APPROACHES TO SECOND/FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION

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ในการศึกษาและการเรียนรู้ตลอดชีวิต มีแนวความคิดมากมายที่อธิบายว่าการเรียนรู้เกิดขึ้นได้อย่างไร การศึกษานี้เป็นการศึกษาแนวความคิดต่างๆ เกี่ยวกับการเรียนรู้ที่มีอิทธิพลต่อวิถีนัยของการศึกษาของครูภาษาที่สอง/ภาษาต่างประเทศ แหล่งอ้างอิงที่มีประโยชน์ 3 แหล่งที่ผู้ศึกษาใช้ในการศึกษา คือ Roberts (1998) Wallace (1991) และ Williams และ Burden (1997) ผลการศึกษาสรุปได้ว่า วิถีนัยที่ยึดความรู้เป็นศูนย์กลางและวิถีนัยที่ยึดบุคคลเป็นศูนย์กลางเป็นพื้นฐานในการเข้าใจความคิดเหล่านั้น วิถีนัยแรกเน้นว่าการเป็นแบบอย่างและปัจจัยภายนอกเป็นแรงขับเคลื่อนที่อธิบายว่าครูที่สอนภาษาสร้างความรู้เกี่ยวกับการเรียนการสอนภาษาได้อย่างไร วิถีนัยที่สองซึ่งมีลักษณะของมนุษยนิยมและ ปัจเจกชนทางสังคมนั้นสร้างขึ้นจากมุมมองและความคิดของครูแต่ละคนที่มีต่อต้นแบบและประสบการณ์ของตนเอง ในการศึกษาครั้งนี้ ผู้ศึกษาได้เสนอวิถีนัยการเรียนรู้สำหรับการสอนภาษา ไว้ด้วย

Abstract

In education and lifelong learning, there are a number of schools of thought providing grounds to how learning occurs. In this paper, the author examines the ways in which different views of learning have influenced and informed approaches to second/foreign language teacher education. Three useful references which inform the author's discussion and to which the author refers extensively are Roberts (1998), Wallace (1991) as well as Williams and Burden (1997). All in all, knowledge-centred and person-centred approaches serve as the fundamentals to the understanding of such stances. The former focuses on modelling and the external factors as a drive that explains how language teachers construct their knowledge about language teaching and learning. Being humanistic and socially individual in nature, the latter is internally formed and reflected, subject to each teacher development perspec-

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tive and reflection on personal models and experience. Towards the end, the author's choice of approach of learning for language teaching is also put forward.

INTRODUCTION

In the field of English or foreign language teaching, teachers make use of various teaching methodologies and techniques to convey a body of knowledge to students. What actually influences the ways teachers see the world and shape their pedagogical practices is worthwhile discussing at length. Teacher education means to obtain knowledge and skills that can be explicated in the light of the learning theories that underpin them as well as in relation to the method options they offer.

The approaches to second/foreign language teacher education can be distinguished into two major approaches: *knowledge-centred approach and person-centred approach*. Adapted from Roberts (1998: 110), Table 1 outlines the basic approaches to second/foreign language teacher education.

Knowledge-Centred Approach

This term is used to refer to approaches to teacher education which involve the application of public theory to teaching. These approaches adopt a "transmission view of learning" (Williams, 2002, p.22) where theory is perceived as a body of external source of doctrine informing practice and being transmitted from the expert to the

Table 1: Approaches to Second/Foreign Language Teacher Education: Basic Principles

	Knowledge-Centred Approach	Person-Centred Approach
Approaches	▪ Model-based learning ▪ Applied Science approach	▪ Humanistic ▪ Constructivist (individual/social)
Theoretical basis	Behaviour is "externally" determined	Behaviour is "internally" determined
View of knowledge	Objective, transmitted	Internally constructed
View of person	Person as an "input"-"output" system	Person with self-agency
View of teacher	Operational/Employee	Professional
Perspective	Training	Development
Methods	Modelling/ Lectures	Reflection on personal models and direct experience

novice (Williams, 2002). Within this context, two approaches are further discussed: *model-based learning and the applied science approach*.

a. Model-based Learning

This approach originated from *behaviourist psychology* and perceives the individual as a kind of input-output system: input via the senses determining output in the form of observable behaviour. This behaviour is a response to external stimuli and is learned by positive and negative reinforcement (Williams and Burden, 1997).

Roberts (1998) distinguishes two particular models based on behaviourist principles. The first is the *craft/apprenticeship based model* with the apprentice (participant teacher) learning from the craftsman (teacher educator). The second is the *competency based model* of teacher education, which was dominant in the USA in the 1970s. It relies on pre-specified objectives known to the learner in advance and provides measurable standards and meets political and institutional requirements for accountability. Teacher competencies are broken down into lists of discrete behavioural skills from which participants learn visual or written models of behaviour by the master teacher.

b. The Applied-Science Approach

According to Wallace, this approach "derives its authority from the achievements of empirical science" (Wallace, 1991, p.8). Knowledge is constructed scientifically, and it is objective and capable of being discovered empirically with a procedure which

dictates the following steps: state the problem, formulate the hypothesis, select research methods, collect data, analyse data, interpret data and reformulate the hypothesis (Foley, 2000). This approach, when applied to education, attempts to uncover the rules of classroom behaviour (or in our case language learning) through systematic observation and experiment.

In teacher education programmes, the referred approach implies that "unscientific and mystical approaches" (Stones and Morris, cited in Wallace, 1991, p.8) to teacher education are rejected and teaching problems are solved by the application of empirical science to the desired objectives. The aims of such programmes are for teachers to understand the theoretical bases and principles on which a particular set of practice is based, to select or design syllabi, materials, tasks and activities according to these principles, and to monitor their own teaching to check that it conforms to those theories and principles (Freeman and Richards, 1993).

The knowledge-based approach reflects a view of teachers as the implementers of teaching roles, styles, strategies and methods "imposed" on them. Therefore, in applying the above approach to teacher education, the task is essentially of training. Some of the methods used in training, thus, reflect a view of learning as "modelling" (Richards, 1991, p.22). Participant teachers model the behaviour of master teachers or established techniques of teaching. For example, microteaching is viewed as a forum of modelling and reinforcement. A model is presented and participant teachers' behaviour is shaped through observation, imitation, reinforcement and feedback

with the assumption that it will be transferred to real classrooms. Observation (either of teachers in real classrooms or of model lessons on video) also allows participant teachers to learn through modelling or imitation. In addition, demonstration, simulation and role-play are procedures that facilitate participant teachers in mastering new techniques with the hope that they will transfer them into their classrooms and eventually incorporate them into their repertoire of teaching strategies. A method mostly related to the applied science approach is the lecture where theoretical input is provided by an expert (Wallace, 1991). It is, then, the teachers' job to put theory into practice and if it fails, it means that the teachers have not fully understood or not properly applied what they have heard. Examples of a knowledge centred approach to English language teacher education can be found in Ur (1991) and Vale and Feunteun (1995).

Person-Centred Approach

The outstanding attribute of this approach is that it embarks with internal rather than external views of learning. It commences from the assumption that teachers, rather than methods, make a difference and that teachers are engaged in a complex process of planning, decision making, hypothesis testing, experimentation and reflection (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Moreover, this process is often specific for a person and situation; it involves teachers developing their own personal theories of teaching, exploring the nature of their own decision-making and classroom practices and developing strategies for critical reflection and

change. Within this tradition, the author can distinguish two main approaches: *humanistic* and *constructivist approaches*.

a. Humanistic Approach

An approach to teacher education focusing on self-agency and personal change "enabled but not directed by others" (Roberts, 1998, p.18) emerged from humanistic psychology in the 1950s, an approach led by such figures as Rogers, Maslow and Kelly. This movement came as a reaction against what was seen as the deterministic and one-dimensional approach of behaviourism and experimental psychology. The individual is perceived as unique and as a whole with an innate potential for self-development as he or she has self-agency and can decide on how to develop and grow. Through introspection, the starting point is where the person is and not an outside viewpoint. This approach provides a rationale for nondirective intervention in a variety of settings, ranging from counselling to teaching and teacher education with learning being internally determined rather than externally controlled.

In second/foreign language teacher education, humanistic theory leads to considerable innovation, with greater emphasis on co-operative development (Edge, 1992). The basis for this change is the new respect for the teacher's personal autonomy. The teacher educator's role is one of supporter and facilitator, with the adoption of counselling models of intervention. An additional important factor is the recognition of the emotional dimension to learning.

Within this framework, relationships between supervisors and student teachers are

emphasised in pre-service education programmes. In in-service programmes, counselling models are adapted with syllabi containing not only subject matter knowledge, but also skills for self-directed development. Moreover, self-assessment and group-work are determined where feelings, relationships and learning can be inexorably linked. Examples of second/foreign language teacher education practices adopted on a basis of humanistic principles include work by Freeman and Richards (1996), Gebhard (1999) and Woodward (1991).

b. *Constructivist Approach*

Constructivism puts an emphasis on the ways in which individuals bring personal meaning to their world. Early researchers such as Piaget focused on the individual construction of knowledge. Bruner on the other hand, placed a greater emphasis on the interaction of the learner with curriculum materials, the teacher, and other significant factors. Similarly, Vygotsky and Feuerstein criticised Piaget's view concerning the individual view of knowledge and suggested that, living as we do in a social world, learning occurs through interactions with other people (Williams and Burden, 1997). The author examines constructivism in relation to teacher education, from both the individual and social aspect as follows:

Individual Constructivism
While behaviourism focuses on observable behaviour and how it can be shaped, cognitive psychology, the theoretical basis of constructivism, is concerned with the ways the human mind thinks and learns. The key idea of constructivism is that people make their own sense of ideas or theories presented in a personal way. Williams and Burden (1997) offer their own understanding of constructivism: "…each individual constructs his or her own reality and therefore learns different things in very different ways even when provided with what seems to be very similar learning experiences" (p.2).

Learning is not viewed as the result of development: "Learning is development" (Twomey Fosnot, 1996, p.29). It is not behavioural change but the cognitive development which underlies it. For in-service teacher education, this implies that teachers are not viewed as entering a programme with deficiencies. Although there are obviously areas that teachers may not be familiar with and may wish to learn about, more emphasis is placed on what teachers know and do and on providing tools with which they can more fully explore their own personal theories and practices. Moreover, a theoretical basis central to the planning and implementation of in-service programmes does not serve as "an external wisdom" (Williams, 2002: 22) to shape and modify teachers, bringing them closely to an ideal model, but serves as a starting point. This way, theory is merely concerned of as a body of external wisdom to be learnt by teachers, which will inform practice. The role of teacher education is to help teachers explore, define and clarify their own classroom practice and their personal theories of teaching and learning. Finally, programmes do not start with the idea that participant teachers must change or abandon current practices. As Freeman (1989) argues: "Change does not necessarily mean doing something differently; it can be an affirmation of current

practice; the teacher is, perhaps, unaware of doing something that is ineffective" (p.38)

Therefore, the focus is more on expanding and enhancing awareness. In second / foreign language teacher education, the referred aims are pursued through a number of methods. First, constructivists re-interpret the classical microteaching to see it more than a channel of conceptual development - a mixture of input, skills practice, experience and discussion, emphasising the importance of exploration and imitation. Sharing experiences and activities, which centres on self-awareness and explore participant teachers' learning experiences and personal theories, is an important part of constructivist approaches in second/foreign language teacher education.

Kolb's theory of experiential learning also falls within a constructivist framework. According to Kolb, there are four stages in the learning process:

- concrete experience: full involvement in new experiences;
- reflective observation: reflection on new experience from different perspectives;
- abstract conceptualisation: the integration of observations into logically sound theories;

- active experimentation: making decisions and solving problems based on these theories (adapted by Roberts, 1998, p.33).

This cycle is particularly helpful as it suggests an ongoing process which results in new schemas through the use of various tasks and activities.

Another method which reflects constructivist thought is mentoring with experienced teachers working with novice teachers. An effective mentor uses skilful questioning to explore teachers' personal theories, showing participant teachers ways to filter or interpret training interventions or input "so that this fits in with their framework of thinking about teaching" (Roberts, 1998, p.27). This process suggests a need on the part of the participants to uncover their implicit personal theories as a way of enabling them to build on prior constructs. Teachers learn when they are able to reflect on and test out their personal theories through direct experience. Thus, experiential learning and reflection on which experience together with received input are key features of the "reflective approach" (Wallace, 1991: 12) to second/foreign language teacher education as illustrated in Figure 1.
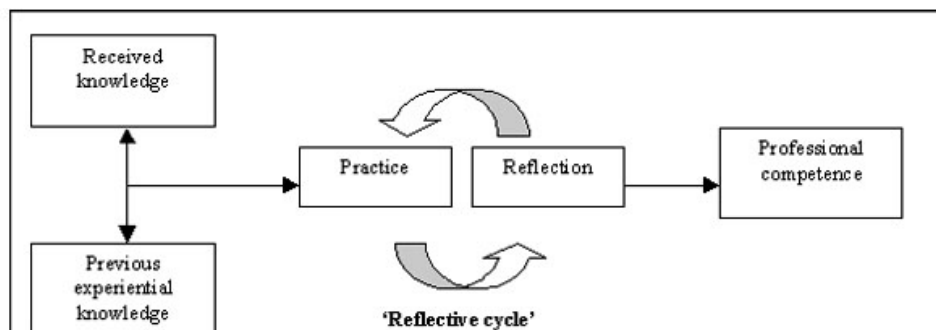

Figure 1: Reflective model   **Source: Wallace (1991, p.15)**

However, the cognitive structuring process is as much individual as context-bound. This means that "we cannot understand an individual's cognitive structure without observing in interacting in a context, within a culture…We do not act alone: humans are social beings" (Twomey Fosnot, 1996, p.24). Such view is reflected in a sociocultural view of constructivism.

Social Constructivist Approach

Based on the work carried out by Vygotsky, Bruner and Feurstein, *social interactionism* sees the individual as born into a social world, and thus learning occurs through social interactions with other people (Dmitri, 1986).

This is in contrast with the views of the individual constructivist approach expressed by Piaget and others. A claim is made that our mental representations are not only internal but also dependent on the mental representations of others and rules and restrictions that society imposes on the roles a person can adopt (McMahon, 1997).

Therefore, learning to teach is not an internally constructed process with a set of techniques and some specialist knowledge but rather a social process, involving the adoption of a social role. For teachers, this means that they selectively acquire the values and attitudes, interests, skills and knowledge of their professional group. This implies a need for teachers to assess "the relationship between their work and wider social conditions" (Roberts, 1998, p.44). Thus, the teachers' context is not perceived as a constraint but rather as a challenge within which appropriate methodologies need to be evaluated.

Evidently, the application of social constructivism in the field of second/foreign language teacher education reveals that social constructivism focuses on the importance of knowledge constructed within and with the help of the group. This is supplemented with teachers sharing and contrasting ideas, agreeing and disagreeing, etc. The group of teachers in question may also be widened by joining forces with other participants in the education system, in the form of a wider learning community (Gredler, 1997).

The recognition of dialogue as central to teacher learning is not new. The experiential learning cycle and the humanistic perspectives also recognise the importance of talk in learning. However, according to Roberts (1998, p.45), within a social constructivist framework, dialogue is seen as particularly valuable, in that it is collaborative, task-focused and offers teachers the chance to clarify their own personal theories and social relationships. Activities which help promote social interaction and construction include awareness raising tasks, e.g. problem-solving, which involves past experience, current beliefs and knowledge, direct personal experience in the form of microteaching and teaching practice with opportunities for reflection in and on these activities through structured observations, journal writing, etc.

Within this approach, as within the other person-centred approaches, there is apparently a shift in emphasis from that of training to that of development.

Conclusion and Recommendation

In this paper, the author has discussed

two basic approaches to second/foreign language teacher education. Teachers, aware of these principles not, could revisit and reflect on how they gain insights into their professional practice. Then, they may have to adopt the approach that best fits their learning and teaching context in which the combination of these fundamental approaches may be possible.

It could be argued that model based learning, the applied science approach and humanistic as well as individual constructivist approaches fail to take into account the public face of teaching and social imperatives. Learning a second/foreign language does require the importance of culture and context in understanding what occurs in society as well as interaction with others and it is through this construction of knowledge that learning and understanding emerge (McMahon, 1997). This is congruent with Halliday (1985)'s approach to linguistics, in which the key concept is the "context of situation". The said "context" essentially obtains "through a systematic relationship between the social environment on the one hand, and the functional organization of language on the other" (Halliday, 1985: 11).

What should then be the more adequate framework for second/foreign language teacher education design? "Social constructivism" is thus proposed. This is because it is built on an individual constructivist's views of learning and also takes into consideration the context in which teachers live and work. Also, the notion of reflection is central in the constructivist approaches to teacher education. The author sees that it is truly the reflective model that informs most current second/foreign language teacher education. In addition, within

a framework of social constructivism (Gredler, 1997), four perspectives that inform how second/foreign language teachers could adequately facilitate learning lie. First, there exist the engrained cognitive tools, which focus on the learning of cognitive skills and strategies. Second, the idea-based elements, prioritising education on important concepts in the various disciplines, could expand learners' visions and become important foundations for learners' thinking and on construction of social meaning. Then, the pragmatic or emergent approach does assert that the implementation of social constructivism in class should be emergent as the need arises (Cobb, 1995). Finally, transactional or situated cognitive perspectives prevail. This perspective focuses on the relationship between the people and their environment. As humans are a part of the constructed environment, including social relationships; the environment is in turn one of the characteristics that constitutes the individual (Bredo, 1994). As we say, no man is an island. Therefore, with justification stated, this certain approach has well served as the author's own model of learning for second/foreign language teaching.

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