpose or are ill at ease with the content of the talk, then the potential benefits of the discussion can be adversely affected (Farr 2011:169).

Two main frameworks were employed for the structure of the feedback sessions with the aim of opening discussions on topics that had been identified as important - either by me or by the participants. In the first framework, I attempted to get students to open the reflective conversation by inviting them to feedback their thoughts on the session and encouraging an atmosphere whereby all participants felt comfortable at offering thoughts and opinions on wherever the discussion may lead. Extracts 4 and 7 provide typical examples of how the LTs often took this up and. In the second approach, I would leave the LTs alone for fifteen – twenty minutes following a teaching episode. During this time, they were tasked with writing reflective bullet points on the whiteboard that serve as the basis for discussion upon my return (for an example of a passage that takes place in this style see extract 11).

A strong espirit de corps was noticeable amongst the participants from the outset of the practicum. Fostering and encouraging a culture of a *community of practice* was an aim of the practicum as the participants were encouraged to learn together and from one another, as one participant noted:

> *You reflected on your lesson but also on other peoples' lesson which gives more independence. I think it definitely helped as in the real world we won't have you to comment on how the lesson went so it's nice to know what others think so that helped me learn about how I teach and things. (SU)*

Politeness and respect

As opposed to the structured, 'round robin' approach in which each participant is encouraged to state an opinion on an aspect of the lessons observed, the LTs were not guided into giving feedback on their peers as such. Rather, they were encouraged to feel free to discuss anything they had seen of interest in another's lesson. This may well be praise but could be a question, criticism or suggestion and so on. However, when criticisms were made, the comments were nearly always couched in polite, tentative language – and often accompanied by a compliment on some other aspect. The following peer-peer utterances from the transcripts provide a flavour of how the comments were often justified by the interlocutors and criticism often carried out with much sensitivity:

I think it was a good task but maybe you could have modelled a few of the questions at the start of the task – just to make sure they did get the grammar correct.

You didn't get to the questions about the video – which is a shame because it's a really great video and the questions were relevant, but the time and planning…

What was good was when you used colloquial language; you checked the students had understood. For example, "got up to" – you gave them the chance to tell you (what it meant).

You could have had the students working in a team – so they would see each other's (hidden famous character). Would that work?

Maybe you could have started off by explaining Christmas. What you did was good – about the turkey. But then you could have said "now tell the class about your celebration".

An obvious way of facilitating favourable conditions for open dialogue is to try to ensure that discussions are undertaken with much respect and sensitivity to others' feelings. In addition, attempts to reduce social asymmetry can be made through the judicious employment of politeness strategies. Analysis of my own conversational moves during the

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feedback discussions display similar hedging and politeness strategies as those identified by Vasquez (2004). For example:

(TP Wed 11th Dec)

EDUCATOR: I would've set it up, perhaps, slightly differently. I would've got them to predict it. I wouldn't ever say 'just listen' because for me, personally, it just doesn't ever work when I'm listening in a second language, I zone out. I do, though, think they found it more interesting than we think. Remember, we're exotic for these guys.

In the above excerpt, I am giving advice on the organisation of an activity that focussed on providing listening practice. The listening topic was about Christmas traditions in the UK. Three of the strategies that Vasquez refers to can be identified; the use of the modal verb (would), the adverb (perhaps) used to both hedge the advice as well as make it sound more polite and also the qualifier 'slightly' that downplays the extent of the changes to be made. There is also the attempt at creating empathy with the learners' cultural identity by reminding the LTs that for the learners, a Welsh university classroom and cultural surroundings may be far more glamorous and colourful to outsiders than to home-based residents.

Politeness strategies are also evident in the following example:

(TP Wed 9th Jan)

EDUCATOR: They were engaged whole time. I think the instruction giving for the task could've been clearer. It was pretty good and they all seemed to be getting it but I'm not sure they all knew that the answers were at the bottom.

This extract relates to advice that was given following instructions on carrying out a gap fill writing task. Here we can identify the praise before the advice that the instruction giving

was a little vague. It is also evident in the lexical hedge of "not sure" in order to downplay the fact that a number of learners were clearly unaware of the exact nature of the task.

However, conversational moves that contained such politeness strategies were not ubiquitous in the data collected from the feedback discussions. Indeed, very little direct giving of advice can be found in the transcripts. The reason for this is my conscious attempt to create an exploratory atmosphere over one where I am telling the LTs how to teach. As a result, there are fewer exchanges that consist of direct advice, or criticism. Rather, a more common exchange involved the description of a scenario leading to a question that had the aim of getting the LTs thinking about an issue.

The following excerpt further exemplifies this point:

(TP Mon 5th Nov)

EDUCATOR: I felt we missed opportunities, for example when she asked "get up to?" you identified the difference between "get up" and "get up to" with "yeah it means what are you doing?" at that stage, and although she said "ah, yeah", I didn't think she got it – and that became evident when she asked again about ten minutes later. What could we do then, at that point, to take it a few steps further?

In this excerpt, once again, I could have advised, perhaps using 'sugar coated language' that the LT needed to be more alert to signs of whether or not a learner had understood. I could also have explained that there is so much more to knowing a word or expression than simply knowing what it means – formality, nuance, synonymy, construction, and much more. Yet importantly, what dialogic interaction facilitates is the involvement of the LTs in exploring such issues.

The outcome

Despite the pressure on the learner teachers that accompanies a practicum, the findings seem to suggest that the manner in which they undertook the process was beneficial to

their own sense of development. The quote overleaf captures the sense the respondents reported following the completion of the teaching practice and reflective discussions.

It actually makes more sense and you just remember it more if it's something you've come to a conclusion about whilst discussing things with everybody else rather than just a fact somebody tells you at the time. You're kind of like "I know something went well but I can't remember what it was that they said went well" rather than if you actually speak it through. (AN)

The experience of having the opportunity to articulate their emerging understandings, despite the attendant issues of being assessed, being sensitive to others and so on, nonetheless appears to have been a positive one. The following sentiments depict the value that LTs seem to place on having a voice, and having the opportunity to express their understanding of the process:

I found the feedback sessions really helpful – nice to have not only teacher input but also peer input as we're all in the same boat. It was good to hear their opinions. I liked it when you left us to write down (on the whiteboard) what went well what didn't. And doing it as a group gave everyone a chance to put down their ideas and opinions. (RA)

For me it's important to discuss what happened as I take from that and from writing my reflections and come up with my own ideas as to how I can progress. (SH)

The interviews also revealed that the participants valued the opportunity to discuss matters not just during the practicum but as part of all their teaching modules, as this respondent noted about the declarative or subject-based knowledge modules:

I found them way more interactive, and they were my favourite the whole time – I'm not just saying that now cos I'm here, but they were my favourite because in that class you got to speak, to discuss what you were doing and it wasn't just us sitting and listening and take notes from a board or slide because we kind of learnt through doing especially from group work, when you put us into groups and make one of us pretend to be the teacher and the others the students – things like that when we were actually doing what we were talking about – it just stuck in my head then. (RA)

However, important notes of caution were also identified by the LTs. One issue was that of LT sensitivity to the diverging beliefs of individual teacher educators and how such beliefs influence how the educators go about the organisation of talk in the feedback discussion. It is advisable to keep in mind that the participants in this study are also final year undergraduate students. As a teacher educator and, in this case, researcher, it is extremely important to remain very aware indeed that for these final year students, understanding what the lecturer is looking for plays an important part in guiding LTs' actions and behaviour. LTs may become disgruntled if they feel that the educator is obfuscating matters unnecessarily. One participant made the valid point that an approach that obliges LTs to think and reflect may not be one that all final year students welcome:

I think some people prefer to be told –"this isn't so good" – "do this" – as they may be concerned about marks or grades or what have you. (SH)

The following respondent, perhaps unintentionally, draws attention to the divergent beliefs and practices of different teacher educators. While the participant may have looked positively at the differing styles of the educators, others may well prefer a more prescriptive approach to teaching and learning.

> *I had (name) in the first term and hers were really different to yours because she told us what we did well and what we need to work on and that was good and stuff but with you, you made us think about it yourself before you told us. So then we were like, remember you got us to write on the board and uumm, it gave us the chance to think for ourselves and to give our own feedback on ourselves and all the other girls as well, before you came in and confirmed what we were saying and we usually agreed – sometimes you'd have one or two extra things to say but I thought it was very helpful.* (RA)

Another participant described how the experience of a more dialogic approach helped her gain a deeper understanding of alternatives available to a teacher:

> *I liked us having a chance to think about it and taking a step back and viewing it afterwards, it just made me think of more things that I could do.* (MA)

During the running of the practicum upon which this research is based, despite the variations in how different educators conducted the feedback, no participant complained or voiced negative concerns about the group nature of the feedback organisation. Indeed, as many of the sentiments presented above illustrate, the opportunity for discussion on each lesson was welcome with views expressed such as, "*I really liked that we had the reflective session and it was nice observing the others' lessons as well*" (KI). Data from the

interview transcripts also suggested that the encouragement of exploratory discussions on peers' teaching episodes helped promote the concept of critical reflection:

> *We were all given a chance to comment on the others' lessons and our own*
> *and to justify our reasons and also to think maybe in the future 'uumm, I*
> *could change that /or tweak it'. It definitely helped me. Lots of things when*
> *I look back at lessons I think – yeah I could change that*. (TA)

Peers will often explain notions, experiences or ideas from the perspective of their own (as opposed to an old timers') viewpoint which can then enhance their understanding in the process (Maggioli 2012:94). Peer contributions quite possibly allow opportunities for intersubjectivity and thus for participants to co-construct talk within their own ZPD's, as one participant noted;

> *Just from having had people watch us in the sessions really helped. I think*
> *other people's feedback was really helpful for you to learn and move on your*
> *teaching. (TA)*

Interview data record how the participants believe that peer observation and feedback sessions may well facilitate key moments in developing LTs' understanding of teaching and learning. The following reflections were made by a participant describing how she came to better understand and 'see' the link between the theoretical and practical aspects of her teacher education while observing others; as opposed to when she herself was undertaking the teaching. In discussing her knowledge of teaching approaches she describes how:

> *I'd be able to recognise them even not so much myself, well yes for myself*
> *but also when I'm observing the others. I can see what they are doing, or*
> *predict what they are going to do next or all right, I understand why they did*

that activity or maybe I didn't understand why they were doing an activity

but at the end it made sense. (SU)

4.4.1 Chapter summary

Findings that pertain to the first research aim and its four subsidiary questions have been reported in this chapter. As a reminder to the reader, research aim one was:

To develop a critical review of an attempt to facilitate a dialogic approach to teacher learning and evince any cognitive development that may result.

And the four substantive questions were:

1)   Is the employment of a dialogic approach possible in the context of study?

2)   How do the patterns of exchanges fit with theoretical conceptions of dialogic interaction and exploratory talk?

3)   Can any learning be evidenced from analysis of multi-party dialogic interactions?

4)   Can learning be evidenced from teacher-led dialogic instruction?

Interactions from the feedback discussions have been presented to illustrate their similitude with theoretical frameworks of dialogic talk that were detailed in the literature review (Q1 and Q2). The ways in which a dialogic approach can promote development through the creation of opportunities for peer-peer interaction, as well as through dynamic assessment during teacher-led scaffolding have been presented (Q3 and Q4). Findings that demonstrate concept development through addressing teacher cognition, encouraging articulation and facilitating the employment of professional discourse in reflection have also been examined (Q3 and Q4). The final part of the chapter also looked briefly at the feasibility of taking a dialogic approach in the context under study by examining the

response from participants who have completed their practicum regarding the conditions

under which the discussions took place (Q1). The next chapter discusses the findings that

relate to the second research aim of this study.

Chapter 5   Findings - research aim two

Findings that pertain to the second research aim and its related subsidiary questions are documented in this chapter:

"*To explore and identify what factors in a formally assessed course of teacher education may work to promote or inhibit the efficacy of dialogic teaching under the model studied.*"

5.1   Chapter overview

As with the first research aim, analysis and presentation of the data in this section is aided by categorising the findings into separate areas. The overarching research aim and subsidiary questions resulted in the organisation of this chapter into three sections. Issues surrounding what is presented to LTs as good practice, and the effect of this on dialogic interaction, are examined in the first part of the chapter. This includes scrutiny of accepted craft wisdom as well as examining the attempt to inculcate reflective practice as methodology. Various doubts and hesitancies became evident as the participants undertook the practicum and these are detailed in the second section. Factors such as apprehension stemming from uncertainty about the value of conventional learning materials, insecurity regarding the roles that they were beginning to take on and a lack of confidence in the merits of communicative activities as vehicles for language learning, are all addressed. Tensions and difficulties that emerged as a result of pursuing a dialogic approach are presented in the final section. Many of the themes in this chapter overlap quite closely, for example, a developed pedagogical language awareness is concomitant to one's ability to diagnose a learner's level, potential, difficulties and so on. However, for purposes of clarity in communication, the themes have been categorised separately on the following pages. At a number of points, as in the previous chapter, I indicate areas that I

feel are important to the pedagogic issues that underpin this research and, at times, draw on concepts from sociocultural theory to validate these points. However, a detailed discussion of the findings is presented in chapter six.

5.2   Classroom issues

This section presents evidence of the way in which various aspects and knowledge bases of English language teaching may affect the shape and efficacy of dialogic instruction. The section examines teacher language awareness, spontaneous language instruction (an unplanned focus on form), corrective feedback and lesson planning.

Teacher language awareness

The importance of highly developed linguistic knowledge in EFL is frequently highlighted as theorists put forward the argument that a lack of language awareness directly affects teaching efficacy (Andrews 2001, Widdowson 2002, Andrews 2007). However, there is concern about the approach that educators opt to take with regard to developing teachers' language awareness during pre-service teacher education. The literature review detailed the ways in which many leading commentators view the development of expert *pedagogical* language awareness as being crucially important to teacher education (Widdowson 2002, Wright 2002). In other words, what matters is that teachers develop knowledge of language in a way that can best promote its learning and use – as opposed to a prescriptive or descriptive language awareness which would entail a focus on its structural properties. The issue an educator may choose to probe or delve deeper into, hinges on his / her assessment of where the LT is at in their learning. That is to say, dialogic directions taken by the educator during the feedback discussions are dependent upon the sense of intersubjectivity present, which, in turn, is determined by the shared knowledge that the interlocutors have to call upon.

The data that emerged from this study, especially from the feedback discussions and the reflective journals, strongly suggest that the LTs acquire and use much of the professional discourse that is employed in language teaching but that their English pedagogical language awareness remains weak. The LTs are often able to devise what can be described as communicative, learner centred lessons. Reflective journal entries commonly refer to the labels applied to teaching techniques and approaches as the LTs strive to explain their reasoning and thought processes, for example, *"This particular lesson started with an inductive activity, which are common features of both TBL and CLT lessons"* (AN RJ3). The findings further indicate that the LTs are increasingly aware of how to organise learning environments that can promote authentic communication and provide interesting and stimulating tasks based on the learners' needs, suggestions, histories and so on. Sentiments such as *"I know that the students always enjoy speaking-based activities"* (AN RJ4) may be obvious to an 'old timer' but to a learner teacher, schooled in a transmissive methodology, such awareness should not be taken for granted. As noted in the previous chapter, the urge to control and dominate classes is a strong feature of many LT classes on the practicum. Indeed, although the LTs' pedagogical language awareness is weak and their ability to enact reactive teaching approaches is, at this point, insufficiently developed, evidence emerged that the learner teachers were becoming aware of the possibility of relinquishing control of a lesson and the opportunities this may afford when they have a little more classroom experience.

> *I have come to reflect that, in order to progress from this, in my next lesson I*
> *will need to consider letting myself go with the flow of the lesson a little*
> *more. I will need to allow the students to take advantage of any linguistic*

tangents they may wish to go on, and to actively encourage any specific area

*of language they want to delve into. (*SH RJ2)

Post-course interview data also seem to support the notion that exposure to more communicative methodologies may be able to supersede ingrained assumptions about teaching, as one participant described:

I like to learn by speaking to other people and I have noticed that a lot of the

students in the classes we were teaching were the same, student centred and

stuff – it was never like that in school – not for me. (RA)

While these feelings may chime with contemporary notions of good practice, acting upon them during a live class on the practicum is more challenging. Despite studying language based modules during the first two years of university, noticing, evaluating and reacting to unplanned moments that offer opportunities for exploiting or correcting language use remains too challenging for most pre-service LTs. In a subsequent lesson, the same participant reveals how she is experiencing such problems concerning language awareness and competency:

In my wanting to go with the flow of the lesson, I strayed from the list of

adjectives I'd prepared in my plan, which as I got carried away, led me to

unintentionally misspell and make my own grammatical errors. (SH RJ5)

Such sentiments disclose the security LTs ascribe to rigidly following a plan and the dangerous waters that seem to surround any deviation away from it. The extract seems to capture the sense of panic and resulting chaos that LTs sense awaits any departure from pre-planned activity.

In order to be effective at explaining language – either in a planned lesson or by reactively attending to emerging needs, LTs will eventually need to have good linguistic knowledge and awareness. Despite this being an almost insurmountable obstacle at this point of development, findings from all three data sets, as well as from observation notes, reveal glimpses of the participants' growing mindfulness of the ways in which well-developed language awareness is crucial for those wishing to enact good practice in ELT. The following sections detail findings that corroborate this claim.

Focus on form

"Can I do it? That's what I think of first. Do I even know how to do it?" (SH) This quote, taken from extract 3 in the previous chapter, is a response to an enquiry about when and how we may spontaneously incorporate a language focus in class. The statement was uttered during a feedback discussion that centred on the problem of knowing how to respond to a learner's developing interlanguage, yet the sentiment expressed could equally apply to other classroom moments concerning unplanned language work. For example, it is not only instances of corrective feedback that call for spontaneous intervention; the expert teacher may also identify opportunities to 'add' to a learner's language through timely intervention. The participant who uttered the sentence was, however, far from being experienced enough to earn the label of 'expert'. She was basing her interventional decisions not on criteria suggested by conventional craft wisdom or on appropriate SLA research findings or on theoretical or philosophical assumptions, but on different principles entirely. However, failing to alert learner teachers to the options to only focussing on a pre-planned teaching point may well be harmful in the long run, despite their initial inability to work with unexpected language issues. Allwright (2005: 14) warns that ignoring what the learners

bring to the classroom may well "*imperil the potential richness of the overall experience, from which so much more might have been learned*"

In the following extract, I am trying to scaffold the teacher who had just taught into seeing ways in which communicative activities allow the teacher opportunities to add to and develop the learners' interlanguages. The teacher had just set up a task where the upper-intermediate learners were required to use the third conditional structure. She had focussed on the use of 'would' in the construction but had not made any reference during the class to alternative options that may be useful to the learners – may, might, could etc.

Extract 12 (TP Wed 9th Jan: 15.02)

1. Educator: Think about in China or Spain wherever. That structure (conditionals) when it's used, we mentioned
2.   'would' but other modals are equally as frequent ; 'Could', 'may', 'might', you know?
3. LT 12:   I thought about it but I was unsure what to do *(pause)* like do I do a section on modal verbs and
4.   explain that?
5. Educator: These guys, given their level, they know 'should' and 'could' but in any structure like this, you know
6.   it's useful to draw attention to what is frequently used.
7. LT 12:   I don't think 'might' is used that often. 'Could' is, though. I did put 'could' and 'would' as I thought if I
8.   do one, I'll have to do the other but I don't know, so...
9. Annie: I just think their level is probably high enough that you could just draw attention without having to
10.   go into what is a modal verb etc. They could notice and it would just click (...) as an alternate word...

As line 3 shows, the LT did not know how to go about expanding on the language focus that formed the central part of her lesson. As a result of her planning to teach a pre-decided language point, she did possess the declarative knowledge and was comfortable in explaining how third conditional sentences were constructed, the rules of use and so on. However, what it also reveals is that she did not possess the pedagogical language awareness that Widdowson argues makes language real for learners (2002). In considering

whether or not the class needed to be presented with the grammatical rules of modal verbs, she is demonstrating linguistic knowledge but far less pedagogical understanding of the needs of the learners in front of her. What is also interesting to note here is that the extract may also reveal development taking place in one of the participants, although not the one to whom I was attempting to scaffold understanding. Lines 9 and 10 reveal, perhaps, a teacher already beginning to theorize her own practice in starting to see that the grammatical labels that accompany a linguistic description of language may not always be needed for those engaged in learning to communicate in a foreign language. Annie's utterance could be interpreted as evidence of a shift in how she views language proficiency – from knowing about the properties of language, to one that is based on a more communicative competency.

In taking a dialogic approach that avoids overwhelming or baffling LTs the educator is, then, faced with an extremely complex task. S/he must be mindful of the issues that are central to language teaching while being careful to maintain intersubjectivity by staying within, as Wedell and Malderez put it, "*the mental area within which education needs to be working in order to be effective*" (2013: 60). There is a very complex conundrum here. Good practice in ELT, in which both planned and spontaneous teacher interventions are seen as necessary, is a target that teachers on a practicum, understandably, are seldom able to hit. With regard to nurturing the learner teacher's developing confidence and identity, scaffolding on the feedback discussion must be carried out with the utmost awareness and sensitivity. As line 5 in the extract above demonstrates, the suggestion of alternative actions was all that I deemed the LT to be capable of taking on board, at this point.

The following extract provides a typical example of the joy LTs often reported feeling on teaching a class where the learners seemed to visibly be engaged in the learning process.

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In the extract, I am attempting to get the LTs thinking about what factors promote times in a class when the learners are using the target language while clearly enjoying the interaction; when the class atmosphere is more akin to pleasure than pain. Episodes such as this, when learners are interested, animated and contributing to a discussion or activity with enthusiasm are often described as 'magic moments' (Harmer 2006). It is extremely rewarding for learners to be able to express what they wish to in a second language. Sharing something humorous, achieving a sense of connection or completing a challenging task are examples of the type of activity which leads to such moments. Given that they frequently represent the most cherished times for teacher and learner alike, perhaps their facilitation demands rather a lot more attention.

Extract 13 (TP Mon 23rd Nov: 15.47)

1. LT 11:   At the end I was so glad you asked 'Are any idioms similar in your language?' But with 5 minutes to
2.   go I didn't think it was worth asking. But they lit up when they started talking about their <u>own</u>
3.   <u>languages</u> and the idioms. It was <u>*really*</u> nice to see how engaged they were and that they had clicked
4.   what the idioms were and explaining their own ones really clearly. It was really interesting.
5. Educator: So what did we do? How can we <u>induce</u> such magic moments? We all felt it…
6. LT 11:   It's just, we've got to make it meaningful to students and then they'll feel it's worth their time.
7. Educator: It became a discussion… and yet they were processing what you had drawn their attention to…by doing
8.   what?
9. LT 8:   Talking about it…
10. Educator: Mmm using language to talk about language and it was really interesting. And it wasn't fake laughter or
11.   anything. It was very interesting to hear about the green hat. I'll always remember - don't give a man a
12.   green hat in China!
13. LT 11:   And yellow! Green hat (…) but Yellow means sex (laughs) in China it's *"Yellow, yellow, dirty fellow*!' I was
14.   thinking, does that actually rhyme in Mandarin?? Or just the English version?
15. Sian: Yeah, and it kind of like relaxes the students and makes them feel…they have a natural
16.   inquisitiveness…they want to find out about classmates, what they think or what their culture is and
17.   that actually mimics much more real communication.

The passage demonstrates how reflecting on their activity is helping the LTs in coming to see the value of making language real and meaningful to learners (lines 2, 6, and 15-17). The probing questions (lines 5 and 7) in this extract were asked in order to prompt the LTs into thinking about both the pedagogical approach and the importance of language awareness. It is an example of how a dialogic pedagogy made it possible for the LTs to appreciate such matters and, by allowing them to articulate their understandings, it in turn enabled me to better judge how to scaffold subsequent turns and exchanges. Such prompts and encouragement do indeed appear to help the LTs to notice aspects of practice and possibly reformulate their thinking about pedagogical issues. For example lines 6 and 13-14 reveal how reflection and discussion on practice has made an impact on the LTs thinking regarding a number of issues including intercultural awareness, humanistic approaches and motivation.

However, as noted at various points in this study, knowledge may be viewed from a declarative (subject matter knowledge) and procedural (knowledge in action) dimension. Knowledge with regard to teacher language awareness (TLA) is a particularly complex area (Andrews 2001). Teachers may have a good descriptive grammar knowledge yet lack pedagogical awareness or methodological know how. Conversely, a teacher may be quite adept at identifying learner needs or problems yet lack knowledge of particular aspects of language to effectively promote learning. In such cases, regardless of the quality of dialogic interaction or the expertise the educator may display in helping his / her LTs to reformulate new understandings, the TLA will govern the decisions the teacher makes in the classroom. The ability to react, with confidence in their linguistic knowledge, to the emerging language needs of a learner was, in the data collected for this study, outside the ability of the LTs on

most occasions. Pre-service teacher education may be best served by keeping such a scenario in mind. Talk in feedback discussions can refer to crucial pedagogical concepts that may be out of reach for new teachers at this point in time, such as spontaneous language work and unplanned corrective feedback, but the educator should not, perhaps, be expecting it at this stage of teachers' development. Rather, it may be wise to use dialogic interactions point out and discuss such pedagogy in the hope that the approaches may serve as helpful signposts along the path of continuing, long-term development.

Corrective feedback

Breakdowns in communication caused by lexical, grammatical, phonological or cultural mistakes are, of course, a natural part of learning a language. However, how these are perceived and should be treated raises a multitude of questions. How should teachers react to errors? Which errors warrant attention? When should they react? What are the implications of error correction on learner motivation? Which part of the lesson should be given over to error correction? How these questions might be resolved in practice does, of course, affect the content and direction of scaffolded discussion during the feedback on live teaching. The theoretical position taken on corrective feedback, along with the various approaches and techniques for treating inaccuracies in language use that LTs are exposed to during their education, influences how they reflect on the success or otherwise of their own classroom actions.

Ellis et al. (2002) report that during the undertaking of a task, interruption can be carried out in two ways. Either it can come about as the teacher elects to respond to a learner utterance that contains an error, or where either the learner or teacher elects to interrupt the planned flow of activities in order to attend briefly to form. This may stem directly from a learner query, for example as a result of a difficulty in the forming or production of the

language under study. Alternatively, the interruption may come from the teacher noticing ways in which s/he could *add* to the learner's developing competency, for example by observing an unnatural construction (albeit grammatically correct) or by noticing opportunities to introduce linguistic alternatives to a particular function etc. In other words, a spontaneous focus on form as described in the previous section.

Unplanned attention to language, whether in identifying inaccurate use or enacting opportunities to scaffold the learner's participation in social interaction, may well appear natural to the 'old timer' (Díaz-Maggioli 2012) who is familiar with the challenge of language learning. The experienced teacher will likely be attuned to the learners' use of English and comfortable in their knowledge of both language and pedagogical options at their disposal. The participants were becoming aware of the need to develop linguistic sensitivity towards the learners' language use but often avoided attending to their potential. For example, one interview respondent described her pedagogical predicament, "*I found error correction difficult too; I would notice them but not really know how to deal with them." (*RA). Another reasoned that although she had been attentive to language use, "*There wasn't enough time for my error correction slot*" (LT 10 TP Nov 7th), suggesting, perhaps somewhat unfortunately, that at this early point she very much saw error correction as something she believed should be demonstrated as part of her teachers' skill set rather than as an opportunity to focus on the learners' emerging language needs.

 In addition, Sheen and Ellis (2011:606) draw attention to the fact that corrective feedback "*constitutes a highly complex social activity*" and findings from the study demonstrate how it is not only the linguistic challenge but the pedagogical and social nature of carrying out corrective feedback that can be exigent for teachers on a practicum. Both the social and

linguistic challenge that corrective feedback poses to pre-service teachers is perhaps best summed up in the following participant's reflective musing on the topic:

> I heard errors in their speech but I didn't want to spend time at end saying "you said this wrong" I know I have a tendency to not support their errors but just correct them which I don't like doing and the fact that I couldn't articulate what was wrong with it. I just corrected it. I wish I'd revised more but didn't know. (LT 11 TP Nov 5th)

Evidence from the recorded discussions does seem to suggest that the LTs recognise the pedagogical value of corrective feedback during appropriate points in a lesson e.g. during a focus on accuracy. For example, the following utterance was made by one of the participants offering constructive advice to a peer about the need to assist the learners in accurate pronunciation during a controlled activity that took place prior to a freer task. The LT teaching the lesson had attempted to set up a communicative task but was disappointed with the limited opportunities for interaction that it afforded. The peer suggested that:

> I think that if you had said 'question forms' (because you didn't do error correction) and then made sure they got it perfect - that's why the task wasn't so language focussed. (TA TP Dec 1st)

The LT teaching this class, early on in her practicum, had been uncomfortable in correcting the learners' pronunciation and had avoided the issue entirely in her lesson. These are telling examples and reflect the fact that even when novice teachers are able to identify errors, and are able to describe the inaccuracy using appropriate professional language, they are, nevertheless, unsure as to how to methodologically deal with corrective feedback. Which errors to correct and how, can be bemusing for the LT. Ellis (2003) advises that teachers should select forms that learners use incorrectly while doing a task. He also adds that the teacher may elect to introduce useful or natural forms that the learners failed to use at all. Such guidance may sound clear to an experienced practitioner but data from the study, such as in the instances given above, suggest that this type of advice can lead to difficulties for LTs who don't yet possess a developed pedagogical language awareness. In

other words, for dialogic talk to be effective, to help LT's develop conceptually, establishing the point at where the learner teacher is at, needs to be at the forefront of the educator's thinking.

The feedback discussions frequently produced further evidence to support the notion that LTs view corrective feedback as important while at the same time experience difficulty in enacting it:

Extract 14 (TP Wed Jan9th: 34.53)

1.	Annie:	Well, something went very wrong in my planning. I Thought, '*I worry too much about… trying to be*
2.		*new.*' I now have a stigma about using course-books. I have really enjoyed making lessons where I
3.		come up things and make the connections between the stages. One of the things I don't do is error
4.		correct or I don't go back to the board and talk about the use of language so I thought if I take a
5.		ready-made lesson off the net, a structured lesson, I thought that's fine as I can actually try to
6.		concentrate on the things that I haven't been doing so far.
7.	Educator:	Are they things you believe <u>should be done</u>? Conventional, teacherly things?
8.	Annie:	Uumm, well, yeah… it's the thing I really struggle with. I don't often do error correction or
9.		listen out for language use and think '*ah I 've heard three people making that mistake*'. When I
10.		do realise after the time, I don't think, '*Everyone look at this – how can we make it more*
11.		*accurate*'. I think that is helpful but it is one of the main things I know I don't do it enough so I
12.		thought if I do a straightforward plan, I'd free up myself to have a go at those things. But then I
13.		panicked about it as I thought it was really, really boring.

In the above passage, the LT's feelings towards error correction are made explicit. She sees it as an important aspect of language learning and teaching, yet recognises that it is a feature of her practice that she rarely engages in. Indeed, in lines 4-5, the teacher divulges how her whole approach to planning for this particular lesson was based around the aim that she would be able to address more of her attention to language issues. Admirably,

perhaps she was attempting to identify learning opportunities from observation of the learners' language use. It is also interesting to note that in this, assessed, teaching episode the LT felt able to disclose what she perceives as weaknesses (line 8-10). In doing so, it can only be surmised that she does not feel that talking about areas of difficulty will be prejudicial to her summative 'mark', which naturally concerns most students. Dialogic interactions that conform to the descriptions given by Mercer (1995) regarding exploratory talk, depend on such openness and critical self-reflection and this issue is discussed later in this chapter.

The following passage also provides an example of the doubts and uncertainty the LTs feel regarding the adoption of a spontaneous, incidental approach to language issues. The exchange corresponds to the, now familiar, interpretation of exploratory talk. The participants are jointly discussing the issue of when and how to carry out corrective feedback.

Extract 15 (TP Wed 16th Nov: 4.25)

1. Tara: When they are on a roll you don't want to interrupt them and say "That's wrong". When they got into
2.   it when they were debating at the end *(pause),* I think you don't want to be like '*hold up everyone*'.
3. LT 10:   I picked up on two and thought *'great'*, but they'd know who I picked on and I wouldn't want them to
4.   know it was them I picked on. I only caught two.
5. Annie: You could have said it like, '*these are just some....*"
6. LT 10:   Yeah but because they were so chuffed I'd heard what I wanted to hear to I didn't want to spoil it by
7.   saying, 'You *also said this rubbish*.'
8. Annie: No. It's the way you do it; I don't think you'd do it like that.
9. LT 9:   As long as you don't interrupt the flow. It might be worse if you save it for later and write on board.
10.   It seems like it's a bigger deal then.
11. Annie: I think It depends on point of lesson, doesn't it? If somebody says, '*They stole the bank*', and you
12.   jump in straightaway   and say, '*robbed the bank*"that's OK, that's not...*]*

13. LT 10:   [I think everybody's done that - repeated back the corrected version.
14. Annie: But if it's a grammatical thing, it could be worth going back to it afterwards…?
15. LT 9:   Yeah – just saying the corrected version aloud…
16. LT 10:   I think we've all done that, haven't we…but are we not doing it enough maybe?

The above extract captures some of the issues that are of concern to the LTs and through allowing the participants to articulate their beliefs in this way, I was better able to get an idea of where their thinking was with regard to these areas. This in turn made it possible for me to direct the LTs to the options available to them. For example, LT 10's (line 3) use of language in referring to errors in learner utterances discloses much about the way in which such inaccuracies are viewed by her. Seeing an error as something which should be caught (and eradicated!) reveals in the LT a view of language development which no longer fits with contemporary views of interlanguage. Scaffolded, educator-led talk in subsequent discussions was able to directly address such (previously) tacitly held beliefs. Furthermore, even when the LTs were able to identify opportunities where corrective feedback may be useful, the examples above exemplify how LTs often felt unable or ill-qualified to respond. The reflective accounts, transcript data and interview texts illustrated how the participants were not ready to enact spontaneous, incidental language work. However, what did emerge was that they were, at least, becoming aware of future alternatives available to them.

A number of other methodological suggestions for dealing with errors are proposed in the literature (Ellis, Basturkmen et al. 2002) and include getting students to correct their own mistakes, noticing activities, consciousness raising tasks and more traditional production-practice exercises. Such options are also introduced and discussed in the co-requisite TESOL modules that the LTs study before and alongside their practicum. Although bridging the

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theory-practice gap is a challenging endeavour; the evidence does suggest that the novice

teachers are aware of ways in which they may develop their expertise in the long run. As

one reflective passage illustrates:

> *Another opportunity to teach, which I feel I missed out on, was when one of*
>
> *the students said "bored" instead of "boring". This is a common mistake for*
>
> *language learners and I could have turned their attention to the board to*
>
> *clarify this error. It would have been an excellent time to introduce an*
>
> *important error correction.* (AN RJ 4)

The reflective journal entries reinforced the finding that the learner teachers were aware

of this long road ahead of them. The LTs often made reference to teaching abilities seen as

desirable but which they are not yet in command of, as the following extract describes:

> *Although I am aware of errors I still don't correct them as often as I should. I*
>
> *did plan to address some errors at the end, however due to the lack of time*
>
> *here I opted not to rush a language focus. This is an area I need to focus on*
>
> *in the future. If I had re-focused on language at the end, after the worksheet,*
>
> *it would have been a more satisfactory ending to the class.* (AN RJ3)

In feeling that she was under-correcting, the LT reveals how, like the teacher in the previous

transcript, she sees errors as important to learning and as something which must be

attended to. As chapter one outlined, since there is no clear evidence of what constitutes

effective action with regard to the complex issue of corrective feedback, helping the LTs

realise, despite their deeply held beliefs, that not all inaccurate utterances need to be

corrected can be important for their developing understanding of the teaching and learning

process. Indeed, what an exploratory approach can help LTs realise is that complex

linguistic, methodological, and social and contextual concerns need to be considered in one's approach to corrective feedback.

From these findings we may infer that the path that dialogic interactions take, regarding, for example, the subject of spontaneous language attention or error correction, depends in part on the beliefs and experiences that the LTs bring to the practicum. In other words, during the feedback stage of an IRF sequence in a scaffolded discussion, the direction of the guided talk will depend on the views that LTs reveal in their talk. What has emerged from the data is that the LTs, while strongly believing that error correction is an integral part of their role, are still, by the end of the practicum, unsure of how best to go about it but are beginning to appreciate the complexity involved.

Lesson planning

The issue of lesson planning surfaces throughout the data as being one of the most difficult areas for LTs on the practicum. There are, of course, many reasons for novice teachers finding lesson preparation a major challenge but the issue of which methodological approach to take, in the absence of empirical evidence regarding language learning, means that LTs need very clear guidance about the practicable options that they have at their disposal. Developing awareness in LTs of the alternatives available to them is important in a model of SLTE that wishes to avoid a prescriptive, simplified approach to pedagogy. The interview data, however, suggest that perhaps the LTs can feel overloaded with options:

> *The most difficult thing was sometimes planning lessons. I'd find something I thought was great then I started planning and think – oh – it's not going to work and I'd overthink it and get myself really worked up and nervous but then when I go and teach it it'd be fine. I'd gotten so nervous*

but then when I was up there I was fine. So I found that really difficult and

sometimes there are areas you are more confident. (RA)

The micro teaching module that the LTs undertake in their second year is based around giving them the opportunity to experiment with a number of different approaches to delivering lessons. Lesson shapes such as Engage-Study-Activate (Harmer 2006), Authentic-Restricted-Clarification (Scrivener 1994) as well as PPP and TBLT approaches form the input to the practical second year modules of the undergraduate program. However, when it comes to teaching real learners, it seems, as commented on above, that the LTs have recurring problems in moving away, at this stage in their development, from more conventional, teacher-centred approaches. Observation notes from many of the lessons on the practicum record LTs deductively presenting aspects of language. In other words, the LTs often revert to the comfortable role of knowledge transmitter:

Although in hindsight there may have been too much TTT within the

lesson, the board work was necessary to a certain extent. However, it

would have been more useful to the students to be working through the

points together in groups as opposed to talking to me at the front of class.

It would have been beneficial in my planning to look at different ways to

change the lesson to make it more student-focussed. (KI RJ3)

The content of this reflection provides an example of how the LT has resorted to modes of teaching that she herself, as a learner would be familiar with. In conducting her class in this manner she would have avoided the opportunities for spontaneous language work or unpredictable learner input and been more comfortable controlling the language aspect of

the class. However, her reflection also records how, as a result of the practicum experience, she was becoming aware of alternative approaches to take:

I also need think about ways in which I can make the lessons more student

focussed; reducing the TTT and putting the onus back on the students,

maximising their opportunity for natural conversation and fluency. (KI RJ3)

Other journal entries, nonetheless, may suggest that LTs see more planning and control as a method of reducing the chances of losing face in a class. For example one LT, after providing a confusing and erroneous explanation of the differences between phrasal verbs and collocations, revealed a lack of confidence in providing her own spontaneous explanations of aspects of language use. She saw the plan, clearly, as her safety net in deciding that, "*I think in future I could avoid this by preparing my examples before the lesson, rather than making them up on the spot.*" (MA RJ5)

The theoretical modules of the course of teacher education had provided the LTs with the professional discourse to talk about and initiate an understanding of concepts such as a focus on form, inductive learning and so on. Yet on numerous occasions, the learner teachers still appear more comfortable being the 'transmitter' of knowledge; that planning for a 'teaching point' is central to performing a good lesson and any divergence from the plan is akin to entering dangerous territory. Other LTs did, on many occasions, make an attempt to venture into higher risk approaches yet often found it demanding.

I think I was quite all right with how to make the links but then I found it

difficult if one week I wanted to do a task-based lesson I'd try and suit it

to that approach exactly and focus too much on that which would make it

difficult… (MA)

The sentiments communicated here once again reveal an LT focussed more on the plan and lesson than perhaps on the learner needs. The thoughts expressed in the following reflective entry also uncover the apprehensions that LTs have about dealing with unexpected classroom challenges. Rather than embracing unforeseen questions, errors or learner difficulties as opportunities for learning, the LT believes, once again, that ever more thorough planning will hold the answer:

> *In the future I will be more decisive and organized in choosing and*
>
> *planning exercises, therefore creating a lesson plan much more in advance*
>
> *to avoid last minute stress and doubt about the lesson.* (AN RJ4)

5.3   Learner teacher readiness

What became clear from analysis of the transcriptions, reflective accounts and interviews was a strong sense that although the LTs were developing an appreciation for the complexity of what may be considered good practice in ELT, a number of interrelated factors were working at prohibiting them from fully engaging in or attempting to carry out some of the approaches which were put forward as being effective in promoting language learning. Given that the practicum represents their first six hours of live classroom experience, this is understandable. Yet the participants had spent much time in the previous two years discussing issues surrounding language teaching, as well as peer teaching their cohort. Therefore, it is worthwhile examining in more detail what factors seemed to most concern the participants.

Materials

Repeatedly in the data it emerged that the LTs found course-books and on-line materials useful tools in lesson preparation although they did develop a critical awareness of their

limitations as the practicum progressed. Facing the uncertainty all new teachers confront, course-books offer a trusted helping hand to novices who are unsure of their pedagogic and / or linguistic knowledge. EFL employers are also well aware of the value of course-books – especially as a scaffold (or means of control) for new teachers. One of the participants who had been employed as a teacher in the south of England during the summer months recalled how, "*They wanted us to follow the course-book*" and explained the reason as being, "*…because in a company like that they want to make sure you are doing things in the way the company want you to do things.*" (AN) Another interviewee recounted how she had been weaned off relying on a course-book as the practicum proceeded, recalling how, at the start, "*I used a course-book as I didn't know the grammar or how to do a lesson without the course-book. I'm a bit more imaginative now.*" (MA)

The option of tailoring published materials to better suit learners' developmental needs and the context within which a class was taking place often surfaced as an area of attention for the LTs. This need for adapting pre-designed plans or activities to the context was made real for one participant as she recounted during one of the feedback discussions how her reliance on published materials had left her feeling dissatisfied with her teaching episode. The LT had devised her own materials in her previous three lessons and had decided to use an (untailored / adapted) pre-designed plan and materials, found in a course-book, for this particular class. She had expressed the personal aim of focusing more on the learners' use of language and less on the effectiveness of her lesson stages and felt that using published materials designed by an experienced practitioner would leave her safe to focus her attention on language issues. The moment captures the value of providing LTs with the space to discuss their evolving understanding of the practice of teaching. The LT's assessment of the root cause of her dissatisfaction also provides further evidence of the

way in which guided talk may help co-construct meaning. The exchange begins with a gentle prompt for the LT to explain further why she felt dissatisfied with her planning for the class:

Extract 16 (TP Wed 9th Jan.   37.50)

1   Educator: I agree with what you have said. Can you tell me again what was wrong planning-wise? You
2   wanted to do a lesson that gave you a chance to do some error correction and listen to the language
3   they use. You planned the lesson from a book, fine, but you're not happy with that?
4   Annie: Because, I think because it was an existing plan, you take it for granted it would be, good or fine and
5   then when you actually start to visualise it taking place, which I did a little bit late, then I was like,
6   actually I think that's boring. Whereas when you come with one completely on your own, you
7   painstakingly think '*I don't want it to be boring*,' they are such energetic students]
8   Educator: [I think "painstakingly" is the word, you do put a
9   lot of effort into it. All of you do this.
10 Annie: Yeah, so then I didn't this week and that was....well, yeah.

Annie's previous classes had been planned on her knowledge of the students' interests and needs, with numerous openings for learner contribution throughout the lesson. This time, in order to free up her thinking and allow her more space to focus on the learners' use of language, she followed the stages of a published lesson plan, yet was not at all satisfied with the outcome. In being prompted to articulate the reasons for her dissatisfaction, she appears to reach the conclusion that the generic course-book tasks failed to provide the opportunity for authentic, meaningful communication to take place. However, course-books did help the participants to begin envisaging and structuring their lessons - especially during the earlier stages of the practicum:

Finding something that is really going to engage the students and putting

together a plan that will stimulate them, interest them, be relevant, be

suitable for their level so finding initial ideas was most challenging . I was

going to a course-book for the initial ideas, finding them and then

adapting them – that took the most time but once I had the idea I just

went with it. (SH)

Another respondent who had a year's experience of teaching abroad spoke of how, through exploring the options that became available to her during the course of teacher education, she is far more mindful of the practical teaching choices she now has:

I think the biggest difference from three years ago is when I taught in

Spain during my first year and I literally felt I knew nothing and used the

grammar book and course-book and did it all from there. But then when

we came to teach here we explored so many different ways of teaching,

different approaches and methods and theories. I feel a lot more aware

now of what I could do and it's not all out of a course-book. (MA)

While mindful of the limits of course-books, as the quote above demonstrates, the LTs do not yet have alternative options at their disposal for each situation. Throughout their three years studying TESOL modules on their undergraduate award, the LTs are made aware of how they may use course-books as a stepping stone in their planning. They are encouraged to adapt published materials to fit better with the needs and interests of the students they are teaching. In the exchange below, the LTs are unsure of how they should go about planning for their learners - a small cohort of monolingual Asian undergraduate Business Studies students. The extract provides an interesting example of the possible confusion that the LTs face. Although their TESOL education has promoted a questioning style - both to espoused approaches and published materials, the LTs are understandably unsure about

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creating their own lessons at this stage. The learners have requested opportunities for communicative practice '*we really want to speak*!' However, the LTs are having difficulties finding appropriate materials and designing suitable lessons.

Extract 17 (TP Wed 7th Nov: 48.10)

1. Educator: In the course-books there are CLT based activities. Have you really gone through all of them?
2. Tara: Yeah but there are lots of reading and listening tasks]
3. LT 10:   [Stuff that is not student centred – the course-book is
4.   almost the opposite to what you say we should do. For example, you said my gap fill would be better
5.   as a homework task and I agree with you but that's what is in the course-books .
6. Tara: And they are also full of tasks that are like the way I learnt in school and I remember thinking I was
7.   <u>so bored</u> with that.

The utterances in this exchange reveal that the novice teachers are developing critical skills with regard to lesson planning and materials selection (lines 3 and 4). What the example also highlights is that the feedback discussions have indeed allowed the room for discussion and reflection on past experiences. For example, Tara (line 6) articulates her dissatisfaction with traditional book based approaches. Yet what we can deduce from the arguments presented above as well as in themes emerging from the data is that LTs do hold positive dispositions towards a more communicative, meaningful approach. The LTs are motivated to focus more attention on the learners in the classroom than on the mastering the steps in a coursebook – a step, perhaps towards focusing on the quality of life rather than the quality of materials in a classroom (e.g. see Allwright and Hanks 2009; Hanks 2015). That they do not, at this very early stage in their career, feel confident enough to carry them off successfully is without doubt. However, in allowing LTs the room to explore and discuss

various alternatives to conventional approaches, important steps will have been taken to creating far more critically reflective practitioners:

> *The way I was taught languages was boring, not stimulating, the teaching has changed – it's more interactive now. Whereas before it was, "Open your text books and copy the yellow box"; "Translate this or that paragraph". I now do more games and use net tools. I would not inflict on anyone how I was taught. (SU)*

The participant who voiced the above clearly had strongly negative memories of her own (Welsh) language learning experiences that were course-book based. Moreover, other participants made reference to the alternative approaches (to a text book) available to them while nonetheless alluding to their as yet unpreparedness.

> *You look at a lot of methods, especially when you look at Communicative Language Teaching and TBL, it really helped. And looking at the theory of others – but I don't think it came into my lessons as much as it could have.* (TA)

The above sentiments capture both the security felt by LTs in using published materials and also the desire to teach in a manner that more closely reflects their developing interests and beliefs.

The teacher role

Doubts about performing the type of roles expected in a communicative language teaching approach also surfaced in the triangulation of data. The roles of guide, facilitator, monitor and so on often clashed with the beliefs LTs held regarding the identity of a teacher. Their underdeveloped language awareness, apprenticeships of observation and concern about

grades meant that a safety first approach of *presenting* language for communication often, yet not always, understandably took precedence. In those cases, the LTs were able to read up and become familiar with the language areas that their lesson would focus on; they could present (inductively or deductively) an aspect of language and provide opportunities or situations in which the learners could practice the target structure. Indeed, in their planning and subsequent teaching episodes, we have seen above how it was often the case that LTs looked to course-books for their initial inspiration yet were often unable or disinclined to take advantage of what Allwright (2005) terms *learning opportunities* that may have arisen from the teaching encounter.

The findings do, however, suggest that some participants are surmounting their own prior language learning experiences and are coming to value meaningful, communicative based approaches to teaching that involve dynamic, unpredictable scenarios. Some revealed how they identify differences in TESOL approaches to what they themselves had experienced e.g.:

> *The way we were taught (German) was awful and now after doing TESOL it*
>
> *has made me realise why I didn't enjoy it*. (TA)

And:

> *I think the way I was taught was the only way I knew – even when I learnt*
>
> *Welsh, that was very similar to the way I learned at school …so now I have*
>
> *a knowledge of different methods and ways that you can uumm,*
>
> *implement them for specific individuals in classes to suit their needs.*(KI)

However, others appear to occasionally doubt the value of an approach that is far more learner-centred and thus requires a far less hands-on teacher role than they have ever

experienced themselves. The concerns about facilitating opportunities for communication, instead of transmitting 'new knowledge' are detailed further on in this section. How the LTs view their own competency, along with how they view this alternative role of a teacher as facilitator rather than transmitter, along with their ability to perform it, is a source of tension for some participants. Post-course interview data highlight this quandary of whether enjoyable, interactive lessons really do have worth with regard to learning, as the following reflection illustrates:

> *I think it takes practice to recognise the things that need to be introduced or that they are weak at so then you know that you have had a really successful, communicative based series of lessons because you've been doing the things you recognise they didn't know at the beginning and doing good error correction so it just takes practice to feel like the communicative lessons are more successful…even though I believe they are the best ways to teach but I don't know that I teach it in the best way yet.* (AN)

The excerpt captures both the theory-practice gap that novice teachers in general experience as well as her developing sense of a pedagogy that needn't involve the teacher or students taking conventional, transmissive based roles. Her thoughts also suggest that the LTs were aware of the long journey involved in developing into expert practitioners, as another respondent articulated:

> *I think I could be getting there. It'll take long time and much more experience to get confident to say I could teach anywhere. I feel more confident than I did at the start of the third year.* (SU)

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Awareness that the path to developing into expert practitioners would take some time to travel along was a topic that the LTs occasionally referred to in their reflective portfolios, as the same participant articulated in writing toward the end of her practicum:

> *I view the teaching sessions of this module as stepping stones onto what I hope to be a happy exciting, journey for me on a personal, professional and academic level*. (SU RJ6)

LTs were able to recognise and use professional discourse to help articulate their inchoate thoughts on the teaching and learning process. The account from the reflective journal overleaf demonstrates an LT attempting to teach in a manner that aligns itself with her developing beliefs. It also perhaps, offers us a glimpse of her experience as a learner and the preconceptions that resulted as to what the teacher role should be:

> *However, I do feel that my lesson was more deductive than I would have liked. I told the students the language instead of eliciting what they already knew. I should have given the students a couple of minutes to discuss amongst themselves the differences between the future progressive and the future perfect and given them the chance to answer before jumping in and answering my own questions.* (RA RJ4)

In the above reflection, we can deduce that the LT's nerves, inexperience and desire to demonstrate her teacher credentials, combined with her experience as a learner appear to have resulted in her teaching a class that was more teacher-centred than she had hoped; a class that perhaps reflected her own prior concepts of how a teacher should behave. Nevertheless, in instances where LTs intentionally planned for a communication based class which placed fluency development as a main aim, mixed feelings were still

occasionally reported. Examples in the previous section noted how apprehension in engaging in the sort of spontaneous or incidental form focussed instruction that expert teachers may employ(Tsui 2002)(Tsui 2002) is often the source of this ambivalence.

In the extract overleaf, the LTs were reflecting on different courses of action that could be taken as alternatives to the teacher merely providing a pre-selected list of useful phrases for giving presentations. The exchange takes place early in their practicum yet provides a good illustration of the LTs needing to be guided to see how there were alternatives to a teacher-centred transmissive approach:

Extract 18 (TP Wed 11th Dec: 33.45)

1.   Annie: So what's a good way of introducing language chunks without it being too teacher-centred?
2.   Educator: What do you think?
3.   Tara: Elicit?
4.   LT 9:   I find it hard.
5.   Educator: Which ways do we have of presenting new language?
6.   Tara: The board.
7.   Educator: Yeah – but may be out of context *(pause)*.
8.   Tara: In a paragraph – get them to identify some.

In the exchange, I am attempting to scaffold the dialogue up to Tara's turn in line 8, where she arrives at the usefulness of providing learners with a context for analysing language and hence enabling the learners to notice targeted linguistic features for themselves. The content – language presentation appears difficult for the LTs. This conversation took place at the start of their practicum and despite undertaking a module focussed on peer teaching the previous year, they are struggling to overcome their own experiences and to see language from a pedagogical viewpoint. The LTs, in their own language learning histories, have largely experienced very teacher dominated conditions. As noted earlier, some may

well have been guided through a text book, '*turn to page 28*!' and their teaching practice experiences repeatedly reveal the difficulties involved in creating good conditions for language learning; ones that manage to avoid the sort of atmosphere that the LTs themselves had found so unappealing and demotivating. In other words, the design and implementation of tasks that place high emphasis on learner involvement and motivation was difficult for LTs unused to such interactive methodologies – compounded further by the challenge of knowing when and how to provide unplanned, spontaneous language help.

The communicative approach

Intertwined with doubts about the teacher's role are LT doubts about the values of a communicative learning episode or task, as the following interviewee expressed:

> *I think when you are not quite sure of yourself as teacher, especially the grammar – so many of us didn't know any of it when we started the course, so you're still a little unsure of that, so that (those ideas) almost fight each other. If you are doing a communication based lesson you feel like you really enjoyed it, they really enjoyed it, but you question whether or not they actually learnt anything, like they might have become more confident which is good for their fluency but you're not sure if you've actually helped them with their English that much… (AN)*

The LT who uttered the sentiments above was reflecting on two aspects of taking a communicative language approach to teaching and learning. She expresses doubts as to "*whether they have actually learned anything*" and also misgivings about her ability to enact spontaneous form focussed instruction during a communicative task because of her

limited language awareness. This uncertainty regarding the teacher's role is understandable given that the notion of facilitator or guide will clash with most LTs' conceptions of teaching, formed from their own histories and experiences. While there is, of course, plenty of room and need in language teaching for input of new information, the fact that the LT feels that her fluency based classes may not be of much use for the learners suggests that her own beliefs about teaching and learning are very much based around a 'banking' model of knowledge. However, a student centred language classroom, characterised by extended periods of learner interaction challenges many LTs' expectations of the role of the teacher. Copland (2008:14) also comments on this phenomenon and reports on communicative activities being described as a "*cop-out*" because the teacher "*isn't actually teaching anything*".

Such doubts or internal reservations need to be addressed and articulated if the teacher educator wishes to engage the LT and achieve a meaningful level of intersubjectivity. The crux of the problem appears to be that the LTs are able to appreciate the worth of a communicative approach, yet doubt its efficacy as they are not yet able to enact aspects that more expert teachers employ. Nevertheless, such doubts need to be addressed for the benefit of long-term development and it is worth repeating here Warford's (2011: 2) warning that failure to make explicit LT's thinking may well result in situations much like:

> Skipping pebbles on the surface of a pond, pouring on the prescriptions, the potpourri of practical tips seem to generate momentum, then ultimately sink into the abyss.

However, problems are also evident in LTs' language awareness during pre-planned form-focussed instruction. The way in which language awareness is inextricably linked to language explanations and presentational approaches can be seen in the following passage. The respondent here is reflecting on her attempt at adopting a planned focus on

form. Even though, in her preparation, she had time to become familiar with the linguistic focus, she still struggled during the class.

The bit at the end when I was explaining clauses…it was a bit too confusing. Even I didn't know how to explain it so I should have revised it more before teaching it. I had a rough idea it was about subject and object but didn't entirely understand it myself. (MA)

In response to these common dilemmas, it can be quite tricky for the teacher educator, in dynamically assessing the LT, to choose which area to go about unpicking first. For example, s/he could choose to explore the value of linguistic labels to learners (subject, object, clause etc.) or alternatively opt to begin a discussion on the choices available for grammar teaching; such as whether inductive or deductive techniques would have been most useful in this instance. Either way, it is the LT's limited language awareness that played a large part in her class not being as successful as she had hoped. Such declarative knowledge limitations affected most of the LTs throughout their practicum and it was a topic that emerged in many of the feedback discussions.

There will inevitably be a tension between the roles of educator and assessor given that the culture within which higher education operates demands that learner achievement is somehow mapped onto assessment criteria for a summative evaluation. What is more, not all final year undergraduate students may feel as passionate about exploring learning as the 'old-timer, or be as ready as the educator would like, to express their understanding of a particular notion, theory or classroom episode. Findings relating to the problem of assessment and the issue of LT contribution to the discussions are presented in the final section of this chapter.

5.4   The university context

As seen throughout this study, much contemporary thinking views teacher learning as a developmental, reflective process and that pre-service preparation is only the beginning of a rather long developmental path. Indeed, many commentators reason that a principle aim of teacher education should be to create reflective practitioners (Breen, Hird et al. 2001, Richards and Farrell 2011, Díaz-Maggioli 2012). However, it could be argued that the imperative to do well academically discourages students from engaging in honest and open reflection (Hobbs 2007). Nevertheless, a more dialogic pedagogy does seem capable of promoting and guiding reflective thought and the interview data also suggest that perhaps not all reflection is undertaken with a summative grade in mind. The following participant noted how, following her teaching episode and subsequent feedback discussion, although she would be mindful of getting good grades while writing her reflective journal, the process had helped her come to better understand teaching and learning :

> *Sometimes when you are writing things I was thinking, ok, I have to make sure this is good to try and better my grade but then sometimes as I was reading over it something would click and I was oh yeah, now I understand that and it would like consolidate things more and like it just it wasn't just like writing without thinking*. (RA)

Another participant recorded how worries over her grade played little or no part in the reflective tasks that she undertook but came to value the process more as the practicum developed:

As a graded thing, you're not really even quite sure of your lesson enough

to kind of... base ideas on it. But by the end of it (the practicum), well, in

the second half, they felt like more genuine reflections, like "I know I did

this...I'm going to keep that in mind". Whereas at first, it was more like,

"this went well, this didn't", than actually thinking more in depth about

why it didn't go well. (AN)

While another recorded how:

I didn't think of grades while doing it – afterwards I hope I did all right

but when I was writing I wasn't thinking I need to hit this mark or that. I

went through it and it really was a self-reflection. (TA)

There is a little doubt that for many of these final year undergraduate LTs, at one point or another, the issue of the grade they will be awarded for their Teaching Practice module is often at the forefront of their thoughts. The following passage, recorded toward the end of their practicum, discloses the strength of feeling some LTs have towards their grades:

Extract 19 (TP Wed 9th Jan: 49.15)

1. Educator: I would feel very comfortable leaving you guys to run this class now till the end of term. You
2.   know what you are doing. Do you feel that?
3. LT 12:   I feel comfortable - it's just that the marks freak me out.
4. Educator We try to be very laid back.
5. Annie: It's not that – it's our degree. But say I did a bad lesson – and I'm paying thousands to be
6.   here – it's lot of pressure.

Similar sentiments regarding the importance of grades were also frequently made during the interviews. LTs may well be interested in developing their skills yet undoubtedly feel the pressure that accompanies the assessment of long-term study. For example, one respondent noted how:

> *In the third year you're thinking like, this is my final year, anything I do now could be detrimental to the final grade that I have been working towards for three years. (KI)*

These extracts point tellingly to the importance that LTs place on the assessment of their teaching performance. The utterance in line 5 of the dialogue also allows one to reflect on the fact that the LTs often have preconceived assumptions as to what constitutes a good and bad lesson and such beliefs, as noted earlier, can aid the process of scaffolding immeasurably when made explicit.

As mentioned above, on a formal course of education, detailed assessment criteria are expected to be produced and made public to the LTs. In contrast, much has been written criticising a tick-box approach to SLTE with educators contending that simplifying the knowledge and skills base of language teaching to fit a criteria grid that can be used to judge a teachers 'performance' fails to capture the essential elements of what a teacher can know and judge (Murray 2009). Given that the dialogic directions in this course of SLTE are not governed by guiding the LTs into the correct appropriation of specific prescribed actions or behaviours, it is important that the LTs are clear as to what indeed does constitutes good practice. In other words, they are clear as to what is required for the attainment of good grades. To that end, it is important to facilitate a culture whereby the LTs are able to equate 'a good class' with a good grade and the understanding that what

constitutes a good class is entirely dependent on the situation and context in which it took place. The findings suggest that was achieved to some degree:

I really wanted to do a lesson the class would enjoy – but then I don't think I could have got a good mark if I hadn't done a good lesson. And after each lesson I learned more and wanted to improve on that. (TA)

Nonetheless, as mentioned earlier, doubts about adopting a less teacher centred approach did emerge. One participant believed that in taking a less obtrusive or central role there were fewer opportunities to demonstrate her teacherly skills and attributes. What she expresses suggests that she had now come to understand or perhaps appreciate the central role of her own reflective journal entries, in stating that:

So far in the classes I have taught and in the lesson I will be teaching next week, the students are doing a lot of the work and I tend to only be there to listen to what they have to say. I understand that this may be what the students need but as with everything in University, I'm thinking of my grade.
(LT 10 email correspondence)

Another, while keen to embrace a communicative approach and expressing a desire to experiment with various approaches, was nevertheless cautious that moving away from a perceived safety first approach could negatively affect her grades:

I'd really like to try a Dogme lesson but I think… that's when I thought about marks more. When you are trying something completely new it could really go awful … (TA)

However, other participants revealed a readiness and desire to experiment with approaches and techniques that had been discussed and studied throughout their SLTE, as one recalled:

I like to experiment in my lessons and thinking about good marks or grades came partly into it. When I was planning and doing reflections but mainly about how I'd give a good lesson…you were really teaching to people so they had to get something out of it. (TA)

This readiness to experiment contrasts with findings from studies on shorter courses which reveal an emphasis amongst LTs to master the skills and techniques required to pass the course. Nevertheless, as the findings report, not all LTs were so adventurous despite my best efforts to support the LTs in teaching to whichever style they felt able to justify.

Reality

One of the observations from the data is that, despite my enthusiasm for and efforts to undertake a dialogic pedagogy, participants were not permanently awaiting their turn to offer useful insights, make helpful suggestions, challenge assumptions or ask probing questions. Discussions did not always evolve into exploratory, dynamic vehicles of learning. It is unreasonable to expect all undergraduate students to be as passionate about language teaching and learning as experienced educators. What is more, they have far less experience and education to call on when attempting to critically reflect on a teaching episode. As a result, energetic, insightful debate may not always immediately follow a teaching episode.

The passage below took place during a discussion that followed an unusually flat lesson delivered by LT 9. The atmosphere amongst the learners during the class, normally one of

lively participation, was somewhat quiet and subdued. Nevertheless observation notes record that the learners left the class upbeat and the excerpt reveals the subsequent attempt to motivate the LT and generate discussion:

Extract 20 (TP Wed 11th Dec: 1.25)

1. Educator: The students had a productive two hours. They seemed to leave very happy. How'd it go?
2. LT 9:   OK – it went as I planned but I didn't want to put them through the video a second time. They didn't
3.   enjoy it. Not that I thought they would enjoy it but it worked with the language.
4. Educator: Were you happy with some things?
5. LT 9:   Some of it was ok. *(pause)*
6. Educator: You displayed many teacherly attributes]
7. LT 9:   [It was OK. I don't know what to think today. *(pause)*
8. Educator: Anyone? Anything? *(pause)*
9. LT 10:   It was culturally relevant and they understood ok – it was a good one.
10. LT 9:   I wasn't going to get them to swop but I should have done so as they were reading each other's. I
11.   should have stuck to my plan. *(pause)*
12. Educator: (Name)?
13. LT 12:   I liked it.

The exchange is characterised by short turns. Answers are brief with few challenges or justifications given in the responses to questions I set (e.g. lines 4, 8, 12). There is little evidence of critical engagement or any suggestions offered for joint consideration. A number of possible reasons may be put forward for this. Firstly, given the obviously flat atmosphere that characterised most of the class, it may well be the case that the observers had no desire to further dent the confidence or hurt the feelings of their co-teachers; as described earlier in the findings, politeness and respect was a predominant feature of the discussions. Secondly, it is quite possible that this extract provides a good example of the participants not really knowing how to offer reflective comment. Insufficient preparation

and support prior to the practicum may have left the LTs without adequate hooks for their reflection. Post-course interview data lend some support to this interpretation, for example:

> *There were probably times when we could have been more honest. But we get on with each other so well so maybe sometimes we'd think, actually, yeah, I'd do that differently but we don't kind of, don't really know how to say it.* (AN)

Other possible reasons include a lack of methodological or pedagogical knowledge to accurately reflect on the merits and drawbacks of the class or perhaps the LTs were given insufficient time to organise their thoughts and reactions to the day's classes. What is noteworthy in the extract, however, is that while it does reveal the thinking and reflection opportunities that peer observation and discussion allows it also shows how opportunities can be missed if the LTs are not comfortable with how to partake in dialogic interactions – especially on each-others' teaching episodes. Further support for this interpretation also emerged in the interviews with the participants often hesitant to criticize co-teachers who had become friends:

> *Yeah – I think it's really, really good but think sometimes they're all my friends, they really did bring up my confidence by saying you did this and this well but I think that when it comes to saying what you didn't do well I think they find it harder because they are really good friends.* (RA)

The learner teachers also recognized that their observations and thoughts on others' teaching episodes would possibly be useful for all concerned but did not feel comfortable or prepared to do so: "*I hated telling people and I knew they wanted to know but how do I*

say this without hurting your feelings". (RA)   Other respondents did appear to feel

comfortable engaging in the feedback discussions yet drew attention to the importance

that LTs often attach to their teaching episodes:

> *We had a good group and we said from beginning it's not to offend but to*
>
> *help – there were one or two lessons where people didn't have their best*
>
> *lessons and you could tell they were a bit sensitive so you felt you couldn't*
>
> *be as honest as you could with others.* (TA)

These reflections suggest that the LTs were perhaps not prepared appropriately to take

part in the discussions; at least not entirely in the spirit of the exploratory nature and

approach that I had hoped for. Certainly if they were viewing the feedback discussion as a

space for critiquing positively and negatively their co-teachers then there was a

misunderstanding. What I was hoping for and believed was important for developing

rounded, reflective practitioners depended on a joint understanding of the nature, purpose

and shape of the feedback discussions.

However, positive responses to peer contributions in the feedback discussions also

emerged from the data:

> *Everybody teaches and learns differently but you don't want to offend*
>
> *anyone. I quite liked it though – I like to know but it was a bit challenging*
>
> *at times especially as I did not know how others would take it. But, as the*
>
> *weeks go on, and you know what's ok to say. So, while learning how to*
>
> *teach you are developing not a relationship but that sort of thing – like if*
>
> *you have an opinion you feel it's ok to say it but it was quite strange at*
>
> *first to give that sort of feedback.* (AN)

The data also revealed that the LTs did not feel that their goal was to achieve the mastering of techniques or procedures inherent in any 'one right way to teach'. They did not view the aim of the practicum as being to prepare all concerned to teach in a similar, methodologically approved, manner:

And I think all of us taught quite differently so that was good. We kind of recognised that so if we said something constructive it wasn't 'I don't like the way you do it' but kind of, 'you do things in a very different way to me; however, I'm not sure about that.' So it's not saying I could have done it better because we're all coming at from completely different ways, anyway. (AN)

The mixture of responses here seems to suggest that some participants have understood and taken on board the spirit and aims of the practicum and subsequent discussions more than others. Given the complexity of teaching, and certainly of human psychology, perhaps this is not so surprising. It does suggest, however, that greater effort needs to be made in preparing LTs to take part in, and understand the thinking behind, the feedback discussions. This corresponds to findings from other research that highlights the need for learner teachers to be prepared for feedback discussions on a practicum (Copland 2012) and forms part of the reflection on the action research section that is discussed in the next chapter.

5.3.1   Chapter summary

Findings that pertain to the second research aim and its four subsidiary questions have been reported in this chapter. As a reminder to the reader, research aim two was:

To explore and identify what factors in a formally assessed course of teacher education may work to promote or inhibit the efficacy of taking a dialogic approach under the model studied.

And its subsidiary questions were:

1) What learner factors were evident that promoted or inhibited the efficacy of dialogic teaching or exploratory talk?

2) How did declarative knowledge affect the efficacy of dialogic or exploratory talk?

3) What role did contextual factors play in promoting or inhibiting the efficacy of dialogic teaching or exploratory talk?

4) What practical (or procedural) factors emerged as being important with regard to employing dialogic talk with pre-service language teachers?

Findings relating to the role of a linguistic and methodological knowledge base with regard to dialogic teaching have been presented (Q2). The challenges faced by learner teachers in enacting a communicative approach to language teaching have also been documented (Q1 and Q4) as well as contextual obstacles such as the tension over assessment or development (Q3). The next chapter contains a detailed interpretation and discussion of the findings presented from chapter four and chapter five.

Chapter 6   Discussion

6.1   Chapter overview

The ways in which the findings of this study are relevant to the actions and behaviour of teacher educators, as well as to the preparation of ELT professionals, are discussed in the first part of this chapter. Throughout the chapter, the reader is referred back to the numbered extracts with the aim of developing the ideas and pedagogical issues that became evident during the collection and analysis of the interactions. In addition, a number of supplementary extracts not contained in the findings are presented here, in order to highlight or clarify certain points or arguments. The final section of the chapter reflects on the ways in which this action research has implications for the course of education under study, and possibly for other contexts where this process of teacher preparation may be of interest. However, in order to assist the reader in managing the large amount of information contained in a study such as this, and as a recapitulation to what has already been presented, the chapter starts with a synopsis of the findings, the main themes and their importance to teacher education.

6.2   Synopsis

Much data from the transcribed discussions reveal that the shape and manner of the exchanges tend towards the type of dialogic interactions as described by the various theorists detailed in the literature review. What is more, the key findings from all sources

suggest that this creating the space for more dialogic interaction during teacher education is conducive to facilitating concept development; that is to say, learning. However, the data also point clearly to the fact that a number of contextual issues may, to a greater or lesser extent, undermine the efficacy of dialogic interaction. For instance, undeveloped linguistic knowledge is a major challenge for pre-service EFL teacher education. In order to facilitate the type of SLTE that aims to prepare novice teachers for a positive professional career, in ways that adhere to current representations of good practice in a post-methods era, the data reveal clearly that greater efforts should be made to develop LTs' pedagogical language awareness. The successful preparation of teachers to be reflective practitioners, equipped with the tools and resources to help them to begin to understand the practice of teaching, stands a far better chance of being effective when the practitioner has well-developed pedagogical language awareness. Moreover, as is detailed later in this chapter, in order to be effective, novice teachers need to begin developing the awareness to identify opportunities to scaffold language learners in the spaces between the planned and spontaneous. In other words, teachers need to have sufficient pedagogical language awareness, or at least a developing awareness, to react to opportunities as they unfold in the classroom.

What the findings have revealed is both interesting and important to note. The data demonstrate how participants found certain approaches far easier to implement than others. For example, a focus on forms (rather than a focus on form) approach, was often, yet not always, adopted by the participants. Having control over the language aspect of the lesson was reported as being a priority for the participants. Conversely, addressing the needs of any emerging language issues, during a class, was thought to involve far too much risk. Knowing what language area would be involved in an upcoming class, and how it was

going to be explained were thus primary concerns and provided much-needed security during their teaching episodes. The chances of a dreaded 'loss of face' that accompanies not knowing an answer or not knowing in which direction the class was travelling, was far less likely when the teacher controlled the linguistic focus. This, of course, is one of the reasons that the Presentation, Practice, Production (PPP) model of teaching is endorsed as a model template for lesson design on many short, intensive teacher-training programmes. It is an approach that promotes what Paulo Freire (1970) referred to as the 'banking model' of education with the assumption being that the teacher makes 'deposits' of knowledge in the learner's knowledge bank which they are then able to utilise.

The findings from all data sources revealed that this banking model was also the type of teaching most frequently recounted by the participants in recalling their own experiences as language learners. Logically then, it is an approach that carries importance in their own apprenticeships of observation and thus one that has helped form their everyday concepts of how classrooms should operate. When these facts are taken together, it is simple to see why a PPP type approach is so appealing for new teachers. Moreover, taking the view of language as a commodity that can be broken down into separate, manageable chunks and presented to learners is extremely useful for those who mass-produce language learning materials.

Evidence gathered in the findings did, however, suggest that the LTs were indeed becoming aware of the alternatives to course-book / PPP / deductive dominated approaches to language lessons yet were apprehensive about their own ability to perform them (e.g. vide supra, p.234). What is interesting is the finding that, by the end of the practicum, many participants appeared to hold the belief that more communicative, less teacher dominated approaches were probably often more effective. This corresponds closely to findings in a

study undertaken by Ogilvie and Dunn (2010). They detail attempts to include TBLT methodology on a course of SLTE and found that despite being able to see its merits, their LTs also tended toward PPP type methods during the practicum.

It is, of course, almost impossible to say with any degree of certainty what specific aspect of their teacher education may have propelled or been the principle vehicle for such development or conceptual change. However, the findings do indicate that the reflection on and discussion of scientific concepts, brought to bear on actual practice, helped bring about an increased awareness of certain key aspects of language teaching. These include central themes such as focussing on the learner and his or her motivation, focussing on the socio-contextual factors of the class and focussing on language; and specifically situated language in use. Moreover, these approaches chimed closely with the kind of teaching that participants reported wishing to aspire to despite not having experienced such conditions in their own learning histories. Their own predominant learning experiences, the ones which shaped their most influential images of teaching were reported as being primarily that of receiving information and instructions. This is a paradigm which, as Smith (2001: 222) notes, is the one which many teachers rely upon during their first teaching experiences and argues that teachers "…*need to experience socially-constructed learning directly, guided by a more experienced teacher or peer, in order to create fresh interpretative frames for themselves.*"

In sum, the findings indicate that the feedback discussions provided the means to mediate such realisations in the novice teachers. These insights were then consolidated by their concurrent exposure to the declarative aspects of their TESOL degree modules along with the varied ways in which the LTs were required to reflect upon their concrete practice. In other words, the findings suggest that the LTs were becoming aware of procedural options

as well as the thinking behind them, yet, understandably at this point in their development, did not always feel disposed to act upon them.

As mentioned above, an approach that calls for spontaneous language work may well place unreasonable demands on the new teacher and threaten their 'status' in front of the learners. How novice teachers plan for the language component of lessons, and how they make classroom decisions about spontaneous language work hinges, to a large extent, on two factors. The former depends on the methodological practices available as options and the latter on their ability to identify and react to a learner's emerging language needs. Thus, a knowledge base that involves both declarative (linguistic and theoretical knowledge) and procedural knowledge seems to be essential. Chappell and Moore (2012: 590) in outlining the reasons for increased linguistic knowledge on courses of SLTE argue that what is needed is an emphasis on both "*the product of good language teaching and the process of becoming a good language teacher*". Indeed, Kumaravadivelu (2012: 31) cites a number of studies that show how learning procedural knowledge alongside declarative knowledge would be most beneficial with regard to pre-service teacher preparation. Another way of perceiving this is through returning to Malderez and Wedell's (2007) conception of teaching knowledge. In order to ultimately develop the skill of knowing *to*, LTs first need to know and develop both to *know about* and to *know how*.

The current state of much pre-service SLTE provision may be seen to be lacking when considered from this perspective of procedural and declarative knowledge. For example, Stanley and Murray (2013) propose a framework for analysing English language teacher qualifications since they find that neither short-term (i.e. usually 4 weeks) pre-service teacher training nor longer term post-graduate teacher education (i.e. usually a year) provide adequate teacher preparation. They surmise that while the syllabus on short-term

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teacher training courses lack declarative knowledge, longer term masters' courses, which do not include a practicum, lack a procedural knowledge of pedagogy. Butler (2014) reports that although the majority of UK based MA TESOL courses are academically based and do not include a practicum, there has been a sharp rise in the number of courses that include practical input.

Few LTs possess the well-developed declarative and procedural knowledge that expert, experienced practitioners have access to (Tsui 2002). However, the indications are that by the end of the practicum, the learner teachers were beginning to see and value appropriate tools and resources needed to make decisions about teaching. They had methodological alternatives to a deductive, PPP-led approach and were learning to base their choices on reflection and consideration of the context in which they find themselves; on the learners and their language use. They were beginning to notice the opportunities where spontaneous language work (for example, through corrective feedback or exploiting a language point) would be useful to the learner. They were starting to appreciate language learning as consisting of more than the assimilation and mastery of discrete grammatical chunks and to value a more holistic approach to language development; one that emphasises the value of communication. This is despite the fact that the data expose how this is not what they seemed to have experienced as language learners themselves. Evidence presented in this research suggests that dialogic interaction which encourages the development of exploratory discussions, based around practice and involving participants who possessed sufficient professional discourse to articulate complex ideas, allowed such new conceptualisations to take form. In sum, exploratory discussion assisted in the *internalising* of the new concepts experienced during their course. The following section examines the teacher educator role during this process.

6.3   Teacher educator

Chapter two detailed the varied types of interactions that are available to educators and described how more exploratory type interactions are those in which constructive critical engagement is encouraged (Mercer 2004, Mercer and Howe 2012). This can be demonstrated by reasoning being visible in the interactions with ideas challenged and suggestions offered for joint consideration not just by the educator, but by the LTs also. For example extracts 1 and 4 provide evidence of the attempt made to facilitate such talk. This section examines how, from a sociocultural perspective, concept development may be seen to be facilitated, to a greater or lesser extent by the dialogic approach taken. The ways in which dialogic interaction enables the educator to better work within an LT's ZPD, how creating the space for articulation of concepts aids understanding and how multi-party conversation can aid dynamic assessment are all discussed.

 Previous chapters have detailed the argument that it is through such talk, action and reflection that declarative knowledge (or, in SCT terminology, scientific concepts), can come to have real meaning and real use for the prospective teacher and thus effect tangible cognitive shifts, as Johnson (2009:63) describes:

> Dialogic mediation is the primary means by which learners are assisted as they appropriate relevant linguistic and cultural resources and are guided as they use and transform those resources to accomplish certain goals.

Such teacher guided learning is best enacted when it involves activity, the articulation of current thinking and understandings, reference to scientific concepts and reflection on action. An extended practicum undertaken alongside declarative based modules corresponds to the conditions for teacher learning from this sociocultural perspective and

provides opportunities for both free and guided talk. From this perspective, Diaz Maggioli

(2012:39) views the teacher educator as:

> Someone who responds to the evolving needs of aspiring teachers by
> providing different scaffolds along the learning process. This includes
> informing, modelling, helping notice and mark as well as providing
> ongoing monitoring of performance and providing feedback, taking into
> consideration what the profession considers to be expert performance.

With regard to taking such an approach to education, Alexander (2005: 51) suggests that

the ultimate challenge lies in achieving the marriage of pedagogical form and content.

Viewed from a sociocultural perspective, achieving intersubjectivity and facilitating the

development of interactions which fit the description of exploratory talk are beneficial for

learning yet scientific concepts are key to conceptual development and therefore must also

be introduced. Alexander (ibid.) draws attention to the complexity involved for the

practitioner since a dialogic exchange:

> …tests the teacher's ability to receive and review what has been said
> and to judge what to offer by way of an individually–tailored response
> which will take learners' thinking forward.

In other words, in adopting a dialogic pedagogy which involves conscious dialogic teaching

as well as encouragement of an exploratory approach to thinking about teaching and

learning (as opposed to a transmissive approach to learning), the teacher educator must

be continuously alert and responsive to the LTs' utterances in order to dynamically assess

the LTs and take full advantage of learning opportunities. As Wedell and Malderez

(2013:140) state:

> Teachers, through repeated interactions with their learners over time,
> can understand more about their learners (what they know, and how
> they learn, and what their difficulties are and how they see things) and
> so be in a better position to determine their needs.

In order for the educator to mediate learning, the LTs must be exposed to classroom activity in addition to acquiring an understanding of the linguistic and methodological discourse of TESOL. Theoretically, the subsequent reflection and articulation facilitates concept development of their emergent understandings in allowing the space for "active responsive understanding" (Bakhtin 1986: 71) to take place. The following section discusses the evidence that emerged in the findings surrounding such an attempt at mediation.

6.3.1 Teacher guided scaffolding

In a study that looked at how trainer talk during the feedback event may scaffold LT's understanding of teaching, Engin (2013) examined ways in which the teacher educator or a *more expert other* can organise exchanges in order to scaffold learning. She describes scaffolded talk as consisting mainly of open questions that oblige LTs to reflect on the teaching episode. Question types that are found in her framework frequently appeared in the transcribed data for this research and starter queries such as "*How'd it go*?" and "*Any thoughts*?" were often used to begin the discussions or to probe or stimulate the LTs' thinking on an approach, issue or technique. Yet her framework of questions (vide supra, p.75) made no reference to scaffolding which involved reflection on declarative knowledge (scientific concepts). In other words, it did not look at how such knowledge may inform procedural practice in the development of professional 'praxis' (Edge 2010: 17).

From a Vygotskian perspective, we have seen how understanding and knowledge are socially constructed through collaborative talk and interaction in and around activities that fall inside the individual's ZPD. Thus one way in which novices develop cognitive skills is by participating in joint activities with more knowledgeable others who are able to assist the learning and understanding of the LTs. Johnson and Golombek (2011: 8) refer to several

studies that detail teacher educators' attempts to identify the limits of their learner teachers' ZPD. They describe how the process begins by "*encouraging the teachers to verbalize their current understandings of whatever concept, skill or disposition is the focus of study*". This 'verbalisation' takes the form of journal entries, reflections on teaching practice, reflections on textual input or through dialogic interaction with an expert other. The point is that by making the cognitive state explicit, it becomes open to dialogic teaching that can promote "reorganisation", "refinement" and "reconceptualization" (Johnson & Golombek ibid.).

Attempts to provide the space for such verbalisation, and thus concept development, can be seen in many of the extracts presented in the findings. For example, extract 10a (vide supra, p.194) may be looked at from the point of view of the IRF exchanges that are evident (Alexander 2005, Rojas-Drummond, Torreblanca et al. 2013). The spiral patterns of the exchanges demonstrate my attempts at gauging the LTs' needs based on the emergent dialogue. It is in the teacher's feedback to the learner's response, where Wells (1999: 200) believes the potential for development may be exploited:

> The third move functions much more as an opportunity to extend the student's answer, to draw out its significance, or to make connections with other parts of the students' total experience during the unit.

It is reasoned that such scaffolding opportunities must be created in order for learner teachers to address and make explicit their previously held assumptions about effective pedagogy, that is, their everyday concepts. Although referring to language learners, Wedell and Malderez express similar sentiments to Wells in reminding educators that (2013:140):

> What the learner needs, at any given moment in a classroom, must be gauged by the teacher from what the learner says or does. In other words, identifying needs occurs via a two way interaction between teacher and learner.

As the findings demonstrated, most LTs enter university with well-developed cognitions about what constitutes good pedagogic practice; a result of their experiences from more than twelve years of formal education and what has been referred to throughout this document as their apprenticeship of observation. With regard to being able to better identify an individual's present state of knowledge, Warford (2011) draws attention to the significance of attempting to establish teachers' understanding of concepts *before* connecting them to the larger story of how researchers have approached teaching and learning. In doing so, the learner teachers are assisted in merging such expert and experiential knowledge into their own personal narrative. Establishing such understandings requires the same type of dialogue patterns as evidenced in the findings. A number of extracts demonstrate efforts to direct the learner teachers to think about how their experiential knowledge clashes or chimes with expert knowledge (e.g. extract 8). In other words, the data display occasions that reveal attempts at getting the LTs to defend their pedagogical choices or relate their real classroom experience to what their declarative studies are describing *and* to what they themselves have experienced as learners and learner teachers. This, in effect, is teacher guided scaffolding. In this discussion I shall refer to further extracts from the findings (and reproduce a part of one) as I believe they are crucial for making sense of the arguments presented.

Wright and Bolitho (2007: 141) argue that engaging course participants in activities that oblige them to justify teaching decisions, actions, plans and so on, helps make explicit the participant's personal theories regarding effective teaching and learning. They contend that declarative knowledge (others' theories / scientific concepts and so on) also has an important role to play but it is only through inviting and facilitating opportunities for participants to personalise such theories that effective cognitive development can take

place. They argue that through the use of challenging dialogue, generative questions etc.

learners can be manoeuvred into articulating their rationale for choices made in practice.

This, in turn, is in fact helping them to develop and perhaps amend their personal theories.

These are, after all, the only ones that matter in the end as the practitioner faces, alone,

"*the complexity and fuzziness of teaching contexts*" (Wright and Bolitho 2007: 144-156).

The exchange below is a part of extract 10a (vide supra, p.194) and is returned to here since

it provides an example of how such obliging / justificatory interaction may look in practice.

Extract 10a (TP Mon 14th Jan: 14.40)

1. Educator: How else could we do the language focus for this function, so that it wasn't so teacher-centred?
2. Mary: Could you get them to come up with it?
3. Educator: Yes you could – but you know that. (…) The thing is how would you <u>go about</u> doing that?
4. Mary: Well you could say your regret and then say "*What advice would you give me?*"
5. Educator: Certainly you could do that; you could have a few different scenarios. When you start thinking
6.   about it there are]
7. Susan: [Different possibilities.
8. Educator: Yeah, you could make a few – which statements are advice? Which are regrets? What's the
9.   difference? And <u>*they*</u> have to make it. Therefore they have a chance to talk, to think about it, rather
10.   than going to the teacher all the time. Even though it was clear and it was fine but if you are
11.   teaching every week or everyday, you may want to mix it up.
12. Susan: I was thinking when I was doing the planning I remember thinking that there was one stage where
13.   they, uumm, I gave my regrets, '*I really should have* ….'And then they gave theirs and I think I
14.   possibly did it, well not the wrong way around, I gave them the advice straight away and in my
15.   mind when I was planning the lesson I wanted to leave that uumm, until after I had first explained my
16.   regrets and then go back and when they were going to go into their groups and talk to the persons
17.   next to them saying "*oh I should have spent less money*" and when they have got those thoughts in
18.   their mind, when they'd exchanged information,(…) what I had wanted them to do was to give each
19.   other advice without me giving them the structure, you know like, '*What would you say to that*
20.   *person about their regret?*' And then to see what they would come up with themselves.

In being given the opportunity and encouragement to discuss her practice, Susan is reflecting on her attempts to take a more inductive approach to teaching – an approach that she did not experience as a learner yet which she has encountered on her declarative modules (line 12-20). She reaches her own conclusions regarding what would have been a preferable approach while also acknowledging the difficulties of overcoming the planning / reality gap. In justifying her teaching decisions; she is making explicit her developing personal theories about teaching and learning. We can conclude from the above that what she has taken from her experiences of this classroom episode is not a set of concrete tips and techniques on how to present a language point but rather an enhanced appreciation of the value of identifying and working within the learners' capabilities. She is beginning to notice the learner and not only her own actions. Furthermore, she is perhaps revealing an appreciation of more humanistic, communicative principles of language learning rather than more transmissive pedagogy in uttering, "*What I had wanted them to do was to give each other advice without me giving them the structure...to see what they would come up themselves*". Such spontaneous utterances are consolidated in her reflections which revealed a growing confidence in the employment of the professional discourse of TESOL. For example:

> *For this reason I also feel that at times, my lessons take on a CLT approach, wherein the students negotiate and come to conclusions about the lesson/language/tasks etc. themselves and my role as a teacher is more inductive. The same can also be said for when I encourage the students to help each other out with unfamiliar vocabulary and also during peer error correction.* (SU RJ4)

Further examples that support the use of teacher guided talk to reflect on declarative knowledge (scientific concepts) experienced in practice occurred throughout the data. The exchange below is part of extract 11 (vide supra, p.199).

Extract 11 (TP Mon 23rd Nov: 12.40)

1. Educator: Inductive teaching? Sorry, what do you mean in saying that?
2. Sian: Am I getting this the wrong way around between inductive and deductive? I keep on doing this.
3.   Inductive that means students are working it out themselves more. Yeah. So what I mean is
4.   eliciting and allowing students to (...) output rather than input. So the students, you're eliciting their
5.   knowledge and evoking their ideas. You're pulling out what you can from them first in these tasks
6.   even if, you know sometimes you've gotta go with it and see and let them carry on. Uumm, so that's
7.   what I guess it is really. That's what I mean.
8. Educator: What have you seen today, particularly, that makes you think about that?
9. Sian: Uumm well, in my tasks, I can't remember the exact example but they actually knew a lot more
10.   than I assumed which actually was brilliant and I'm glad that I then asked them instead of
11.   presuming and putting input, uumm, that knowledge that they already know, uumm, is therefore
12.   just a waste of time because they already know it. They are not learning anything new, that's
13.   what I mean.
14. Educator: And you experienced that today?
15. Sian: Yeah.
16. LT 11:   It's so nice when they surprise you and know more than you thought]
17. LT 8:   [Yeah. Like with the idioms...
18. LT 11:   Yeah. I was so happy that they knew those idioms. I was beaming.

Once again it can be seen that the LT is beginning to appropriate professional discourse in order to relate course material to her classroom practice and is able to justify the advantages of taking an inductive approach to the class she taught by pointing out how more transmissive approaches may often be pointless (lines 11-12). Such evidence seems

to provide much support for the notion that LTs need to be given the space and conceptual tools to articulate their growing understandings; in other words access to scientific concepts, concrete experience and the opportunity to reflect during organised discussion. When LTs are prompted to express and explain ideas from an authoritative source (a scientific concept), the articulation helps them to make the point their own. As Wells (1999: 8) explains, "*It is by attempting to make sense with and for others, that we make sense for ourselves.*" And to which he adds, "*It in this effort to make his understanding meaningful that the speaker has the feeling of reaching a fuller understanding herself.*" (ibid: 18) Articulations such as those transcribed in the exchange above, uttered following prompts by the educator, may then, from both a Bakhtinian and sociocultural view of the mind, be seen as the catalyst for learning taking place.

An approach which attempts to mediate learning in this manner, may also tackle some of the criticisms that are traditionally levelled at pre-service teacher education. For example, in highlighting the fact that the short-term teacher education courses prioritize procedural over declarative knowledge, Stanley and Murray (2013: 109) note that LTs "*may be able to perform appropriate classroom behaviours but have little awareness as to why they are doing what they do*". They point out that CELTA –type programmes certainly do seem capable of enabling LTs to become adept at managing a class and performing in the role of a teacher. However, they argue that in lacking declarative knowledge of language teaching, they are unprepared to adapt expertly to different contexts in which they may practise. They argue that graduates from such short-term programmes:

> …lack the facility – associated with education rather than training programmes – to reflect on their practice in light of theory and to adjust their pedagogical approaches according to teaching circumstances. (ibid: 113)

This is a theme also taken up by Chappell and Moore (2012: 597) who claim that short-term provision currently falls short of preparing novice teachers for the linguistic challenge of teaching EFL and contend that a stronger linguistic orientation on pre-service course of SLTE will "*best enable them to carry out their duties as confident novice teachers".* A longer course of pre-service SLTE, as well as developing declarative domains of teacher knowledge through exposure to various approaches and methods and the theories that underpin them, can also develop pedagogical content knowledge such as language awareness, assessment strategies and so on. There are also more opportunities for setting tasks and assignments that improve other important aspects of procedural knowledge such as classroom management techniques, scaffolding knowledge, developing intercultural awareness etc. Edge (2010: 17) sees both declarative and procedural knowledge bases as crucial and believes that the adoption of reflective practice "*allows us to explore the experience of craft learning and intellectual learning in mutually interpenetrative ways*". In taking a dialogic approach, it can be observed from the examples provided in this research that an educator may be able to provide LTs with the room to reflect on both declarative and procedural aspects of teaching. A longer approach to SLTE, in which the educator consciously attempts to dynamically assess LTs and thus assist them in making connections between theory and practice, may go some way towards answering the criticisms that have been levelled at TESOL and SLTE.

Scaffolding and SCT concepts

As detailed in the literature review, research findings from a number of studies suggest that effecting teacher change in the classroom can be extremely difficult (Bartels 2005). Johnson (2009:21) refers to the critical importance of both everyday and scientific concepts and argues that it is in coming to learn about and understand scientific concepts that allows

learners to move beyond an understanding that has been reached only through their personal everyday experiences. The scientific concepts thus allow learners to form understandings and make decisions in a wider range of circumstances and contexts. Johnson (ibid: 63) states that:

> When teaching creates opportunities in which learners can participate in activities that provide them with direct experiences in the use of new psychological tools and in ways that make the evolving histories and functions of these tools explicit, such tools have the potential to advance cognitive development.

Much data from the reflective journals detail the LTs' developing understanding of language teaching. The LTs repeatedly referred to declarative and procedural content knowledge and so employed professional discourse to assist them in their justification and reflection of their initial teaching experiences. This participant is critiquing her own attempt at teaching a communicative based class:

> *This particular lesson started with an inductive activity, which is a common feature of both TBL and CLT lessons. Although seemingly working well at the time, something that would have enhanced this activity would have been a further activity using modals. For instance I could have gotten the students to put the modal verbs in order of certainty.* (AN RJ3)

Once more, these reflections indicate clearly that the LT is thinking deeply about her teaching and the reasons behind the actions she chooses. She is not merely focussed on the visible teacherly skills that Lortie's (1975) apprenticeship of observation suggests provide the most enduring understanding of teaching. Rather, her use of professional discourse reveals her growing understanding and allows her to articulate and to make

sense of the pedagogical challenges that she is undertaking. Freeman (1996: 222) views the employment of professional terminology as a crucial feature of the teacher education process. He uses the label *renaming*, to theorize how "*teachers re-negotiate the meanings of their actions and thus construct different, more critical, ways of understanding what they are doing in their classrooms*". Johnson and Arshavskaya (2011:170) argue that, from a sociocultural viewpoint, it is the responsibility of teacher educators 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.

They contend that teacher development needs to be viewed as a holistic endeavour with the way in which teacher education is organised and undertaken being as important as the content. In other words, ways and means need to be developed of enabling teachers to link theoretical knowledge to their own teaching experiences and from this, new understandings emerge which Johnson (2009:23) suggests can:

> …enable teachers to reorganise their experiential knowledge and this reorganisation creates a new lens through which they interpret their understandings of themselves and their classroom practices.

Numerous exchanges from the transcriptions reveal how pursuing a dialogic approach to feedback may provide a possible means of facilitating such new understandings (e.g. see extracts 1, 4 or 8). The conversation below refers to notions of communicative language learning and student-centred learning. Allowing the language learners the space to interact in meaningful, authentic situations and confronting the type of teacher-centred class that most LTs have experienced are concepts that the LTs study alongside their practicum. The exchange (below) has not been presented previously but demonstrates how the LTs can view theoretical notions in light of their real, practical experiences:

1.   Educator: Can you see why student centred teaching is useful??

2.   Tara: I think it's opened our eyes by doing different types of activities. It's making me think a lot

3.   more. For my reflections it is really useful and it's going to help me in the future to think is (the class)

4.   it going to be all towards me or is it going to get them talking.

5.   LT 10:   I think it's good and is helpful but it will be the thing I'll struggle with most. Like you said things

6.   before and now. I'm like…it is very difficult to do.

7.   Educator: Can you see the language learning benefit?

8.   LT 10:   Yeah but I also think it depends on the class. Some students are very quiet and don't want to speak.

9.   Tara: All of these seem to want your (the teacher) approval for what they are saying.

10. LT 10:   They look for that – they look at you and go like *"Is that right?"*

11. Educator: What do you think they are doing then, when that happens?

The extract provides a good example of how past learning experiences, theoretical suggestions (teacher-centred learning) and classroom reality (the teacher knows all the answers) combine in affecting how an LT may interpret their experience. Although finding it a challenge, the conversation reveals how the LTs are coming to see and experience new ways of teaching and learning. Theory, practice, dialogue and reflection can all be seen to have central roles in bringing about such changing conceptions.

6.3.2   Facilitating talk

The feedback discussions opened, on a number of occasions, with questions such as "*What have we learned about teaching and learning today*?", or "*What was effective today? What was not so effective*?" Such prompts, through dynamic assessment (Poehner 2008), can help establish the learner's current state of knowledge and thus guide the educator's response in the construction of knowledge (Mercer 2004). If we are to impart the notion that teacher development is a long-term process which involves constant reflection that takes into consideration the learners, the context and the pedagogical alternatives

available, then LTs need to engage in the types of dialogic processes which explore and work on these ideas. In addition, such prompts can serve as a trigger for encouraging the type of multi-party discussions which, as van Lier (2004) also suggested, offer opportunities for development. Indeed some trainers see spontaneous talk as "*potentially the most valuable of tools in training*" (Wright and Bolitho 2007:127).

The types of prompting, exploratory questions referred to above represent a move away from the conventional experience that has been the norm on short courses - where teaching practice is followed by "*immediate feedback on their personal pedagogic skills*" (Roberts 1998). The five phases that Copland (2008) identifies as being predominant during exchanges in the feedback event provide a good example of such conventional talk patterns, with the LTs only invited to add to the discussion in one phase. Copland reports that multi-party discussions were rare on the intensive teacher preparation courses she studied and that interactions tended to be between the trainer and *one* trainee **(**2012:16). She argues that the strictures of time and assessment necessitate adherence to the phases she describes and makes the point that such strictures may well hinder the opportunities for more exploratory, reflective discussions. In a call for a more dialogic approach to the organisation of the feedback, Copland et al. (2009: 17), in two studies of the feedback event, note that much of the talk in the studies they analysed was conducted in a directed model of feedback and that while LTs reflections were elicited, they tended to be devalued if they did not fit with the views of the teacher educator. They also point out that much of the talk centres on the pedagogy of teaching - which is quite often linked to the assessment criteria laid out by the awarding body. However, they also found that some of the tensions that Copland had highlighted (ibid: 16) were related to the "*dissonance between the explicit criteria and the more locally interpreted criteria*". In other words, much talk was related to

the teacher educator's opinion of what constituted good practice rather than to behaviours that may more closely match the assessment criteria. As seen in the research findings, these close connections between the content of the discussions and the assessment criteria were far from the principal topic of conversation in the discussions transcribed for this research. What is more, given that in the university setting it is the lecturers who teach the course who devise the assessments, such dissonance is unlikely to occur.

Yet according to van Lier (2004:162), learning opportunities do not only occur in instances of conscious and reflexive activity on the part of the educator. He argues that the 'expert-novice' relationship construct of the ZPD is indeed critical, but it can be expanded to include *"an equal peer one, a peer to lower-level peer one, and a self-access, self-regulated one."* In other words, under appropriate conditions, peers can learn from one another. Yet these patterns of peer-peer interaction do not appear to be possible in the type of conventional feedback that Copland describes.

 In contrast, the findings presented here (e.g. extracts 3, extract 4 or extract 10b,) display a variety of exchange patterns that fit more closely to van Lier's (2004) framework of an expanded ZPD than the conventional expert-novice relationship. For example in some extracts (e.g. extract 4, p.162) we can see evidence of the type of open scaffolded questions referred to earlier. This facilitative approach helps create an atmosphere that, it is argued, makes the LTs far more likely to engage in critical reflective thought. It provides the space for LTs to enter into a discussion on aspects of teaching and learning that emerged during their teaching episode and thus possibly gain a better understanding of the scientific concepts that are promoted as effective for learning. At the same time, the participants, in actively participating in discussion, are more likely to be involved in the type of reciprocal-scaffolding that Diaz Maggioli (2012) and van Lier (2004) highlight as part of an expanded

ZPD. It is talk that has been categorised by Mercer (1995) and referred to throughout this study as *exploratory talk*.

Nonetheless, as evidenced in extract 20 (vide supra, p.252) moments of flow, with all participants keenly engaged in critical reflection do not always unfold during a feedback discussion. However, the findings do seem to show that encouraging an open, supportive, exploratory atmosphere can produce rewarding results overall. Indeed, the importance of the atmosphere of the feedback discussion (that educators have a large part in creating) should not be overlooked. As Diaz Maggioli (2012: 93) points out with his CARE metaphor (vide supra, table 2.5, p.82), "*the way in which feedback is given is as important as the content of that feedback*".

Other extracts reveal evidence of how, during such peer-peer interaction, the content of the discussion, in addition to its direction, is not only influenced by the educator but also, crucially, by the contributions of the LTs. This freedom to explore issues often (yet not always) allows discussion to incorporate wider intercultural concerns and seems likely to help promote a greater sociocultural and socio-political understanding amongst the LTs. For instance, in the extract below, we can see how providing space for discussions to flourish allows the LTs to become engaged in issues far removed from grammar rules, seating arrangements or concept-check questions. The extract signals the beginning of a lengthy discussion on religion in China and the Middle East that was prompted by a lesson with a Christmas theme. Discussions broached intercultural, social and religious issues regularly during the feedback sessions.

Extract 22 (TP Wed 11th Dec: 17.01 – needs major addition but argument holds)

1. Tara: Last week we were talking about their Christmas and most said we don't celebrate Christmas.
2. LT 9: Even if they don't celebrate the way we do?

3. LT 10: You could have asked about their festival - the New Year festival?

4. LT 12: Are the Chinese students Christians or not?

(Conversation continues)

Providing the space, and the spur, for LTs to discuss a wide range of issues that emerge during the practicum can, as argued throughout this thesis, be extremely beneficial. Indeed, such conversations seem ideally placed to address issues of critical ELT (Pennycook 2001, Pennycook 2004, Crookes 2009, Crookes 2013) that are not often at the forefront of initial ELT preparation. According to Pennycook (2004: 335), it is the through the adoption of a dialogic approach that the various domains of knowledge can best be reconciled:

> What I'm looking for here then is a way of doing critical teacher education in a way that does not put all its eggs in a critical syllabus basket (critical – directive option) but rather seeks ways of probing, discussing and negotiating in these moments of teacher reflection.

Intersubjectivity

Sociocultural commentators such as Wertsch (1991) stress that an experienced educator may not see things in the same way as a novice teacher. In other words, concepts, ideas and actions will not be defined and understood in the same way and the opportunity for development may well be limited. Yet when a shared understanding is arrived at, that is, when the educator conscientiously judges the extent and potential of the learner's comprehension, and thus employs appropriate scaffolding based on joint understanding, then cognitive development is more likely. Identifying where an LT is 'at' in their understanding hinges on the concept of intersubjectivity. In order for this to be successful, contribution is required on the part of the learner teacher(s) and the findings demonstrate that multiparty exchanges, of varying lengths and depths, occur frequently in the transcribed discussions. Wells (1999:12) refers to the importance of creating such opportunities for collaborative talk stating that such dialogue "...*necessarily plays a central*

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mediating role since it is the principal means of arriving at a common understanding for whatever question is at issue."

Wedell and Malderez (2013: 143) in outlining their understanding of the importance that dialogue plays in creating shared meaning also note that:

> Over time, between people who interact frequently, as teachers and learners have the opportunity to do in classrooms, it also helps to create (classroom) culture since "shared meanings" are one of the features of any culture.

Intersubjectivity then, in this study, may be seen as the LTs' arriving at a form of comprehension; coming to more closely understand an idea or concept from an educator's or more expert peer's point of view; providing a space for dialogue and encouraging participants to contribute thus allows shared meanings to evolve. An interpretation from a sociocultural viewpoint sees such shared understanding, developing from the *more expert other* as vital since: *"interactions on the interpsychological plane to move to the teacher-learner's intrapsychological plane"* (Johnson and Golombek 2011:125).

Many of the transcribed discussions touched upon issues, concepts and ideas which, in their reflective accounts, the LTs were subsequently able to reflect on further still. For instance, the following extract reveals the developing understanding of one LT who is grappling with the conflict between creating a student centred, interactive lesson while at the same time desiring to incorporate a meaningful language focus into her lesson.

Often we, as novice teachers, are too concerned with giving an entertaining, interesting lesson in which students will have fun. Authenticity can be lost when attempting to carry out these types of lessons all the time. Although it was not my original aim to produce the lesson that I did, I'm glad that I did. It was useful for me to understand

that a stripped back lesson, with one simple aim can be much more

authentically useful for the students. (AN RJ4)

A number of the feedback discussions had included exchanges based around this issue (e.g. extract 9, p.156 or extract 11, p.163) and the reflection provides a good example of the LT's struggle to theorize her experience and develop her understanding. Once more, from a sociocultural viewpoint it could be argued that in articulating her growing understanding, we can see how knowledge from the social setting (interpsychological) has been transformed (to intrapsychological) through opportunities to discuss and reflect on concrete action. As Wells (1999:18) describes:

> Dialogue of this kind involves both the internalization of the meanings created in the inter-mental forum of discussion and the externalization of those intramental meanings that are constructed in response.

However, it should be borne in mind that attempting to establish intersubjectivity is a demanding endeavour and educators need to be aware of a number of obstacles and barriers that can prevent or inhibit its successful implementation. Most of these issues revolve around what van Lier (2001:98-100) termed contingency. It depends upon participants expressing what they know, feel, or believe to be a true or valid point or concern etc. The problem here is that the predominating culture in most sites of formal learning is one of asymmetrical relationships. There are two points of tension here; one is that educators are *expected* to know what the LT does not know. Given that expectation, LTs may not sign up to or understand the reasons for engaging in critical reflective thought. They may simply await the answer from the more experienced old-timer. The second point of tension is that dialogic interaction requires active questioning, agreeing, disagreeing and so on. Yet in a formal learning

context, the positions, roles, duties and rights of the educator and learner are very different and many learners will, as Breen (2001: 131) puts it, "…*be reluctant to upset the asymmetry of roles and identities to which these duties and rights are assigned*". The findings in this study revealed that some participants reported feeling uncomfortable in engaging in critical reflection while others reported not really knowing how to do it. It is not difficult to deduce that such issues may, in part, be a result of asymmetrical relationships.

Moreover, the findings also reported the importance of grades and assessment to the participants. Given this, no matter how demotivated or unhappy an LT may feel about his or her teaching episode, s/he may wish to portray a picture that is rather more positive than the reality of what transpired. The inclusion of assessment on teaching practice means that useful reflection on the activity may even be impaired. The LT may not wish to draw attention to or deconstruct an aspect of their classroom decision making that was unsuccessful or inexpertly carried out. As Golombek (2011: 123) notes, an LT may "…*feel compelled to present a positive narrative presentation of self that inhibits meaningful self-examination*".

This section has provided an overview of the interpretations of the findings and examined how the data suggest that dialogic teaching can be useful in mediating the declarative and procedural domains of knowledge. It has looked at the ways in which the outcomes of scaffolded talk may be judged to have led to conceptual development when viewed from a sociocultural theory of mind. It has also discussed how educators need to be mindful of the obstacles to achieving intersubjectivity that are present in formal learning contexts. The section concentrated primarily on the actions of the teacher educator. The following section focuses on the

interpreting the findings with regard to the broader influence of the course of teacher education.

6.4   Teacher education

The importance of linguistic knowledge, the teaching context and the methodologies introduced on a course of SLTE are discussed, with their relevance to dialogic interaction, on the following pages.

6.4.1   Language knowledge

With regard to linguistic knowledge, Widdowson (2002) stresses that the teaching of English as a foreign language, as a pedagogic construct, is something not acquired, like a first language, but something which professional teachers consciously have to learn about. Indeed, Widdowson argues that the principal purpose of language teacher education is to get LTs to understand knowledge *about* language and how it may be best learned. He notes how this involves recognising the ways in which English is foreign in different ways, to different cohorts of learners, depending on the context. In doing this, he posits (ibid: 80) that classroom activities should entail localising language so that it can "*key in with their reality and can be progressively appropriated and authenticated*". Widdowson (ibid) believes that teacher education should facilitate such knowledge about language in this way since such knowledge of the language as a subject may be managed to promote learning "*which involves managing the learners to induce them to learn*".   From Widdowson's perspective, facilitating such pedagogical language awareness is directly related to the cultivating of adaptive expertise since he states clearly that it is not a set of techniques or directions that he is suggesting but rather, the inculcation of a realization that language "*can be foreign in many different ways, calling for different kinds of*

manipulation" (ibid.). Tarone and Allwright (2005: 7) also draw attention to this crucial point in highlighting how English language teacher preparation differs from other subject areas of teacher preparation since ELT practitioners must become adept at knowing how to "…*pay attention to the linguistic forms produced by our students while simultaneously processing the content of their utterances*". Seen from this viewpoint, language knowledge consists of a great deal more than the technical metalanguage for grammatical categories and functions and so on. Yet such metalinguistic knowledge is needed in order for LTs to comprehend the kind of manipulation that Widdowson calls for; but at a pre-service point in development, this too is challenging for the teachers.

Data from the LTs' reflective journals as well as from the feedback discussions revealed the real difficulties that language matters present to the participants on the practicum. As the following examples demonstrate, the novice teachers, while coming to appreciate the value and worth of dealing with language concerns during planned and spontaneous moments, find attending to language concerns amongst the most challenging aspects of teaching EFL. While only a selection, they are indicative of the insecurity LTs feel about dealing with language related issues, especially spontaneous addressing of form. Observation notes from the lesson the LT is referring to (below) record the unease the teacher felt at not being able to deal with queries the learners had put to her about the verb patterns. Her reflection recalls that:

> *There were a few instances when students asked for grammar clarification when we were looking at alternative verbs to use, instead of like and dislike. This put me on the spot, and despite all the grammar preparation I'd done, I couldn't answer their questions.* (SH RJ3)

Another LT recorded how, during a task-based activity, she had made efforts to pay attention to the learners' use of language. She had noted areas where she could enact peer-peer corrective feedback as well as areas where she could possibly alert the learners to alternatives to their language use; in other words, ways in which she may help learners notice features of language while at the same time providing input at a point of need. She was, in effect, relating theoretical good practice, in this case *'analytic focus on form'* (Long 2015), to her actual experience, yet was unable or perhaps not yet confident enough to actually implement the process. As she records:

> *I opted not to rush a language focus. This is an area I need to focus on in*
>
> *the future. If I had re-focused on language at the end, after the worksheet,*
>
> *it would have been a more satisfactory ending to the class.* (AN RJ2)

Of note from the above is that it provides a real example of the juncture between theory and practice. In order to enact the type of classroom actions or activities that have been exposed to the LTs throughout their course and during the feedback discussions, the LT needed to feel more confident in her pedagogical language awareness. Wright (2002: 117) stresses that language teacher education must make room for the types of activity which involve participants applying new language knowledge and teaching methodologies that have been introduced on their course of education. He argues that "*the emphasis must ultimately be on the participants doing, rather than passively absorbing expert 'input'.*" Notes from observed lessons, along with data collected from the participants, record that most participants were comfortable enacting a pre-planned, presentation of language yet they were simply not able to confidently react spontaneously to language issues which emerged during a lesson.

The example overleaf demonstrates how such pre-planned language presentation, as opposed to a pedagogical language awareness, is often insufficient for effective practice. It records how the LT had spent time familiarising herself with and understanding the rules of a particular aspect of language / adjective order. She had pre-planned content knowledge yet the procedural uncertainty resulted in both the teacher and learners becoming a little unstuck during the lesson as it turned into a teacher-led explanation of numerous complex rules and exceptions:

> *However, the lesson has highlighted a weakness in my planning. The adjective order on paper seemed a simple task to teach; however, in practice it was more complicated. I need to be aware that issues may arise in practice that are not necessarily apparent on paper. For future lesson plans I will need to think more broadly about how I approach the lesson. I also need think about ways in which I can make the lessons more student-focussed.* (KI RJ3)

Once more, what is interesting to extrapolate from these sentiments is that whereas in their lessons the LTs had attempted to learn and understand the language learning point that their planned lesson had been built around, they were unable to deal with the unanticipated tangents that lessons naturally take. In addition, even when they were developing a linguistic sensitivity, where they were able to identify and categorise features of their learners' language use, they were, for the most part unable to respond pedagogically. Any approach that foregrounds spontaneity and improvisation, such as strong CLT, TBLT, or Dogme, may place unreasonable demands on their own language proficiency, in turn threatening their status in front of the learners. It seems that LTs would

benefit greatly from being exposed to classroom scenarios and approaches where they are encouraged to notice their learners' emerging language abilities yet not obliged to act on them until they feel confident to do so. Evidence from the data suggest that discussing such possibilities with LTs and raising their awareness of possible future directions in their pedagogy may well be useful in preparing them for the long road of reflective development that lies ahead.

> *It feels like there is a lot of work I need to do. But you are not going to know all about language and grammar. It is a constant process but I think it is something that I am much more aware of after doing TESOL. And it is very helpful when planning and teaching. When I teach international students I pick up on things a lot more.* (TA)

Wedell and Malderez (2013:156) point out that an important aspect of teacher preparation is enabling teachers to become more adept at noticing salient features and then being able to analyse and interpret their findings. In the case of language awareness, we can interpret this as having the ability to notice features of language use in their learners and then selecting the most appropriate course of action from their knowledge of the pedagogical alternatives to hand. This pedagogical language awareness, one that provides a bridge over this particular theory-practice gap is a concept that Wright (2002:113) describes as "*An approach to the acquisition and development of content knowledge that provides a means of connecting content knowledge and teaching methodology.*"

The findings suggest that while facilitating such observational skills may be achievable at a pre-service point of development, acting upon what is noticed may be too demanding for most learner-teachers, as the following section discusses.

The beginnings of expertise…

Evidence did emerge, as the earlier example illustrates, that despite the difficulties related to developing a pedagogical language awareness (e.g. see Trappes-Lomax 2002), it was certainly possible for the LTs to begin to notice their learners' use of language. Furthermore, their desire to incorporate less familiar teaching styles into their approach can be observed repeatedly in the data. The journal entry from one participant, records how she had set up a fluency activity for learners to practise using comparative adjectives but realised the learners were finding it more difficult than she had anticipated and reflected that *"It was like a mini 'PPP' inserted into the lesson and gave me the chance to do some drills and teach deductively". (SU RJ3)* The entry chronicles a deviation from her plan as a result of her learners' problems. This is noteworthy as it possibly demonstrates her ability to notice and attend to unexpected problems and also how she calls on TESOL terminology and alternative methodologies to aid her articulation and understanding of her lesson.

The aim of developing language awareness in LTs should not be solely to provide them with the metalanguage and labels that are applied to describe English grammar. Rather, SLTE should aim to develop sensitivity to language in a way that helps them to notice language as it is used and emerges in the learners. Wright (2002:115) refers to such sensitivity as a language radar and argues that:

> A linguistically aware teacher not only understands how language works, but understands the student's struggle with language and is sensitive to errors and other interlanguage features. The linguistically aware teacher can spot opportunities to generate discussion and exploration of language for example by noticing features of texts which suggest a particular language learning activity.

Findings from the data suggest that at pre-service level, it is possible to begin to develop the LTs' linguistic sensitivity. One participant, reflecting on a class in which learners were tasked with coming up with useful new inventions, noted in a journal entry that:

Although there were some language errors, the students were quick and creative with their ideas. I overheard the students use phrases like, 'it will become a fashion,' 'we have many different sizes,' 'the function of the mane is for when you eat noodles, it protects your clothes from stains'.

(TA RJ3)

Indeed, data also revealed that the LTs were aware of and were coming to value unplanned moments in a lesson. The extract below shows how, even at pre-service level, teachers are able to overcome the fear of what Soslau (2012) terms "*going off script*":

I am pleased that I was aware and took the opportunity to go with a spontaneous decision that followed the students' needs, as I felt that the lesson had become even more meaningful and valuable for all the students. (SH RJ2)

This task of connecting a novice teacher's declarative and procedural language awareness is extremely challenging at pre-service level. Bartels (2005) found that improving teachers' knowledge of language and of language learning may not be sufficient to promote changes in their pedagogical practice. Ogilvie and Dunn (2010:163) contend that for many teachers, it may be impossible to promote approaches to teaching which require a more reactive or spur-of-the-moment approach to learners' emerging language needs since they lack the linguistic ability to incorporate them. According to Andrews (2007: 185) the challenge for teacher

education is finding the right balance between providing a foundation of basic knowledge about language and arousing sensitivity and he states that "*Achieving such a balance may be easier on some courses than others: On an intensive four-week CELTA course, for instance, it may be virtually impossible.*"

It is argued in this study that by taking a dialogic approach to the practicum and indeed throughout the course of TESOL development, finding that balance may, at least to a certain extent, be attainable.

6.4.2 Context

The following pages examine why an understanding of the role of context in such an important aspect of SLTE. The diversity of contexts in which EFL teachers undertake their roles, and the importance of being able to reflect upon suitable approaches are discussed. Given the incredibly varied range of contexts in which the English language is currently being taught around the world, it is no surprise at all that there have been many voices calling for models of teacher education that are able to produce 'rounded' practitioners in which teachers are guided by their 'sense of plausibility' in their local context (Kumaravadivelu 2006; Diaz Maggioli 2012). Such practitioners should be able to take into account complex contextual factors such as the prevailing school culture, the predominant ELT approach etc. when making pedagogical decisions (Widdowson 2002, Wedell and Malderez 2013). That is to say, a course of SLTE should aim to prepare teachers who can operate effectively in diverse social, political or cultural contexts in which they may be required to teach.

However, what may be considered as good practice will hinge not only on the multifarious, complex factors mentioned above but also on elements such as the socio-political context, class size, learner needs and levels and expectations and so on. Matters are further

complicated in that, while some argue that developing understanding of SLA research is

central to making successful decisions in the classroom (e.g. Jourdenais 2004; Tarone &

Allwright 2005), others point to its limited use for the practitioner as Freeman & Johnson

(1998:402) contend:

> What may be effective in one classroom, with one group of students may
> not be with another. We recognize teaching as more than the accumulation
> of research knowledge because it is evident that giving more research
> knowledge does not necessarily make them better teachers. Learning to
> teach is a complex, long-term, developmental process that operates through
> participation in the social practices and contexts associated with teaching
> and learning.

In other words, any formative, exploratory conversations need to address the fact that the

decision-making process must include a consideration of the context in which the language

teaching is carried out. As Wright (2006: 73) points out, each classroom is inherently

complex where "social, cultural, psychological and institutional forces interact". The issue

of teaching context is a tremendously detailed area and one which is, without doubt, of

tremendous importance with regard to the pedagogic decisions that teachers make.

Although it is not the focus of this research, the crucially important issue of teaching

context should not be downplayed or overlooked during discussions about appropriate

methodology. Comprehensive discussion of the importance of context to language

teaching can be found in Holliday (1994) and also Wedell and Malderez (2013). Any teacher

learning that takes place during the practicum must be promoted as being introductory –

with the aim of providing the LTs with the skills to evaluate the suitability of an approach

dependent on their context – rather than providing them with a set of actions and

behaviours that can be delivered in any context. However, while expert teachers are able

to reflect consciously on the complex set of factors that make up each separate teaching

context, Tsui (2002: 281) points out that novice teachers may be helped by a more expert

teacher drawing attention to and making explicit, his or her ways of thinking and learning. This approach may help guide learner teachers in their own teaching and facilitate the development of adaptive expertise.

And the reality is that native English teachers (NETs) certainly do find themselves practising in widely differing situations. For example, TESOL graduates from the 2011/2012 cohort of the university featured in this study found teaching posts in numerous and varied locations. A brief look at just some of the destinations in which these novice teachers secured employment may help illuminate the picture. One graduate obtained a post teaching all ages and all levels in a rural, family run institution in Thailand, another has taken up employment teaching English to tourist guides deep in the Ecuadorean Amazon. A third novice teacher has begun her career teaching classes to Milanese business executives working for a multinational company in Northern Italy while a fourth is now teaching undergraduates at a Chinese university in the Guangdong province and a fifth is teaching young learners and adults alike at a private Spanish language academy in the Basque country. Although the list goes on and varies each year as the globalisation of English continues (Crystal 2002), it should also be noted that an English language teacher is highly likely to face multiple, varied contexts even within one city. It is not difficult to imagine a UK based teacher having a weekly timetable that includes general English classes, one to one conversation classes, IELTS exam preparation classes and EAP classes – all containing learners with different levels, needs, ages, interests, histories and expectations.

Context and reflection

The role that reflection has to play in developing awareness and sensitivity to such clearly important contextual factors is also appreciated by educators. Farrell *(2012:438)* calls for a model of SLTE that avoids equipping teachers with a one-size-fits-all approach that may not

be effective in each of the contexts within which novice practitioners may find themselves. He argues that it is the positioning of reflection as central on teacher education programmes that will enable teachers to "...*better assess and manage whatever issues and problems they face in their particular context*".

To be clear, in place of training novice teachers to apply a particular approach or set of techniques, a model is needed whereby teachers have access to and understand a range of methodological and theoretical foundations of language teaching. Lantolf and Poehner (2008:6) refer to the sociocultural concepts mentioned earlier in this chapter to argue that in educating teachers this way, we are, in effect, creating the sort of conditions that are required to produce adaptive expertise. They refer to the importance of declarative knowledge in teacher education and posit that:

> Scientific concepts liberate us from the constraints of context specific everyday experience and allow us to function appropriately in any concrete circumstance in which the concept may be relevant.

A more rounded pre-service teacher education may, it appears, comprise of more than the provision of techniques or behaviours that can be used in any teaching situation. Rather, a principle aim may be to enable the LTs to become aware of how to critically assess and analyse their context and thus make better informed decisions regarding the approach they take to teaching. Hedgcock (2009: 144) argues that many educators see reflective practice as the principle vehicle to promote autonomy in novice teachers, pointing out how contemporary teacher preparation, "*emphasizes the cultivation of diverse kinds of teaching expertise*", yet also noting that quite how to best go about organising teacher education to achieve such expertise remains, "...*somewhat undefined*".

Delving a little deeper into the efficacy of making LTs more aware of the importance of social, political and cultural factors, Soslau (2012) points out that what is important is

getting novice teachers to justify what they are doing, in light of their learning and experience. Personal values and beliefs, actual experiences and access to methodological and theoretical knowledge bases all play a part in teacher learning. Uncovering such values and attitudes can, as this research argues, help facilitate teacher growth and development. Soslau (ibid: 771) argues that reflection on all aspects mentioned above are important but that it is justificatory or critical discourse that offers most opportunities for developing what she also terms "*adaptive expertise*". For example, in the following extract the learner teacher is writing about her experience at attempting to facilitate a communicative approach in her lesson and attempts to justify her planning decisions by calling on theories of inductive learning and scaffolded learning:

> *My aim was for the lesson to incorporate a level of task based learning*
>
> *using activities which involved the use of adjectives with an inductive*
>
> *approach to learning. Each stage was designed to build up the knowledge*
>
> *of the students with a view to them working out the adjective order for*
>
> *themselves*. (KI RJ3)

The learner teacher goes on to further validate her attempt in referring to her decision to make the lesson meaningful and authentic for the learners:

> *I decided that setting up a situation where the students are to describe the*
>
> *items for selling on EBay would be something that they could all relate to*
>
> *in everyday life*. (KI RJ3)

The organisation of teacher education in this study has been designed to offer multiple opportunities, throughout the term of the degree, for the undergraduate learner teacher to critically reflect on the pedagogical choices she makes – engaging in the type of

justificatory exercises that Soslau (ibid.) advocates. This involves cultivating the teachers' ability to validate his or her decisions in light of their developing theoretical understandings, the context of the teaching and also their own assumptions and values. Chapter one detailed how, in addition to the feedback discussions, both practical and theoretical assignments have been designed to bridge the theory-practice gap through creating opportunities for LTs to address their beliefs and learning and subsequently detail the reasons for their planning and classroom based actions. Findings in the study strongly suggest that such portfolio based work offers multiple opportunities for promoting the type of reflection that LTs need to employ in order to cultivate adaptive expertise. Indeed, other recent studies in the field of pre-service SLTE have also found that guided support in developing teaching portfolios is effective in helping to scaffold novice teachers' reflective learning (Velikova 2013). What the findings suggest is that reflective tasks can be incorporated into a formal course of teacher education at a pre-service level. Such findings resonate with other reports of formal teacher education. For example, Orland-Barak et al found (2007: 966), that knowing they would be graded on their ability to be open and honest in their critiques, often "*pushed student teachers to reflect beyond their technical performance*."

6.4.3 Methodology

What declarative content should be included during pre-service teacher education and how it should be conceptualized is dependent upon one's epistemology. Viewing learning to teach as a developmental process means that the knowledge base is an evolving one for each teacher, dependent on his or her own beliefs, experience, skills, principles and so on. Therefore, what knowledge to impart, to draw on while in the role of 'an old timer' or while enacting a 'telling' stage of scaffolding, can be a complex, delicate task (Díaz-Maggioli 2012,

Soslau 2012, Engin 2013). Indeed, it may be especially problematic for language teacher education as little empirical data exists as to what constitutes the most effective methodology. Commentators frequently point out that little agreement exists as to what effective language teachers need to know (Faez and Valeo 2012). There is no one, official, sanctioned method or approach or set of techniques that can serve as a target for pre-service LTs to aim for. Rather as this study has made reference to, in a post-methods landscape, a more realistic aim is to enable LTs to become thinking, reflective practitioners able to base decisions on their contextual circumstances (Kumaravadivelu 2012, Ur 2013, Wedell and Malderez 2013).

 Moreover, the debate on the role of SLA research in teacher education means that the teacher educator is faced with an enormously broad range of options with regard to the direction and content of scaffolded talk; that is, as mentioned above, little empirical evidence exists to support one approach over another or one learning theory over another. For example, while sociocultural theorists see learning as originating in a social context, SLA researchers view it as something that happens in the individual. As Ellis (1997: 137) describes, "*SLA is replete with theories, many of them oppositional*". Furthermore, the range of variables that each classroom situation throws up, mean that any advice must be offered often in relation to an imagined, future context.

Given these circumstances, there is a strong case that to be effective, teacher education *and* training must be organised in a manner that offers novice teachers opportunities to experiment with the options available to them. It must contain theoretical input (scientific concepts) alongside teaching experience with opportunities to discuss how emerging understandings clash or chime with their existing notions of good teaching (everyday concepts). Most TESOL academics agree that fostering opportunities for authentic

communication, helping learners notice important language features, scaffolding tasks around learners' emergent language needs and reacting instinctively to language learning opportunities are key aspects in effective language teaching.

However, the findings suggest that the LTs in this study had not experienced communicative language approaches as learners themselves and thus such a student-centred approach to language teaching and learning was not an everyday concept that would have formed part of their apprenticeship of observation. That is, a communicative class setting, with its attendant teacher and student roles, did not fit with the preformed view of what the participants believed was effective pedagogy. In order, therefore, to direct scaffolded exchanges that can best assist the development of the novice teachers, the LTs need, as detailed above, a well-developed linguistic awareness, along with awareness of and familiarity with pedagogical alternatives available to them. They need exposure, for example, to TBLT, CLT and Dogme approaches and to become conversant with the various activities and participant roles that accompany these alternatives. They need to experience both a focus on formS and a focus on form approaches to the language focus stage of a class. They need to experience dealing with both planned and spontaneous corrective feedback and grammar explanation. And so on. Failure to be aware of such choices obviously constricts the adaptability and decision-making power of a teacher.

Published materials

Many TESOL educators have criticised the adoption of the type of methodology that adherence to a course-book often engenders (e.g. see Meddings and Thornbury 2009, Block and Gray 2012). While presenting language in managed, discrete chunks may provide order for the writer and security for the teacher, it is removed from contemporary theories of language learning which endorse cooperative learning, task based teaching, conscious

raising activities, reactive focus on form and so on. There is certainly evidence that the

structural approach, which has form and accuracy as its basis and which most course-books

adopt, can contribute to learning (Ellis 2012: 343). However it seems obvious that teachers

would benefit from acquiring the declarative knowledge needed to allow them to make

analytical decisions based on their context and their learners. In other words, the ideal may

be for teachers to be able to teach using both form and accuracy, course-book led

approaches and more meaning and fluency led approaches that focus more on

communication and reactive focus on form. As Wedell and Malderez point out (2013:138):

> Finding out what learners' starting points are requires more than, for
> example, looking at where they have "got to" in the syllabus or
> textbook, and more than looking at results of pen and paper tests. It
> requires a diagnostic approach over time, backed up by careful,
> focussed noticing.

Teachers need access to alternatives; alternatives which are based on the learner needs

that the teacher has been able to discern from the context in which they find themselves

teaching. Waters (2009) makes the suggestion that:

> The less linear, more process-oriented focus on form approach to the
> teaching of language structures, rather than being seen as a replacement for
> the PPP paradigm used in many current textbooks, can instead be viewed
> more productively as a way of raising awareness of the limitations of a
> language teaching approach which is too segmentary and deterministic; and
> so on.

One obvious consequence of underpreparing novice teachers is the tendency for them to

become overly reliant on such published materials. The majority of course-books that are

found in ELT staffrooms around the world are now published alongside comprehensive

teacher manuals that 'instruct' the teacher what to do – and so relieve him / her of the

burden of decision-making. It can lead to the type of teaching that numerous educators

have argued is a course-book led teaching methodology based more on market forces than

on theories of learning (e.g.see Block and Gray 2012, Waters 2012). By their nature, course-books cast the teacher in the role of 'presenter', transmitting the knowledge they have to their awaiting learners. Novice teachers may closely follow the course-book approach with its attendant problems of being inauthentic for the learner and ignorant of individual learner language needs. Doing so may go some way to relieving the teacher of dealing with spontaneous language needs as they emerge - thus reducing the chances of having his / her inadequate language knowledge exposed. Despite the advent of theoretical and SLA based support for a more communicative, meaningful approach to learning, commentators such as Waters predict that the methodology of ELT course-books is unlikely to change. Instead he suggests that sociocultural factors and context ultimately decide the teaching approach and states that:

> Classroom-level teaching methods, rather than undergoing some kind of theory-driven 'second coming', will continue to be based rather less on the findings of SLA studies than on enduring situational realities. (Waters 2012: 448)

Yet course-books can and do offer useful scaffolding to new teachers. As one LT reflected in her journal:

> *The materials I used were activities and worksheets on will and will/going to from course-books, the Internet and books on language teaching, I took inspiration from Scrivener especially. I pooled all of these together and then attempted to create a lesson that was both level appropriate and appropriate for the individual learner.* (AN RJ5)

Planning

Much literature on planning for EFL lessons notes that the production of detailed lesson plans with clear stated aims is a predominant feature in SLTE (Bailey 1996, Woodward

2010) while studies of experienced teachers note how plans will seldom have aims although their planning thoughts will often be "*richer and more elaborate than novice teachers*"(Tsui 2002:187).

Data in the findings regarding planning, suggested that, despite efforts to move away from this, LTs often viewed the undertaking of ever more comprehensive planning as the way to ensure successful classes on their practicum.

> *This particular lesson has taught me that when teaching PPP I need to be more clear and concise in my lesson planning. I need to be more specific in what I plan to teach, but also aware of opportunities for 'magic moments'. I feel that I have learned a great deal from the teaching practice module and have developed confidence in my teaching. However, I feel I now need to polish my skills, particularly at the planning stage of future lessons*. (KI RJ3)

This notion of more detailed planning seems to serve a number of psychological purposes for the learner teacher. It not only allows opportunity to demonstrate his or her expertise through lengthy language explanations but also reduces the chances of a loss of face that may arise from unplanned incidences that could cause problems due to his / her inadequate linguistic knowledge. A strictly followed agenda therefore allows the LT greater management of a class and in his or her mind, perhaps a controlled performance will result in a better assessment grade.

However, good practice as described throughout this study, suggests that the ability to react spontaneously to emerging language needs is a key tenet in language teaching expertise. Tasker et al (2010:133) argue that careful and meticulous lesson planning that is

grounded in institutional expectations of pre-service teachers can socialize teachers into accounting for everything that will occur during their lesson. However, they do provide evidence that suggests inquiry-based dialogic approaches to development can help overcome such deeply engrained planning beliefs. The result is that teachers may be able to see and understand "*the distinction between being prepared and being planned*". When this occurs, teachers may be more responsive to their students and more successful in dealing with spontaneous events. As Bailey (1996:38) notes, a skilled teacher is one who is able to manage departures from a teaching plan in order to maximize learning opportunities. Allwright and Hanks (2009: 73) suggest that even when educators believe in taking a far more learner-centred, reactive approach to teaching, institutional assessment requirements constrain LTs to plan and conduct lessons in a conventional manner. Of interest here, is that despite downplaying the importance of following a lesson plan, the LTs are, nevertheless, often reassured by having one in place.

Murray (2002:189) criticizes short-term teacher education for not developing LTs' language awareness sufficiently to be able to notice problems in learners' use of language. She makes the point that such observation provides the teacher with valuable information regarding their learners' developing needs yet is an area hardly addressed at all on NET short-term training courses. Murray's findings suggest that too much time is devoted to issues such as planning and "*Teachers who are not aware of learners' errors and who do not know how to make use of them in their judgements about teaching can be significantly handicapped*".

Allwright (2005: 11) also makes a strong case for supporting the notion that planning for a specific language point is an ineffective use of teaching time. He cites a number of reasons to support this claim, principally drawing on theories of communicative language teaching and autonomous learning to disparage the structural view of language as a product that

may be broken down into manageable, planned, learning chunks. He criticises the methodology of course-books since "…*they still revolve around the basic idea that units should consist of particular things, quite narrowly conceived, to be taught in a particular order, in particular lessons.*" Instead, he puts forward the notion of planning for "learning opportunities". This would involve a shift from planning for the mastery of pre-selected target structures to planning for "*a richness of experience that is likely to prove productive, though not for precisely predictable target items.*" (ibid: 24) To any experienced, alert teacher, this is a logical and attractive proposition. Once more, however, one must be mindful that for notions such as these to be meaningful to pre-service teachers, then the learner teachers must have, at the least, a developing pedagogical language awareness. What is more, such an approach may best be held as a future target; as part of long-term self-development rather than an aim to be assessed and focussed upon during pre-service education. As the findings have revealed, during a pre-service practicum, fundamental aspects of good practice are not always attainable yet this should not mean that the complexity of expert teaching should be hidden from learner teachers and replaced with a set of observable competencies. That direction may well run the risk of curtailing future development and even work to prevent teachers from seeing learning as a developmental process.

An overview of the findings together with an examination of the educator's role and the role of knowledge and context in dialogic teaching has been examined so far, in this chapter. In the final section of this chapter, the implications of the findings for the course of SLTE under study are discussed.

6.5   Reflection on action research

The process of analysing the findings and attempting to interpret their meanings have resulted in a number of areas emerging that have subsequently affected both my own understanding of teaching and learning and also the design and organisation of the course of SLTE being researched. The following pages detail these effects with regard to the context of course provision, the value of declarative content and the importance of pre-practicum preparation.

The context of learning

The context of learning obviously imposes constraints on the education process. Studying for a recognised degree award brings with it attendant expectations of behaviour and norms for students and lecturers alike. These roles, along with factors such as assessment practices and concern for grades present a major challenge to an educator who is striving to achieve a culture of inquiry and dialogic interaction. However, the amendments discussed below, which resulted from this research, detail organisational changes that may help to overcome the obstacles posed by the sociocultural context of higher education.

Placing emphasis on teacher learning rather than on teacher performance can be of great help in creating the type of 'thinking teachers' (Maggioli 2012) that have been detailed in this and previous chapters. It is the aim of the feedback discussions to create an exploratory culture (at least, for most of the time) rather than one in which the learner teachers are merely attempting to do teaching 'the right way'. However, relationships which are overly asymmetrical e.g. mentor-mentee or lecturer-student may restrict or hamper efforts made by the educator to establish developmental opportunities through the use of exploratory talk or collaborative discussion (Acheson and Gall 2003). Moreover,

the pressure of achieving grades may exert forces on both educator and learner teacher that act against the facilitation of dialogic interaction. There is little doubt that in a context such as the one in this study, where formal assessment procedures are in place and being carried out, it might be assumed that LTs may be unlikely to show disagreement with those responsible for grading performance. In addition, as Le and Vasquez (2011) point out, contextual pressures such as time and assessment demands may lead the educator to do more 'telling' than guiding, enquiring or spending time attempting to achieve intersubjectivity.   Nevertheless, the findings demonstrate that authentic dialogic interaction certainly did occur - with participants frequently asking questions, contributing to discussions and justifying actions.

Mercer (2004: 138) states that although sociocultural research is not a unified field, those within it "*treat communication, thinking and learning as related processes which are shaped by culture*". Working within the context of formal higher education, obstacles such as assessment concerns are bound to feature highly. The notion that there is 'one right way' to teach and therefore a set of concrete, universal indicators that one can aim for and master, is, at the beginning of their teacher education, a strong feature of most LTs' everyday concepts about teaching expertise and assessment. One of the most important outcomes of this study is the realisation that this perception of teaching needs to be made explicit and tackled throughout the teacher education course – not on the practicum alone. For dialogic, exploratory talk to be truly meaningful, LTs must feel confident enough to articulate their growing understandings and voice their current beliefs regarding pedagogy without fear of sending a negative message or possibly harming their own or another's university grades. This means that appropriate assessment methods and clarity about the course objectives must be clear in the minds of all participants. Efforts need to be made to

ensure the learner teachers are fully aware of what *is* and what *is not*, expected of them. To that end, fifty per-cent of the practicum grading in the final year (seventy five per cent in the second year) is now based on the LTs' teaching portfolio. The portfolio contains not only materials and plans but also frameworks for the type of justificatory exposition that is argued to be essential for teacher development (Wright and Bolitho 2007, Soslau 2012). Frameworks for the type of reflective articulation that enables the LT to reflect on their own learning and teaching histories, articulate their emerging understandings of new ideas and theories and thus internalize new concepts (Almarza 1996, Edge 2010, Johnson and Golombek 2011, Díaz-Maggioli 2012) also form part of their portfolio and efforts are now made to ensure there is greater understanding of the aims of the practicum.

So, even though summative assessment is an inevitable feature of formal education, judicious organisation of assessment elements, and thoughtful weighting of the allocation of marks, may be able to go some way to overcoming the learning-assessment dichotomy described in the literature review. For example, in addition to the amendments described above, other changes are also being experimented with such as allowing the LTs the option of undertaking more teaching practice sessions for which they are not graded; this gives the novice teachers more time to get a feel for being in the classroom and to begin to form their teacher 'identity' (Kurtoglu-Hooton 2010). These measures will hopefully consolidate the notion that the practicum on this pre-service course of SLTE is not designed to be a test of current ability but a rather is a vehicle for weaving the declarative and procedural aspects of their education together. Seen in this way, the reflective discussions are not primarily an opportunity for evaluative comment by the educator; rather they are an opportunity for all participants to reflect on the process of becoming a teacher. Moreover, directing observers' attention away from the performance of the teacher, even if in part,

and on to the learning that goes on during the class may well help alleviate the fear of the trainee that all eyes are on him or her. This in turn may perhaps go some way to addressing the concerns reported by the respondents in Farr's (2010) study detailed in the literature review. That is to say, teaching practice sessions and feedback discussion do not have to be all about the LTs' *teacherly,* craft performance. This helps to avoid the training of teachers to comply with a set of tick box competencies (Murray 2009, Hobbs 2013) which, in turn, is crucial in moving learner teachers away from a predominantly technicist or craft based view of teaching and onto one in which learning is seen as a context-based developmental process.

However, the attempt at a more dialogic approach to feedback also brought the realisation that an overly amorphous approach to evaluating a LT's work on the practicum may run the risk of leaving the learner-teacher with too little guidance. In other words, learner teachers may be unsure as to what is expected of them. This can have implications both with regard to their confidence and to their motivation. As the data from the findings demonstrated, attaining high grades was a primary aim of most participants and they need to be clear about what the purpose and aim of the practicum is. Well calibrated dialogue plays a key role here and the need to create space for open discussion in the feedback sessions is, once again, crucial.

Other researchers have reached similar conclusions to the issue of facilitating authentic dialogic interaction. Despite the obvious power imbalances in roles, Mann (2005) proposes that a supervisor may be able to deliberately construct a discourse that creates interactional spaces where development is more likely. Indeed, Kurtoglu-Hooton (2010) suggests that it is possible to create conditions that are conducive to collaborative learning – even in a formal setting. She argues that development is more likely, despite

asymmetrical roles of the participants, in contexts where LTs feel free to express their own beliefs and ideas about teaching and learning. The value of creating the right conditions for contingent interactions (van Lier 1996, van Lier 2001) to take place was an area that emerged from the findings as being key to the success of a dialogic pedagogy. Amendments to the course of SLTE before the practicum begins that aim to facilitate this are discussed below.

The content of learning

Perhaps one of the most important outcomes of the data analysis and interpretation is the growing awareness of the ways in which a learner-teacher's development is facilitated by the professional discourse that he or she has available. A good grasp of the discourse pertaining to language, methodology and pedagogic theories both facilitates intersubjectivity and provides the LTs with the means of articulating their emergent understandings of language teaching – so long as they have the space and opportunity to do so. Drawing on insights into dialogue by David Bohm and with similarities to the Bakhtinian notion of appropriation (Bakhtin 1981), van Lier (2013) notes how learners make use of linguistic and other semiotic resources as part of sense-making and labelled this concept as *languaging*:

> This languaging allows the students to discuss academically complex concepts and events and reorganise (restructure) their discursive and agentive space. (van Lier, ibid: 247)

Thus, for reflection and discussion to be productive, developmentally speaking, learner teachers need a discourse of teaching (Snow 2005). This in turn enables the educator to be more effective at dynamically assessing the LTs point of learning and thus be better placed to scaffold development within their individual ZPDs. What is more, in creating the conditions that allow the LTs to reflect on concrete practice, the process also provides the

opportunity for development of the aforementioned 'professional praxis' (Edge 2010). In other words, there is an amalgamation of declarative knowledge and classroom experience as the LT uses the former to better understand and verbalize their developing understandings of the complexities of professional practice (Johnson and Golombek 2011). One result, therefore, of this action research study is to reinforce the view that learning to teach is a developmental, ever-evolving process that needs to address LTs' fixed ideas about learning and teaching by providing them with the classroom experiences and declarative discourse to facilitate concept development. However, there are many, incremental, ways in which this process can be enriched throughout the three-year course of TESOL preparation and this research has provided the impetus and confidence to believe that this is the most appropriate way to continue improving the preparation of EFL teachers for professional practice.

Another outcome from the research is an enhanced understanding of the limitations of the LTs' language awareness and the need to make greater efforts to improve their pedagogical linguistic knowledge during the course of SLTE. Widdowson's arguments, described earlier in this chapter, called for a language awareness that enabled LTs to be able to determine what language their learners needed, what they were capable of learning and how they could best make such language useful and accessible to the learners. Jourdenais (2011: 652) supports such arguments for increased pedagogical language awareness and contends being a proficient user of a language and even knowing how a language works is still insufficient for successful teaching. She draws attention to the fact that language teachers "…*must have a level of awareness of language that enables them to assess, analyze and present it to learners in ways that will enhance acquisition.*"

Few educators would disagree that language teachers need excellent language awareness to be effective. But what this research has illuminated for the dialogic approach under study is that greater success in developing enhanced language awareness will have two immediate advantages. Firstly it would provide the novice teacher with the type of critical, context based language awareness that Hobbs (2013) argues is crucial in the modern, global world of TESOL. Secondly, an enhanced appreciation and understanding of language and the discourse around its description and use, may afford the educator greater opportunities in mediating learner teacher development during the practicum. The action research, therefore, has highlighted the need to find new and more effective ways of improving the learner teachers' pedagogical language awareness during the extended course of SLTE. One possible starting point for assisting in this endeavour was put forward by Wright (2002). He outlines three domains of language awareness that teachers should have: the user domain, the analyst domain and the teacher domain. His description for what expert language awareness entails for EFL teachers provides an excellent overview of what teacher educators should look to develop in a course of SLTE.

Pre-practicum preparation

Another way in which the research has affected the course of SLTE under study is in the realisation that it is not only a grasp of professional discourse and an understanding of TESOL methodological notions that can increase the efficacy of dialogic interaction. There is also a need to improve LTs' understanding of the importance of taking part in exploratory discussions and that their contributions are both valued and valuable; to provide them with the means for discussing classes taught by their peers; to create a good enough rapport

that intersubjectivity can be achieved and to be sensitive and respectful to the feelings and wishes of all those involved in the practicum.

Data from the transcribed feedback discussions demonstrate that although many of the exchanges fit with the descriptions of dialogic interaction provided in this study, there are also many instances where fostering a symmetrical, collaborative atmosphere was more challenging for the educator e.g. see extract 20 (vide supra, p.252). There is obviously a need to include authoritative talk within a dialogic pedagogy. That is, there will be times in feedback discussions when the novice teachers want or need clear guidance or input from the educator or 'old timer', for instance in matters regarding linguistic knowledge or specific industry knowledge such as examinations or assessment. However, what emerged from the data was the fact that there were numerous moments where I attempted to facilitate exploratory interaction during the feedback turn of an exchange yet did not manage to achieve the level of engagement that I had hoped for.

Identifying ways of increasing the opportunities for and the quality of dialogic interaction are obviously, given the nature of this study, of key importance. The literature review detailed how explicit engagement with LT beliefs is likely to be conducive to stimulating change in how a novice teacher thinks about learning and how they go about practice. Promoting talk as a way of making such beliefs explicit is central and, as Wright (2010:271) notes, there is growing awareness in the field of TESOL teacher education that:

> The various interactions on an SLTE programme, the relationships between all participants, and the emotional conditions under which SLTE is carried out can all have a positive influence on student teacher cognitions.

However, what emerged from the findings was that a combination of factors led to the feedback discussions missing opportunities to stimulate genuine dialogic interaction. These

factors included LT uncertainty as to how to go about conducting talk with and about their peers, sensitivity to peers' feelings and concern over whether overt disagreement may affect grades. In attempting to create an atmosphere that allows and encourages discussion, reflection and thought, it is important to create conditions that allow participants to "*see any issue from many points of view and realize people can address an issue constructively without necessarily agreeing with each other*" (Pugh, 1996:2 as cited in Bailey 2006:232). This is certainly applicable to the field of TESOL, in which no definite answers yet exist as to how language learning is most effectively facilitated. For the reasons mentioned above, creating such conditions, within the context of a final year BA programme, may be difficult but the research has convinced me it is a worthwhile challenge.

One way of overcoming the obstacles of uncertainty and sensitivity may be to establish a set of 'ground rules' Mercer (2000:154-162). Such rules include items such as respecting one another, involving all participants, providing reasons for disagreement and so on. One of the things that can adversely affect the quality of discussion during feedback is if the participants feel uncomfortable with the content of the discussion them or the manner in which it was being discussed (Farr 2010). Farr reports that learner teachers in her study greatly resented having the opinions, values or beliefs of an educator, thrust upon them. It seems sensible, in retrospect that rules, guidelines and parameters are drawn up and made explicit to the undergraduate LTs.

What is more, greater efforts need to be made to ensure that the 'emotional conditions' that Wright refers to are at the forefront of the planning for the practicum. Learning teaching can be extremely stressful – especially so when undertaken during the final year at university. The desire for good grades may supplant the educator's efforts to promote

conditions conducive to exploratory talk and dialogic interaction. Participants have little desire to diminish their own or their peers' chances of getting high marks. Without clear guidance from the teacher educator regarding the philosophy behind the post teaching discussions, the result may be a large proportion of participants feeling as one interviewee described: "*Maybe sometimes we'd think, actually, yeah, I'd do that differently but we don't kind of, don't really know how to say it*. (AN). Doubts and worries such as these may be offset, to some degree, by making a greater effort to ensure not just the content but also the manner in which feedback is conducted is crucial to successful, constructive discussion. Frameworks such as Diaz Maggioli's CARE (vide supra, table 2.5, p.82) provide useful guidelines as to how feedback discussions may be conducted in a sensitive and supportive manner. In sum, the findings correspond to other research (Copland 2010) that greater care, thought and effort need to be made to ensure that the LTs are prepared for the exploratory nature of the feedback process .

6.5.1 Chapter summary

The ways in which the efficacy of dialogic interaction is influenced by the approach of the teacher educator, the context of education and the knowledge bases included in the course of SLTE have been examined, in relation to the findings, in this chapter. The issues surrounding the successful mediation of declarative knowledge on classroom practice have been addressed and the amendments to practice that have resulted from this research have been outlined. The general implications for second language teacher education and the contribution to knowledge made by this research are detailed in the following and final chapter.

Chapter 7 Conclusions

7.1 Chapter overview

To conclude this study and elucidate the ways in which it makes a contribution to knowledge, the main issues that have emerged throughout the research are recapitulated, and a case is made for professionalising TESOL initial qualifications by considering the feasibility of *pre-service teacher development* as a model for SLTE in UK universities. In the first section of the chapter, criticisms of the predominant model of TESOL pre-service teacher preparation are briefly outlined. The proceeding sections detail how, through investigation of the research questions and examination of the findings, a dialogic approach to teacher education may facilitate development that goes some way towards overcoming the criticisms currently levelled at TESOL pre-service qualifications. It is argued that an

extended model of *pre-service teacher development* can better prepare teachers to embrace a developmental view of teaching expertise. A discussion of how the implications of the research contribute to a model of pre-service teacher development, a description of the research limitations and suggestions for future research conclude the chapter.

Criticisms of short-term teacher preparation

At numerous points in this study, reference has been made to the dissatisfaction that exists around contemporary short-term models of teacher preparation. Before outlining the implications and suggestions that this research puts forward for an extended period of teacher education, it is worth briefly noting some of the principal recent criticisms levelled at the existing predominant model of SLTE in the UK.

A number of educators have questioned the competency-based training (CBT) methods of many short courses around the world, arguing that assessing pre-service teachers on a classroom performance limits the potential of teacher education. Referring to models of teacher education in New Zealand and Australia, Murray (2009) argues that in a post-method era of language teaching, a behaviourally based approach to evaluation and assessment is outdated and unsuitable and so calls for different models to be considered. Wright (2010:273) similarly contends that:

> A less didactic teacher education pedagogy might empower student teachers by enabling them to develop awareness and voice and take ownership of pedagogies sensitive to the challenges of the contexts in which they will practice.

Numerous other commentators (Brandt 2006, Allwright and Hanks 2009, Díaz-Maggioli 2012) have also disparaged models of short-term teacher education for adhering to assessment practices that run contrary to a social-constructivist view of how to develop novices into effective practitioners. Most short-term courses base

assessment on skills that a trainee can be seen to display e.g. the presentation of a pre-selected language point, clear instruction-giving, or managing a lesson at an effective pace. Researchers such as Hobbs (2013) believe that such a performance-based approach to teacher assessment may inhibit adaptive expertise. Others suggest that it may well lead to early stagnation in teachers who come to believe the skills they have learnt are now applicable in all contexts and are sufficient for a career in language teaching (Díaz-Maggioli 2012). In other words, a tick-box approach can give the impression that there is a right and wrong way to teach, independent of socio-contextual factors or of an appreciation of what learners bring to a classroom. Experienced teachers may well identify these as crucial elements in effective decision-making. This simplification of the knowledge and skills base of language teaching is the point that Murray (2009:26) highlights in arguing that a prescriptive, competency-based approach to teacher education fails to capture the essential elements of what a teacher can know and judge. That is, an expanded knowledge base can be key in assisting and informing professional decision-making. This is seen, for instance, in the number of educators who have called for models of teacher education that provide far greater opportunities for learner teachers to develop a critical, pedagogical language awareness (Widdowson 2002, Wright 2002, Pennycook 2004, Hobbs 2013) and also in calls for increased critical awareness in pre-service TESOL education (e.g. see Crookes 2013).

Other commentators have lamented the marketization of TESOL teacher education and argue cogently that short-term education programs fail to provide the opportunities needed to foster critical, reflective practitioners (Lin 2013). Block and Gray (2012) view short-term education as being shaped by market forces with the

limited time meaning that the approach to teacher training is based on a craft tradition model with the trainer very much taking on the role of 'teller'. They consider how "*Teacher training has been taken over by notions of technical rationality and concomitant notions of efficiency, calculability, predictability and control.*" (2012: 125)

They suggest that month long courses consist primarily of the transmission of a set of prescribed practices. Through analysis of transcripts of recorded trainer-trainee interaction, Block and Gray (ibid.) highlight how time constraints inhibit the possibility of meaningful dialogue taking place and, in calling for a more sociocultural understanding of the nature of teacher education, they advocate that dialogue needs to play a more prominent role in the education process. While undertaking guided lesson planning with LTs, they found that "*The concept of exploratory talk would seriously have encouraged the trainee (possibly through questioning) to clarify her thinking about the textbook material.*" (ibid: 126) Unfortunately, because of time pressures, they conclude that since the trainer was obliged to take a technocratic-reductionist approach to the activity in question the opportunity was missed to create a space for development to occur.

Drawing on the analysis and discussion of the research findings along with the literature review and an understanding of learning from a sociocultural perspective, a proposal for a model of *pre-service teacher development*, which may begin to address some of the concerns about current SLTE, is detailed in the following section.

7.2   Pre-service teacher development

The findings support the contention that an extended course of pre-service SLTE affords the time and opportunity for dialogue to facilitate engagement and learning. Dialogic

interactions are able to assist in bridging the theory-practice divide in allowing the learner teachers to consider and review the declarative knowledge from their course of education in light of their classroom teaching and learning experiences. As learner teachers, they have not yet had the time to develop strongly held personal theories about teaching and learning nor do they have experience to call upon to aid deliberation of the value and worth of various theories or to consider the feasibility of diverse approaches that they encounter during teacher education. Moreover, at this early stage, they do not yet have a great deal of confidence in their ability to manage and control a class and all its unpredictable possibilities; as Roberts (1998: 207) points out, LTs are "…*far more likely to be oriented to meeting course demands than to exploring assumptions underlying their own approaches to teaching*".

However, they do have a rich experience as learners, and in being tasked to reflect on authentic classroom experience, both during dialogic interactions and in recording reflective journals, they are given the means to develop an orientation toward practices that are essential for long-term development. What is important is that the learner-teachers understand the role they have to play in their own personal development over the long term. Of note is that engaging teachers in this process is often omitted in contemporary models of pre-service SLTE (Crandall 2000). The findings have revealed that the learner teachers do indeed possess the ability to begin reflective practice. They are, in effect, being mentored to think, rather than being taught to believe that mastery of doing teaching 'the right way' is the primary aim. The findings record how the LTs are able to observe and judge learner reaction to various approaches; they are keenly aware of how to assess the worth of published materials for the context of their teaching and they are starting to analyse and notice features of learner language use. It is argued here that when

teacher learning is viewed as such a process, it is dynamic assessment of the learner teachers that facilitates the crucial intersubjectivity and scaffolding; and these are achieved through the co-construction of knowledge in constantly developing dialogic exchanges. The interactions, which involve reflection on activity and scientific concepts, play a pivotal role in mediating the conceptual development. What is more, a broad introduction to methods, approaches and theories of learning, together with enhanced language awareness, arms LTs with the tools to help them examine and interpret their own decision-making, classroom experience and assumptions and thus to be able to begin developing their own theories of teaching and learning.

Some of the evidence displayed in this research contradicts findings from other studies that have been undertaken on feedback discussions on an SLTE practicum. Of particular importance are the findings from studies which reported quite different dialogic patterns to what have been presented in this study. For instance, Vasquez (2004) found that guidance and advice offered by supervisors on an MA TESOL course resulted in only minimal responses from the novice teachers. Other researchers have drawn attention to the fact that multi-party discussions are unusual and that on short-term intensive courses, teacher-educator to one LT is the predominant pattern (Copland 2012). While there certainly are many instances of teacher scaffolding of an individual LT in the discussions presented here, much evidence is also displayed that reveals the common occurrence of multi-party discussions. Moreover, other studies report that on competency based courses, learner teachers are unlikely to experiment in the classroom for fear of failing to demonstrate their ability to meet assessment criteria. For example Brandt (2006:9) relates how LTs on a short course of SLTE were more concerned with performing the required techniques than with *"using the opportunity to experiment, and learn from inevitable*

mistakes". The findings recorded in this study suggest that an extended course of pre-service development allows the learner teachers a greater degree of freedom in the classroom and thus may well have more time and room to both experiment in classroom approaches and to reflect on the process of learning teaching. It is also worthwhile noting that no research could be found that had been based on a UK University BA TESOL degree award. Most of the studies cited here were conducted on either short-term teacher training courses or longer term post-graduate courses of teacher education. What is more, no other UK BA University award could be found that included a teaching practicum and so attempted to connect declarative knowledge to procedural ability in the form of the aforementioned professional 'praxis'. A number of BA TESOL degree awards do allow for a one-month intensive practicum to be attached to the end of a degree yet such a model would appear to be overlooking the opportunity to supersede the traditional theory-practice dichotomy.

The data does, however, correspond to research findings from other studies. For example, Soslau (2012) records that in attempting to scaffold through guidance, inquiry and reflection, learner teachers seemed better able to acquire the type of adaptive expertise necessary for the manifold classroom contexts and situations that teachers have to face. The research findings of this study do suggest that the dialogic approach allowed the development of an initial appreciation into the complexity of language teaching with decision making inextricably linked to the multifarious contextual factors. Indeed, a dialogic approach which encourages exploratory talk and reflection on concrete experience, that brings into play declarative knowledge, prior experience and present beliefs also, it may be argued from the findings presented, assists the 'refinement', 'reconceptualization' and

'reorganisation' that occurs when knowledge from the social setting (interpsychological) is transformed (to intrapsychological) through mediation (Johnson and Golombek 2011).

 The findings have also revealed that critical, pedagogical language awareness is a necessary and crucial component of a declarative knowledge base for novice teachers. They bring to light its importance in a post-methods, global era of international English while at the same time illuminate how the development of such language awareness in LTs is a challenge. This issue has been highlighted by other TESOL pre-service researchers who have argued that an undeveloped language awareness is a serious and growing issue for novice EFL teachers (Hobbs 2013).

The research findings are also in accordance with other studies that have attempted to introduce greater declarative knowledge, in the form of alternative methodologies, language acquisition theories, micro-teaching of various approaches and so on. For instance, Ogilvie and Dunn (2010) researched a social-constructivist approach to undergraduate TESOL teacher education at a Canadian university. They report that participants in their research came to appreciate the value and understand the reasoning behind communicative language activities, participant roles and so on, yet nonetheless reverted to a transmission style of teacher-centred behaviour during their practicum. This tallies with much evidence presented here, with participants often feeling a need to display what may be taken as their 'everyday concepts'; their 'teacherly attributes'. Such findings may also further corroborate claims that deeply held beliefs, formed by an apprenticeship of observation are difficult to shift or overcome (Pajares 1992) – evidenced, perhaps, in the doubts and reservations that the participants displayed in taking a less autocratic pedagogical approach.

Furthermore it can be argued that the findings do appear to signify that a dialogic approach promotes the development of adaptive expertise. That is, it works towards better preparing teachers to be thinking, reflective practitioners, aware of the importance of the local context and the pedagogical options that are at their disposal (Johnson 2009, Copland and Mann 2010, Soslau 2012) . There are also strong indications in the findings that participants in group conversations, which are based around teaching and learning may, at certain moments, *"come to validate their own knowledge and beliefs or reshape them through dialog with others"* (Singh and Richards 2006:165). What the findings seem to be suggesting, therefore, is that a model of teacher education that involves reflection and declarative knowledge at a pre-service level certainly is feasible and that creating conditions favourable to promoting exploratory talk can facilitate its success.

However, there have been arguments put forward by a number of educators who feel that neither teacher *education* nor teacher *training* provide adequate current models to prepare novice EFL teachers. Crandall (2000: 37) argues that neither are sufficient since both operate within transmissive pedagogies. She stresses that what is needed are "*opportunities for teachers to reflect upon their beliefs and practices and to construct and reconstruct their personal theories*". Murray and Stanley (2013) question what 'qualified' actually means in regard to English Language Teaching and find established models of both training and education to be inadequate. They argue (ibid: 113) that traditional CELTA-type training leaves novice teachers without declarative knowledge who thus lack

"…the facility – associated with education rather than training programmes – to reflect on their practice in light of theory and to adjust their pedagogical approaches according to teaching circumstances."

On the other hand, they found that conventional teacher *education,* which most commonly took place on Masters' courses, often lacks a procedural element and thus meaningful engagement with concepts and approaches and so on is only possible for students with teaching experience. In light of their analysis of existing ELT qualifications, they propose a framework (overleaf) based on Bourdieu's (1986) 'forms of capital'.

Table 7.1

Language	**Methodology**	**Interculturality**	
Knowledge about language	Knowledge about teaching	Knowledge and appreciation of cultural differences; knowledge about specific cultures	**Declarative**
Ability to use a variety of English appropriate to the needs of learners	Ability to teach in contextually appropriate ways	Ability to interact across cultures.	…………………….. **Procedural**

Murray and Stanley (ibid.) contend that a comprehensive ELT education, that most fully prepares learner teachers to operate effectively in any classroom context, would need to

'tick' all six boxes of their framework. The ways in which the framework corresponds to various notions of teacher knowledge described in the literature review are obvious and the parallels with the knowledge bases outlined in Diaz-Maggioli's 'Participate and Learn' model of SLTE are clear (vide supra, p.62). Malderez (2004: 43) employs a 'modified iceberg' metaphor to note how subject knowledge and professional behaviour represent only a small part of overall teacher knowledge and ability. She argues (ibid.) that teacher education needs to make explicit the ways in which teaching and teacher education are a multi-channelled process involving overlapping knowledge constructs that include professional knowledge, local cultures and the personal beliefs, attitudes and experiences of the LTs. The framework, therefore, chimes with sociocultural views of teaching and learning in that new knowledge needs to be introduced and reflected upon in light of current knowledge and actual, concrete experience. It also draws attention to aspects of linguistic and methodological declarative knowledge that numerous educators have insisted are essential for teachers to have in their armoury (Edge 2010, Long 2011, Warford 2011, Díaz-Maggioli 2012, Chappell 2013). Reflective practice is also considered and conceptualised as part of declarative teaching capital. Murray and Stanley (ibid: 114) contend that their framework reveals how neither conventional models of teacher training nor teacher education confer "*a complete set of ELT skills*". They suggest that the Cambridge DELTA qualification may be the type of course that best prepares teachers according to the framework criteria or "…*a Bachelors' degree in education with a substantial, suitably assessed, teaching practicum focussing on ELT.*"

As mentioned above, in the context of a UK university BA award, no research has been published on a pre-service course of ELT teacher preparation that includes a teaching practicum. However, as seen in this study, a course that includes all elements of the

framework certainly is possible when it is conducted on an extended model. What is argued here, is that such a model is feasible, and enhanced, when the procedural and declarative elements are mediated through dialogue. It would be a model of *pre-service teacher development*.

7.3   Implications for pre-service teacher development

The reflection on Action Research, detailed in the previous chapter, has already outlined some of the implications of this research in regard to the course of SLTE under study. It is also worthwhile to look at the broader implications that have emerged as a result of this research and which merit consideration for extended models of SLTE. As described in chapter three, the notion of validity for this study is not based upon generalizability of the results. However, the findings of this investigation do suggest that certain courses of action may be possible or desirable in other contexts of SLTE and the following pages discuss these.

Assessment

The implications for the design of an extended model of SLTE are that a greater weighting of the assessment can be given over to broader knowledge base. Although the findings in the study clearly show that assessment is a major concern, when teacher education is organised over an extended period, more time can be spent on discussing issues connecting declarative knowledge to procedural ability. A university based model of SLTE allows educators the space to avoid the type of standardisation that "*effectively discourages trainers from exploring ways of fully including trainees, and by extension learners, in the process of learning about teaching and learning*" (Allwright and Hanks: 62). Assessment can thus can move away from a predominantly competency based mode to focus on more

reflective, developmental issues and include, for example wider areas of knowledge that incorporate the linguistic, methodological and intercultural aspects of education that feature in Murray and Stanley's framework. In other words, assessment can incorporate not only a technicist 'knowing how' ability but also 'knowing about' knowledge which can assist the long-term goal of producing reflective practitioners (Malderez and Wedell 2007: 151). The findings show how portfolio-work, on a longer course, can provide the means by which learner teachers reflect on and demonstrate their understanding of such aspects of TESOL knowledge. As other studies have shown, assessment on such reflective documents can also serve as an important 'instrumental incentive' (Orland-Barak and Yinon 2007). Document collections are also helpful in allowing the learner teachers to articulate their own evolving theories on what constitutes effective teaching and learning; they can direct the learner teacher into appreciating the importance of 'noticing' what goes on in a classroom and provide further evidence for the assessor of where the LT is at in his or her development (Malderez and Wedell 2007: 161). The documents also provide space for the LTs to make connections between the coursework and the classroom and thus assist the learner teachers in bridging the practice-theory gap. Parrot (cited in Allwright and Hanks 2009) notes that on formal teacher training programmes, meaningful reflective tasks and discussions take too much time. Allwright and Hanks (ibid: 69) surmise that removing the pressure to conform to limited, tick-box criteria during the practicum allows LTs "…*to fulfil their potential as key developing practitioners themselves*". To be clear, with regards to pre-service development and assessment, what this research has found is that shifting the emphasis of assessment, from observable teaching behaviours and onto the thinking behind the planning and decision-making process appears to be feasible and realistic not only at post-graduate but also at undergraduate level.

The importance of reflection in developing expertise in teaching has been detailed throughout this study and is acknowledged in both TESOL and mainstream education (Wallace 1991). For this reason, much criticism has been levelled at short-term courses that do not or cannot allow LTs sufficient opportunities to reflect on their teacher development (Brandt 2006, Brandt 2008). Gray (2004:26) makes the case that allocating time to exploring the reasoning and justification behind decision-making or to undertaking collaborative work and research projects is vital to teacher learning but often not possible when time is lacking. Schedule constraints mean that educators in this position often have to opt for 'quick fix' solutions of giving advice rather than engaging in exploratory, productive discussion. Shapiro (2007) supports such sentiments stating that short-term TESOL training is:

> …underpinned by the assumption that the education of teachers is about the transfer of knowledge and skills from expert to novice rather than the more democratic and active construction of meaning.

Rather than the transmission of top tips or hasty advice, the findings have demonstrated how a spirit of dialogic inquiry can be fostered on an extended course of SLTE with the aim of using the feedback discussions to mediate a deeper understanding of the complex nature of language learning and teaching, even at a pre-service point in the learning process. What this research argues to have found is that tasks that call for reflection certainly are possible on an extended course of pre-service teacher development. Dialogue that is consciously focussed toward uncovering the reasoning and soundness behind decision-making and tasks such as guided journal writing can move LTs' thinking beyond a concern for the mastery of prescribed basic skills. This reflection consolidates the LTs' developing professional discourse and encourages them to think critically about their own

beliefs, actions, decision-making and developing TESOL knowledge. Although the LTs certainly are concerned about their own performance, it is clear that on an extended course of SLTE there are also opportunities to focus on and incorporate numerous other factors of teaching and learning.

The second implication is, therefore, that pre-service SLTE should be aiming to create thinking teachers; practitioners who view the profession as more than just a vehicle to satisfy personal wanderlust; practitioners who come to understand language teaching as consisting of much more than a simple transmission of 'their' language to keen learners and practitioners who are cognizant of, and comprehend, the constantly evolving process of teacher expertise. In order to achieve such an aim, creating a culture of reflection is vital. Yet for reflection to be meaningful, for the sense of professionalism to be cultivated and imparted, LTs need to be exposed to the cannon of professional knowledge and received wisdom that is the result of tremendous work, thinking and effort undertaken by TESOL professional educators over the last fifty or so years. Furthermore, novice teachers need to be take part in legitimate peripheral activity at the pre-service level. Educators need to provide such teaching opportunities, alongside exposure to the theoretical /scientific knowledge of the field of TESOL and at the same time provide the space to discuss and articulate their growing understanding of effective language teaching and learning. When all these conditions are present, then a course of teacher education stands a far better chance, as the data in this study demonstrate, of producing teachers who are able to critically analyse their context and base their pedagogical decisions on the various alternatives that they have at their disposal.

The third implication is that on an extended course of SLTE, novice LTs do develop a far greater awareness of the pedagogical alternatives that are available to them. Alternatives that will become easier to employ as their experience grows. Even though the data presented here confirm findings from other studies (e.g. see Mann and Tang 2012) that novice teachers lack a repertoire of pedagogical routines that they can employ to cope with unexpected classroom events, the findings nevertheless confirm that the learner teachers are conscious of where opportunities for language learning exist. In addition, they have the professional discourse, the pedagogic metalanguage, to enable them to express their growing understandings of teaching and learning. As Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008:197) describe:

> When methods are seen as sets of coherent principles that link to practice, they help act as a foil whereby teachers can clarify their own principles and beliefs, they challenge teachers to think in new ways, and they provide associated techniques with which teachers can experiment to come to new understandings.

Due to its brevity, a shorter course of teacher education is utterly constrained in the amount of time that can be dedicated to the declarative content of teaching language. In other words, intensive courses of teacher training are restricted to focussing on actions and techniques and thus are unable to expose LTs to the scientific concepts that make up the dominant discourse of TESOL. There is little time to address either theories of language learning and acquisition, or the principles underlying classroom practices and thus little chance of developing adequate language awareness or a professional discourse. This investigation has shown how many commentators view the hallmark of good teaching as spontaneously attending to emerging needs, and in neglecting to respond to classroom events as they unfold, teachers will fail in their task of maximising the learning potential of

each episode. Indeed, it was described in chapter three how many researchers see the facility to react to events as key tenets of expert teaching (e.g. Wright 2002 Long 2011). However, integral to being able to successfully react to the multifarious, complex and dynamic situations that English language teachers will encounter, is access to a linguistic and methodological knowledge base. As Bellaby (cited in Gray 2004:24) points out *"We cannot choose unless alternatives are open to us, and we are aware of them"*.

On a final note, a number of researchers suggest that for the perception of English language teaching to change, the period of teacher preparation must be made considerably longer with a far wider declarative knowledge base (Ferguson and Donno 2003, Block and Gray 2012, Hobbs 2013). Indeed, Widdowson (2002:81) argues that it is crucial for ELT to stake out a clear area of expert knowledge if we want a pedagogic profession. He suggests that as things stand at present:

> Almost anybody with the status of native speaker of the language can get an instant qualification as an English teacher, any Tom, Dick or Harry, (rather than Ramon, Stefan or Jean Marie).

TESOL and TEFL certainly have had a poor reputation in regard to being viewed as a profession with many seeing an initial qualification as a cheap way to see the world rather than as a route to a fulfilling career. Hobbs (2013: 164) recently made reference to the need for attention to be focussed on linguistic, methodological and intercultural knowledge suggesting that during pre-service education, what is needed is:

> …a greater understanding of the links between language and culture and between teaching methods and context, as well as a healthier respect for and awareness of the variations in English found in local and international contexts.

What this research has found is that on an extended course of SLTE, time can be made available for the concerns outlined above to be addressed. An extended course of pre-

service development allows study of the domains recommended by Murray and Stanley, greater opportunities for reflection, and, of course, more opportunities to mediate learning through conscious, dialogic interaction.

What is clearly lacking, however, is any organised, statutory, professional preparation for becoming a TESOL teacher educator; preparation that would aid the transition from teacher to teacher educator and provide new entrants with an understanding of what is still a loosely defined knowledge base (Beaven 2009).

7.4   Limitations

Several limitations to this research need to be taken into consideration when evaluating its worth both to the context under study as well as its worth to those in contexts that may share similar interests or concerns. The following pages outline the principal limitations of this research.

Firstly, caution should be taken in assuming the relevance to other contexts of the findings presented here. As outlined in chapter three, the context under study is quite unique in that there is very little research available that is based on a UK undergraduate university programme that includes a practicum as part of a BA TESOL degree award. Most other research cited in this document was conducted on an MA TESOL award or on a short-term intensive course of teacher training. Given these circumstances, it was not the aim of this research to conduct a study that could be replicated.

Secondly, the research methods employed in this study have limitations which should be considered when assessing the reliability of the data. Although observations, document analysis and interviews are standard methods in qualitative research, the asymmetric nature of the roles of all participants involved in such action research needs to be borne in

mind when attempting to determine what exactly may be inferred from the data. In undertaking action research on a site of formal education, it is difficult to overstress the need for reflexivity and constant vigilance in overcoming subjectivity. It is not difficult to imagine that for an educational researcher, researching his or her own site, the participants (students) may often try to provide the answer that they feel the researcher (educator) is looking for. The measures taken to enhance these areas were detailed in chapter three. A further methodological limitation concerns the quantity of data collected. I had decided that it would be prudent to interview and collect reflective documents from half of the participants in each cohort as I reasoned that this would generate enough data to illuminate, and allow exploration of, the issues surrounding the research aims. In retrospect, the findings would have had more depth, and provided greater illumination into the outcomes of dialogic teaching, if all of the participants in the discussions had been included as part of the data collection.

Thirdly, the research makes no claims regarding the immediate effect of the approach under study on the classroom actions of the novice teacher graduates. SLTE is, surely, ultimately concerned with doing all that is possible to facilitate effective classroom teaching but the focus of this study has been on examining the type of conditions that may contribute to ensuring the long-term developmental success of this aim. Given the view of teacher learning as an evolving, continuing process, examining the immediate effect of the approach on teacherly 'performance' during the live teaching episodes would have been rather futile.

A fourth limitation is based on the inevitable fact that new technologies will have an enormous impact on the way education is organised in the future. One only has to witness the emergence of learning technologies such as Massive Online Learning Courses (MOOCs)

or adaptive learning software to be certain that education, like most professions, is entering a period of radical change. However, this study is based on the belief that the human factor will always be necessary and present in education. Whether in face to face or online interaction, a sociocultural theory of mind still provides a valuable tool for examining and interpreting conceptual development.

A final limitation of this study concerns the content knowledge that should be included during pre-service SLTE. This research has argued for the inclusion of a broad base of declarative knowledge that includes linguistic, methodological and intercultural knowledge bases. However, the precise nature of the declarative content and how it may be accessed during SLTE has not been specifically addressed.

7.5   Future research

Further investigation can build on and add to the developing knowledge base of dialogic teaching during ELT teacher development. The lack of research conducted on extended pre-service SLTE has been highlighted throughout this study and further research on the possibilities that are present in such an approach would contribute positively to promoting the professionalization of the field of TESOL. As this study was concerned with examining teacher learning in one undergraduate context, further studies in University settings that currently deliver similar courses, or intend to begin delivering such courses could build on the initial findings and interpretations made during this research. The themes which emerged in this study suggest a variety of areas that may provide a worthwhile research focus and a number of possible research avenues are outlined below, including brief details of the next cycle of action research which has resulted from this investigation.

Firstly, the ways in which a dialogic approach can facilitate access to and understanding of declarative knowledge or how creating conditions favourable to exploratory talk may assist in developing pedagogical language awareness, could be investigated. One research option may be to undertake a more focussed discourse analysis. For example, it would be useful to investigate the ways in which discourse used by participants, during dialogue that fits the description of exploratory talk, reflects their awareness and understanding of methodological or intercultural issues or how they notice and interpret classroom events. Secondly, research may choose to focus on how an extended course of SLTE offers opportunities for peer-peer as well as expert-novice learning as illustrated in van Lier's (2004) expanded ZPD. Rapid advances in technology are permitting a growing number of opportunities for LTs to interact and thus for educators to be able to more easily identify difficulties or opportunities for mediated co-construction of knowledge. The findings presented here suggest that in taking a dialogic approach, teacher educators need to be acutely aware of their role as assessors of learning and spontaneous interveners in the process in order to be able to best scaffold their learner teachers through dynamic assessment (Golombek 2011, Chappell and Moore 2012). However, before decisions can be made about what type of intervention is required, information must first be gleaned from the learner teacher in order to establish his or her point of learning or understanding (Malderez and Wedell 2007). Valuable research may be conducted on how forums, blogs, closed groups etc. all offer opportunities on an extended course of SLTE for dynamic assessment to be conducted online and not just during face to face feedback.

A further area for investigation would be to examine specific vehicles that can be employed to promote different types of dialogic interaction. For example, researchers have used the joint viewing and analysing of video in attempts to stimulate discussion on teaching and

learning (Golombek 2011). Batenburg (2013) reported on findings from a four-year undergraduate TESOL preparation award based in Holland. She found that viewing videos of expert teachers in action with learner teachers allowed discussion to evolve that helped the participants to link the theoretical and practical elements of their award. The dialogic approach she described enabled the LTs to explore their beliefs and make sense of the new knowledge presented on their course of SLTE. Similar investigations into the use of such media on in UK based university contexts may prove to be a potentially fertile area to consolidate findings presented here.

Research may also be conducted on teachers following a period of experience in the field to examine the merits and drawbacks of the how the approach had prepared them for the realities of teaching. Such research may provide insights into how intentionally creating a culture of reflective practice and context dependant teaching approaches may be best organised in order to assist teachers faced with the reality of vastly differing classroom contexts.

Finally, it should be noted here that a new cycle of action research has resulted from this study. The aim of this next cycle is to investigate the ways in which an extended course of pre-service second language teacher education (that includes concurrent exposure to pedagogical language awareness and the development of methodological and procedural knowledge bases) may promote the predisposition, or otherwise, of novice teachers to attend to language issues spontaneously. That is to say the ways (if any) in which an extended course of ELT preparation may enable novice teachers to identify and act upon learning opportunities, as they emerge during a class, will be explored.

7.5.1 Concluding remarks

This doctoral study has been a tremendously satisfying project over the last four years and one that has deeply influenced how I view research, communication and my own professional field of activity. It has enabled me to participate far more actively in many aspects of TESOL and provided opportunities to attend and present at international conferences as well as to have papers accepted in professional publications. These activities have been and continue to be a source of enormous motivation for me and have directly and substantially affected both how I view my role as a teacher educator and how I perceive my subject area. One of the realisations that undertaking this exploratory investigation has bestowed is that the research is never complete or final and perhaps this is why I find the idea of pursuing inquiry into reflective talk and dynamic assessment of learner teachers to be so important and so fascinating.

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Appendices

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 - Glossary of Terms

ALM Audio Lingual Method

AR Action Research

CELTA Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

CLT Communicative Language Teaching

DA Dynamic Assessment

DELTA Diploma in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

Dogme Conversation based approach to ELT focussing on authentic, meaningful interaction that deals with language problems and opportunities as they emerge during classroom activity.

DOS Director of Studies

EAP English for Academic Purposes

EFL English as a Foreign Language

ELF English as a Lingua Franca

ELT English Language Teaching

ESP English for Specific Purposes

FoF Focus on Form (attention to grammar issues as they emerge or as the teacher identifies a need)

FoFS Focus on FormS (attention to discrete points of grammar through following a pre-planned syllabus)

IELTS International English Language Testing System (an academic English exam)

IRF Initiation-Response- Feedback

KAL Knowledge about language

LT Learner Teacher

L2 Second Language

Glossary of Terms (cont.)

NEST (non-NEST) Native English Speaking Teacher

PGCE Post Graduate Certificate in Education

PPP Presentation, Practice, Production

SCT Sociocultural Theory

SDA Sociocultural Discourse Analysis

SLA Second Language Acquisition

SLTE Second Language Teacher Education

TBLT Task-based language teaching

TESOL Teaching English for speakers of other languages

TLA Teacher Language Awareness

TTT Teacher talking time

ZPD Zone of Proximal Development

Appendix 2 - Researcher Profile

I taught English for four years, without learning a second language myself, first in Andalucía, Spain and

then Estonia, Greece and Korea, until in 1997, I found myself once more in Spain. This time I was in the

noticeably cooler region of Navarra in Northern Spain. I had come to the decision that in order to have

any self-respect as a language teacher, I needed to make a concerted effort to learn one myself and thus

immediately set about making an effort to teach myself Spanish. Four years of teaching English had

provided me with an extremely useful awareness of how (English) language is organised and thus a base

for understanding what learning another language involved. Months of learning tables of verb

conjugations, regular and irregular constructions and a comprehensive card system of conditional and

subjunctive verb forms ensued yet, after four months, I was still struggling to make myself understood

or understand others with any degree of ease or fluency. However, the breakthrough came when I

joined a local rugby team and developed a group of Spanish friends. For the first time, I had an opportunity to use, in a meaningful way, the language. I was, now, not simply uttering the odd request for a coffee or enquiring as to what time the next bus was leaving but instead was using language to organise things, give opinions, express views, agree, disagree, make jokes and so on. The hours of copying out and memorizing verb tables and studying grammar books had helped but it was in the actual use when the real development occurred; when I was using language spontaneously (and certainly almost never accurately) to convey real meaning, rather than simply regurgitating memorized chunks of language.

I returned to UK after four years in Spain and began studying for a Master's degree in Education and Linguistics at the same time as I was teaching English for Academic Purposes (EAP) at a Welsh University. While undertaking the post graduate award, I became very interested in theories of constructivism and social constructivism, especially in Mercer's (2000) work on the importance of talk in education. My experience as a developing teacher and as a language learner strongly reflected a "*bringing together of intellectual and experiential learning*" (Farr 2010:9) and chimed closely with what later I learned about Vygotskian theories on social, collaborative and guided learning.

Five years ago, I was entrusted with the co-development of an in-house TESOL education programme – the BA TESOL Minor award upon which this study is based. The project provided the space to begin investigation into how second language teachers can best be prepared for their future career. My first year of research into different models of pre-service teacher education had focussed on the emerging field of teacher cognition. However, my continued interest in sociocultural theories of learning led me to later focus on the importance of talk in effecting changes in cognition. Whereas all three years of the TESOL degree modules feature tasks designed to get the LTs thinking and talking, it is in the final year where the process of talking and reflecting is most concentrated. It is the feedback discussion which provides an ideal opportunity to bridge the intellectual with the experiential personal experience.

I believe that to be an effective language teacher, linguistic knowledge and awareness of how best to utilise such knowledge are crucially important. However, to know when and how to best employ knowledge of language in a classroom takes time; to be able to judge and evaluate a context and best decide from the alternatives available, in other words to become a thinking teacher, takes time, requires knowledge of available alternatives and is, in part, a product of reflected-upon experience. I passionately believe that professional pre-service teacher development can mightily speed up and enhance this process and thus investigation of how to organise and deliver such education is a worthwhile and exciting aim.

Appendix 3 – Transcription of Feedback discussion

TP Wed Nov 16th

Educator: I'll read from the board what we learnt from today – before we do that though, Annie, how did you feel it went today?

Annie: I do feel it went quite well. The activities were interesting I thought, and that's why I did it - If I was a student I would find it really interesting to do. I think it went well, uumm, I guess it was always going to be a bit pushed for time – I wasn't sure, when I was planning, like how long, it would take for the retelling stories and things but… yeah the bit after – the worksheet and reflecting on the grammatical tenses is kind of what they were meant to be focussing on, that was the bit that had least time so…

Educator: interesting that you mention that - we'll come to that in a sec but OK, you had a lot of management things to keep in mind – and you them did really well – what do you think was the biggest learning point for them? What did they get out of it?

Annie: Uumm, to practice re-telling information; Understanding it second and third hand. They were reading writing and speaking skills, uumm, and then it was to expose them to narrative tenses so all the past tenses. I know they understood because they used them when they were re-

telling and re-writing them so they kind of did do it but I think didn't reflect on it as much as I had hoped. They didn't discuss it as much as I hoped they would at the end.

Educator: There are a few issues to that – not least the timings, I think. Were they as fluent when they were doing it as (name) and Tara would be if they were doing the same task?

Annie: No

Educator: They weren't? So by giving that opportunity to repeat language - a task that forced them to use the past tense - why do you think that's good for them?

Annie: It's practice I guess…

Educator: (to - name) you've lived in Spain – is it true – does it work, if you have to actually use the language??

LT 9: Yeah – I think so - if you get the opportunity to use it more, it adds to your fluency, doesn't it. It gets you that much further down the road.

Annie: Yeah – it's re-using and repeating and because it's different stories although it's always using the same tenses but not the same story so it doesn't get boring. They are not just saying like "*He went to the shop*". "Say it again". "*He went to the shop*". They are using the same tenses but they are saying completely different things all the time so that hopefully kept it interesting for them, too.

Educator: It was pretty student-centred, the whole thing. I mean, I can't remember hearing so much hubbub, in a class for years. Constant.

Annie: Yeah.

Educator: And you needed to keep them going and did that very well indeed. That was an easy lesson to cock up, too…

Annie: The instructions weren't wrong, though, so I am not sure where the story went missing on this table so I have a suspicion that Billy gave up on his story…

Educator: Yeah – I've done similar re-telling stories and know that once they've got to three stories they all become confused and start re-telling a story that wasn't the one they'd just heard…I think Billy did that – which is no fault of your own! OK - going to the board things we've learnt – "*students love to talk*", Yeah – I think we knew that, didn't we. Uumm, "*It's good to shuffle groups*". Yes that definitely kept them energetic. Uumm, I think if you look at almost any adult learning theories of how adults learn, it is by making it meaningful for them making it true to life and getting them working in groups and doing stuff. And it seems, in my experience to be true, you know – these guys don't like to be like schoolchildren - sitting in rows etc. Uumm, "*We could have used more error correction*" Why? This topic comes up every week. Where are we on it?

LT 9: I don't know what to do about it.

Annie: Not noticing it, forgetting to address it…

Tara: …I think sometimes, when they are on a roll you don't want to interrupt and say *"That's wrong"* because then they'll feel put down. But when they were getting into the discussions and when they were debating at end, why they thought they would do that, …I think… you don't want to be like *"hold up – I heard this and this"* and then put them on the board because the student will know it was them

LT 10: I picked up on two and thought *"great"* but there were only two and so they'd know who I picked on and I wouldn't want them to know it was them I picked on. I only *caught* two really obvious ones and I was like *"ah, great"* but I didn't want to point out just those two and make those two feel…

Annie:… You could have said it like, uumm, "These are just *some*…." Not like *"These are the only two everyone else was perfec*t…"

LT 10: Yeah but because they were so chuffed that I'd heard exactly what I wanted to hear and I was like *"Yes! Well done*!" so I didn't want to spoil it by saying *"But…you did also say this rubbish…"*

Annie: No – it's the way you do it. I don't think you'd do it like that…

LT 9: … As long as you don't interrupt the flow, you know, and stop them. I kind of think that it would be worse if you save it for later and write on board. It seems like it's a bigger deal then than if you did stop them and just say, *"oh, by the way, it's not steal, you don't steal a bank, you rob a bank"*…just so you know…

Annie: …I think it depends on the point of the lesson, doesn't it. If somebody says *"Oh, and then they stole the bank"* and you jump in straightaway and say *"robbed the bank"*, that's OK, that's not…

LT 10: I think everybody's done that at some point or another, haven't they - repeated back to them the corrected version…

Annie: Yeah - but maybe if it's a grammatical thing it could be worth going back to it afterwards…?

LT 9: Yeah – just saying the corrected version aloud…

LT 10: I think we've all done that, haven't we…but are we not doing it enough maybe??

Annie: I didn't do it at all…

 Educator: OK -two things about the language focus – error correction is only one part – the other part is adding to language – we could just pick up on a word that they have used repeatedly. I was listening quite closely to the last section. Things like, for the problem they all said *"I'd be worried"*, *"I'd be worried"*, *"I'd be worried"*. We could brainstorm quickly *"How else can we express worried*?" and then elicit or feed in *"anxious" "concerned"*, uumm, *"preoccupied"* – then you are adding to their language as opposed to simply looking to correct only. My sense is that you hit the nail on the head about error correction in that it depends very much on the moment. To me, the word that has come about in this week's classes is to be aware. You've all shown awareness –

when they did report back, it wouldn't have been comfortable to correct person that speaking as they were speaking alone in front of class – the atmosphere was very different at that point – as I am sure you noticed. And I would've thought "*Yeah – leave that – just leave it*". However, the idea of "*they would have known or it makes it more serious*". If you make light of a situation – you know, you don't give it too much gravity – rather jot a few notes on the board– they don't have to be the same words but just change a word etc. For example "*Just take a look at these two conditional sentences and I wonder if you could decide with your partner which one is about the past and which one is about the future…*". I've never had a student say – "*My God – I said that…*" and look as if they were in despair that I had picked up on and commented on their use of English. Uumm, so we can change an error e.g. I heard quite a few things, uumm, "if I am a wife I will tell" etc. A complete mishmash of conditional language…we could use that as an opportunity to look at language. But then there is the problem of time, as well……

LT 12: What about, when they make a little mistake in every sentence –That's when I don't know when to do it because I'm like "*Well, do I stop you in every sentence*"?

LT 9: I would say no you don't stop them after every sentence-…

LT 12: …No, I know you don't really but then how do you choose?…How do you say this verb is more important that this verb…. (…)?

Educator: Yeah –(…)- these are decisions we have to make as teachers. Think of your Spanish how would you feel? We have got to make decisions all the time…

LT 12: but I don't want them to continue talking and thinking they are speaking correctly because we only correct them now and again…Do you know what I mean?

Educator: Yes but for practical purposes we can't …as a teacher…we can't. You are aware bit by bit – this is a complex process – you should listen to my Spanish – errors every sentence…

LT 10: Same here!

LT 9: (laughs)Same!

Educator: What can we do? little by little. So this error correction – be aware – I would say…

LT 9:… I've met language teachers – so correct and strict but I found that really effective – like I remembered what they said – to this day – I won't make the same mistake as a result of the way they told me.

Annie: What type of classes?

LT 9: They were language teachers I met outside of classes I was learning Spanish and they used to correct me a lot and say it in a strict way – they weren't bothered about "*Oh, I can't correct you*"

Educator: Was this in a class or 1-1 situation?

LT 9: It was in a totally informal social situation. You could see that was how they taught – they went into teacher mode but it worked. It helped me so maybe it does help to correct them directly – maybe we shouldn't be so concerned about feelings…

LT 12: But everyone is different I suppose – different things work. When I was in Spain no one corrected me even though I made thousands of mistakes all the time and I still improved…

Educator: The difference then is between fluency and accuracy. If we went into the bank and made a mistake– the banker wouldn't say, "*Hey- use the past tense*" he'd just give you your money. So there is the Fluency and accuracy again. I guess as teachers – as (name) pointed out last week, if we were in a school etc. where we teach the same bunch of kids week after week or possibly day after day, we could begin to focus on different parts of their language areas. It is a bit more difficult in our context. If I was teaching a module then I may choose to spend hour on accuracy based activities and a separate hour on fluency based activities…

LT 9: I'd say "fijate!" not in a nasty way but in

Tara: What does that mean?

LT 9: "Take note" and…you would and it stuck with you. It helps - with me it did anyway because I didn't make those mistakes afterwards. I'd think "it's not like that, you can't make that mistake" – You know, because somebody had told you.

Annie: I think I'd cry and give up.

Tara: I'd want to prove I could do it.

LT 10: It depends on the person I think – I'd be too scared to talk to the person after that…

LT 9: If it's too much…yeah

Educator: Flipping heck, this language teaching lark – if it is too much it's down to the personality - how do know how all the other people are? What if we have fifty in a class?

LT 9: I think as you said, if teaching a module you can organise classes etc. so if you know what they should have learnt by now, it's easier to correct, I imagine…if you have seen what they should have learnt by now.

Educator: I don't see it like that – I see every individual as so complex

LT 9: But if they are on a course where you know what they have to do for an exam…

Educator: Think of your own Spanish course. Sorry to the others for going back to Spanish but we can use these guys as an example. I'd argue, I'd even bet a tenner that not everybody has the same knowledge of grammar, the same level of fluency and so on since it is such a complex thing. Maybe (name) watches Spanish TV all night so her listening is better but maybe you read novels so your vocabulary is far more advanced possibly…

LT 10: I agree with that as although we are all in the same class, doing the same thing, class we have all got different numbers of years of experience, different types of experience and different strengths and weaknesses but each…

LT 9: But we all do the same tasks – don't you think that (name) has certain expectation of us?…like knows where we should be…

LT 10: Yeah she has an expectation, but not all of us meet it…by any standards…

LT 9: But when we're below it she tells us about it…

LT 12: No, she says she knows we are at different levels within the same band. We're the same level, B2, but we're more advanced in different areas like you're maybe more advanced in grammatical areas and you in fluency or whatever.

Annie: are you B2?

LT 9: Supposedly

LT 10: Apparently – we are meant to be!

Educator: This is the point. It's a tricky thing to actually pinpoint – because your backgrounds differ, you know. What students bring to class! I didn't even know what a bucket list was!

LT 10: I loved it like YES! Somebody knows what it is… and he explained it quite well. The others understood his explanation.

Educator: Uumm, so there is no clear cut answer to error correction but being aware of all these things IS important. You are all saying the right things, it seems to me. Uumm, "*make sure students know the reason for doing each task*". Why did you write that? You gave me a row about that last week.

Annie: Well – because simple things like uumm, they all knew they had to listen but originally I forgot to say you'll be writing it end – as soon as I said that – there is the reason - before they were listening but after that they were really listening. There was panic in their eyes - I think they were like trying to listen for details more rather than like "*yeah I know what happens in that story*" I think they were trying to pick out the individual details.

Tara: But I think there is a difference between giving students a reason for doing something and us having a reason to get them to do something. Like if you tell them to listen because they are going to do X that's fine, they understand but if we give students a task which is not straightforward but like with my gap fill last week was so they'd learn new idioms I didn't have to tell them that. There was a reason for me doing it as it interested them to the language that was going to be involved…

Annie: …Ah, yes that's different…

Educator: Yes – depending on the type of task. You had a reason for doing the stage as part of the lesson…

Annie: Yes – but here I meant that there's an outcome they should be aware of as it actually effects how well they do it – because then they'll feel like there is a point in doing it.

Tara: Got it.

Educator: OK, uumm, yes I'd agree it's essential for successful unfolding or unrolling of a task. Uumm, what else did you write? "Stricter time limits for leniency", "Add or remove tasks"…

Tara: This is because I noticed that some of them wanted to just keep going on some tasks and…

Educator: So what should we do?

Tara: We could say no OR we could let them carry on with that and get rid of something else that isn't as important…

Educator: Any thoughts?

LT 10: Which example are you thinking of?

Tara: I think when (name) wouldn't stop talking in your lesson, you were like "*2 minutes, 2 minutes*" ,maybe… let him carry on a little longer or just say "*You'll have a chance to talk again later…*"

LT 10: Ah, OK…

Annie: I guess it depends on just how important that task is. If they are actually practicing the point of my lesson then why not just say OK, let it roll…

Tara: Yeah – give it a bit longer…

Annie: Yeah - but if it's actually just a task to warm up, to get them enthusiastic and it's not actually like contributing to the lesson then you could …

LT 10: I know what you mean – the other group were looking bored so, do I like, stop them because the others are bored? But then, as you said, it's great others are giving so many opinions on the matter, so what do you do?

Educator: Again, I thought both of you handled such things very well today but both of you are showing much awareness of what was going on – which is heartening. I'd agree just be aware and don't be afraid of chopping a lesson plan if something seems to be very effective, useful or enjoyable for the learners.

Educator: Annie - I'll go through notes I made. It was extremely student-centred. They worked their socks off and it was clearly fluency based lesson. For me, the biggest thing was the instructions, the management, the eye contact all of those things were great – all basic skills there. Uumm, the biggest aspect to think about for next time, we've already identified in that. I wonder whether we could have exploited a bit more, the language focus. I think this needs time to do - you identified that. A few micro things as a developmental point – again I'd like to be clear to everyone, I'll say things which are not criticism but meant to help you guys keep improving. This *selling the task* at start can be useful "*Guys – we are going to speak a lot – we are going to really practice the pasts in English*". It is something slow which sells the task. It is difficult to do I suppose and if you don't feel authentic doing it then it can can sound a bit plastic –like list reading. Any thoughts?

LT 9: Yeah everybody speaks differently. It is important to be enthusiastic but it needs to be done in your own way if not it'll be false.

Educator: OK –but there is a need to sell at ask?

LT 9: I think so- yeah.

Educator: Uumm, when they were doing the task, you weren't intrusive, you sat or knelt next to them which allowed them freedom to do task, uumm, there were two groups , Do you have any thoughts on this, one student seemed to finish early and looked bored – who?

Annie: Svetlana

Educator: Any ideas we can use if this happens, when one student seems to be more advanced ?

LT 10: Bring in stuff, like a back up activity.

Tara: Think of extra questions that go deeper into whatever they are doing…

LT 12: Could you like, make her a group captain – ask her to organise something else, you know, think about...

Educator: yeah – I'd delegate somebody to be a group leader. If they seem to find tasks too easy or finish earlier then we can get them to help others in group. This approach has worked for me many times simply by saying "*Can you help me? I 'd like you to help everyone else, too, in your group*". It has worked for me many times, the student may think "OK *I've been recognised as being pretty good in this group*" and often students appreciate such acknowledgment. I wonder whether one of us could try that – it can help –

LT 9: Yeah – I guess I'd find it hard to think of what exactly I'd like them to do, do you know what I mean?

Educator: Yeah - It's a fair point. Any Ideas?

LT 12: I'm thinking of our other TESOL classes. When we work in a group you always say OK– you're the group teacher - you do this and report back for whole group..

Educator: Yeah, and that's a crossover of my own feelings on how people learn best - and works on some occasions. It depends on the class and task, as an example from today – kasha finished first on many occasions. A sort of micro instruction would depend on task at time

LT 12: When she finishes first – Can you just go over and ask her to self-correct?

Educator: Yeah – do whatever it takes – a few extra tasks, as Tara said it's useful to have extra tasks in your pocket. Or assign a group leader or assign as a grammar person, and explain that if any of the group's reported answers are grammatically incorrect then it is her or his responsibility. So all must be checked by the finisher - you are giving them extra responsibility within group. It depends, of course, on the task but it can be effective.

Annie: When they were doing the worksheet, I obviously knew she'd finish first so I said "*What I'd like you to do is to discuss your answer*"– e.g. "*Are your answers similar, is your grammar the same*" and stuff and she said "*OK*" but remained silent.

Educator: It is a point that (name) brought up last week. We can say as much as we want "SPEAK" but if they don't want to or aren't ready they won't. We need to create, in the planning, reasons

for them to speak. For example, find three differences between your answers and your partners'. They have to do something –what's that word – not a gap-fill but an....information-gap – i.e. If you've got information I need then you have to speak. An info-gap can be much like ...create 5 or reach an agreement about 5 x, y, z that you all agree on. In order to do so, the students simply must speak. I put loads of ticks here Annie - hubbub / good management, enthusiasm , teacher working hard etc. And then I wrote "Polish girl and Billy not comfy pair". Any thoughts?

Tara: Yeah Billy is very shy…

LT 10: Last week tried a little harder this week but this week was like…

Annie :– Yes he is…he's potentially weakest…

Tara: Do you think it was because last week it was all his peers…and this week you mixed them up so he was a bit…

Educator: Yeah "face" is a big thing in China and maybe gender as well. He is now in a pair with a European girl…

Annie: Yeah - also he's a first year and others are all third years. I think he's maybe the least confident and she is the best..so he…

Educator: Ah, OK so who to pair with who maybe something to think about.

LT 10: It sucks that even though I planned the groups they still ended up together at some point…

Educator: It happens, uumm, your praise was sincere - not simply "*You said a past tense – good!*" What I would have done though…as a language focus as well, before, did any vocabulary problems come up?

Annie: Allergy – a few people asked…

Educator: Yeah – mates? It's quite colloquial. Peanuts? Screamed? The stories were well written, I must say as the language was just at the right level. Uumm I just wonder if, when we do text work, I wonder if we could pick out some potentially difficult vocabulary and…

Annie: I did think of checking it at first but then time-wise I thought I may just let them read it first then ask, "*Is there anything anybody would like help with?*" "*Is there any vocabulary people would like help with?*" or ask *"Does anyone know what these are?"* and pick out a few words. But then I thought I'd just go round and ask them if they were struggling with anything.

Educator: I can see value in that but what may happen in that sort of approach?

Tara: They don't actually ask. They don't want to show themselves up…

Educator: Yeah – so we could just put 3 or 4 words on board and say "Please *explain to your partners what they mean please*".

LT 9: Sorry for interrupting but when you say people don't ask I think also that people don't know in the moment. When someone says to you, "*Right is there anything else difficult in the text, blah,*

blah, blah", it's hard to analyse which words or phrases you don't really know. In Spanish I sometimes only notice certain words or phrases after an activity. Do you know what I mean?

Educator: I think so. I think though that because a few words came up as problematic, prior to the task we could have identified them. Either because they referred to cultural references or because they were less common words such as screened and allergy. We could then just chuck them on the board and talk about them. And ask at that point "*All OK with these words*?" Simple as that – we don't need any elaborate drawings of friends hugging or anything – these are quite high level students. Uumm…teacher language – I made a small note "*I'm going to get you to ….*" Instead of keeping it clear such as simply, "*Read this*". Am I being too picky? The reason I am doubting myself is that they are quite a high level.

Annie: Oh, so the instructions were too chatty…

Educator: Maybe I'm being overly picky – a low level student would find such language really problematic but perhaps not too important at this level.

Annie: Is that too much TTT?

Educator: Uumm, just don't forget to keep it clear. Then we came to the language focus part which seemed underexploited. How could we "*sell*" the point of the worksheet? What was the point of it and how could that have been exploited?" Anybody? Any ideas on that? They'd just been speaking and writing in past tenses.

Tara: Could we go through it? Maybe get them to read it back to class so they'll talk more as a group…I don't know…

Educator: No, I think you are right – I think also this is the most difficult part of a class. I think it is a developmental thing. By having the worksheet and having the attention of everyone, the teacher could now say "*OK listen up – we are now going to analyse your language use – wow compare it with original, native speaker's language – there are three questions – let's see how the original language was used and how you are using the language*". Some, for example, Kasha, were almost identical. Others, such as Billy's, were written almost entirely in the present simple tense. If I had just done that task, I'd like to know how or in what ways my language use was similar to the native speaker language use – what grammar and vocabulary have I chosen to use and what was in the original. Perhaps we could have sold that part a bit better. As you said at the start. Any thoughts? Questions? Doubts?

Tara: I think maybe if there was more time it would have been easier to do.

Annie: I think I wouldn't have minded going over time if all the groups were in same place – but because they weren't even in the same place it did make it a bit harder.

Educator: Yeah there was not much we could do – the time was over. I think it comes down to…OK… "I'm planning, what's my final activity, how can I make it satisfying, you know, and that involves creating a worksheet, maybe really trying to imagine, "*Well what's going to happen when they do this*…" really trying to envisage how it would pan out. And this is a learning thing, an experimental thing.

Annie: I did think like that when I was doing the lesson I was aware it was going to fill the time. At first I was trying to think of start-up activities but then thought about the main activity which was going to take a lot of time but I yeah, I could have sold it more. But then afterwards…

Educator: Basically, I think it was a really worthwhile lesson so perhaps the next thing to focus on then could be how can we really bring a class to a satisfactory ending. Maybe that's something to focus on because the task was great but at the end instead of saying "*Right, that's it, I bet you are all sick of stories*…" you know, it's like, if the teacher isn't into it, why should they be.

Annie: (laughs) I was but they had to tell them a lot more times than I ever did.

LT 10: You know what – I don't even know how that went – you tell me. Better in some ways…

Educator: I've never left a class with no idea as to whether it was fun or useful …

LT 10: Bits were quite good…

Educator: What bits were they?

LT 10: Especially towards the end when they got into discussion and swopped roles etc. but then it's weird I was so in it that I don't know.

LT 9: I know what you mean…

LT 10: The start didn't go well as I had hoped it would…

Educator: What happened at the start?

LT 10: I presented the idea of a bucket list and they seemed to understand what one was which took a big fear off my mind – that they wouldn't get it. But one did and that meant he explained it instead of me. I'm trying to be less teacher-centred…do you know what I mean?

LT 12: Yeah that was good…

Educator: Being student centred means not having the whole class the whole time reverting back to the teacher all the time. I read your last reflection. We want the teacher to be the guide, to help us along and I think it is, one of the decisions we have to make is how much the teacher should be directing and it seems to me that the higher the level of the student, the further away we can take that scaffolding and the further we can allow the students more time to contribute to a lesson. Does that make sense? They learnt the idiom "kick the bucket"… We started off on death…

LT 10: It was a bit morbid – at the start I did feel that that there didn't seem much of a point to it other than we are going to talk about death… it took a while for me to get the point across.

LT 9: I don't think it took a while, they got into it and you explained it quite well…

Educator: I didn't feel any boredom or that you were dragging it out.

LT 10: It was only a warm-up activity to get them thinking about what they REALLY wanted to do but I don't think they were as enthusiastic as I had hoped they might have been. But I don't know – you tell me, I am not sure.

Educator: OK in your sum-up then, some parts went well and other parts less so, but you are not yet clear as to which are which…

Ellen: I'm sorry but I really don't know what didn't go well and what did.

Educator: OK would anyone else like to chip in before me?

Tara: Maybe you dived in a bit when you were explaining the bucket list. Just maybe like really be clear on the structure. So give it to them as "*If I was going to die in 2012, I would*…" So make it really clear to them that they have to have that sentence structure…

LT 12: Yeah – it would have given them something…

LT 10: …But then there is my fear of am I just telling them what to say and being teacher centred again – it was only a warm up to get some ideas – but like you say I could have made it a proper sentence…

Educator: What these two guys have just said is what I wrote. You could have just modelled a sentence or two. From what I understood, you wanted them to agree on 5 things that they all wanted to do in the two years before the earth ends.

LT 10: Yeah – so is family a priority, is travel a priority…

Educator: If you wanted them all to agree on 5…then it needed a model – e.g. "*Would we all agree that we all want to travel?*" Or "*Would we all want to visit my gran*?" You know they'll agree on the travel one but not everyone will want to visit your gran as they have never met her. Then you'd have made it clear what the task was – you haven't actually insisted on the language to use but you can notice what comes out. The task was a student-centred task - they were doing all the work.

LT 10: I thought last week's lesson was student-centred as they were doing a writing gap fill.

Educator: Last week's class was a writing gap-fill and then a discussion?

LT 10: Yeah I spent a lot of time at the board writing what they told me so they could use them in the discussion after…

Educator: But they were expressions and chunks for writing rather than discussing, if I remember rightly…

LT 10: Yeah, but they were phrases useful for having a discussion too…

Educator: That's where we differed – that was a writing gap-fill as opposed to phrases for agreeing and disagreeing. OK– it seems this time they were responsible for working as a group, working together, as opposed to you writing on board, sweating and doing all the work, writing what they were telling you then them working individually on a piece of text with gaps. This time

it was a lot more of them working together to complete tasks or activities. They seemed more involved this week because of the tasks you planned. Uumm I liked the bucket idea – teacher instructions OK – the meteor idea gave some tension.

LT 10: (laughs) it was a little bit like they really believed me, like this was really going to happen…

Tara: They are all so caring…

Annie: (laughs) Was it Rafa who wanted to have five children?

LT 9: They were all concerned about their family…

Annie: I'd be like "I want some fun!" They are adorable.

Educator: Uumm, then you changed groups to advice giving. And. It's an example of a student-centred activity, I guess your focus was on expressions for giving advice and you elicited and wrote on board expressions for this, "Why don't you…?" "Have you tried…?" Any other ways of enabling students to pool their prior knowledge area? In place of the teacher writing on board what gets shouted out? What other activity could we consider in the planning stage?

LT 10: Which stage?

Educator: If we were wondering about what knowledge students already have about ways of giving advice, you know like "How about…", "Perhaps you could…"

Educator: OK it's getting late. I'll make a suggestion and tell me what you think. OK in groups give them a box…and it has two columns titled *Ways of giving advice / ways of receiving advice*. Model one answer and nominate a group leader in each group who ensures all understand. Now what can we do? We have two groups all with a bunch of phrases for each column, what could we do?

Tara: Mix them.

Educator: Yes put them in pairs with a student from another group. TASK "*Find out which expressions you have the same and which are differen*t". Then it's all on the student. That type of activity can be used anytime, it is a very student-centred way of doing things. Nearly finished. Did you make up the problems?

LT 10: The principle ideas came from a problem page but I changed them. The problems are quite complicated and I wanted the person who had the problem to interpret it in their own way and be like "*I'm married with this person…*" and so they had a part – the people asking for advice had to read it, understand it and then tell it to the group.

Educator: Did it go as you'd hoped it would?

LT 10: One did but one didn't. In one of them there were too many names and too many people and they got confused. So ,I think a lot of time was spent trying to understand the problem.

Tara: I think that was because they were all reading the problem as well – even the advice givers.

LT 10: I was like "*don't read it- it's your problem tell them*" I was tearing my hair out.

Tara: Kasha was good she read the problem for ages and then said "*OK, I have a husband*…"

LT 10: When I swapped the cards over it worked better next round. They kind of understood better after the first one. So if I had had time would have maybe have done more of that activity as they were getting into it.

Educator: Yeah – they were getting into it-I thought the boys were going to come to blows at one point (laughs). Uumm, it was good you were aware of asking different people to report back. Did you feel the atmosphere change when there was one person reporting back at length at the end – compared to when they were all speaking? How should we interpret that?

Tara: It was quite tense – when Davey was doing it and realised all eyes were on her she went very quiet – she was like "*No – you do it*".

Educator: Yes – that can happen - Any thoughts on that?

Tara: LT 10 did well by mentioning something else…

LT 10: – I asked others to speak - otherwise it would have been the same person giving feedback every time.

LT 12: I couldn't understand what Rafa was saying…

LT 10: I think he gets a bit too excited and it doesn't come out right.

Educator: Also, grammatically he was weak. I was thinking that, well, because they ended up reading it, it lost authentic communication. Perhaps we could have just said here's a problem discuss a solution. They weren't really pretending to be the person in the story with the problem. But again I thought you made a bunch of L2 speakers work their socks off for the whole two hours. I didn't see anyone looking bored at all. Have you ever sat at the back of a class and thought "*Oh no, two hours of this to go*"?

All: Yeah!

Educator: Well I didn't see anything like that today. Well done. You created opportunities for people to use language. Any other thoughts?

Tara: It went well.

LT 9: Yeah – it was good

LT 12: yeah well done!

Educator: OK last question - (LT 9) I asked you to listen out for interactions between learners. Did you make any notes? Did you pick up on anything.

LT 9: Quite basic stuff I guess. They would change their vocabulary if they weren't understood clearly. Like they would use "lift" for "elevator" or try any other word they knew if they couldn't make themselves understood. Uumm, they were speaking very directly with lots gestures and eye contact – being very expressive like that. They were speaking really slowly and repeating often…

Educator:…because they realised their partner was struggling to understand…?

LT 9: Yeah - they were monitoring the other person really closely and stopping to see if the other one understood. And…long pauses, I think they were doing the same thing – stopping to see if they were understanding or not, and then at one point it went into their first language but we didn't know if they were gossiping or talking about the task or not. And they didn't correct each other. I didn't see anybody correct each other at all – I wrote that down as you had told us to think about the theories we had been studying. I was thinking about the socio-cultural theory one and Vygotsky you know, saying that students will correct each other if one is better…

Educator: Ah, well I think what I understand about that is that a weaker student may learn from a stronger one - rather than a stronger one correcting a weaker one.

LT 9: Ah, OK.

Educator: So if the stronger one says "If I was Married, I would have two children…" etc. ..By speaking to the more advanced student, the weaker one may notice and think "Ah, *if I was*…"…So maybe the more capable peer is…indirectly learning. It was a good thing to pick up on.

Well done everyone. You are brilliant. A la casa!

Appendix 4 – example of reflective journal

Reflective Account: Teaching Practice 1; Comparatives and Superlatives.

The aims of my lesson were achieved. I wanted students to use comparatives whilst talking about their home county with a partner. This worked well and all students appeared to have a lot to say. I think I introduced the activity well as all students were comparing their countries with interest. However, I should have elicited some examples of topics to compare because some of the students spent a lot of time discussing food, which was my first example. If I had gotten them to think of their own examples they might have been more imaginative in their discussions.

The second of my aims was also achieved. I wanted a few students to present the differences between the countries. This worked in terms of being a good opportunity to note down language errors. However, for the rest of the class who were listening, this stage lacked purpose. I need to ensure that every step has a point for all students. Unfortunately, this stage did

not have a point for many of the learners. On reflection a simple activity for the students, such as writing down any further questions they had for their peers on their countries, would have given them a *reason* to listen.

I think that the main activity was level appropriate. As a prompt for comparative discussion I feel it was suitable and adaptable for any level of difficulty because the students could push their language skills as far as they were able to within the discussion. I decided to do active, discussion-based activities based on Vygotsky's Sociocultural theory and Edgar Dale's cone of learning; both of which believe learning occurs when interacting (especially with interlocutors of a slightly higher level, according to Vygotsky.) For these reasons my lesson most closely followed a CLT framework as well as TBL.

I decided to get all students from China to raise their hands and letter them 'A' and then letter everybody else 'B'. I did this mainly because half the class was Chinese so it was the most logical way of pairing students internationally. Also, Chinese and European students' strengths and weakness' generally, lay in different areas so they could draw on one another's strengths; as is recommended by Vygotsky..

I wasn't supposed to present the grammar point, however my error correction/language focus part did turn into a dictation. This was the weakest part of my lesson. I should have planned it better and time-managed with more efficiency. I originally planned to use the errors I heard during the students' presentations of their comparisons, and use a pyramid discussion to correct them; begging as a paired error correction, which would then expand into groups, followed by a brief class discussion of the error corrections. Although I did note down some mistakes (more better, more colder), I became worried about time and ended up neglecting this inductive, pyramid discussion. Instead I simply, and far too briefly, summarized the patterns in comparative and superlative language. I did elicit some of this information but feel I should have stuck to what I had planned and used less 'teacher talking time' here.

Overall the majority of the lesson worked well and was suitable for such a chatty class. The weak parts were due to inexperience and poor time-management, which I feel I can improve upon.

<u>Reflective Account: Teaching Practice 2; Story Swap Lesson.</u>

Overall I feel that this lesson was a vast improvement on last week's. The students were all really engaged as the activity was very active and included a lot of involvement from each individual. Another positive attribute of the lesson is that it used all four main skills. Because of this it means that students get to practice in all areas, even those in which they're weakest. This meant that on the whole it was level appropriate for all students.

I feel that I improved on both in my invisible and visible skills since last week's lesson. My classroom management was something that was challenged, as half of the class were late. I think the issue of their lateness was handled quickly and effectively; I decided to have two versions of the lesson coinciding with one running slightly behind.

The lesson was heavily student centred which left room for me to observe/assist them and listen out for errors; I did this attentively yet not intrusively. Although I am aware of errors I still don't correct them as often as I should. I did plan to address some errors at the end, however due to the lack of time here I opted not to rush a language focus. This is an area I need to focus on in the future. If I had re-focused on language at the end, after the worksheet, it would have been a more satisfactory ending to the class. For my next lesson I aim to have an end activity that is a satisfying conclusion for the learners.

When presenting the story-swap lesson I could have "sold" the activity more by being more enthusiastic. Also, I forgot to tell the students their *reason* for listening at the very beginning (that they would later re-write one of the stories). I told them this after a few minutes, but it would have been clearer and more effective if they were told initially. Something else that I could have done at the beginning is picking out potentially difficult vocabulary from the stories and asking students to tell their partner what those words meant. Such as: screaming, Dracular, allergy, peanut, mate. This also would have raised interest in what the stories might be about and avoided me individually telling students.

Whilst writing the stories I incorporated all four past tenses so there was a lot of language input. The only negative of this lesson plan would be that there was no creative input from the students.

I think the idea and content of the worksheet were good but the execution of presenting it fell flat. I could have exploited the worksheet by asking them to "analyse" the language in the narratives. In this part of the lesson stronger students lost some interest. I could have asked those students to be the "group manager's" with the duty of organising their group's discussion of *why*

the grammar used is correct. At the end I then could have asked for the feedback on these discussions, which would have felt more satisfactory.

Overall I am pleased with how the lesson went. All of the aims were achieved. The students had *a lot* of practice reading, listening, writing and speaking and they worked hard and enthusiastically for an hour!

Lesson Reflection: Teaching Practice 3; Secrets Lesson.

My lesson took a TBL/CLT approach again. I think my lessons closely reflect my beliefs about language learning as they are generally very student focused. This particular lesson started with an inductive activity, which are common features of both TBL and CLT lessons. Although seemingly working well at the time, something that would have enhanced this activity would have been a further activity using modals. For instance I could have gotten the students to put the modal verbs order of certainty.

Another improvement could have been if I had rearranged nationalities, especially as TBL or CLT lessons have limited use of L1. The prediction exercise before the video was played worked better with one group than the other. Each group had three students. The group with mixed European nationalities (Turkish, Cypriot, Polish) did the activity as I had envisaged. However, the other group, made up of three Chinese students, didn't approach this exercise with as much creativity and seemed much more concerned with whether or not their predictions would be correct. This may have had some reflection on cultural differences within the class. Overall I was pleased with this exercise, but it would have benefitted from an example/model beforehand as well as mixing the nationalities.

There was some potentially difficult vocabulary used within the worksheet. I should have gone over this before giving it out. Another opportunity to teach, which I feel I missed out on, was when one of the students said "bored" instead of "boring". This is a common mistake for language learners and I could have turned their attention to the board to clarify this error. It would have been an excellent time to introduce an important error correction.

The theme of 'secrets' underpinned the lesson giving it a satisfactory linear feel, as each stage ran smoothly into the next. This is an example of improved invisible skills. Another area in which I feel I have improved is within my role as a teacher. The teacher role I took for this

particular lesson was that of a facilitator, guide and organiser. This is typically the stance of a CLT teacher role. The students' role fitted within this methodology also; being active with other students in paired/group work and being an independent thinker.

I adapted the end activity to utilize it further by asking students to come up with three instances in which it is OK to lie. This activity lead to an interesting discussion where the students' role was central and involved. This on-the-spot adaptation meant that this last stage took on a more Dogme-inspired approach. With me taking a responsive rather than pre-emptive role.

The three language learning theories that I feel I used with this lesson reflect my views on language learning. They are all inductive, student-centred approaches. They all also focus on communication and fluency, both of which I feel are of paramount importance to language learning. Communicating effectively is the reason the learners are learning English.

Lesson Reflection: Teaching Practice 4; Communication and Understanding.

This was most probably my weakest lesson, certainly in terms of planning and preparation. I decided to take an existing lesson plan from the British Council website entitled 'Socialising: Keeping Conversations Going'. I thought that this sounded exactly like the type of lesson the students would be engaged by. Communicative lessons are something that consistently appeals to me. It was what attracted me to this particular lesson, as I know that the students always enjoy speaking-based activities. I decided to use an existing plan rather than creating my own because I thought that way I could concentrate on error correction and the students use of language rather than thinking about which stage is coming next.

Using an existing lesson plan from a reputable website, I think I took for granted that it would be a successful and interesting plan. I did not envisage each stage happening, as I would do with my own plans, so very last minute I decided that it was not engaging enough. I should have decided this sooner seeing as I did have my doubts, and find I can agree with the stigma attached to course books.

With help from Mike before the lesson I decided to use a singular activity from the plan: an information gap, gap fill exercise of quotes on communication. By concentrating on one exercise I could utilise it entirely. I ensured that the main focus was communication and negotiating understanding. I began by eliciting various ways a listener might ask somebody to

repeat their self; something the students had said they often felt they needed to do. The students came up with many examples such as *Can you repeat that? Sorry I don't understand. What was that?* We also discussed utterances the speaker could say to ensure the understanding of the listener, such as *Do you follow me? Do you see what I mean?*

I think that the function of communication and the importance of understanding was conveyed well, however the instruction giving could have been slightly clearer. I gave an example and stressed that the focus was not on giving a correct answer but to come up with an answer together. But I could have made it clearer that the answers were available on their partners' corresponding worksheet. Most students did understand but one pair asked me to double check, meaning they had been unsure.

I felt that the slow paced lesson, with one clear focus was actually a refreshing change for the students and myself. Often we, as novice teachers, are too concerned with giving an entertaining, interesting lesson in which students will have fun. Authenticity can be lost when attempting to carry out these types of lessons all the time. Although it was not my original aim to produce the lesson that I did, I'm glad that I did. It was useful for me to understand that a stripped back lesson, with one simple aim can be much more authentically useful for the students.

Lesson Reflection: Teaching Practice 5; Will Future.

Overall I felt that this lesson went very well. I left feeling that it had been very productive for Lily and that the lesson had been satisfactory for both her needs and ability. Lily was introduced to the form of *will* future, its' common use for making spontaneous decisions and new vocabulary. Despite the amount of information acquired during the lesson Lily's level of energy and enthusiasm did not falter and she remained engaged and focused throughout. This made the lesson feel very satisfactory for myself also.

Not all aims were achieved for this lesson. I didn't complete the lesson plan due to timing, which meant that the use of *will* to make predictions was not addressed. However, I did not feel that it was detrimental to achieving the other aims; to introduce and use *will* for making spontaneous decisions. In fact, slowing the pace in the lesson, consequently missing out the end stages, allowed time to really utilize the stages that I did cover at a rate that was more suitable for the student. When planning the lesson I had not taught Lily before and did not know how

thorough and precise she is in her work. I had also never taught a one-to-one lesson before, but upon doing so realized that it is easier to gauge when the student understands and is comfortable with the language. I slowed each stage down and made these needs a priority, not moving to the next stage until I felt Lily was confident to do so.

Both my teaching practice 5 and 6 slots were on the same day, in the morning and afternoon. This meant that there was a degree of fluidity between the two lessons. Originally I was going to teach a *will* lesson just after Lily had had a lesson on *going to*, then, in TP6, I was going to do a comparative lesson between the two tenses. I chose to adapt my second lesson last minute, this meant that I could now address the difference between *going to* and *will* within the first lesson. I think that this worked well as both were fresh in her mind, and the clarity enhanced her understanding of the comparison.

The materials I used were activities and worksheets on *will* and *will/going to* from course books, the Internet and books on language teaching, I took inspiration from Scrivener especially. I pooled all of these together and then attempted to create a lesson that was both level appropriate and appropriate for the individual learner. The lesson more or less took a PPP approach despite my adapting of it.

Things that I feel I did well were eliciting when appropriate, giving clear concise examples, concept checking and repeatedly reinforcing the use for the tense. I was patient with Lily, this allowed her to use and practice her existing knowledge of language. The power point worked well to give quick, clear examples and to provide many visual aids, this worked especially well for introducing vocabulary. I rounded up the lesson with a contrast of *will* and *going to* which worked well as a natural stopping point.

In the future I will be more decisive and organised in choosing and planning exercises, therefore creating a lesson plan much more in advance to avoid last minute stress and doubt about the lesson.

Lesson Reflection; Teaching Practice 6; Will and Going To Future.

This lesson took place at 4pm on the same day of my fifth teaching practice slot. This meant that I was able to adapt this lesson to incorporate the uncompleted stages from the mornings' lesson. This change to the lesson actually worked in my favour and TP6 became a logical extension and summary of the mornings' teachings.

My initial feeling was that it hadn't gone as well as the morning lesson. I thought that the presentation of *will* for predictions would be quickly understood by Lily because of how smoothly TP5 went. However, this was not the case. It took much longer than anticipated to explain the prediction usage of *will.* It was suggested by Rhian that I use the internet to show a fortune cookie to demonstrate the prediction use. After this Lily seemed to quickly grasp the concept of a prediction.

It appeared to be the first time Lily had come across the prediction use of *will.* She did not seem as confident in her ability as she had that morning. Whereas when I introduced spontaneous decisions, she picked it up very quickly. She had most likely come across spontaneous decisions before, as they are more common. Introducing something entirely knew to Lily meant that each stage had to be dealt with very tentatively. I was careful not to over complicate anything and spend time on all examples. I had chose to concentrate on these two uses for *will* because I felt they were two of the most useful and common uses.

In the recapping *going to* stage, I used the tense to make New Years Resolutions. I personalised this by addressing her upcoming trip to Hong Kong and China for Chinese New Year. I accidently missed out the controlled-practice worksheet for making resolutions. I then asked Lily to produce her own, which she was able to do based on the examples I had given, but it would have been easier for her had I given the worksheet first. I decided to do the worksheet after instead because I thought the practice and repetition was necessary. The mix-up of this stage did not affect the overall outcome of lesson.

Next Lily produced five perfect examples of plans for her holiday using *going to*. This was really good to see. The personalised nature of the exercise demonstrated Lily's ability to use language in an authentic situation.

I think that my visible skills and classroom manner have improved immensely throughout my TP slots, as well as my invisible skills. I began by eliciting prior knowledge, I ensured I had valid, concise examples throughout and always elicited after giving multiple examples. I recapped on the negative use of *going to*. I think I have become a lot better at judging and dealing with situations in the classroom, as well as being reactive. During one-to-one teaching I have found

that allowing silence for the student to process their thoughts is key. This way, when speaking, the student has had time to contemplate and will feel comfortable when they do talk. I think that it is a quality that is beneficial to the students learning.

Appendix 5 - Interview KI

M: OK Katie, your semi –structured interview, these are in no order of importance and we'll probably be jumping around. Is that all right?

KI: Great.

M: A few different things…during the feedback that you had from each teaching practice, did you find any difference in how the discussions were organised, between the lecturers and the people who had done the TP? Did the styles have any effect on your learning?

KI: Uumm, I think yes, because I started my TP sessions with (name), so I did half of the sessions with (name) and half with yourself. So both very different people and both were different. With (name) the thing was we'd go, after the session to somewhere quiet and we'd have copy of feedback given to us at the end of our feedback which was useful for us to write our reflection and what not and she'd generally go through the main points of the lesson from what she had seen and peers would chip in if there was a particular issue but it was very much a sort of carbon copy of different points then she would comment on what went well and maybe things she didn't think went very well.

Umm, and then with your feedback it was very different in that it was a lot more sort of, independent thinking which is good as it was a nice transition from, with (name), it was very a, b, c, d, and with your feedback it was a lot more thinking for ourselves which was more realistic as well so it was a nice transition. I didn't feel too scared to do that. Uumm and you gave more of an opportunity as well to help each other think so you reflected on your lesson but also on other peoples' lessons and commenting on what other people had said about your lesson - which gives more independence…I think it definitely helped as in the real world we won't have you or anybody else to comment on how the lesson went so it's nice to know what others think or from an observer's point of view, what people might be thinking of. So, yes, that definitely helped me learn about how I teach and things I need to learn…do you get me?

M: Yes, these questions aren't about comparing styles but rather…how people learn. Uumm, do you feel that you do now have the ability to teach in a variety of situations?

K: I think I could be getting there – it'll obviously take long time and I'll need more experience to get confident to say I could teach anywhere, but I feel more capable than I did at the start of the third year, uumm, having received feedback , I know my strengths and weaknesses, things I'm good at or not, things that are valuable to my lessons or not me – that's why it has helped me. With regards to going ahead and teaching, obviously it's what I really want to do and I definitely feel I've been given knowledge and tools to be able to do that but ultimately I know it is up to me at the end of the day as to how I teach whether I take people's advice or not. I think regarding all the different teaching styles and different methods that we've learnt about, I think I would be, I feel encouraged to go on and do them, but, you know it would take some time for me to be completely confident but it is something that I'd like to have a go at.

M: Go at what?

K: If I was asked to teach in a particular way, I would not feel put off.

5.21 M: How about in different contexts or environments. There are so many different contexts in which you could find yourself. For example teaching adults in a company or kids in a state school / kids in kindergarten…

K: I think, because of the content of the course and the way I received it, I feel like quite adaptable, do you know what I mean? To the situations and that I have got the means to be able to do it and to be able to adapt to it and have a go at it. Uumm, if the situation arose, it is something I would attempt,

M: When you say you have the means and strengths, could you tell me a bit more about what they are, in your mind…?

K: My strengths…uumm, I think that with language learning and teaching, and I've always been a language learner, but I never would have recognised that as a strength before now, as I've never had to acknowledge it as I have never been teaching. So when I first started learning welsh I never would have entertained the thought of teaching language – not the way I was taught anyway. I never thought I'd go into teaching. The way that's developed now, it's easier for me to empathise with the people who are in the class because even now, I am that person, I am the one who is learning a different language - learning Spanish.

M: Are you saying you may not teach as you were taught?

K: I wouldn't teach (as in school) since I came to Uni, and learnt about all the different ways and activities we can do. I was thinking about this the other day actually I was trying to relate about how I learnt Welsh, as when I learnt Welsh, which was obviously my first – second language, you know what I mean? Uumm, I thought how does learning Spanish (at uni) compare to learning Welsh and the difference is with learning Welsh I don't remember doing any of the activities we do (in TESOL) to make it more interesting and all the different skills. I don't remember doing any of that in school. I literally remember being told to look at a poem and analyse it – I didn't speak the language – maybe it was my fault- I should have done my GCSE instead of going straight to 'A' Level Welsh. But I did it somehow, I was motivated to do it but I was never encouraged to, uumm, I don't know to do different activities and practice in different ways and I am now so when I think of my experience then and my experience now – I'd more like to reflect how I've been taught Spanish with varied activities and different things to do rather than in the very confusing way that somehow I learnt Welsh. It's like it just happened one day.

M: Let's go back to the feedback after teaching. Was your aim, do you think, to find out more as you wanted better marks or because you wanted to learn about teaching?

K: For me, to know more about teaching as I think at University age, most people know strengths and weaknesses, so I am not going to enrol on a maths course, but although I was interested I didn't know anything about teaching when I started. I'd seen teachers all my life but I had never thought about the role reversal, like how would I be if I was the teacher. I probably couldn't even do a presentation, I'd be so nervous I probably couldn't stand up in front of a class I was really quiet through school. I would never take lead or use the skills I feel I now have. Like two weeks ago I gave a presentation to hundreds of kids – all 14, 15, if you'd asked me to do that three years ago, I would have said that said you're having a laugh.

M: What aspects of the teaching did you find most challenging and which most enjoyable?

K: The challenging thing is that...nothing unenjoyable, but the challenging thing is that learning and teaching is really personal because I don't think that you're ever going to find two learners or teachers the same. I think it is the same for every subject but because language which is communication, it's a personal thing how you choose to communicate and you don't really know who you are going to get and you may do all the lovely planning in the world but you don't know who you are going to get. I could go to Spanish sometimes and be in a really foul mood. There is nothing the teacher can do about it, and if you are trying to get people to produce things. I think that can be quite challenging, luckily, the learners in our teaching slots have been nice but when I went to Spain some of the kids really challenging, some of the kids had attention deficit problems that I had to deal with. Yesterday in the Spanish class I taught there was a boy who would not do anything at all. I was thinking, OK, I'm really going to have to change my expectations as to what I want from this lesson. So that's what challenge is – my overall aim, we were doing 'birthdays' so I had to change the aims. I thought that as long as he could say a number and a month then that's ok. So yeah, it was a challenge – you just don't know how people are going to be.

M: How you've been taught on TESOL modules, did that differ from other school or Uni modules?

K: Yeah – it was, how can I compare it? A big difference but I don't know if that is because I enjoyed the content more…that had a lot do with it.

M: Tell me about how it is different and has that affected your views of learning or how it can be organised?

K: The way I've been taught in these modules has sort of been more like, what is the word, trying to get us to be more independent about things, do you know what I mean? Like learning about trying to be more independent, which will obviously be important when I start work and stuff. Whereas in school, you are taught to pass exams really. I can't really tell you about anything I did at school about the way I was taught that helped me remember things. Now, it's put in a way that I remember the information and remember how it was given to me and obviously helps me as well with my grades…

M: Are you saying you would not teach in the same approach you were taught in school?

K: Yes – because the way I was taught languages was boring, it wasn't very not stimulating, the teaching has changed, I noticed when I went back to visit and it's quite interesting for me – it's more interactive now whereas before, it was "open your text books to page twenty and copy the yellow box. We are going to do verbs". Not every lesson – we would do some games but it was mostly "Translate this or that paragraph." I know they do more games and use more materials and tools like the internet now. but I would not inflict on anyone how I was taught. That's the reason I would not teach as I was taught in school – the boring element.

M: OK. Back to the feedback. How easy or difficult was it to give constructive advice to the other people you observed teaching and talking about others' teaching episodes?

 K: I wouldn't say it was easy – because, as I said, it is a personal thing and everybody teaches and learns differently and I don't think we had any particular issues but you don't want to offend anyone I quite liked it – though maybe that is just my personality. I like to know but it was a bit challenging at times especially as I did not know how others would take it. But, as the weeks go on, and you know what's ok to say –and by the end of it it was pretty much OK to say anything. So while you're learning how to teach you are also developing not a relationship but that sort of thing. So like – you can say this to me if you want or if you have an opinion you feel it's ok to say it. But it was quite strange at first to give that sort of feedback

M: Anything increase your motivation? Decrease it?

K: I'm easily motivated that's the problem – anything that happens I'm alright with that. In particular, the only thing is to just do it –

M: Anything you dreaded or really wished to do…

K: The only thing I really wished to do was the teaching. I really enjoyed the teaching where others feel nervous – not that I don't get apprehensive it's just that I enjoy doing it. And that is the motivation in itself- to be able to go back and do it again.

M: We looked at lots of stuff like inductive / deductive learning different approaches to teaching and so on, how easy was it to consider such stuff while planning?

K: I think it's almost a skill in itself, you know. I think towards the beginning, because it was still early days, you are not, your brain isn't trained to thinking about these things but as the weeks went on I think it's something that developed and is something that I will probably continue to always develop – thinking about the different elements. Uumm, it's at first it was a challenge to remember such things even existed as I'd never previously thought about them – the different ways of teaching like if I want them to be more student centred or teacher centred – all these different things I'd never had to think about.

M:Towards end of practicum, did all these words and terms come to mean something?

K: I feel it became, uumm, all the different terms, I could relate them to things I'd done and things I'd seen in the classroom and I'd be able to recognise them even not so much myself, well yes for myself but also when I'm observing the others. I can probably see what they are doing, or maybe predict what they are going to do next or all right, I understand why they did that activity or maybe I didn't understand why they were doing an activity but at the end it made sense. Whereas before, if you'd put me to observe a class, I'd just be sitting there not thinking about anything – I'd probably just look at them. But now I've been given things to think about which meant it became easier to relate it..

M: How confident do you feel now?

K: I feel capable but not so confident that I can do anything – I definitely do not feel that way but I do feel able and happy and I think, it all depends, you become more comfortable in yourself in doing and planning all these lessons and that's important for me in order to feel comfortable, but at the moment, I don't feel in any way dispirited about anything.

M: The last few things – we have a kind of conflict between telling people how to do things and guiding them to think for themselves…the theory goes that guidance, in any practice – such as medicine or teaching- helps folk become more independent. At other times, folk want to be told things they're learning. If you were doing another 6 lessons would you prefer to have people telling what you should do or have people getting you to try and think and explain why you are doing what you are doing?

K: This situation, learning teaching, I would prefer uumm, given the opportunity being able to think about things, rather than be told this is a, b, c or d. I'd like to be asked questions to help me find my way to the answer, or one of the answers, as there may be many, rather than, uumm, "yeah that's good that's bad." Within saying that, sometimes people ask if this is ok or not – for peace of mind. Especially with this, there are so many possible answers that it may be impossible to say something is right or wrong. For me, it is easier and more beneficial and it helps me more to be made to think about things and to ask questions about things, rather than uumm, to be told right or wrong – especially with this kind of work. Do you know what I mean?

M: So if I said to you, what have you learnt? I mean rather than facts such as that Manila is the capital of the Philippines. Is it to question stuff? Is there anything I'm missing? Let's try it – what have you learnt from doing TESOL the last few years?

K: Uumm, how to be aware of my own language, because obviously I didn't have a clue about these things before. The words I use, why I use them, to be able to question those things. Because

if I think about those things, like why I'm saying what I 'm saying, it'll help me a lot to think about the kinds of things that people are going to ask me. Probably, uumm it also helps me think about why I choose to say things – and for Spanish and Welsh – in those circumstances it has helped me. Obviously I've also learnt about theoretical sides of things which I wouldn't otherwise have known about. A lot of hidden skills as well like confidence and being able to speak in front of people, presenting and stuff…

M: Do you think you'll be able to help people learn stuff?

K: Yeah – the thing is my job, in the school, (I work as a mentor for English Maths in Merthyr comp) although I hate maths it was great as my students all moved from D's to C's which made me feel really good and if I can do that without much content knowledge I was still able to think about their learning styles, how they can revise, different ways to motivate them. I wasn't just telling them the answer to whatever equation they've got but rather how to go about thinking about how to break it down which is something I think that through doing TESOL over the last couple of years I've been able to learn how to how to ask right questions and break things down and think about things as a lot of time people know a lot of stuff.

M: So teaching is like kindling a fire or filling an empty vessel?

K: Yeah, I think it's like nurturing something – yeah like kindling a fire. Because lots of kids I'm working with or the people on this course- they know a lot of things – it is hard to learn a language and I think that people don't give themselves credit for what they can do. I think as long as you provide an opportunity for people to learn things – you can't get into their heads at the end of the day and make them learn irregular verbs.

M: It's complicated. Would you like to add anything else? Was the practice important?

K: The practice was really important for being able to apply what you have learnt – not just the methodology but having a go at a different activity and being more prepared. For instance, now if I did get a job I'd want to be confident that I could do that job – you know if someone is paying me to do something.

M: You know, now, what you are doing, how to plan a lesson, I have seen you do it. Where does that come from?

K: I think making these lessons and doing the planning and reflecting on things and all that sort of stuff. It comes from the interest in wanting to plan a good lesson or want to learn a language. For me, it's the interest that has driven me to pass my degree. Also my personal interests are to do with languages – people I socialise with – from Spain or wherever, friends and family.

Appendix 6 - Stages of analysis

1 Become familiar with the data

The fourteen feedback discussions were transcribed by the researcher between January and April 2013. This process although laborious, nevertheless allowed numerous and repeated close examination of the interactions. The discussions were transcribed verbatim and an example of a transcribed feedback discussion can also be found in appendix three. Handwritten notes were made on the transcriptions at an early stage and subsequent waves of categorisation involved highlighting sections of the discussion, copy and pasting sections onto word documents and analysing sections for alternative interpretations.

The earliest examinations of the discussions were centred on the shape of the turns taken by myself and also what the learner teachers brought up during their moves. However, it became apparent almost immediately that analysing sections and stages of the discussions was necessary for examining how scaffolded talk can lead to the co-construction of knowledge. And that it was prudent to consider the knowledge bases that the LTs had available to them, in evaluating the type and direction of my interventions in mediated dialogue.

The seven participants sent their six reflective journal entries to me by email during March / April 2013. I printed off all forty two copies and worked with both hard and soft copies. Thus handwritten notes and word documents were used to try to make initial sense of the data. The

interviews, conducted in April and May 2013, were also transcribed and printed thus allowing me to work with both hard and soft copies.

2 Search for themes

In what was quite a messy, cyclical, time-consuming and challenging process, an overall view of what was in the data was generated, from which numerous themes were produced. At this point, latent themes were diverse and included areas such as evidence of nerves, class management difficulties, assessment concerns and so on. At the same time, the process was undertaken of analysing the feedback discussions for evidence of dialogic interaction – based on the taxonomies described in the literature. Not all the research questions were fully formulated at this point. As the analysis was being undertaken, the subsidiary questions emerged as being pertinent and of value to the exploratory aim.

3 Define and name categories

Through the process of data reduction, the themes that overlapped or were otherwise connected were organised into categories of interest or which seemed to have a bearing on the overall research aims. For example, LT concerns about "not teaching anything" or "knowing the answer" both fit into a category of "Doubts over the teacher role". Handwritten thematic maps were produced which attempted to provide a visual perspective on the emerging categories and themes. These maps attempted to identify the links between the categories of data that were being defined from the journals and interviews with the areas of cognitive development that were possibly evinced from the dialogic discussions

5 Develop the argument, within and across themes
Constant comparison of the data sets also allowed a picture to emerge of which factors were facilitating pedagogical discussion, which factors were of concern to the LTs and so on.
Analysis of the patterns of interaction during the feedback discussions allowed the identification and categorisation of different types of scaffolding that were evident in the dialogic acts and how open conversation also permitted the educator to identify further learning opportunities. The content of such interactions was constantly cross checked with the themes emerging from the other data sets in order to make connections regarding the influences of one over the other and so on. For example, it was fascinating to observe how it was evident in some cases that without being made aware of, and given opportunity to practise, alternatives to the teaching methods that the LTs themselves had experienced, they would have almost certainly taught in the way that they had (unsatisfactorily) experienced language lessons as learners. Triangulation of the data assisted in validating such interpretations.

Appendix 7 - Overview of modules on TESOL Award

All 6 modules carry twenty credits each.

Year one: Language Awareness – Lexis and Phonology

              Language Awareness – Grammar

Year two: An Introduction to TESOL

              Peer Teaching

Year three: Developing the TESOL Professional

              Teaching Practice

Further details may be found at the following address:

http://courses.southwales.ac.uk/courses/402-ba-hons-english-with-tesol