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SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION:  
THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHER COGNITIONS ABOUT  
THE CHARACTERISTICS AND PRACTICES OF EFFECTIVE ESL INSTRUCTORS

by

Kenneth Geoffrey Richter

A Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Major: English

The University of Memphis

August 2014

## **Dedication**

To mother, *sine qua non*.

## Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I would like to thank my mother. She gave me life, which was really quite the nicest thing anyone has ever done for me. And she has spent every moment since looking after me, in one way or another. And she read to me when I was a child. I love you, mom. Thank you for everything.

I would like to thank my father, a brilliant man who worked hard for his family and who introduced new knowledge into our home every day. I hope he would be proud of me.

I would like to thank my brother and sister. Greg is the most intelligent person I've ever met. And most likely the kindest. Not a bad combination. Carolyn, no slouch herself in the intelligence department, is the hardest working, most perseverant, and one of the most loving people I know. I owe a large part of who I am to both of them.

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I would like to thank the members of my dissertation committee: Emily Thrush, Teresa Dalle, Charles Hall, and Mark Conley. It has been a privilege to work under them and to learn from them.

I would like to thank David Coronado, a dear friend and the finest language teacher I know. Many years ago, when I was first considering the idea of returning to



graduate school, he posed a very wise question. Pointing out that I was going to get older no matter what I did, he asked: “Would you rather be older with a doctorate, or older without one?” I’m much happier with one. Thanks for the push, T-Bone.

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## Abstract

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Second Language Teacher Education: The Development of Pre-Service Teacher  
Cognitions about the Characteristics and Practices of Effective ESL Instructors. Major  
Professor: Dr. Emily Thrush.

My dissertation explores the impact of second language teacher education on the development of the pedagogic beliefs held by student teachers enrolled in the University of Guanajuato's *Licenciatura en la Enseñanza de Inglés*. Specifically, my research investigates the origins of these students' pedagogic beliefs, the development of their beliefs over the course of the four-year language teacher program, and the convergence of their beliefs and professional practices.

The current research can be described as a synchronic, exploratory-descriptive study based on a cross-sectional investigation of participant beliefs. Repertory grid interviews were used as the primary method of data collection. The repertory grid technique (RGT or "rep grid") is the best known of several data solicitation instruments associated with the field of personal construct psychology. Data was subjected to both qualitative and quantitative inspection, including principal component and FOCUS analyses.

Despite the use of statistical interpretation, the RGT is firmly grounded in qualitative, constructivist assumptions. As with any qualitative research, conclusions are necessarily tentative and must be heavily caveated. However, a number of findings seem sufficiently robust to be worthy of mention. These include the following: LEI students do not appear to significantly change their pedagogic beliefs as a result of second language teacher education; LEI student beliefs about pedagogy look to be primarily concerned

with socio-affective aspects of teaching; LEI student attention seems to be as drawn to the personal characteristics and behaviors of their teachers as to the formal educational information these instructors provide; and LEI students tend not reflect on practice.

## Abbreviations and Acronyms

AL	applied linguistics
ELT	English language teaching
ESL	English as a second language. I use this term literally and also as a blanket term to cover both the field of ESL and EFL.
FL	foreign language
FOCUS	also referred to as “tree” or “hierarchal cluster” analysis
L2	second language
LEI	<i>Licenciatura en la Enseñanza de Inglés</i> . A BA program in second language teacher education offered at the University of Guanajuato.
LTE	language teacher education
PCA	principal component analysis
PCP	personal construct psychology
Rep grid	repertory grid technique
RGT	repertory grid technique
SLT	second language teaching
SLTE	second language teacher education
Student teachers	Also referred to as teachers-in-training, trainees, novices, and pre-service teachers. These latter labels are a bit inaccurate as all the LEI students in the current research are already practicing teachers. Therefore, the term “student teacher” is preferred.
Teachers	Unless otherwise noted, teachers here refers to second or foreign language teachers.
TESL	teaching English as a second language
UG	University of Guanajuato

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Second Language Teacher Education:  
The Development of Pre-Service Teacher Cognitions about  
the Characteristics and Practices of Effective ESL Instructors

**Introduction**

My dissertation research explores the impact of formal pedagogical training on pre-service teacher cognitions and practices. I am interested in the origin, content, and development of beliefs about the characteristics and pedagogical behaviors of “good” and “bad” second language teachers and in the degree of congruence between these beliefs and the classroom teaching of students enrolled in a SLTE program. Specifically, my work concerns the questions of how pedagogic beliefs are acquired, how they change (or don’t) over the course of a four-year language teacher program, and how (or if) beliefs and professional practices converge as students progress through their educations.

Teacher cognition research within the field of English language teaching springs from cognition research in general education. Over the last 20 years, the study of ELT cognition has grown into a well-established domain of research activity in its own right (Borg, 2006b). Concepts such as teachers’ practical knowledge, pedagogic content knowledge, and personal theories of teaching are now established components of our understanding of language teacher cognition. Findings from teacher cognition studies paint a picture of teaching as not simply the application of knowledge and learned skills, but as a more complex, cognitively-driven process affected by a number of variables, including the classroom context, the teacher’s general and specific instructional goals, the learners’ motivations and reactions to lessons, and the teacher’s management of critical moments during a lesson (Richards, 2008, p. 8). At the same time “teaching reflects the

teacher's personal response to such issues; hence teacher cognition is very much concerned with teachers' personal and 'situated' approaches to teaching" (Richards, 2008, p. 8).

The beliefs, thinking, knowledge, and decisions of pre-service language teachers have been studied from numerous perspectives (see Borg, 2006b). The role of cognition within the context of second language teacher education is an expanding area of interest. Research has examined issues such as the influence of prior educational and language learning experiences on teaching philosophies and practice (Bailey et al., 1996; Freeman, 1992; Golombock, 1998; Gutierrez Gutierrez Almarza, 1996; Johnson, 1994; Numrich, 1996); approaches to, perspectives on, and characterizations of teacher expertise (Tsui, 1998); beliefs about second language acquisition (Johnson, 1992, Kalaja & Barcelos, 2006); the formation of teacher identity (Miller, 2009; Varghese et al., 2005); and perceptions of initial teaching experiences (Johnson, 1996). Of particular importance to my own research are investigations concerning the impact of formal education on the development of teacher cognition among pre-service instructors (M. Borg, 2005; Borg, 1999a, 1999b, 2003, 2006, 2011; Debrel, 2012; Gürsoy, 2013; Hunt & Lasley, 2010; Johnson, 1994; Kagan, 1992; Mattheoudakis, 2007; Peacock, 2001; Pennington & Urmston, 1998; Richardson, 1996; Urmston, 2003; Von Wright, 1997; Yaman, 2010).

In the last 20 years or so, second language teacher education, as a whole, has tended to move away from an approach aimed at introducing teacher candidates to classroom techniques and skills to an approach in which teacher candidates are encouraged to develop their own pedagogic theories and to reflect on their own development as instructors (Richards & Nunan, 1990). Nonetheless, Von Wright (1997)

suggests that teacher training often produces "parallel models" or "separate line[s] of thought" whereby student teachers learn the rhetoric of their teacher education program without real development of their reflective capabilities and awarenesses (p. 264). The aim of my dissertation is essentially to test this proposition. I wish to better understand how pre-service teachers' beliefs about effective language teaching change over the course of a four-year SLTE program and if these beliefs inform professional practice or not.

### **Research Questions**

My study concerns students enrolled in a second language teacher education program at the University of Guanajuato in Mexico. Students who graduate from the four-year BA program (LEI, for its initials in Spanish) generally go on to teach English at public and private educational institutions throughout the country. The primary aim of my study is to explore the ways in which the LEI program influences these students' beliefs about effective L2 teaching.

Clark and Peterson (1986) divide research about teacher thinking into three categories: "teacher planning," "teachers' interactive thoughts and decisions," and "teachers' theories and beliefs." This current investigation falls into the authors' final category: it is an investigation into student cognitions. That is, it is concerned with what ELT students think, know, and believe about language pedagogy (Borg, 2006b). The qualities of "good teachers" and "good teaching" are the major focus of this research, as teacher training, in its most existential form, is concerned with the transfer of information about "good teaching" and "adequate teaching behavior," i.e., the place of the teacher in

“inducing learning processes in pupils and to the variables which play a role here at micro-, meso-, and macro-levels” (Corporaal, 1991, p. 316).

My primary research questions are as follows:

1. What is the content and structure of the research participants’ personal beliefs about effective English language teaching?
2. How do conceptions of effective teaching change over the course of a four-year SLTE program?
3. Where do pedagogical beliefs come from? Prior educational experiences, pedagogic training, institutional culture and constraints, other?
4. How do personal beliefs about effective English language teaching correlate with observed classroom practices? Do personal beliefs about effective English teaching and classroom practice converge as students progress through a four-year SLTE program?

The current investigation can be described as a synchronic, exploratory-descriptive study based on data obtained through survey research. Because it compares six discrete teacher cohorts, the design can be characterized as cross sectional.

### **Significance of the Study**

It is hoped that the present study will positively contribute to the growing literature about foreign language teacher cognition and its relationship to pedagogy. I believe this research may be significant for a number of reasons. The first set of reasons is rather general and has to do with how my research may help to advance understandings of language teacher cognition within the context of SLTE. The second set of reasons is

quite specific, having to do with the practical problem of improving language teacher education in Mexico and, in particular, at the University of Guanajuato.

**Importance of cognition research on second language teacher education.**

Historically speaking, there has been little research conducted regarding the field of SLTE and much less regarding teacher cognition. In 1998, Freeman and Johnson reported that less than 10% of the articles published in *TESOL Quarterly* between 1980 and 1997 focused on the subject of language teacher preparation. In 2000, Schulz conducted a similar search in the *Modern Language Journal* and concluded that “FL teacher preparation is still long on rhetoric, opinions, and traditional dogma, and short on empirical research that attempts to verify those opinions or traditional practice” (pp. 516–17). As late as 2001, MacDonald could write that teacher education in the field has been relatively little studied. MacDonald at that time was only able to identify one study of an SLA course on student teacher cognitions. In recent years, more attention has been paid to the field. By 2010, Barkhulzen and Borg could state that “there has been a substantial increase in the volume of research directed at understanding how and what teachers learn, and we now appreciate in much more sophisticated ways the complex processes entailed in becoming, being, and developing as a language teaching professional” (p. 237). However, the authors go on to note that “despite significant advances in research on LTE ... it remains an emergent field of inquiry, one not yet characterized by a well-defined research agenda and a programmatic approach to research” (p. 237).

While the core literature concerning teacher cognition in the field of language instruction is composed of hundreds of books and articles dating back to the mid-1970s (see Borg, 2006b), there has been surprisingly little research into the congruence between

the beliefs and professional practices of language teachers or into how teacher education impacts either of these. Given that the *raison d'être* of training programs is to create successful teachers, and given the interplay between beliefs and instructional practices, this represents a surprising lacuna in the research. For this reason, a number of writers have called for further research to be carried out on SLTE (Borg 2003; Tarone & Allwright, 2005). It is my hope that my current investigation may usefully add to the research base.

**Improving SLTE in Mexico.** Language teacher cognition research is notable for its limited geographical diversity. Pre-service language teacher cognition has only been examined in a small handful of countries, with perhaps a third of the studies conducted in the United States. A number of interesting, recent studies have been carried out in Turkey. Other studies have been conducted in the United Kingdom, Hong Kong, Canada, Singapore, Germany, Turkey, Malta, Hungary, Australia, New Zealand, Columbia, Oman, Brazil, Greece, the Netherlands, Puerto Rico, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka (see Borg, 2006b). Cognition research in Mexico, however, has been negligible (see Cundale, 2001; Johnson, 2004; Negrete Cetina, 2009).

I work as a professor in the *Licenciatura de la Enseñanza de Inglés* at the University of Guanajuato in Mexico. The UG's language teacher program is only one of a handful of university-level SLTE programs in Mexico and enjoys a good reputation. All the graduates of the program who wish to find work as English language teachers do so, and so in that sense the program is a great success. However, little or nothing is actually known about the program's success at creating effective teachers. We know from assessments that our students learn a great deal about the nomenclature of language



teaching, and we know from observations of their teaching that they can often emulate the practices they have been taught. But we have little valid information about how their beliefs concerning L2 instruction develop as a result of their sustained presence in our program, or if those beliefs impact their teaching practices.

My hope is that research into these areas may help to inform curricular and programmatic decisions. The ability to measure changes in student conceptions of teaching practice has obvious implications both in terms of guiding and advising our students as they progress through the program and in terms of evaluating the effects of the program on student learning (Proctor, 1989). Hart (2002) argues that it is imperative “that teacher education programs assess their effectiveness, at least in part, on how well they nurture beliefs that are consistent with the program’s philosophy of learning and teaching” (p. 4). In the same spirit, Minor, Onwuegbuzie, Witcher, and James (2002) correctly observe,

...knowing pre-service teachers’ perceptions of effective teachers and teaching is a necessary precondition for identifying program experiences that require candidates to confront their own beliefs and to consider the appropriateness of those beliefs in the context of the research, promising practice, psychological theories, and philosophical beliefs that underpin professional goals and practice. (p. 117)

At the moment, the LEI’s curriculum committee (on which I sit) is working to review, rethink and revise the program. My dissertation research fits within the framework of this revision process and has the potential to significantly impact how language teaching is taught at the University of Guanajuato.

## **Organization**

This study is divided into six chapters: introduction; literature review; methodology; results; discussion; and conclusion. Here, I briefly discuss the contents of each of these sections.

### **I. Introduction**

In this chapter, I have attempted to explain the rationale for the present study. My research aims at understanding LEI students' understandings of effective language teaching. Specifically, I am interested in the origin, content, and development of student beliefs about the characteristics and behaviors of good language teachers and how these beliefs inform teaching practice. It is my hope that my dissertation work will contribute to the literature of cognitive research on SLTE and will have a positive impact on the LEI program at the University of Guanajuato.

### **II. Literature Review**

In this chapter, I review research relevant to the most pertinent issues in this study:

The first section is concerned with the following questions:

What is belief? What do we know about teacher beliefs? Where do teachers' beliefs come from? And to what degree do teachers' beliefs inform classroom practice?

The second section discusses what it means to be a language teacher and what it means to be a *good* language teacher. This section begins by exploring the idea of disciplinary differences

and then considers the domain specific characteristics of ESL. I review the history of linguistics, applied linguistics, and second language acquisition and discuss their influence on both ESL's disciplinary characteristics and the field's conceptions of good teaching. I conclude by considering beliefs about the characteristics and pedagogical actions of effective instructors from a number of perspectives, including those of students, pre-service teachers, and in-service teachers, both within and without the ESL discipline.

In the third section, I conclude the literature review with a brief overview of research concerning teacher expertise generally and language teacher expertise specifically.

### **III. Methodology**

In this study, I adopt a constructivist, interpretative perspective on conceptualizing student teacher thinking. I rely on George Kelly's (1955) repertory grid technique as my primary data elicitation instrument in order to better understand pre-service teachers' pedagogic beliefs. The repertory grid technique (RGT or "rep grid") is the best known of several data solicitation instruments associated with the field of personal construct psychology. In the methodology chapter, I briefly review PCP and then discuss how repertory grid interviews are conducted. I provide three short case studies as examples of rep grids in use. I conclude the chapter by providing both a general explanation

and a detailed audit of how this current study was carried out. Using rep grids, observations, questionnaires and follow-up interviews, I collected cross-sectional data from four student cohorts, each group representing a different level of the LEI's four-year program. I also interviewed graduates of the program and practicing teachers who lack formal teacher training. Data was analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively.

#### **IV. Results**

Here, I present the findings from my study. Data was principally analyzed using principal component and FOCUS analyses.

#### **V. Discussion**

Here, I synthesize the results and answer my major research questions. I interpret findings with respect to their relationship to the literature and their implications for the LEI program.

#### **VI. Conclusion**

In the final chapter, I summarize my study and highlight major findings, discuss limitations of the study, and offer suggestions for further research.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

#### Teacher Beliefs

The idea that teachers' beliefs influence pedagogic decision-making and practice is one of the few uncontroversial claims found in the teacher cognition literature (Arnett & Turnbull, 2007; Basturkmen, 2012; Basturkmen, Loewen, & Ellis, 2004; Borg, 2011; Cundale, 2001; Davis, 2003; Farrell & Lim, 2005; Johnson, 1994; Richardson, 1996; Richards & Lockhart, 1994). Also uncontroversial is the general understanding that the relationship between beliefs and practice is bi-directional: while beliefs guide actions, action and reflection on action can bring about changes to beliefs (Basturkmen, 2012; Breen, Hird, Milton, Oliver, & Thwaite, 2001; Sato & Kleinsasser, 2004). In sum, "We know that what language teachers do is underpinned and influenced by a range of pre-active, interactive, and post-active ... cognitions which they have" (Borg, 2006b, p. 275).

Beyond these points of agreement, however, lie a host of issues that remain unresolved. For instance, while there exists something like unanimous agreement that what teachers do is a "reflection of what they know and believe" (Richards & Lockhart, 1994, p. 29), there is remarkably little agreement as to what "beliefs" actually are; they have been variously described, for instance, as axioms, ideologies, perceptions, personal theories, rules for practice, and repertoires of understanding (Pajares, 1992). Similarly, there is very little agreement as to how beliefs are formed. Scholars have investigated the impact of early educational experiences, professional socialization, social and institutional contexts, and teacher education on the formation of teachers' pedagogical beliefs. Finally, there continues to be disagreement about the degree to which teachers'

beliefs influence classroom behavior. Social norms and situational factors have been implicated in the oft-observed incongruence between principles and practice. In this section, each of these controversies will be examined.

**What are teacher beliefs?** Teacher cognition research is overburdened by the plentitude of terms used to describe similar (often identical) concepts. In his much-cited, comprehensive review of the literature concerning the concept of belief, Pajares (1992) bemoaned the fact that the term was so ill-defined. He wrote that although the impact of beliefs on instructional practice was widely acknowledged, research into teacher belief was inhibited by the lack of any clear, agreed-upon definition of the concept: “The construct of educational belief is ... broad and encompassing. For purposes of research, it is diffuse and ungainly, too difficult to operationalize, too context free” (p. 316). Pajares writes that defining beliefs is at best a game of “player's choice” and proceeds to catalog a sampling of concepts from educational psychology that “travel in disguise ... often under alias”: attitudes, values, judgments, axioms, opinions, ideology, perceptions, conceptions, conceptual systems, preconceptions, dispositions, implicit theories, explicit theories, personal theories, internal mental processes, action strategies, rules of practice, practical principles, perspectives, repertoires of understanding, and social strategies (p. 27).

Borg (2006a) demonstrates that 15 years on from Pajares' observations, the situation had not improved: in his exhaustive review of teacher cognition literature, he notes that the field continues to be characterized by an overwhelming array of concepts. Borg identifies over thirty of these, including varying understandings of belief, cognition, conceptions, images, knowledge, orientations, schemata, and theories.

Discussing the difficulty of precisely classifying constructs, Pajares (1992) cites Hunter Lewis' dictum that "In the world of human thought, the most fruitful concepts are those to which it is impossible to attach a well-defined meaning" (p. 308). If this is true, then the concept of "belief" is fruitful, indeed. The number of definitions that have been attached to belief is a testament to the essential impossibility of satisfactorily describing it. Kagan (1992) defines teachers' beliefs as "tacit, often unconsciously held assumptions about students, classrooms, and the academic material to be taught" (p. 62) but notes that the term "teacher belief" is not used consistently, "with some researchers referring instead to principles of practice, personal epistemologies, perspectives, practical knowledge, or orientations" (p. 66). Richardson (1996) defines beliefs as "psychologically held understandings, premises and propositions about the world" that are accepted as true by the individual holding the belief (pp. 103-104). Zheng (2009) defines beliefs as "permeable and dynamic structures that act as a filter through which new knowledge and experience are screened for meaning" (p. 74). Borg (2011) suggests that beliefs are "propositions individuals consider to be true and which are often tacit, have a strong evaluative and affective component, provide a basis for action, and are resistant to change" (p. 2). A number of other definitions have been proposed:

1. "... language teachers' beliefs [are] propositions about all aspects of their work which teachers hold to be true or false" (Phipps & Borg, 2009, p. 381).
2. Belief is "an attitude consistently applied to an activity" (as cited in Farrell & Lim, 2005, p. 2).
3. "... the term [belief] is generally used to refer to evaluative propositions which teachers hold consciously or unconsciously and which they accept as

- true while recognizing that other teachers may hold alternative beliefs on the same issue” (Borg, 2001).
4. “... the term beliefs is defined as statements teachers [make] about their ideas, thoughts, and knowledge that are expressed as evaluations of what ‘should be done,’ ‘should be the case,’ and ‘is preferable’” (Basturkmen, Loewen, & Ellis, 2004).
  5. Belief systems are “values ... about what ought to be the case” (Linde, 1980, as cited in Woods, 1996, p. 70).
  6. Beliefs are “a filter through which teachers make instructional decisions” (Shavelson & Stern, 1981).
  7. Beliefs are an “individual’s judgment of truth or falsity of a proposition, a judgment that can only be inferred from a collective understanding of what human beings say, intend, and do” (Pajares, 1992, p. 316).
  8. “A belief is a way to describe a relationship between a task, an action, an event, or another person and an attitude of a person towards it” (Eisenhart, Shrum, Harding, & Cuthbert, 1988).
  9. Beliefs are a “complex and inter-related system of personal and professional knowledge that serves as implicit theories and cognitive maps for experiencing and responding to reality. Beliefs rely on cognitive and affective components and are often tacitly held” (Murphy, 2000, p. 16).
  10. Beliefs are “a set of conceptual representations which signify to its holder a reality or given state of affairs of sufficient validity, truth or trustworthiness to



warrant reliance upon it as a guide to personal thought and action” (Harvey, 1986, as cited in Cabaroglu & Roberts, 2000).

Another problem in defining belief is that there may well be different classes or kinds of beliefs. Several systemic models of belief premised on this basic insight propose that certain categories of beliefs are cognitively discrete. Green (1971, as cited in Richardson, 1996) posited that beliefs are held in clusters, and each cluster may or may not interact with others in the system. Green’s model furnishes a plausible understanding of how individuals can maintain incompatible or inconsistent beliefs: as long as any two incompatible beliefs are never held to the light and examined for consistency, the incompatibility may remain. Refining Green’s model, other researchers have hypothesized a hierarchy of beliefs in which “core” principles are held more strongly than “peripheral” principles. In this model, core beliefs are normative, stable, and exert a more powerful influence on behavior than peripheral beliefs (Bangou, Fleming, & Goff-Kfour, 2011; Phipps & Borg, 2009). Peripheral beliefs, on the other hand, are malleable principles that are more adaptable to shifting contexts (Breen et al., 2001). This model is consonant with Kelly’s (1955) personal construct psychology, in which the grand majority of beliefs are subordinate to some beliefs and superordinate to others (see Chapter 3, Methodology). Those beliefs at the top of a person’s hierarchal “construct system” govern identity:

Such constructs lie fundamentally at the heart of the individual’s sense of self, guiding each anticipatory choice, action and stance they may take. ...

Compared to constructs at a lower level, core constructs appear to remain invariably stable, leading individuals to determinedly preserve a core

belief about self, even in the face of invalidating evidence, rather than seek an alternative construction ... (Butler, 2006, p. 3)

In Kelly's model of personality, core constructs exist at a low level of awareness, hiding "under the radar," where they are less threatened by evidence that might controvert them (Leitner & Thomas, 2003). Although it is unusual to explicitly identify our core constructs, Kelly argued that all action either seeks to validate them, or seeks to avoid their invalidation (Butler, 2006).

Hierarchical models such as those outlined above help explain the oft-observed disjoint between beliefs and action: while individuals may espouse one belief, in reality they may act in accord with deeper, more core beliefs.

Accurately defining belief, then, is problematic: researchers cannot decide on the exact nature of the concept or even if "beliefs" are a uni- or multi-dimensional construct. Precisely defining the notion of belief may, however, not matter overmuch. Indeed, taxonomic debates over the terminology of educational psychology are probably counter-productive. First, such debates disguise the substantial overlap that exists between competing terms and definitions. Collectively, the definitions above highlight the multi-faceted nature of the concept (Borg, 2003) and the fact that beliefs are personal, practical, systematic, dynamic and often unconscious (Phipps, 2010). Second, such debates ignore the reality of how teachers understand their own beliefs. It is almost certainly true that teachers themselves do not make fine-grained distinctions between their knowledge, beliefs, perceptions, assumptions, insights, etc. Verloop, Van Driel, and Maijer (2001) argue that in the mind of the teacher, components of knowledge, beliefs, conceptions, and intuitions are inextricably intertwined. Hence, the authors conclude, the purpose of

research should not be to disentangle these threads, but rather to focus attention on “the complex totality of cognitions, the ways this develops, and the way this interacts with teacher behavior in the classroom” (p. 446). Phipps (2010) concurs, adding “While this stand is unlikely to solve the ... epistemological debate, it does reflect a constructivist view of teachers and teaching” (p. 17).

Each of the definitions listed above, then, is serviceable. A higher degree of exactitude or an attempt at disambiguation is probably counterproductive. As Borg (2006a) points out, terminological imprecision, while contested on philosophical grounds, is often the tacit position taken in the major reviews of teacher cognition. Indeed, in their review of teachers’ beliefs in second and foreign language teaching, Arnett and Turnbull (2007) note that the majority of studies “cited research and terminology that could be understood as shaping their conception of the construct but did not explain their exact position on how they then synthesized this information ...” (p. 16).

This last point reflects the essential messiness of categorization. Because achieving consensus about terminology is so improbable (likely impossible), at some point researchers have to put the issue aside. An obsessive emphasis on resolving the problem of definitional rigor steals time away from a discussion of the subject at hand. To wit, I am concerned with how pre-service teachers express the “complex totality” of their cognitions. The careful delineation and operationalization of terminology is less interesting to me than the precise identification and description of the views of my research participants. (How accurate accounts of students’ beliefs might be elicited is the subject of the methodology section, below.) For this reason, in the present research, I make no attempt to operationalize the term “belief” and instead use it loosely to refer to

teachers' pedagogic convictions that are relevant to their own learning and practice (Chiuan, 2003). I use the terms belief, view, conviction, concept, conceptualization, cognition, and principle (etc.) more or less interchangeably.

**Research into teacher beliefs.** The 1970s have been identified as the era that marked a critical turning point in how teachers were viewed in the research literature and by policy makers. "In many ways, this period marked a shift in the plate tectonics of educational research and policy and how teaching, learning, and schools were conceived in the United States and in the United Kingdom" (Freeman, 2002, p. 2).

One of the critical new areas of interest that emerged during this decade was teacher cognition. Educational research shifted from studies of teacher behavior to investigations of teachers' thought processes (Fang, 1996). A key moment in the development of this new line of research was a conference organized in 1975 by the National Institute of Education in the United States. The aim of this conference was to define a research agenda for the investigation of education and teaching. One working group was tasked with preparing a research plan centered on "Teaching as Clinical Information Processing" (TCIP). The group reported back that "...it is obvious that what teachers do is directed in no small measure by what they think," and thus "...the question of relationships between thought and action becomes crucial" (National Institute of Education, 1975, as cited in Borg, 2006b, p. 7).

Although by the late 1960s there was already significant interest in the influence of thinking on teacher behavior (Calderhead, 1996), the report by the TCIP working group is generally credited with marking the development of a new model for understanding the role of the instructor (Borg, 2006b; Phipps, 2010). Prior to 1975, the

dominant research paradigm for the study of instructional actions was the process-product approach. Research grounded in the process-product approach saw teaching as a complex of behaviors that were performed by instructors. Process-product research was primarily interested in understanding how these teacher behaviors impacted learning outcomes and focused on discovering which behaviors were the most effective.

When couched within a transmission model the process-product paradigm examined teaching in terms of the learning outcomes it produced. Process-product studies concentrated on the link, which was often assumed to be causal, between the teacher's actions and the students' mental processes. ... In product-process research the aim was to understand how teachers' action led – or did not lead – to student learning. (Freedman, 2002, p. 2)

Researchers such as those that participated in the Teaching as Clinical Information Processing group, however, rejected the process-product orientation. Influenced by constructivist and cognitivist trends in psychology, these researchers argued that teachers should be seen as active decision makers and that learning should be viewed as a process of cognitive development involving individual and social construction of knowledge (Fang 1996). This new perspective acknowledged the situated and social nature of learning and stressed that learning develops through the interaction and participation of teachers and students working together. The task of the teacher, then, was not to translate knowledge and theories into practice, but to construct “new knowledge and theory through participating in specific social contexts and engaging in particular types of activities and processes” (Richards, 2008, p. 6).

The TCIP report, crystallizing these views, argued that to understand instructors and their work, researchers had to understand the psychological processes through which teachers understood themselves and their professional practice. Instruction should not be seen as behavior, but as thoughtful behavior. Teachers were no longer to be viewed “as mechanical implementers of external prescriptions, but as active, thinking decision-makers, who processed and made sense of a diverse array of information in the course of their work” (Borg, 2006b, p. 7).

Today, the influence of teacher cognition on teaching practice is widely acknowledged. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (2009) reports in their *Teaching and Learning International Survey* (TALIS) that teachers’ beliefs and attitudes “...are closely linked to teachers’ strategies for coping with challenges in their daily professional life and to their general well-being, and they shape students’ learning environment and influence student motivation and achievement.” In their review of the literature, Phipps and Borg (2009) noted that there is ample evidence that teachers’ beliefs about teaching and learning

“... may be powerfully influenced (positively or negatively) by teachers’ own experiences as learners and are well established by the time teachers go to university; act as a filter through which teachers interpret new information and experience; may outweigh the effects of teacher education in influencing what teachers do in the classroom; can exert a persistent long-term influence on teachers’ instructional practices; are, at the same time, not always reflected in what teachers do in the classroom; interact bidirectionally with experience (i.e. beliefs influence practices and practices

can also lead to changes in beliefs); have a powerful effect on teachers' pedagogical decisions; strongly influence what and how teachers learn during language teacher education; [and] can be deep-rooted and resistant to change." (p. 381)

Research into cognition within the area of second language teaching generally lags behind developments in related fields. It has only been in the last 20 years or so that scholars in the discipline of ELT have taken up an interest in the question of teacher cognition. However, in this short time, teacher cognition has established itself as a major area of research (Andrews, 1997, 1999, 2001, 2003a, 2003b; Borg, 1998, 1999a, 1999b, 1999c, 1999d, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2011; Calderhead, 1996; de Silva, 2005; Freeman, 1993; Johnson, 1994; Johnson & Goettsch, 2000; Kagan, 1992, Munby, 1992; Peacock, 2001; Pennington & Urmston, 1998; Richardson, 1996; Tsui, 2005, 2011; Woods, 1996; et al.). Horwitz (1985) argued some 25 years ago that addressing the beliefs of student foreign language teachers should be "the first step in their development ..." (p. 333). It is now received wisdom in the field of ELT that understanding the belief structures of teachers and teacher candidates is essential to improving their professional preparation and teaching practices (Borg, 2006b; Pajares, 1992; Phipps, 2010).

**The origin of teachers' beliefs.** Two decades ago, Kagan (1992) argued that not enough was known about how a teacher's "personal pedagogy" evolves over the course of his or her career. Since that time, a raft of studies has investigated this issue. Although there are still no clear, unambiguous answers, a number of compelling findings have emerged. Arnett and Turnbull (2007) identify four potential sources of teacher beliefs: their experiences as language learners; their perceptions towards students; their

institutional environment; and their personal views on current practice. Andrews (2003) stresses the strong role that context plays with patterns of cognition and pedagogical practice: “Each teacher’s beliefs and practices are influenced not only by the macro-culture of society (and such factors as the syllabus, the textbooks, the examination system, the expectations of parents and student characteristics), but also the micro-culture of their particular institution” (p. 372). The participants in a case study carried out by Liu and Fisher (2006) identified academic, institutional, and curricular factors (e.g., school environment and atmosphere, course content and structure, and school placement) and cognitive, affective, and social factors (e.g., their relationships with their mentors and other professional staff, the role of reflection, and support from family and friends) as the primary drivers of change and professional growth (p. 343).

In general, the literature describes three primary hypotheses about the origins of teachers’ beliefs. It is argued that FL teacher beliefs are generated and developed by (1) pre-service experiences with learning in general and with language learning in particular; (2) in-service teaching; and (3) teacher education. I will consider each of these in turn.

***Pre-service experiences: The apprenticeship of observation.*** According to Lortie (1975), teacher socialization begins not when pre-service teachers commence their formal educational courses but the day they first enter school as children. Lortie coined the now famous neologism “apprenticeship of observation” to denote the internalization of teacher roles, identities, and practices that takes place over the course of a student’s education. These beliefs about teaching constitute what have been referred to as “folk pedagogies” (a term which emphasizes the cultural dimension of how students come to understand



teaching) and as “personal history-based lay theories” (a term which emphasizes how views of teaching are shaped by personal experience) (Joram & Gabriele, 1998).

According to Johnson (1999), for pre-service and in-service teachers, the apprenticeship of observation encompasses two types of memories, the first having to do with how they experienced their earlier roles as students (how students are supposed to talk and act) and the second having to do with how teachers remember their own instructors (how these teachers acted and how they approached the work of teaching and learning). Johnson writes that “Unknowingly, these memories become the basis of our initial conceptions of ourselves as teachers, influence our view of students, formulate the foundation of our reasoning, and act as justifications for our teaching practices” (p. 19). In Johnson’s words, certain dimensions of the apprenticeship of observation become “tacitly embodied” in teachers’ classroom practices (p. 22). Gutierrez Almarza (1996), reporting on evidence from a large corpus of data, supports this view that teachers tend to recall and build on their own experiences as students. The author found that the participants in her own study of student language teachers “had memories of their language learning experiences on which they built an initial conceptualization of their profession” (p. 56). Freeman (1992) sees these memories as “de facto guides for teachers as they approach what they do in the classroom” (p. 3).

Educational experiences are deeply ingrained. Lortie (1975) calculated that before a student has finished his or her education, they have been exposed to some 13,000 hours of educational practice. Kennedy (1990) writes that by the time students complete a bachelor’s degree, they have observed teachers and participated in their work for more than 3,000 days. Kennedy concludes that as a result of this exposure, “Teachers acquire

seemingly indelible imprints ... and these imprints are tremendously difficult to shake” (p. 17). Nias (1989, as cited in John, 1996) indicates that these impressions are so powerful that even very experienced teachers continue to be deeply affected by them, “a factor which shows not only the longevity of such experiences but also attests to their depth and intensity” (p. 92).

For non-native speakers (and for native speakers who have learned second languages) this “cultural scripting” (Stigler & Hiebert, 1999, as cited in Helterbran, 2008) often includes experiences in the language classroom. Phipps (2010) identifies three ways that prior language learning experiences can impact language teacher beliefs:

Firstly, teachers may unconsciously adopt aspects of practices inherent to their particular educational system. Thus, teachers in Puerto Rico and Hong Kong, who themselves had learnt English through more traditional instruction, tended to believe in the value of formal instruction and an expository approach (Eisenstein-Ebsworth & Schweers 1997; Richards & Pennington 1998). Secondly, teachers may avoid certain practices because of negative experiences they themselves had. Both Golombek (1998) and Nurnrich (1996), in studies of pre-service teachers in the USA, found that teachers tended to avoid explicit error correction because their own experiences of being corrected during language learning had been negative. Thirdly, teachers' beliefs may be influenced by their own perception of factors which help or hinder their own learning. Farrell (1999), for example, in a study of pre-service teachers in Singapore, found that some teachers rejected a

deductive approach to teaching grammar as they felt it had not worked for them, while others adopted such an approach as it had worked for them. (p. 30)

Studies in the field of ELT support the view that prior language learning experiences affect language teacher beliefs about instruction. Here, I review a few of these studies.

After writing “learning autobiographies” and critically analyzing their own language learning experiences, Bailey et al. (1996) concluded that “the memories of instruction gained through the apprenticeship of observation” were a powerful influence on teaching practice. Numrich (1996) reviewed pre-service teachers’ language learning histories in conjunction with their diary entries. Her findings show that the effect of learning a second language carried over to the students’ practice teaching. For instance, 27% of the trainees reported that integrating culture into their classrooms was important to them. “Those who had had positive learning experiences in studying culture as they learned another language were motivated to introduce elements of ... culture in their teaching of ESL” (p. 138). At the same time, an equal number rejected error correction as a pedagogical technique because of prior negative experiences. Farrell’s (1999) investigation of the pedagogical beliefs of five Singaporean pre-service teachers found that such students “... enter a teacher education program with an accumulation of prior experiences, in the form of beliefs, that may be resistant to change” (p. 3). Indeed, Farrell’s research demonstrated that all five participants’ approaches to grammar instruction were heavily influenced by their prior backgrounds as language students. Research by Johnson (1994) demonstrates the influence of prior language study on

teachers' classroom practice even more clearly. Johnson concludes that the pre-service teachers in her study ...

... judged the appropriateness of certain theories, methods, and materials in terms of their own first hand experiences as second language learners. Furthermore, the extent to which they had accepted or rejected the content of their teacher preparation courses appeared to rest on their prior formal and informal language learning experiences. (pp. 445-446)

In her study of novice teachers, Cochran-Smith (1991) explained that her research participants' moved away from the kinds of humanistic views often stressed in teacher education programs and became "custodial," i.e., "seeing students less as friends and individuals and more as students to be controlled by the authoritarian teacher" (p. 106). The author attributed this finding to the student teachers' prior experiences as learners. "Although they may express humanistic views in their formal pedagogical classes at the university, when the student teachers move into the classroom their preexisting beliefs prevail" (p. 117).

Hassan (2013) is quite critical of the negative effect that prior beliefs had on the instructional practices of the student teachers in his investigation:

... it is evident from their classroom observations that they teach exactly in the way as they were taught, i.e., the structural method of teaching. Their classroom atmosphere was quite strict, as there was restricted participation of students. The syllabus was followed rigidly without keeping in mind the different learning styles of their students. Furthermore

... their students [were] passive listeners, as they used to be in their own classes. (p. 33)

Ariogul (2007), on the other hand, saw how the student teachers in his study benefited from their prior classroom experiences as second language learners. He notes that their dynamic and negotiation-based understanding of language acquisition had, in part, been developed by their prior learning experiences. When these student teachers struggled to understand their students, “their identities as former language learners helped them in the process of their decision making and instruction” (p. 177).

***In-service teaching: Socio-cultural and situational influences on teacher beliefs.*** A range of studies demonstrates that newly-minted teachers entering their classrooms for the first time often experience a type of “reality shock” (Farrell, 2006, p. 211). Ideas about teaching that were formed in teacher-training courses suddenly bump up against an array of often unexpected social, micro-cultural, institutional, instructional, and physical pressures. Immediately upon entering their professions, new teachers are expected to assume all the responsibilities of an experienced instructor, often with little or no support. Fantilli and McDougall (2009), citing Maciejewski (2007) and Halford (1998), describe the socialization of new teachers as a “sink or swim” affair in a profession that “eats its young” (p. 814). In general education literature, it has been noted that novice teachers continue to leave the field because of inadequate socialization structures (Joiner & Edwards, 2008).

Those teachers that do stay in the profession generally undergo a pronounced shift in attitude that in turn impacts their teaching practices (Brouwer & Korthagen, 2005, p. 155). Commenting on their study of novice teachers, Munby and Russell (1992, as cited

in Richardson, 1996) concluded that learning through experience involves the development of new cognitive frames and that some new instructors are more capable of reframing their conceptions of practice than others (p. 110). Nespor (1987) highlighted the durability of these conceptions, noting that critical experiences gained early in a novice teacher's career tend to have a large and lasting influence on later teaching practices (p. 320).

How new instructors come to view their pedagogical work is influenced by at least five inter-related factors: macro-cultural understandings of teaching; micro-cultural influences at the institutional level; individual and group-level characteristics of students; classroom environment or "ecology"; and interaction with colleagues. Andrews (2006) explains that such influences are not deterministic but rather interactive: individuals both act on and adapt to their environments. In this section, I briefly consider how each of these five factors influences teacher understandings of practice.

It is uncontroversial to note that socio-cultural contexts have an influence on teachers' thinking and professional practices, and there is considerable empirical evidence to support this claim. The OECD's TALIS (2009) compared perspectives on conditions of teaching and learning in 16 OECD and seven partner countries. Findings indicated that the influence of culture, national school systems, and pedagogical traditions on teachers' beliefs and practices is "exceptionally high" (p. 96). Indeed, 25% of the variation in teachers' constructivist beliefs and more than 50% of the variation in teachers' direct transmission beliefs are accounted for by variance between countries. For instance, in northwest Europe, Scandinavia, Australia, and Korea, teachers are inclined to see students as active participants in the process of acquiring knowledge. Instructors in

southern Europe, Brazil, and Malaysia, on the other hand, tend to see themselves as transmitters of knowledge and the providers of “correct solutions” (p. 88). In the same vein, the culture of education in many Asian countries is notoriously conservative; great store is placed on transmission models of teaching, high-stakes exams, and rote learning (Andrews, 2003; Chiuan, 2003; Gorsuch, 2000; Ng & Farrell, 2003; Pennington & Urmston, 1998). In Japan, for instance, *yakudoku* has traditionally been the dominant foreign language learning pedagogy. *Yakudoku* is characterized as overwhelmingly concerned with grammatical form and with the translation of English literary texts into Japanese, with little or no attention paid to developing the skills of listening, speaking, or communication (Gorsuch, 2000, p. 676). The educational culture is much the same in Hong Kong. Pennington and Urmston (1998), in their investigation of pre-service teachers in that city, found that the views of the graduating TESL instructors they had studied “were not greatly affected by their coursework but were rather largely a reflection of the teaching culture of the Hong Kong education context” (p. 34).

Cultural ideas about pedagogy are reified by a country’s educational system. These systems have been described as a complex of “nested layers” that dampen and disperse any efforts to modify national teaching beliefs and practices (Gorsuch, 2000). This is certainly true in Mexico, the site of the current study, where the national curriculum is set by the *Secretaría de Educación Pública*.

Teachers’ beliefs may also be shaped by the socio-cultural forces of a particular work environment. The process of entering the micro-culture of an educational institution and internalizing its norms and expectations is often referred to as socialization, although the term enculturation also seems apt. The latter term comes from cultural anthropology

and refers to “an encompassing” of an individual by the surrounding culture (Grusec & Hastings, 2008, p. 547). The anthropologist Conrad Kottack (2004) defines enculturation as

... the process where the culture that is currently established teaches an individual the accepted norms and values of the culture in which the individual lives. The individual can become an accepted member and fulfill the needed functions and roles of the group. Most importantly the individual knows and establishes a context of boundaries and accepted behavior that dictates what is acceptable and not acceptable within the framework of that society. It teaches the individual their role within society as well as what is accepted behavior within that society and lifestyle. (p. 209, as cited in Reed, Lane, & van der Leeuw, p. 52)

Enculturation is often contrasted with the concept of socialization, which comes from the field of sociology. Originally, socialization referred to the process of how an individual was deliberately shaped by members of a community through some form of tutelage. However, in developmental and social psychology, the concept now often refers to both the informal aspects of enculturation and the more purposive aspects of socialization (Grusec & Hastings, 2008). In educational research, the term socialization is preferred, and thus in this current study that locution is employed with the proviso that I mean it to convey both the implicit and explicit aspects of the socio-cultural pressures teachers encounter in their work.

The influence of the socio-cultural environment in specific schools is a matter of debate. On the one hand, the OECD’s TALIS (2009) reports that beliefs about instruction



seem to be relatively unaffected by “socialization within the school, the influence of colleagues and superiors, and other school-level factors” (p. 96). The report explains this by underlining the lasting impact of initial education on cognitive development. It also suggests that school-level variables may have different effects on different teachers depending on their personal characteristics. On the other hand, the majority of research highlights the impact of school context on teacher beliefs. Many studies recount the process by which new teachers become socialized into a professional culture with shared goals, values, and standards of conduct (Calderhead, 1992, p. 6). Hayes (2008) writes that “Every school has a culture of norms, values, and ideas to which teachers are expected to subscribe...” (p. 58).

The literature on institutional socialization demonstrates how school cultures can have both positive and negative effects on teachers’ beliefs and practices. Positively speaking, a given educational culture defines the framework of beliefs which furnishes a “normative basis for action and ultimately holds teachers professionally accountable for the many tasks involved in educating students” (Grimmet & Crehan, 1992, p. 60). Negatively speaking, rigid work schemes (generally based on approved textbooks and in-house supplemental materials) and the supervision and surveillance that oversee them may be major constraints on teachers’ capacity to make their own decisions (Benson, 2010, p. 273). One illustration of the deleterious effects of school culture on teacher autonomy comes from Farrell (2006), who recounts the experiences of an ESL teacher in Singapore as he transitioned from an education program to life in a real classroom. Farrell’s research participant, Wee Jin, quickly came to understand that his ideas about

student-centered, communicative teaching were untenable within the micro-culture of his new school.

Students have been identified as another influence on teacher development. Richards (2008) writes that “the course room is a setting for patterns of social participation that can either enhance or inhibit learning” (p. 7). Here, “teaching” could easily be substituted for “learning.” Zeichner and Gore (1989) write that based on classroom studies and research into teacher socialization, there is “little question” that instructors’ relationships with students and their conceptions of student characteristics, expectations, and behaviors influence the nature of their professional growth. Citing Haller (1967) and Doyle (1979), the authors argue that the important role of students in teacher socialization is comprehensible given that during class hours, most teachers are isolated from their colleagues and supervisors and thus rely on their pupils as their main source of feedback. Arnett and Turnbull (2007) make the strong argument that teacher perceptions towards students can be considered as a dominant source of teaching beliefs (p. 821). Findings from Doyle (1979) support this view: the author notes that students influence teachers’ approaches to teaching and patterns of language, as well as the frequency and kind of particular teaching techniques. In a study of five novice teachers, Richards and Pennington (1998) reported on how the new instructors quickly jettisoned the principles they had been taught in their BA TESL course when faced with their first real classes. These teachers immediately focused almost exclusively on establishing and maintaining their teacher roles and relationships with students in terms of an appropriate degree of authority and distance (p. 186).

The environment of the classroom has also been identified as playing a role in how teachers develop their views about practice. It can be argued that a number of classroom factors shape what it is possible to accomplish; these include time constraints, teacher-pupil ratios, material resources, classroom size and layout, and even the actuality of functioning heating and cooling systems. Hargreaves (1988, as cited in Zeichner and Gore, 1989) comments that teacher actions are closely related to the physical circumstances in which they find themselves:

Teachers do not just decide to deploy particular skills because of their recognized professional worth and value, or because of their own confidence and competence in operating them. Rather they make judgments about the fit between particular skills, constraints, demands, and opportunities of the material environment of the classroom; about the appropriateness of particular styles or techniques for present circumstances. (p. 219)

Lastly, interactions with and observation of professional colleagues may play another significant role in how teachers come to conceptualize their professional role. Several diverse "teacher cultures" often exist even within an individual school and instructors may have to tread nimbly through a host of competing and at times incompatible social pressures (Zeichner & Gore, 1989). Thus, as with all the factors mentioned in this section, the social context may have either positive or negative consequences. Arnett & Turnball (2007) note that "peers are the closest external agents who act out to contribute any notions towards molding teachers' beliefs" (p. 814). Informal talks in the corridor or sharing sessions in the teachers' lounge are seen by the

authors as constructive opportunities for teachers to discuss their pedagogic plans, decisions, and actions (Arnett and Turnball, 2007). Moreover, colleagues may serve as models. Zahorik (1987, as cited in Kagan, 1992) argues that while teachers obtain the majority of their teaching beliefs from their own practice, to a lesser extent they are also influenced by observations of their fellow instructors' classroom work. Velez-Rendon (2006) underline the crucial role experienced teachers can play in the professional development of novices, accelerating their professional socialization by serving both as instructional models and sources of guidance (p. 321). However, not every social context is supportive. In Farrell's (2006) study of Wee Jin's first year as a teacher, Jin reported that his new school "exhibited a culture of individualism," and that as a result, he was essentially left on his own throughout the year (p. 216).

*Impact of teacher education on teacher beliefs.* Of central importance to this investigation is the question of whether teacher education impacts teachers' beliefs and pedagogical behaviors. Research into this question has a long history in general education. There has been an on-going debate about the effectiveness of teacher training, with many researchers averring that teacher education is a "weak intervention" in teacher development (Hunt & Lasley, 2010; Kagan, 1992; Richardson, 1996).

In teacher education programs, it is often taken as an article of faith that by learning theories of teaching, students will be able to apply these theories in their professional practice. In such programs, lecturing "appears to be viewed as an appropriate form of teaching about teaching" (Korthagen, Loughran, & Russell, 2006, p. 1021). However, for at least the last 30 years, it has been noted that reading and applying the findings of educational research does not generally affect teacher beliefs (Hall & Loucks,

1982, as cited in Kagan, 1992). Korthagen et al. (2006) refer to the theory-practice issue as intractable: “telling new teachers what research shows about good teaching and sending them off to practice has failed to change, in any major way, what happens in our schools and universities” (p. 1038). The authors go on to note that having teachers write behavioral objectives or exhorting them to be reflective practitioners has also failed to yield positive results. Brouwer and Korthagen (2005) concur, underlining the fact that the gap between theory and practice seems to persist across different times and contexts (p. 154). The authors comment that

It is not a very favorable picture that arises from the literature on the nature of teacher development and the impact of teacher education on teachers' practice. Basically, Lacey's (1977) view still seems to hold; that is, teacher education provides a stressful, ineffective interlude in the shift from being a moderately successful and generally conformist student to being a pedagogically conservative teacher. (p. 156)

Assessing the data concerning the question of teacher education on the growth of and change in teacher beliefs in general education contexts, Richardson (1996) concludes that the results are complex: “Some programs effect change and others do not; some programs affect certain types of students, and not others; and some beliefs are more difficult to change than others” (p. 111). Overall, however, the author is pessimistic about the role of teacher education since it is “sandwiched between two powerful forces – previous life history, particularly that related to being a student, and classroom experience as a student teacher and a teacher” (p. 113).

Like their colleagues in general education, scholars concerned with language teaching have also taken an interest in the role of formal education in shaping what instructors believe, think, know and do. Bailey et al. (1996), referencing Smith (1971), assert that language teacher education programs should lead the teacher to a better understanding of his or her own “assets, beliefs, and values,” and help teachers steadily improve their competencies (p. 27). The question, of course, is if language teacher education really does do these things. Research has produced contradictory findings. Among many ELT scholars, there is a pronounced skepticism that teacher training programs have any more than a negligible impact on students’ beliefs (Burke, 2006; Kunt & Özdemir, 2010; Peacock, 2001; Urmston, 2003; Pennington & Urmston, 1998; Von Wright, 1997). In this section, I review a number of findings supporting the contention that SLTE has, at best, a minimal influence on student cognitions.

Von Wright (1997) suggests that pedagogic training often produces separate lines of thought: student teachers learn the nomenclature of the teaching profession but don’t actually grow in terms of their reflective abilities (p. 264).

Pennington and Urmston (1998) compared a group of graduating BA TESL students in Hong Kong with a group of beginning students enrolled in the same course of study. The authors concluded that the three years in which the graduating students studied in the program did not provide them with adequate preparation for a career as EFL instructor in the local community. In fact, the course may have had detrimental effects: “The group of prospective teachers studied showed themselves to be less enthusiastic and idealistic ... towards the business of teaching English in Hong Kong than were a comparison group just beginning their course” (p. 34).

Peacock (2001) investigated 146 full-time undergraduates in different years in the BA TESL program in the Department of English at the City University of Hong Kong. The author writes that the “study was begun with the hope that while trainee beliefs about language learning might differ from experienced ESL teacher beliefs at the beginning of their programme, they would change by the end of the programme.” The author concluded, however, that “disturbingly, these beliefs changed very little over their 3 years of study of TESL methodology” (p. 186).

Urmston (2003), following up her prior study of Hong Kong BA TESL students (Pennington & Urmston, 1998), again compared the beliefs and knowledge of trainees at the beginning and end of a language teacher training program. The author concluded that “the fact that [the students’] views on some of the most crucial aspects of teaching showed just a few changes during the period of their course is indicative of the resistance to change in beliefs of pre-service teachers” (p. 122).

Burke (2006) investigated undergraduate and graduate students studying to become teachers of world languages (French, German, Latin, Russian, and Spanish) at a U.S. university. The findings of this study support the claim that training in university methods courses is not enough to significantly alter student teacher views of language pedagogy. (For a discussion of the weaknesses of Burke’s and similar studies, see below.)

Kunt and Özdemir (2010) applied Horwitz’s *Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory* (BALLI) to 41 pre-service English language teachers studying at Eastern Mediterranean University in North Cyprus. Their findings demonstrated that although the fourth-year, graduating students had covered the required methodology courses during

the educational program, they still relied on their past experiences to guide their professional practice.

The preceding studies underscore the idea that beliefs are very rigid and difficult to modify. Pajares (1992) sums up the situation thusly:

... there is substantial evidence to suggest that beliefs persist even when they are no longer accurate representations of reality, [and there is little evidence to demonstrate] that individuals pursue, even in minor ways, strategies that aid in the alteration or rejection of unreasonable or inaccurate beliefs. This is not to say that beliefs do not change under any circumstance but that they generally do not change even when it is logical or necessary for them to do so. (p. 317)

The rigidity of language teacher beliefs is regularly attributed to the powerful influence of the trainees' prior experiences as learners (see above). In her influential research review of forty learning-to-teach studies in general education, Kagan (1992) noted that

Almost every one of the 40 studies reviewed ... indicates that university courses fail to provide novices with adequate procedural knowledge of classrooms, adequate knowledge of pupils or the extended practice needed to acquire that knowledge, or a realistic view of teaching in its full classroom/school context. (p. 162)

The author blamed this situation on the inflexibility of the personal beliefs that pre-service candidates bring to teacher education programs and concluded that “candidates



tend to use the information provided in coursework to confirm rather than to confront and correct their pre-existing beliefs” (p. 154).

Much research in the field of ESL has tended to corroborate Kagan’s findings. Bailey et al. (1996) take as their point of departure that “we teach as we have been taught,” rather than “as we have been trained to teach” and ask whether pedagogical intervention is enough to break the cycle of imitation or if “we are bound to perpetuate the models we have learned...” (p. 11). Johnson (1994) likewise remarked that the most striking pattern that emerged from her data was “the apparent power that images from prior experiences within formal language classrooms had on ... teachers' images of themselves as teachers, and their perceptions of their own instructional decisions” (p. 449).

The view that teacher training has a limited or nugatory impact on teacher beliefs is not unanimously held, however. Cabaroglu and Roberts (2000) suggest three reasons why the idea that educational programs are ineffective at altering student teacher cognitions should be viewed with caution. First, they argue that the inflexibility of student teacher beliefs might actually be caused by the shortcomings of educational programs rather than the persistence of beliefs established before teacher training begins. As support, they cite Kagan’s (1992) original study, in which the author noted that “... one finds no systematic efforts to encourage novices to make their personal beliefs and images explicit ... or to reconstruct the image of self-as-teacher” (in Cabaroglu & Roberts, 2000, p. 388-389). Second, Cabaroglu and Roberts argue that group-level studies may conceal cognitive changes at the individual level:

Where group-level measures are used, such as questionnaire rating scale data, individual variations can be lost because they tend to cancel each other out. Different respondents can move in different directions along the scale on different questions. As a result, no significance appears in “before and after” mean scores even though there has been movement at individual level. There is evidence that individual-level re-analysis of group-level data which had shown no or little development revealed multi-directional and variable movement in the beliefs of individuals. (p. 389)

Third, Cabaroglu and Roberts propose that studies which characterize student teachers' beliefs as “inflexible” often use the term to mean that an entire group has not moved uni-directionally towards the beliefs promoted by a given course. This last is certainly a serious flaw in the many studies which purportedly examine shifts in belief but in fact track change only insofar as student teacher thinking moves in the direction of the researchers' own preferred positions. For instance, Burke's (2006) study of world language teachers can be criticized on the grounds that it did not examine changes in beliefs per se, but rather reported the participants' failure to embrace a particular belief, i.e., the appropriateness of communicative work in their classrooms. In the same vein, Badger, MacDonald, and White (2001) investigated two groups of student teachers studying at undergraduate and postgraduate levels to become ESL teachers. Both groups took a research and theory course in second language acquisition. The authors then examined the extent to which the course influenced key beliefs which students held relating to language learning during their period of study. The authors concluded that, broadly speaking, the views of the study participants changed “significantly.” However,

the study is seriously flawed in the way that beliefs were measured. The pre-service students in the study were given a questionnaire based on Lightbown and Spada's (1995, p. xv) well-known set of questions about language learning before and after taking a theories course. The second questionnaire, then, was essentially indistinguishable from a summative evaluation. It would be strange indeed if the students, after having taken the class, did not attempt to respond to the questionnaire according to what they had been asked to learn. The Badger et al. study says less about cognitive change than it does about the pressure applied to students to conform to prevailing orthodoxies and to parrot "correct" responses.

In another instance of this phenomenon, Peacock (2001) editorialized that even after three years of study, "far too many" of his research participants still held that learning a second language involved the acquisition of large amounts of vocabulary and many grammar rules (p. 186). He also lamented the fact that the student teachers in his study continued to believe that intelligence and language aptitude are highly correlated. Peacock's study, like the ones discussed above, is an example of research that very narrowly defines a "change of beliefs" as an intellectual shift towards a preferred set of views. In this present example, it should also be noted that Peacock's stands regarding vocabulary, grammar, and intellect are all highly contested. A significant literature exists, for instance, which argues that L2 learning does, indeed, require specific attention to vocabulary (Nation, 2001). Similarly, the place of explicit grammar in the second language classroom is far from decided (Ellis, 2006). And there is considerable evidence that intelligence is, indeed, highly correlated with language ability (Teepen, 2005). It is difficult to know in this situation if the students in Peacock's study would ultimately have

benefitted from shifting their beliefs towards Peacock's preferred views, or if Peacock would have been better off shifting his beliefs towards those of his students. In any case, the point here is that the concept of student teacher change is clearly compromised if it is used to mean nothing more than a conformist shift towards a particular orthodoxy. Any study investigating changes in cognition limits itself enormously if only certain kinds of changes are accepted as legitimate.

In contrast to the many studies discussed above indicating that formal educational does little to alter beliefs, a number of investigations provide evidence of changes in cognitions during pre-service language teacher education: Badger, MacDonald, and White (2001), Borg (1998), M. Borg (2005), Borg (2011), Cabaroglu and Roberts (2000), Farrell (2006); Debreli (2012), Gürsoy (2013), Gutiérrez Almarza (1996); McCutchen (2002), Mattheoudakis (2006), TALIS (2009), and Yaman (2010). These studies tend, on the whole, to be more recent than the research reviewed above. Much (although not all) of the research is based on small case studies, therefore obviating the danger endemic to group-studies that individual differences may wash out (Cabaroglu & Roberts, 2000) (while at the same time making it essentially impossible to extrapolate findings to larger populations).

In a well-known study, Gutiérrez Almarza (1996) reviewed the considerable evidence that teacher training courses have "little impact" on how teachers think about their work. She argued that the picture that emerged from her own research was more complex, since the four student teachers in her investigation drew on different sources of knowledge. Gutiérrez Almarza concluded that SLTE played a significant part in forming her research participants' instructional practices: "... a large proportion of the

transformations in pre-training knowledge had its origin on campus during the teacher education programme and before student teachers took up their school placements. These changes were related to the way they selected content, provided explanations, and organized activities during teaching practice” (p. 71).

Cabaroglu and Roberts (2000) reported on their investigation of twenty modern language students enrolled in a post-graduate certificate in education. The students participated in a sequence of three in-depth interviews about their beliefs and their perceptions of their development as teachers. The authors reported that nineteen of the twenty students showed some development. Cabaroglu and Roberts hypothesized that the observed changes were attributable to the “belief development opportunities” that the students were afforded during the certificate program: classroom data collection, reflective/evaluative assignments, and flexible forms of learning and the sharing of experience. In particular, the authors pointed to the value of early confrontation of pre-existing beliefs and self-regulated learning opportunities (p. 399).

Badger et al. (2001) investigated 28 non-native speakers of English. At the beginning and end of a SLA course given by the authors, the participants were asked to make judgments about 12 claims having to do with learner language, learning, learner variables, and language sequencing. Badger et al. reported that at the end of the course, the study participants had changed their minds about seven of the claims (two related to errors in language learning, two related to learning, and three related to language sequencing). There was relatively little change in terms of the claims made about learner variables. The authors concluded that their SLA research and theory course had an impact on at least some of their students’ beliefs, assumptions and knowledge. In particular, the

student teachers appeared to move away from their initial behaviorist views of language learning. However, the authors conceded that “from their comments, both orally and on their course evaluation forms, it would appear that our students were either unaware of, or undervalued, the changes that were taking place” (p. 960). (For a discussion of the weaknesses of Badger et al.’s methodology, see above.)

In a 1998 case study of a single language teacher, Borg found that his research participant was “profoundly influenced” by his initial training (p. 29). Borg reports that the teacher’s educational experiences introduced him to communicative methodology and developed in him strong beliefs about the importance of student-centeredness. These beliefs had a lasting impact on the teacher’s professional practice and were powerful enough to “blot out” prior beliefs about the value of explicit grammar work instilled by his own experience as a learner.

A large-scale study by McCutchen et al. (2002, as cited in Borg, 2006b) concluded that teachers’ beliefs can be deepened through training, that teachers can use these beliefs to change their practice and that these changes can improve student learning. Mattheoudakis (2006) tracked a group of pre-service EFL teachers through a three-year teacher education program. She concludes that the majority of student beliefs developed gradually from one year to the next and noted that in several cases, significant changes were observed between the first and the last year (p. 1283).

As in many studies of student teacher cognition, Michaela Borg (2005) found only limited evidence of changes to the beliefs of her research participant, Penny. Penny, despite her novice status, maintained firm ideas about pedagogy that interacted with the experience of her teacher education program in “sometimes complex ways” (p. 1).

Despite the fact that some of her beliefs were resistant to change, some of the beliefs that she had brought to the program from her earlier educational experiences showed signs of “elaboration and deepening understanding” (p. 1). In particular, Penny shifted her views on grammar, coming to see the subject through the lens of a teacher rather than through the lens of a student.

Like Borg’s (2005) study, Farrell’s (2006) findings only indicated limited changes in the cognitions of the student teachers he investigated. The author investigated 20 pre-service ESL teachers enrolled in a one-year training program in Singapore. Farrell found that after the program, these students were more capable of articulating the field’s nomenclature and that they were making initial stabs at connecting concepts they had learned with classroom methods, techniques, and activities. On the other hand, the author reported that the students “internalized the course in different ways and ... some students did not have a very coherent representation of what it means to teach ...” (p. 58).

Yaman (2010) reports on the findings from a longitudinal study examining pre-service second language teachers’ conceptual change over two years. Her research suggests that these pre-service instructors altered their perceptions of effective language teaching as well as their own practices as a result of education. In another study by Borg (2011), the author carried out a longitudinal study designed to examine the impact of a teacher education program on the beliefs of six English language teachers. Borg concluded that the program had a considerable, if variable, impact on the teachers’ beliefs. “The course allowed teachers to think more explicitly about, become aware of, and articulate their beliefs, to extend and consolidate beliefs they were initially -- and

sometimes tacitly -- positively disposed to, and to focus on ways of developing classroom practices which reflected their beliefs” (p. 1).

Debreli (2012) tracked three undergraduates through the final year of their bachelor’s degree in language teaching. She found that changes in student beliefs “were evidenced from the beginning to the end of their training programme” (p. 1). She attributes this to the opportunity they had to practice their teaching in real classrooms during their practicum. Gürsoy’s (2013) study of 170 first and fourth year teacher trainees in the ELT department of a Turkish university indicates that both prior learning experiences and education is influential in forming beliefs.

Very little research into the impact of SLTE has been conducted in Mexico, the site of this present study. According to the OECD (2009), the Mexican teachers who took part in the *Teaching and Learning International Survey* embraced constructivist beliefs about teaching in direct proportion to how many days of professional development they had received. However, the study also found that the type of training a teacher participates in is more important than the time spent in such training: “The net effects of days of professional development are small ... whereas indicators of participation in networks and mentoring ... workshops and/or courses ... have significant and stronger net associations with teaching practices ...” (p. 117).

**Congruence between beliefs and practice.** The extent to which beliefs influence pedagogic practice is one of the key unresolved issues in teacher cognition research. The studies that have sought to amplify our understanding of the relationship between pedagogic belief and action are limited in number and have tended to be quite small in scope. Most have been case studies relying on two, three, or four participants



(Basturkmen et al., 2004, Farrell & Lim, 2005; Inceçay, 2011; Melketo, 2012; Min, 2013; Mori, 2011; Ng & Farrell, 2003; Phipps & Borg, 2009), and a large number of these have focused exclusively on how teachers think about and teach grammar or literacy (e.g., Sheikhol-Eslami & Allami, 2012). Many of the findings about ESL teachers' beliefs and practices come from doctoral dissertations rather than peer reviewed journals, and often research into beliefs and practices has only been one aspect of a study rather than the main focus (see Basturkmen, 2012). Moreover, it has been suggested that investigations of congruence between teachers' beliefs and practices may lack validity because of various weaknesses of the research methods employed (Basturkmen, 2012; Borg, 2006b; Min, 2013). Because of these limitations, circumspection is called for in appraising the significance of research in this area.

At first blush, the idea that beliefs and actions should be tightly linked seems commonsensical. As Davis (2003) writes, "If I believe there is a mouse under the table, then I will behave as though there is a mouse under the table, regardless of whether my belief is or is not correct" (p. 207). However, in the area of ESL teaching, the preponderance of evidence suggests that belief and action are often incongruent in the language classroom, and most studies that do demonstrate a link are heavily caveated. For instance, in the OECD's TALIS (2009), the authors reported that correlations between pedagogical beliefs and teaching practices were found across the 23 countries in their research. Constructivist beliefs, for example, tend to be associated with more frequent use of teaching approaches that focus on "creating a stimulating, challenging and individually adapted learning environment supportive of students' construction of knowledge" (p. 117). However, the authors caution that while these correlations were

statistically significant, they were also rather weak. The authors also underlined the fact that beliefs measured in the OECD survey were not domain specific and were quite general in nature.

A small number of studies have shown a strong relationship between teacher beliefs and pedagogic practices (Inceçay, 2011; Johnson, 1992; Min, 2013). Johnson (1992), for instance, found that the literacy teachers in her study who held clear theoretical beliefs delivered instruction that was in line with those beliefs. She concluded that her research supported the idea that “ESL instructors teach in accordance with their theoretical beliefs and that the differences in theoretical beliefs may result in differences in the nature of literacy instruction” (p. 101). In a study focused on L2 writing correction and feedback, Min (2013) scrutinized her own beliefs and practices through reflective journals and the systematic analysis of her classroom work. Min concluded that although her teaching beliefs changed over the course of her study and resulted in a shift in the kind of feedback she provided her students, at any given point during the period of her investigation, her feedback practices generally matched her beliefs. Inceçay (2011) reported that the pedagogic practices of the two participants in his investigation were “greatly affected” by their beliefs about foreign language learning. Although some external factors created some divergences between their beliefs and their teaching, Inceçay’s findings demonstrated that the pre-service teachers’ beliefs about language learning influenced instructional practices in terms of the language learning environment they created, the teacher roles they adopted, and the language-learning strategies they imparted to their students.

Finally, at least one study about belief and practice has been situated in Mexico. Cundale (2001) carried out an investigation of two teachers at the Anglo Mexican Cultural Institute in Puebla. The author wished to ascertain how closely the teachers' stated beliefs about communicative questioning strategies related to their classroom work. In the author's words, the teachers did, indeed, "practice what they preached." That is, both participants employed referential questions and favored the use of open over closed questions; Cundale determined that both questioning strategies were in line with the teachers' professed preference for communicative pedagogy. However, while their use of these questioning techniques implied a communicative stance, Cundale concluded that it was impossible to determine the exact degree to which the teachers' practice matched their ideals.

Contra the studies reviewed above, which suggest a strong connection between belief and teaching behaviors, the majority of investigations have reported only a very limited congruity between belief and pedagogy (Basturkmen, 2012; Basturkmen et al., 2004; Farrell & Lim, 2005; Fung & Chow, 2002; Hassan, 2013; Karavas-Doukas, 1996; Lee, 2009; Ng & Farrell, 2003; Phipps & Borg, 2009). In Basturkmen's (2012) review of 17 studies, six reported consistency between teachers' stated beliefs and their instructional practices while eleven indicated only limited congruence. Farrell and Lim (2005) reported that one of the two ESL teachers who took part in their study evinced a strong convergence between her stated beliefs and actual pedagogic practices. The second participant's beliefs, however, only partially matched some of her actual classroom practices. Data from Phipps and Borg (2009) highlighted a number of "tensions" between instructors' stated beliefs and their teaching practices, mainly related to inductive and

contextualized coverage of grammar, meaningful practice and oral group-work. The authors reported “several cases where teachers’ professed beliefs about language learning were in strong contrast with practices observed in their lessons” (p. 387).

Ng and Farrell (2003) reported that the instructional approaches of the four teachers in their study matched their beliefs about grammar teaching “for the most part” (p. 135). Three of the teachers stated that a knowledge of grammar rules translated into better language ability, and their explicit teaching and drilling of grammar rules were consistent with these stated beliefs. The fourth participant did not believe that explicit grammar teaching was useful, and this belief was consistent with his practice of avoiding prescriptive grammar lessons in his instruction. However, in terms of error correction in writing assignments, all four teachers diverged from their professed beliefs. Although they all espoused the communicative approach, in actuality the four teachers corrected each student error they encountered, which “covertly reinforces the idea that correct grammar is most important in writing” (p. 134). Basturkmen et al. (2004) researched three teachers and the relationship between their beliefs about focus on form and their classroom practices. The authors reported a generally “tenuous relationship” (p. 243) between the two. Lee (2009), investigating Hong Kong teachers’ handling of L2 written corrective feedback, discovered 10 mismatches between beliefs and practices. These mismatches are presented below (Table 1).

Table 1

*Mismatches Between Beliefs and Practices*

	<b>Professed Belief</b>	<b>Actual Practice</b>
1	There is more to good writing than accuracy.	Teachers pay most attention to language form.
2	Selective marking is preferred.	Comprehensive marking is the norm.
3	Students should learn to locate and correct their own mistakes.	Teachers tend to locate and correct mistakes for students.
4	Students have a limited ability to decipher error codes.	Teachers use error codes.
5	Grades draw students' attention away from written feedback.	Teachers award grades to student writing.
6	Feedback should cover both strengths and weaknesses of student writing.	Feedback predominantly covers weaknesses of student writing.
7	Students should learn to take responsibility for their own learning.	Teachers' written feedback process allows little room for students to take control of their learning.
8	Process writing is beneficial.	"One-shot" writing is the norm.
9	Students' written mistakes will recur.	Teachers continue to focus on student written errors.
10	Corrective feedback doesn't work.	Teachers continue to provide corrective feedback.

*Note.* Adapted from Lee, I. (2009). Ten mismatches between teachers' beliefs and written feedback practice. *ELT Journal*, 63(1), 13–22.

The studies reviewed above raise questions about how the oft-observed incongruities between beliefs and classroom teaching behaviors can best be explained. That is, why do so many teachers claim to hold certain pedagogic beliefs yet fail to operationalize these beliefs in their practice? Indeed, why do some teachers employ instructional techniques that actually contradict their stated beliefs? A number of answers to these questions have been offered. These include the influence of social norms, contextual factors, and the role of core and peripheral beliefs. Each of these is discussed below.

*Social norms.* First, social norms place pressure on teachers to conform to the micro-cultural practices of a given institutional context. Richards (1996) comments that teachers are influenced by “their understanding of the system in which they work and their roles within it” (p. 284). In trying to personify their roles, teachers may change their beliefs in accordance with prevalent views, or maintain their own beliefs but teach according to prevailing expectations (Andrews, 2003; Pajares, 1992). It has been noted that teachers, who are generally in subordinate positions in school hierarchies, are particularly influenced by the normative perspectives of the superiors to whom they are accountable (e.g., principals) (Lerner & Tetlock, 1999, as cited in Brown et al., 2012). For instance, Urmston (2003) investigated the effects of formal training on the thoughts and practices of a group of BA TESL students in Hong Kong. The author noted that as the student teachers progressed through their courses, they became increasingly aware of the wide gulf between the pedagogic philosophy and approaches advocated in the BA and the actual teaching norms they would be expected to follow in the Hong Kong educational system.

Instructors may also find themselves teaching in accordance with student expectations. For instance, Phipps and Borg (2009) studied three experienced EFL teachers working in Turkey. These instructors reported that they taught in ways contrary to their pedagogic beliefs in order to satisfy student preferences. The authors explained the pressure to deviate from stated beliefs in terms of superseding interests. For instance, a teacher who does not believe in gap-filling grammar may still provide such exercises based on her students’ enjoyment and expectation of such work, on the testing policies of

the school in which she is employed, or on the utility of gap-fills as a classroom management tool.

*Contextual factors.* Sociocultural perspectives underscore the situated nature of schooling: particular settings shape how both teaching and learning take place (Richards, 2008). In terms of teaching, contextual factors often intrude upon instructors' idealizations about how classes should be taught. Teachers contend with situational pressures over which they have little or no control and which may create gaps between what teachers believe in principle and what is feasible in practice. Constraints on practice include school policies, curricular mandates, student characteristics, student numbers, classroom size and layout, uncomfortable weather, pressure to prepare students for standardized exams, heavy workloads, availability of resources, lack of time, and problems with student discipline (Andrews, 2003; Borg, 1998, 2006b; Farrell & Lim, 2005; Ng & Farrell, 2003; Phipps, 2010; Phipps & Borg, 2007). For instance, Melketo (2012) reports on the congruence between three Ethiopian teachers' beliefs and practices in a university writing instruction. The author found that classroom practices did not always correspond to the teachers' beliefs. Melketo reports that the reasons for this divergence are complex, but that there is evidence to suggest that the teachers' ability to instruct in accordance with their principles was undermined by contextual factors, including class time, student expectations, examinations, and classroom management issues.

Several studies have looked at belief and practice vis-à-vis corrective feedback practices. In Mori's (2011) study, the author concluded that the participating teachers' use of error correction depended partly on such factors as time constraints, student

personality, and the level of student communication ability. Also writing about error feedback, Ng and Farrell (2003) found that the instructors in their study explicitly corrected student errors because they found this method to be faster than eliciting errors; while the study participants believed that elicitation was valuable in theory, they realized it was time-consuming and impractical in reality. Another investigation of error correction was conducted by Lee (2009, as cited in Min, 2013). Lee reported that institutional constraints could explain the mismatch between beliefs and error correction practices among two groups of EFL writing teachers in Hong Kong. The majority of the instructors in the study explained that their work was influenced by local English panel policy, which required them to mark errors in student work.

Pressure to prepare students for exams has also been cited as a major reason that many teachers feel they must abandon their personally-held beliefs about good teaching. A number of studies have been conducted in Singapore, a predominately product-centered and examination-oriented educational environment. Cheah (1998, as cited in Chiuan, 2003), notes that in Singapore, the existence of an “examination culture” forces teachers to “teach in the way they believe will help more students to pass their examinations” (p. 126). Yim (1993, as cited in Ng & Farrell, 2003), comes to the same conclusion, writing that the longer they teach, the less Singaporean teachers become “bothered with their implicit beliefs about grammar teaching” and the more they resort to teaching to the test (p. 129). Chiuan (2003) explains that despite efforts to re-train language teachers to contextualize grammar within meaningful contexts, “a substantial number still choose to cling on to their traditional way of teaching by drilling their students to memorize grammar rules” (p. 126).



Even when teachers make a concerted effort to rise above their situational constraints, they may find it difficult to do so. Benson (2010) reports how some teachers in his study strongly advocated student-centered practices. These teachers not only argued that it was their responsibility to teach classes that were sensitive to the aptitudes and interests of their pupils, they were critical of those of their colleagues who did not dedicate themselves to modifying the official curriculum in ways there were responsive to student needs. Benson concluded, however, that their own ability to modify or supplement the curriculum was severely constrained and “appeared to depend on how much space the system allowed” (269).

*Core and peripheral beliefs.* Teachers’ beliefs are often seen to be at odds with stated pedagogical beliefs. This has been attributed to social pressures and contextual factors. Another compelling explanation is that although instructors’ classroom behaviors often do not accord with their stated beliefs, they are in fact consistent with deeper, more general beliefs about teaching and learning. (Borg, 2009). According to this view, some beliefs are “core,” “implicit,” “intuitive,” or “superordinate” (Basturkmen, 2012; Borg, 2009; Goodman, 1988; Kelly, 1955); in situations in which it is necessary to choose between competing principles, these core beliefs generally trump those that are “peripheral,” “explicit,” “intellectual,” “or subordinate.”

Pajares (1992) points out that “by their very nature and origin, some beliefs are more incontrovertible than others” (p. 325). While teachers may claim that they teach according to one belief, in actual practice they may teach according to another, stronger, less controvertible belief. For instance, a teacher who believes in the importance of communicative activities may set meaning-based work aside if such issues as order and

control, the flow of the lesson, or meeting a deadline are actually her superordinate concerns (Andrews, 2003; Richards, 1998). The influence of core and peripheral beliefs is seen in a study conducted by Richards, Gallo, and Renandya (2001). Many of the teachers who responded to the study's survey reported that in their materials and activities, they de-emphasized explicit grammar instruction in line with a communicative approach to teaching. At the same time, these teachers reported that they continued to believe that grammar is central to language learning and that "direct grammar teaching would result in more accurate language use" (p. 55). It is certainly possible, then, for teachers' belief to take the form "I believe in X but I also believe in Y," with "practice being influenced to a greater extent by whichever of these beliefs is more strongly held" (Phipps & Borg, 2009, p. 388).

In a study examining tensions in the grammar teaching beliefs and practices of three EFL teachers in Turkey, Phipps and Borg (2009) describe the possible origin and influence of core and peripheral beliefs:

... it would seem that the beliefs which exerted most influence on teachers' work were ones firmly grounded in experience ... Conversely, while they may have encountered theoretical support for [alternative] notions ... a belief in such ideas had not been firmly established through positive first-hand experience of their effectiveness. They thus remained unimplemented ideals. We can hypothesize here, therefore, that a characteristic of core beliefs is that they are experientially ingrained, while peripheral beliefs, though theoretically embraced, will not be held with the same level of conviction. (p. 388)

For many teachers, their most ingrained beliefs about pedagogy are those originating from their formative educational experiences. Students construct strong impressions about pedagogy through their apprenticeship of observation, and those who go on to become teachers carry these beliefs into their own instructional practice. Beliefs which are a direct product of personal experiences tend to be deeply ingrained and highly resistant to modification. Johnson's (1999) study highlights how some teachers may be so bound to their core beliefs, they can feel powerless to change their pedagogic behaviors, even when they wish to. A student teacher taking part in Johnson's research recorded in her journal that

It's been really frustrating to watch myself do the old behaviors and not know how to "fix it" at the time. I know now that I don't want to teach like this, I don't want to be this kind of teacher, but I don't have any other experiences. It's like I just fall into the trap of teaching like I was taught and I don't know how to get myself out of that model. I think I still need more role models of how to do this, but it's up to me to really strive to apply what I believe in when I'm actually teaching. (p. 446)

The notion that teachers deviate from their beliefs may, then be incorrect. An intuitively more satisfactory explanation is that, in fact, teachers conform to those beliefs that are most deeply entrenched. Unfortunately, the concept of core and peripheral beliefs has not been widely or deeply studied in teacher cognition research. Indeed, such studies are hamstrung by the same difficulties that plague cognition research in general: concepts are difficult to define with any rigor, and the vast number of interacting variables involved makes it difficult to trace causation. For instance, there is little evidence in

educational research as to what might constitute a core or peripheral belief (Borg, 2006b; Phipps & Borg, 2009). And the relationships between principles and practice are complex and difficult to identify. Both Breen et al. (2001) and Andrews (2003) point out that shared principles (i.e., those beliefs that a group of teachers hold in common, such as the importance of student-centered teaching) may be manifested in a wide variety of classroom practices. Conversely, a common pedagogic practice (i.e., familiar classroom actions, such as using group work) may be justified by a variety of principles. Andrews (2003) gives a detailed example taken from his own research:

... it is evident that a shared principle, such as that grammar learning is a process of “accumulating entities,” may be associated with a different set of practices for each teacher: the majority adopting a primarily deductive approach, others preferring to employ a more inductive approach, and each doing so in individual ways. It was also noted that a common practice, for example explicit form-focused presentation and practice of grammar, was justified by a range of principles: explicit knowledge of grammar supports the development of implicit knowledge; students need to be adequately prepared for the written examinations; students need to feel that they have learnt something specific in a lesson (p. 373).

**Summary and discussion.** Findings from research into language teachers’ beliefs are decidedly mixed and continue to be inconclusive. It is widely agreed that beliefs influence pedagogical action. Beyond this rather prosaic statement, little is settled. The fuzziness of core concepts and the number and interconnectedness of variables has complicated the task of research into second language teacher cognition. For instance, the

concept of belief has not been adequately defined, and some researchers argue that to do so is impracticable. Further complicating research is the fact that beliefs are highly inter-related, bi-directional, and affected by the individual personality of teachers, their cognitive dispositions, and their classroom practices. The origin of teachers' beliefs also remains in dispute. It is clear that beliefs arise from the complex interplay between past educational experiences, cultural understandings of education, the micro-culture and material context of particular institutions and classrooms, interaction with colleagues, teacher education, etc. The extent to which any one of these factors predominates is unclear.

Also unclear is the degree to which beliefs influence pedagogic action. It has been well-documented that pedagogic belief and actions are often unaligned: instructors may teach in ways that actually contradict their stated beliefs. This has been attributed to the strong influence of the normative expectations of students, colleagues, and superiors. For instance, a pre-service teacher worried about passing a teaching practicum may modify his or her teaching style to satisfy an assessor's expectations (Phipps & Borg, 2007). In the same way, an in-service teacher may teach in accordance with an institution's prevailing conventions. Contextual factors, including fixed curricula, class size, and the need to prepare students for standardized exams, can also influence the congruence between belief and pedagogic behaviors. In sum, contextual factors such as those outlined above may encourage a "safe strategy of sticking to conventional teaching methods and materials" (Phipps, 2010, p. 27). As Borg (2006b) points out, such a strategy may be especially true for beginning teachers whose ideas about language pedagogy "may need

to be set aside – at least for a time – while they grapple with new instructional and social realities” (p. 275).

### **Distinctive Characteristics of EFL Teaching & Teachers**

One of the earliest calls for rigorous study of teacher characteristics was a 1935 editorial in the *Twenty-Third Yearbook of the National Society of College Teachers of Education*:

Many of the important and controversial issues in the education of teachers in the United States depend upon knowing in an accurate and detailed way just what constitutes 'successful teaching' in the various kinds of positions, and which characteristics of teachers make them successful.

... The task of measuring teaching success is complicated by so many variables for which there are no satisfactory measures that the problem should become a major research problem, adequately subsidized for a long period of years to test the results of various types of teacher curricula. A hoped-for result from these investigations would be the discovery of one or two tests -- simple, short, accurately scored, reliable, and obviously related to teaching -- which will measure a teacher's success. (as cited in Barr, 1935, p. 561)

The authors of this piece might have been dismayed to know just how long their proposed “long period of years” would actually last. Some eighty years have passed since the National Society’s *cri de coeur*, and yet the question of teacher effectiveness continues to be a major research problem. No “short, reliable test” of teacher success has yet to be constructed.

The search for insight into what makes an effective language teacher has a shorter pedigree than the search for the determiners of success in teaching generally. It has only been in the last few decades that research interest has focused on the issue. This surely has something to do with the fact that, until relatively recently, language teaching was not regarded as distinct from other types of teaching. It was not until 1966, for instance, that the professional organization Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) was founded (Anderson, 1967).

In the following section, I consider the distinctive qualities of the language teaching domain and the characteristics and practices of effective language teachers. First, I examine the unique disciplinary characteristics of the ESL field from a macro perspective. The following questions are considered: What are the practices, beliefs, and pedagogical traditions that demarcate different academic disciplines? What are the practices, beliefs, and pedagogical traditions that establish the disciplinary boundaries of ESL? How has the historical development of ESL affected the trajectory of the field? Second, I consider the personal characteristics and practices of ESL teachers from a micro perspective. The following questions form the basis of this latter section: What does research tell us about the characteristics and practices of good teachers, in general? What does research tell us about the characteristics and practices of effective ESL teachers, specifically?

**Disciplinary characteristics of ESL teaching.** Second language teacher education is premised on the fundamental presupposition that language teaching is different than other types of teaching in ways that transcend simple reference to subject matter (Borg, 2006b). While this observation may, at first glance, appear self-evident,

defining precisely what it is that sets language teaching apart from teaching in other disciplines has proven to be a challenge (Borg, 2006b; Brown, 2009; Brosh, 1996; Hammadou & Bernhart, 1987; Lee, 2010; Lenze, 1995).

For purposes of this present study, the distinction between those teacher characteristics that are discipline independent and those that are specific to the domain of ESL is an important one. Without understanding this distinction, it would be difficult to disentangle the ways in which training programs in SLTE impact the pedagogical beliefs of their students. The University of Guanajuato's LEI curriculum, for instance, is designed to introduce students to a range of ideas and a set of specialized skills that are necessary for and unique to second language teaching. It is therefore appropriate to ask if the program is succeeding in doing so. Are the beliefs about teaching held by LEI students particular to language instruction or are they generalizable across a range of disciplines? What is the ratio between their domain specific and general pedagogic knowledge?

In this section, I first examine the idea of disciplinary differences within the field of teaching: what are the distinctive practices, beliefs, and pedagogical traditions in different academic domains? I then consider the specific case of the ESL field: how is language teaching different from other types of teaching?

***Differences Between Teaching Disciplines.*** Educational researchers agree that a number of teaching characteristics are relatively consistent across different domains. These characteristics include knowing subject matter, being able to explain subject matter in a clear way, and using concrete examples to explain concepts (Lee, 2010). While such knowledge and practices are area independent, research suggest that teaching is informed



by disciplinary context. The specific ways in which teaching varies between disciplines is a subject of continued interest (Bell, 2005) and the subject of this section.

Teaching beliefs and behaviors are often guided by core, but generally implicit, disciplinary assumptions. In a study by Murray and Renaud (1995), for example, one finding was that teachers within the fields of arts and humanities valued rapport with their students more than did instructors in the social and natural sciences.

Research on the relationship between academic discipline and teaching practice often contrasts the so-called “hard” fields (science, mathematics, medicine, etc.) with the “soft” fields (literature, the arts, history, etc.). For instance, Neumann (2001) noted that while lecturing is present in all disciplines and is the dominant mode of university teaching, the amount of lecturing appears to be discipline specific. For instance, students in the soft disciplines are much more likely to take part in lectures, seminars, and tutorials. Those studying in the hard disciplines are much more likely to find themselves involved in laboratory work, exercises, and field trips. Donald (1993) reported that the humanities tend to privilege courses that are flexible; in the scientific disciplines, on the other hand, courses tend to be very structured and emphasize concepts and principles that are highly interconnected. Hativa (1997) found that instructors in the soft disciplines present their students with more recent knowledge than instructors in the hard disciplines. Among the fields Hativa investigated, teachers in the social sciences presented their students with the most up-to-date information. The author contrasted this tendency with the hierarchical way in which knowledge is presented in the hard disciplines: the most current knowledge is often saved for late in the curriculum.

Braxton (1995), considering the issue of curricular goals, found that scientific disciplines place more emphasis on career preparation and stress the learning of specific facts and principles. The humanities, on the other hand, emphasize the importance of a broad knowledge base, student character development, and reasoning skills and critical thinking. These findings are supported by Hativa (1997), who found that disciplines such as the humanities and the social sciences tend to accentuate the importance of creativity and the development of communicative skills. In contrast, programs in such fields as medicine, scientific research, and technology tend to emphasize the importance of students being able to apply the specific methods and principles they have been taught.

A teacher's professional home, whether in a soft or a hard discipline, may even shape his or her verbal behaviors. Poos and Simpson (2002) conducted a quantitative analysis of two subcorpora of the *Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English*. The authors found a significant correlation between academic domain and the use of hedging devices. In the humanities, arts, and social sciences, the hedges "kind of" and "sort of" were both ranked among the top-ten two-word phrases most used by teachers. In the physical sciences and engineering, however, "kind of" and "sort of" ranked as the 42<sup>nd</sup> and 126<sup>th</sup> most used two-word phrases. The authors offered two surmises as to this rather unexpected finding. (1) Language in the humanities, arts, and social sciences boasts a larger vocabulary than in the sciences, and therefore words such as "kind of" and "sort of" may be employed as "filled pauses" while speakers search for the best word among many possibilities. (2) The content of the humanities, arts, and social sciences is more open to multiple interpretations than content in the hard sciences:

Simply put, there is more to hedge about in the softer disciplines than in the sciences. Norms of interaction in the humanities and social sciences call for presenting alternate points of view, stating and eliciting opinions, carefully crafting arguments, and allowing for multiple possibilities — all of which can and do involve the use of various hedging strategies. (p. 14)

In their review of the literature, Neumann, Parry, & Becher (2002), citing the contributions of Becher (1989), Biglan (1973), and Kolb (1981), further refined the concepts of “hard” and “soft” disciplines by grafting to them the constructs “pure” and “applied.” Thus, for the authors, academic disciplines may be located in the “hard-pure” fields (i.e., physics and chemistry), the “hard-applied” fields (i.e., engineering), the “soft-pure” fields (i.e., history and anthropology), and the “soft-applied” fields (i.e., education and management studies). Neumann et al. (2002) allowed that these categories are somewhat loose, in that some disciplines may straddle two categories, and other disciplines may change categories over time. The authors offer linguistics as an example of a discipline that moved from soft-pure to hard-pure as computer-related methods “gained ascendancy” (p. 407).

Neumann et al. (2002) describe the curricular and pedagogic perspectives of the hard and soft disciplines. In both the hard-pure and hard-applied disciplines, instruction tends to be teacher-centered and transmissional, the content cumulative, atomistic, linear, and hierarchical. Students are expected to build up their knowledge “brick by brick” (p. 407). In the soft-pure and soft-applied disciplines, instruction is more likely to be reiterative, holistic, and spiral in configuration, “returning with increasing levels of subtlety and insight into already familiar areas of content” (p. 407).

In the hard-pure disciplines, establishing instructional content is relatively uncomplicated, since knowledge tends to be presented in a linear, cumulative way. Once content has been determined, it tends to remain in place year after year, meaning that less time is spent on course preparation than in other domains. In contrast, academics in the soft-pure disciplines spend more time on course preparation than any other group.

Neumann (2001) cites Smeby (1996), who found that to prepare one teaching hour, the teachers he investigated in soft-pure disciplines spent an average of 2.2 hours of preparation time. Smeby contrasted this with the 1.2 hours that teachers in hard-pure fields spent, and the 0.9 hours that those in hard-applied disciplines dedicated to the task.

In both the soft-applied and the hard-applied disciplines, students contend with heavy workloads. Out of a concern for comprehensive coverage of the content, contact hours are substantial. In soft-pure and hard-pure disciplines, time spent in the classroom is less.

Disciplines can also be differentiated in terms of how they assess students. Angelo and Cross (1993, as cited in Neumann et al., 2002) contend that “assessment depends ... on the match between the conceptual map of the discipline or subject being taught and the internal cognitive map that illustrates what the learner knows” (p. 408). Methods of assessment and the way in which grades are determined are likely to evidence disciplinary propensities. For instance, according to Neumann et al. (2002), the soft-applied fields are characterized by essay, project-based, peer, and self-assessments, with a focus on self-reflection and practical skills. Guidelines for grading are often ambiguous because “many of the practical skills students are expected to demonstrate are inexplicit and difficult to specify in precise terms” (p. 409). This can be contrasted with science-

based disciplines, where assessment models stress the acquisition of blocks of knowledge in a cumulative way. In hard-pure fields, for instance, students are tested often and in-depth, and assessment tasks commonly take the form of “objective” exams.

Neumann (2001) also reports that at the undergraduate level, hard disciplines place a stronger emphasis on student research experience, while soft disciplines focus on student growth and development, on discussion, and on oral and written communication abilities. At the graduate level, academics in the hard disciplines see research supervision as integrated with their own research and tend to spend more time supervising students than do academics in other disciplines. Research by Becher, Henkel, and Kogan (1994, as cited in Neumann, 2001) suggests that in postgraduate education in the hard-pure disciplines, the main organizing principle is the organization of research itself. In hard-pure disciplines, supervision of graduate students is based on a group-based apprenticeship model, whereas in soft-pure fields, such supervision follows an individual apprenticeship model, with student research less likely to be connected to the research of the academic supervisor.

***The disciplinary characteristics of ESL teaching.*** Brown (2009) suggests that second language classrooms present learning objectives, tasks, and instructional approaches that are qualitatively different from those of other teaching domains. Indeed, the entire enterprise of second language teacher training rests upon this basic idea: SLTE would not constitute a distinct discipline if professionals in the field didn't believe that they shared at least some fundamental characteristics that set them apart from other types of teachers. That is, if ESL teaching didn't have a unique disciplinary perspective, then there would be no reason to open separate SLTE programs: students could simply enroll

in courses of study devoted to general pedagogy and take additional, subject specific courses in SLA and ESL. The case is, however, that over 230 institutions currently offer more than 400 TESOL programs in the United States and Canada, including approximately 30 doctoral programs, 180 MA programs, 60 graduate certificate programs, 35 other certificate programs, and 50 undergraduate programs (Christopher, 2005). That so many programs exist apart from the regular system of teacher education speaks to the fact that teaching languages is considered to be unlike the teaching other subjects. The question remains, however: What, exactly, makes ELT different than other disciplines?

Referencing the model developed by Neumann (2001) and Neumann et al. (2002) (see above), it would seem that ESL, as part of the general field of education, should belong to the soft-applied disciplines. However, because its theoretical base is so fractured, Neumann's framework may be of only limited value in understanding the place of ESL vis-à-vis other academic domains. In some classrooms (i.e., those featuring traditional and audiolingual approaches), language teaching looks like typical pedagogy in the hard sciences. Instruction is teacher-centered, and content is organized into discrete units that are taught sequentially and additively. The emphasis is on the learning and retention of factual knowledge. In other classrooms (i.e., those focused on communicative and naturalistic learning), teaching looks like the instruction one would expect to see in more loosely structured knowledge domains. Language is presented holistically and reiteratively, and instruction tends to mirror that in the soft-pure disciplines, where content is "free-ranging and qualitative, with knowledge-building a formative process and teaching and learning activities largely constructive ..." (Neumann

et al., p. 408). In many ESL classrooms (i.e., “soft” communicative courses or those denominated “eclectic”), one can observe instructional practices that draw on both hard and soft approaches. A teacher might, for instance, begin a class by lecturing about a grammar point, but then transition into communicative activities. In still other ESL contexts, teasing out the disciplinary dimensions of teaching is complicated by the fact that the very term “teach” is suspect (Hammadou & Bernhart, 1987; Lowe, 2003). In such contexts, an instructor’s professional duties are described in terms of facilitation, managing, modeling, counseling, etc. (Prodromou, 1991).

In terms of course preparation, ESL teachers utilizing synthetic syllabi (whether structural, lexical, notional, situational, topical, or functional) resemble their counterparts in the hard-pure disciplines. Knowledge is more or less “fixed,” textbooks are common, and curricular innovation is rare. On the other hand, language instructors employing analytic syllabi often spend a great deal of time planning classes and creating new materials, and curricular review and revision are the norm. In these aspects, such teachers most resemble academics in the soft-pure disciplines. Similarly, in terms of class time, ESL students and teachers in immersion and content-based environments resemble their counterparts in the applied disciplines in that they experience a high number of contact hours. At the same time, other language classes are more reminiscent of those in the soft domains, in that students and teachers only meet for a handful of hours a week.

As with teaching style, teacher preparation time, and contact hours, ESL assessment cannot be easily placed into either the “hard” or “soft” disciplinary categories. In some quarters, portfolio assessments and authentic assessment techniques such as journals, logs, conferences, observations, self-evaluations, peer-evaluations, and

interviews are employed (Baily, 1998; Brown, 1998, 2005; O'Malley & Valdez Pierce, 1996; Spandel, 2005). This is consonant with assessment practices in the soft-pure disciplines (in which formative assessments are favored over summative ones; continuous assessment is often preferred to examinations; and interaction between assessor and student is permissible) and soft-applied disciplines (in which project based assessments predominate and peer and self-assessments are common) (Neumann et al., 2002). In both soft and applied settings, guidelines for grading are generally subjective and ambiguous, since many of the practical abilities students are asked to exhibit are “inexplicit and difficult to specify in exact terms” (Neumann et al., 2002, p. 409). In some ESL contexts, however, objective exams continue to be the norm, and students – like their counterparts in the hard-pure fields -- are tested “frequently, comprehensively, and unequivocally” (Neumann et al., 2002, p. 408). In many ESL classrooms – perhaps most – a mix of hard-pure and applied assessment techniques are used.

Given, then, the difficulties of placing language teaching within any one academic area, how best to define ESL's disciplinary distinctiveness (save by noting how difficult it is to pigeon-hole)?

Brosh (1996) points out that language teaching is essentially different than other disciplines in that “it is influenced by social, political, psychological, and practical values that are beyond the control of the teacher and language planners” (p. 1). Such values are illustrated by Lenze (1995), who noted that many of the differences in the teaching she observed in her three-year case-study of two Spanish language professors and two linguistics professors could best be explained by fundamental differences in underlying



disciplinary beliefs. Lenze concluded that the field of linguistics seems to privilege argumentation, while the field of Spanish privileges production.

The concept of production centered on action, and thus [the Spanish professors] were predisposed to develop knowledge of instructional strategies to move students towards participation. On the other hand, the concept of argumentation in linguistics centered on logic and theory. Given their students' lack of knowledge about empirical, analytical, and theoretical ideas ... [the linguistics professors] were predisposed to focus on knowledge of students' preconceptions and misunderstandings. Thus, faculty in two disciplines developed knowledge of equally important but quite different aspects of teaching. (p. 69)

Hammadou and Bernhart (1987) discussed the case of foreign language teachers working within a North American context. They argued that the fundamental difference between language teachers and teachers in other disciplines is that the former work in a situation where the means of instruction is also the subject of instruction. In a very real sense, the medium is the message: whereas the most effective Spanish teacher will use Spanish in order to teach that language, a science teacher, by contrast, will teach his or her subject in a language that the majority of students already comprehend. The authors conclude that "for foreign language teachers to provide genuine instruction ... they must use a medium the students do not yet understand" (p. 301). Hammadou and Bernhart continue on to present a number of other reasons that language teaching, because of its distinctive knowledge base, should be considered unique within the profession of teaching. First, the nature of language instruction requires different kinds of teacher-

student and student-student interactional patterns than would be conventionally expected in other teaching contexts. For instance, in a truly communicative classroom, the teacher may not “teach” at all in the conventional sense, but instead organize student learning around peer-to-peer interaction. Second, maintaining foreign language ability requires sustained interaction with others who speak the same tongue. Because language acquisition is “developmental, dynamic, and interactive,” maintaining a high level of language ability may be difficult for the many L2 instructors who are not part of a community of foreign language speakers and who thus lack regular opportunities to engage in FL communication (p. 302). Third, some foreign language instructors work in situations in which they are the only person qualified in their discipline. In such contexts, voicing professional concerns and “talking shop” are impossible. This may lead to feelings of professional and social isolation. Finally, Hammadou and Bernhar point out that classroom work can provide only a miniscule part of the linguistic and cultural exposure necessary in order to acquire an L2. This means that foreign language teachers must search out ways of providing extracurricular opportunities for naturalistic learning to occur. Extracurricular learning opportunities may be beneficial for students in other disciplines, but are not necessary to the extent that they are in language teaching.

Grossman and Shulman (1994, as cited in Borg, 2006a) also situate the difference between language teaching and the teaching of other subjects in the special nature of the subject matter. For Grossman and Shulman, foreign language teaching is less amenable to definition than the subject matter of other fields:

As an inherently ambiguous subject, which is less hierarchically organized than is math and encompasses a variety of subdomains, [the teaching of

L2] English may offer teachers greater freedom within the confines of the classroom. As it would be difficult, if not impossible, for teachers to cover all of the territory encompassed by the subject of English, teachers may necessarily select the purposes and areas they plan to emphasize in their classrooms. The inherent complexity of the subject, with its separate domains and subcomponents, may also offer teachers greater autonomy in developing curriculum. (p. 6)

The most extensive study concerned with the distinctiveness of language teachers and language teaching was conducted by Borg (2006a). In his study, 200 practicing and prospective language instructors from a range of educational contexts were asked to define the difference between language teachers and teachers in other disciplines. His investigation also analyzed the views of academics in the fields of mathematics, history, science, and chemistry and considered the degree to which characteristics perceived to be unique to language teaching might actually apply to these other disciplines as well. The major findings from Borg's study echo those of Hammadou and Bernhart (1987): language teachers are seen to be distinctive in terms of the nature of the subject, the content of teaching, and teaching methodology. In all, Borg identified eleven core disciplinary differences that set language teachers apart from instructors in other fields (see Table 2).

Lee (2010), inspired by Borg's (2006) study, researched the disciplinary distinctiveness of EFL teachers from the perspectives of students at a national college of technology in southwestern Japan (JNCT). One hundred and sixty-three, first-year, mostly male students were asked to complete a self-report questionnaire and a subsequent

open-ended item. Findings closely matched those of Hammadou and Bernhardt (1987), Grossman and Shulman (1994), and Borg (2006a). The participants in Lee's study substantiated the idea that particular characteristics of EFL teachers and teaching distinguish the field from other teaching domains. First, they echoed previous investigations by highlighting the fact that in ELT the medium and the content of instruction are the same. Among the JNCT students, the highest rated construct in the questionnaire was the idea that "English language teachers have a more difficult job because they have to explain things to learners in English" (p. 34). Second, the participants identified the fact that EFL instructors must develop students' linguistic skills in tandem with their communication abilities and cultural knowledge. Third, there was agreement among the participants that a good approach to EFL teaching involves "maximizing student involvement through encouragement and judicious error correction" (p. 44). Fourth, the Japanese students strongly believed that the teacher's positive attitude towards both students and subject matter was a crucial aspect of EFL instruction.

Table 2

*Core Disciplinary Differences That Set Language Teachers Apart From Instructors in Other Fields.*

<b>FEATURE</b>	<b>DISTINCTIVENESS</b>
<b>The nature of the subject</b>	Language is more dynamic than other subjects and has more practical relevance in real life.
<b>The context of teaching</b>	Unique in scope and complexity. Teaching a language extends beyond teaching grammar, vocabulary, and the four skills and includes a wide range of other issues such as culture, communication skills and learning skills.
<b>Methodology</b>	The methodology of language teaching is more diverse and aimed at creating contexts for communication and maximizing student involvement.
<b>Teacher-learner relationships</b>	In language teaching there is more communication between teacher and learners and more scope for learners to work on themes which are of personal relevance.
<b>Non-native issues</b>	In language teaching, teachers and learners operate through a language other than their mother tongue. Teachers are also compared to native speakers of the language.
<b>Commercialization</b>	Language teaching is driven by commercial forces more than other subjects.
<b>Training</b>	A wide diversity of recognized language teaching qualifications exists, some as short as four weeks in duration.
<b>Status</b>	Language and language teachers are often awarded lower status than subjects and teachers in other disciplines.
<b>Errors</b>	Incorrect output by language learners is more acceptable than in other subjects.
<b>Student body</b>	Many more adults study languages than they do other subjects.
<b>Teachers' Characteristics</b>	For language teachers, characteristics such as creativity, flexibility, and enthusiasm are essential.

*Note.* Adapted from Borg, S. (2006a). The distinctive characteristics of foreign language teachers. *Language Teaching Research*, 10(1), 3–31.

Participants agreed with such statements as “English language teachers have more positive attitudes” and “English teachers show more enthusiasm” compared to teachers of other subjects. At first glance, student appreciation for the positive personality traits of their teachers may not seem to differentiate EFL teaching from other domains in which the importance of teacher disposition has been well-documented (see below). However,

Lee argues that personal characteristics, such as energy and kindness, may be more essential in EFL teaching than in other disciplines, in that they sustain learner motivation and interest in an L2 classroom context, where exposure to the language is highly limited.

Lee concludes that his study

... shows that even though there are identifiable characteristics of EFL teachers that may cut across different contexts, being an EFL teacher is essentially a socially situated construct that is dependent on particular sociocultural and educational milieus in which teachers carry out their work. (p. 44)

*A brief history of linguistics, applied linguistics, SLA, and SLT.* It would be difficult to distinguish the disciplinary differences between ESL and other fields without noting two additional, interrelated characteristics of ESL that set it apart from other academic domains. First, it is surely the only academic area in which the discipline's core subject material -- i.e., the acquisition of non-native language -- is thought by many to be essentially unteachable (Corder, 1967; Krashen, 1985; Lowe, 2003; Rutherford, 1987; Schmidt & Frota, 1986). That is, ESL has no body of knowledge that can be transmitted from teacher to student through, say, lectures or assigned readings. Language is increasingly understood as a skill, such as basketball or chess, which must be developed through intensive practice and immersion in the domain rather than through explicit instruction. Many within the field of SLA no longer view language acquisition as a teacher-controlled activity, but rather as a cyclical, organic, and invisible process over which the instructor has only an exiguous influence:

We (teachers) can point, we can badger, we can show, we can allow. But we can never make something be learnt by a student!! In other words, students learn not what we teach, but what they learn. Our influence on this is, at best, hard to know, and at worst, probably marginal. (Lowe, 2003, p. 3)

Second, among those who do believe that language is teachable, there is no consensus as to the best way to go about doing so. Whereas the humanities depend upon lectures and symposia, and many of the hard sciences are organized around lab work (see above), in ESL a multiplicity of teaching approaches contend. This situation primarily exists because of the lack of consensus about the field's theoretical or research base.

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, second language teaching was guided by the study of applied linguistics. However, faith that applied linguistics could provide sound prescriptions for pedagogy was relatively short-lived. Nominally a science, AL has seen little of the progress that, say, medicine or technology have experienced in the last hundred years. Knowledge about how second languages are learned is still lamentably meager. Indeed, the ever-changing nature of AL theories has had deleterious effects on second language pedagogy, which, in an ongoing attempt to attune itself to trends in applied linguistics, has lurched unsuccessfully from one approach to another in search of a principled teaching system. This problem has been exacerbated by the generally poor fit between the scientific, theoretical nature of applied linguistic research and the humanistic, practical work of classroom instruction. Because of this poor fit, many teachers and scholars have looked outside of linguistics for inspiration, seeking answers from such areas as psychology, sociology and general education. However, a sound

pedagogy of effective language teaching has yet to emerge. There continues to be heated debate regarding what applied linguistics is and what relationship it has – if any – to language pedagogy (Cook, 2005; Kirmizi, 2011). Kirmizi argues that “applied linguistics does not seem to offer much in the name of pedagogy in as much as applied linguistics is mainly concerned with accounting [for] language rather than providing solutions to the problems of what happens in language classes” (p. 15).

ESL, left to its own devices, is as fractured as its ostensible progenitor. It is difficult to think of another academic domain that has such a weak theoretical base, which has changed its pedagogical approach so radically and so often, and whose instructors regularly acknowledge the minor influence they have in advancing learning outcomes. In order to better understand this peculiar situation, it is useful to recall the evolution of second language teaching. In this section, I will briefly review the history of linguistics, with particular emphasis on those intellectual currents that directly influenced the sub-fields of applied linguistics and second language acquisition. I then examine the history of second language teaching practices. Lastly, I discuss problems with applied linguistics and second language acquisition, particularly in terms of SLA’s theoretical base. This latter issue is worthy of consideration because the field’s persistent inability to define itself is itself one of the defining characteristics of the field.

*A brief history of linguistics.* Linguistics as a scholarly concern boasts a pedigree stretching back thousands of years. And yet despite the time and energy devoted to language research, fundamental questions still remain. First among these are the questions of what language is and how it is acquired. For instance, it continues to be unclear whether language is an innate genetic endowment or a constructed cultural



artifact (see, for instance, Everett, 2012; Pinker, 1999; Sampson, 2005). Research into these questions has had a direct impact on second language teaching.

Ideas about the nature of language and the reasons to study it have, of course, changed over time. In ancient civilization, investigations of linguistics were primarily motivated by the desire to correctly describe classical liturgical language, notably that of Sanskrit grammar. Linguistic study was also prompted by the development of logic and rhetoric among the Greeks. Around the 4th century BC, China also began developing its own grammatical traditions. Arabic grammar and Hebrew grammar developed during the Middle Ages (Princeton University, n.d.).

During the Middle Ages, Latin was the language of education, commerce, religion, and government in Europe. Medieval students never studied the structures of their own native languages but instead studied Latin, which was regarded as the basis for all language analysis. As early as 1,000 A.D., Latin was already being used as a prescriptive model of English for Anglo-Saxon children (McGregor, 2009). Some eight centuries later, the grammar of Latin was still considered an appropriate model for English. When Bishop Robert Lowth published his influential *A Short Introduction to English Grammar with Critical Notes* in 1761, he heavily based his language precepts on Latin models (Berk, 1999).

Beginning in the fifteenth century, colonization brought a wide variety of languages to the attention of European scholars, who began to assemble, organize, and compare lists of new, exotic words. At more or less the same time, similar comparisons of European languages lead to the notion that these formed a family of related languages that could be traced to a single linguistic progenitor. In 1686, Andreas Jäger proposed

that the first European language originated in the Caucasus mountains and was carried across the continent by waves of migration. Other language families were subsequently identified.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, linguists began to shift their attention away from historical-comparative language studies to a new area of interest: the structure of language. The most important figure in the establishment of this new, modern linguistics was the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913). For early modern linguists, phonology and phonetics constituted the primary area of interest. In 1886, the International Phonetic Association (IPA) was founded by a group of European scholars.

The first half of the twentieth century witnessed a flurry of linguistic advances. In 1926, the Linguistic Circle of Prague was formed. The “Prague School” made significant contributions to phonology, syntax, and the relationship between word order and discourse. In Great Britain, the “London School,” headed by J.R. Firth (1890-1960), challenged the idea that speech can be disassembled into discrete phonological segments, arguing that this notion was an artifact of western alphabetical scripts. Meaning, specifically the notion that “meaning is use in context” (i.e., that discourse determines the meaning of linguistic items) became a dominant concern (Mock, 1987). Finally, in the United States, Leonard Bloomfield’s (1887-1949) linguistic ideas came to dominate. Greatly influenced by behaviorist psychology and its mechanistic explanations of human action, and uncompromising in his belief that linguistic research should conform to the rigor of other scientific disciplines, Bloomfield is particularly associated with the scientification of the discipline. In contrast to the London School, Bloomfield’s discovery

procedures were designed to exclude meaning, to the extent possible, from linguistic analysis.

Since the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, an array of theoretical and methodological linguistic positions has emerged. Although some of these positions are inimical to easy categorization, it is customary to divide linguistic approaches in terms of their postures towards the concepts of form and function.

In the United States, formalism has predominated. In 1957, Noam Chomsky (1928 - ) published *Syntactic Structures*. Influenced by advances in mathematical logic, Chomsky's book was both a general reaction against the atheoretical, behaviorist, and empirical orientations of neo-Bloomfieldian linguistics and a specific rebuttal of the behaviorist B.F. Skinner's book *Verbal Behaviour*. In *Syntactic Structures*, Chomsky introduced transformation-generative grammar, which describes how meaning lies deep in human behavior in a state he called "deep structure." He argued that in order for meaning to be carried from the deep level (e.g., "I angry bicycle here today morning") to the level of "surface" language (e.g., "Where on earth is my bicycle, it was here this morning?"), it first must undergo a series of innate, psycho-linguistic, rule-governed transformations (Lowe, 2003, p. 8). Chomsky's work revolutionized the field of linguistics.

While Chomskian linguistics thrived in the United States, in Europe, functionalism flourished. Arising from the seminal work of the Prague School and J.R. Firth, functionalism is today most associated with Michael Halliday (1925 - ), who developed the influential systemic functional linguistic model of language. Halliday argues that languages develop in accordance with the uses to which they are put.

Linguistics, he wrote, is the study of "how people exchange meanings by 'linguaging'" (Halliday, 1985, p. 193). In contrast to formal structuralist approaches, Halliday proposed the ideas that language is first and foremost a product of intentions manifesting themselves within social contexts, that language both acts upon and is constrained by these social contexts, and that function (what language does and how it does it) should be central to our understanding of how language works (Lowe, 2003).

*A brief history of SLA & second language teaching.* SLA is most often identified as a domain of applied linguistics, in turn a domain of linguistics. However, this putative hierarchy is complicated by the bi-directionality of each fields' intellectual contributions, and by the fact that each has been so heavily influenced by ideas that have originated elsewhere, in such disciplines as cognitive psychology, neurology, anthropology, sociology, and education. The relationship between SLA and language pedagogy is similarly complicated. One can plausibly view SLA as entirely independent of second language pedagogy (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991). One can also view the two as "inextricably entwined" (Gass, 1992, as cited in Crookes, 1996, p. 96).

In the beginning, few would have challenged the view that linguistics and language pedagogy were "inextricably entwined." In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, mainstream linguistics, applied linguistics, and language teaching were all tightly bound. All shared a common view of language and language learning as well as the goal of resolving problems in language teaching through the application of linguistic theories (Pica, 2005). They were also united by the urgency brought about by the entry of the United States into World War II, which resulted in a pressing need for personnel who were able to communicate in German, French, Italian, Chinese, Japanese, and other

languages important to the war effort. In 1939, the first English Language Institute in the United States opened at the University of Michigan. The language program borrowed from Bloomsfeld's structuralist account of language, i.e., the idea that language could be broken down into a typology of sounds and structures. The Michigan program was also guided by the premises of behaviorist psychology: it was believed that languages could be learned through the inculcation of correct linguistic habits. These habits were to be formed through a regimen of student imitation and the practice of a given language's sounds and structures and cemented in the mind by the judicious use of positive reinforcement and corrective feedback. Thinking during the learning process was discouraged; automaticity of response was promoted through intensive pattern practice: "It is these basic patterns that constitute the learner's task. They require drill, drill, and more drill, and only enough vocabulary to make such drills possible" (Hockett, 1959, as cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2006, p. 52).

Subsequent research and training programs were likewise guided by the framework of assumptions supplied by Bloomsfeldian structuralism and behaviorist psychology. These assumptions were fused to ideas proposed by the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis, which held that the difficulty of learning foreign languages arose from the conflict between the grammatical and phonological patterns of the L1 and the L2. It was believed that contrastive analysis of different languages could systematically predict interference problems, which could then be addressed through pedagogic intervention in the form of drills, practice, and correction. Once again, as in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, the assemblage, organization, and comparison of information about foreign languages

was in vogue. Hierarchies of difficulty were established and error prediction became a major focus of research.

The pedagogic method that emerged from all this was denominated Audiolingualism. A British version, the Structural-Situational Method, introduced the concepts of presentation, practice, and production.

Although vestiges of Audiolingualism and Structural-Situationalism can still be found in ESL classrooms around the world (most notably PPP sequencing), the heyday of the method was relatively short lived. Audiolingualism was unseated for two reasons. The first is that if Audiolingualism worked at all, it worked very poorly. Rote-learning and intensive practice of linguistic regularities did not bring about desired outcomes. Learners appeared incapable of imitating many second language structures (Pica, 2005). The second reason for Audiolingualism's failure was that its theoretical underpinnings were decisively ripped away with the arrival of the Chomskian revolution. Chomsky's powerful refutation of the structural-behaviorist framework overturned what had been established certainties, and suggested exciting new avenues of research. Chomsky's insights about first language acquisition, which undergirded much of his linguistic theory, had a particular impact on SLA. Linguistics, Chomsky argued, should grapple with the problem of how language acquisition is possible. Given the indeterminacy, degeneracy, quantity, and poverty of the linguistic input available to a child, it was postulated that children must be genetically endowed with a pre-wired language faculty that allows them to construct a complete grammar given only limited exposure to an L1 (Martín Morillas, 1991). It was felt that some sort of "language acquisition device" (LAD) residing in the

mind must hold a rulebook for constructing all possible human languages. This set of rules (principles and parameters) was labeled the Universal Grammar (UG).

Although Chomsky himself insisted that his theories had little or nothing to say about second language acquisition (Chomsky, 1966, as cited in Martín Morillas, 1991), there was nonetheless an expectation on the part of educators that linguistics would continue to inform pedagogy in the same way it had when the structuralist-behaviorist paradigm held sway (van der Walt, 1992). The implication that language acquisition is an innate, rule-governed process was seized on by SLA. Connecting fresh findings from first language acquisition to second language acquisition, scholars argued that learning could no longer be explained in terms of stimulus-response; learners, it was now believed, creatively constructed their own interlanguage systems through a process of hypothesis creation and testing. Errors were no longer to be stamped out in the fear that bad habits might form, but were rather to be understood as attempts by the LAD to work out the grammar of the target language. Acquisition was no longer seen as an additive process and attending to linguistic form was no longer regarded as necessary. In a reproof to Audiolingualism, it was now believed that second languages could not be forced into the developing network, but had to be acquired naturally (van der Walt, 1992).

The birth of modern SLA is often traced to Corder's (1967) enunciation of these prevailing views in his celebrated article *The Significance of Learners' Errors*:

... we cannot really teach language, we can only create conditions in which it will develop spontaneously in the mind in its own way. We shall never improve our ability to create such favorable condition until we learn more about the way a learner learns and what his built-in syllabus is.

When we do know this (and the learner's errors will, if systematically studied, tell us something about this) we may begin to be more critical of our cherished notions. We may be able to allow the learner's innate strategies to dictate our practice and determine our syllabus; we may learn to adapt ourselves to his needs rather than impose upon him our preconceptions of how he ought to learn, what he ought to learn and when he ought to learn it. (p. 169)

It was a fecund period for L2 teaching theory and practice. Invigorated by rapid shifts in applied linguistics and SLA and drawing on humanist philosophy and fresh psychological theories of learning, a hundred pedagogic flowers bloomed. In the 1970s and 1980s, the fields of second language teaching were carpeted with new instructional approaches: Community Language Learning (Curran, 1976, 1982), the Silent Way (Gattegno, 1972), Suggestopedia (Lozanov, 1978), and Total Physical Response (Asher, 1986). All had their moment in the sun, but none lasted very long.

At the same moment that the Chomskian revolution was laying waste to established orthodoxies in the United States, a serious challenge to the formalist program was being shaped in Europe. Chomsky's detractors there criticized his purely cognitive view of language, arguing that language is not an innate and fully worked-out code but rather an ever-evolving system of communication embedded in specific socio-cultural contexts. Hymes (1972) proffered the concept of "communicative competence" as a challenge to Chomsky's notion of "linguistic competence." The debate between formalists and functionalists emerged yet again, with high stakes for language pedagogy:



Whereas formalists tend to explain linguistic universals as deriving from a common genetic linguistic inheritance of the human species, functionalists see it as deriving from the universality of the uses to which language is put in human societies; whereas formalists are inclined to explain children's acquisition of language in terms of a built-in capacity to learn language, functionalists explain it in terms of the development of the child's communicative needs; whereas formalists study language as an autonomous system, functionalists study it in relation to social function.

(Leach, 1983, as cited in Martín Morillas, 1991, p. 152)

This debate between formalism and functionalism was carried inevitably into the sphere of SLA. Drawing on the work of Firth and Halliday, and adopting a decidedly functionalist posture, British applied linguists drew attention to the functional and communicative nature of language. In 1972, Wilkins offered a functional syllabus for L2 pedagogy based on an analysis of communicative meanings that second language learners need to convey and understand. He detailed two kinds of meanings: notional and functional. The former referred to concepts such as time, sequence, quantity, location, and frequency; the latter referred to uses of language, such as requests, denials, offers, and complaints. Wilkins later enlarged on these ideas, publishing *Notional Syllabuses* in 1976. Rechristened "communicative language teaching" (CLT), his ideas, and those of other functionalists working at the time, were rapidly adopted by ESL textbook writers and curriculum developers (Richards & Rodgers, 2006; van der Walt, 1992). CLT was to reign for at least three decades and can arguably be said to be the predominant teaching method today (see below).

Communicative language methods were strongly bolstered by the theories of L2 acquisition proposed by Stephen Krashen (1985), whose ideas about the nature of language learning dovetailed neatly with functionalism's insistence on viewing language as a cultural artifact and social act. This melding of perspectives is more than a little ironic. Although Krashen associated his work, and especially the Natural Approach he developed with Tracy Terrell, with other communicative language teaching approaches being developed during the 1970s and 80s (Krashen & Terrell, 1983), his theoretical positions were based on Chomsky's postulations of a LAD. Theoretically speaking, Krashen's Monitor Model and the functionalist underpinning of communicative language are essentially incompatible. Yet these strange bedfellows have cohabitated together for so long, the oddness of the match is rarely remarked upon.

Krashen's Monitor Model is comprised of five hypotheses that suggest a scheme for classroom second language acquisition: the Acquisition-Learning hypothesis; the monitor hypothesis; the natural order hypothesis, the input hypothesis, and the affective filter hypothesis. Almost certainly the most important of these premises is Krashen's distinction between learning and acquisition. According to Krashen, acquisition refers to the subconscious, intuitive development of implicit knowledge about a second language. The processes which govern acquisition are very similar to those which allow children to learn their first language in that development depends entirely on meaningful input. Acquisition is contrasted with learning, which refers to the conscious process of learning about language as an object. Learning refers to the growth of explicit knowledge of an L2. Learning is generally equated with classroom practice, such as when students are taught grammar rules and meta-linguistic information concerning formal features of an

L2. In Krashen's view, what is learned (i.e., explicit knowledge) can never be acquired (i.e., converted into implicit knowledge). According to Krashen, knowing about the formal features of an L2 has at most a minimal impact on one's ability to use the language: it may serve a "monitoring" function in that it allows second language learners to plan, edit, and correct their output; however, all "true" language originates from acquisition.<sup>1</sup> For adherents of Krashen, this position had (and continues to have) a profound influence on classroom practice since it militates against traditional grammar teaching in favor of purely communicative activities.

*Language pedagogy today.* Although CLT remains the dominant paradigm in many quarters of the EFL discipline, it has been criticized on a number of grounds. Kumaravadivelu (2006) places the major criticisms into three categories. First, serious doubts have been raised about the authenticity of CLT. As the author correctly remarks, so-called communicative classrooms may, in fact, be anything but. Reviewing a number of studies supporting this view (Kumaravadivelu, 1993a; Legutke & Thomas, 1991; Nunan, 1987; Thornbury, 1996), Kumaravadivelu concludes that "Even teachers who are committed to CLT can fail to create opportunities for genuine interaction in their classroom" (Kumaravadivelu, 1993a, as cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p. 62). Second, CLT has been criticized on grounds of its acceptability, i.e., its claim to represent a major break from past pedagogic approaches:

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<sup>1</sup> His critics (Gregg, 1984; McLaughlin, 1987; Mitchell & Myles, 1998) contend that the categorical distinction between acquisition and learning is not supported empirically and that Krashen's hypotheses are unsupported by any theory. The full range of criticisms was most famously encapsulated by Gregg (1984), who argued that "each of Krashen's hypotheses is marked by serious flaws: undefinable or ill-defined terms, unmotivated constructs, lack of empirical content and thus of falsifiability, lack of explanatory power" (p. 94).

In fact, a detailed analysis of the principles and practices of CLT would reveal that it is too adhered to the same fundamental concepts of language teaching as the Audiolingual method it sought to replace, namely, the linear and additive view of language learning, and the presentation-practice-production vision of language teaching. The claims of its distinctiveness are based more on communicative activities than on conceptual underpinnings. (p. 63)

Lastly, Kumaravadivelu reviews criticisms of the approach's adaptability to different cultural contexts. In an earlier review of the literature, Kumaravadivelu (2001) pointed out that "all pedagogy, like all politics, is local," and that to "ignore local exigencies is to ignore lived experiences" (p. 539). Quoting Coleman (1996), he concludes that pedagogies that disregard lived experiences will ultimately prove to be "so disturbing for those affected by them -- so threatening to their belief systems -- that hostility is aroused and learning becomes impossible" (Kumaravadivelu, 2001, p. 539). One final criticism left unmentioned by Kumaravadivelu is the simple pragmatic problem that many learners who acquire language through CLT (and particularly those enrolled in "strong" versions of CLT, i.e., programs that offer little or no formal instruction) exhibit problems with language accuracy and lexical range. As Lightbown and Spada (2006) note, research demonstrates that "learners may make slow progress on acquiring more accurate and sophisticated language if there is no focus on form" (p. 176). The authors go on to observe that this is especially true if learners are in contexts where shared language and learning backgrounds permit successful communication even in spite of errors.

As a reaction against the perceived failures of language pedagogies, and as a late embrace of trends in the humanities and social sciences (i.e., the “critical turn”), a number of ESL scholars began to turn to critical pedagogies and to speak of a “post-methods” era. The move from methods (almost always informed by findings in linguistics) to critical theories, pedagogies and discourses (all closely associated with postmodernism) can be traced to Pennycook (1989) and Prabhu (1990).<sup>2</sup> More recently, the work of Kumaravadivelu (1992, 1994, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2006a, 2006b) has garnered considerable attention. Pennycook argued that the idea of method “has diminished rather than enhanced our understanding of language teaching” (p. 597). Prabhu (1990) concurred, writing that “The search for an inherently best method should perhaps give way to a search for ways in which teachers' and specialists' pedagogic perceptions can most widely interact with one another, so that teaching can become most widely and maximally real” (p. 176). Kumaravadivelu (2006a), summing up this line of thinking, observes that the concept of method “has only a limited and limiting impact on language learning and teaching, that method should no longer be considered a valuable or a viable construct, and that what is needed is not an alternative method but an alternative to method” (p. 67).

In some quarters, critical pedagogies are seen as the most promising “alternative to method.” Critical pedagogies reject traditional concepts of teaching, which view the instructor’s task as the application of theory to practice, in favor of a perspective in which teaching is the theorization of practice, i.e., “making visible the nature of practitioner knowledge and providing the means by which such knowledge can be elaborated,

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<sup>2</sup>For a discussion of critical pedagogies in the Mexican context, see the special edition of *Mextesol Journal* 30(2), 2006.

understood, and reviewed” (Richards, 2008, p. 6). Essentially political, critical pedagogies are informed by perspectives which focus on how ideas, interactions, language use, texts, and learning practices are shaped by and within social relationships that “systematically advantage some people over others, thus producing and re-producing inequitable relationships of power in society” (Hawkins & Norton, 2009, pp. 1-2). From a critical pedagogy perspective, the goal of second language teacher education should be to promote critical awareness, critical self-reflection, and critical pedagogical relations. According to Hawkins and Norton (2009), critical awareness may be defined as “raising consciousness about the ways in which power relations are constructed and function in society, and the extent to which historical, social, and political practices structure educational inequity” (p. 4). Critical self-reflection “provides a window on the relationship between the individual and the social world, highlighting both constraints on and possibilities for social change” (p. 5). And critical pedagogical relations refers to a restructuring of power relations between teacher educators and their teacher learners, “not only to model critical educational practices, but to encourage teacher learners to consider ways in which their own teaching can enhance opportunities for language learners in their classrooms” (p. 6).

Critical pedagogy has not been universally accepted. Durst (2006), for instance, argues that critical pedagogies are largely untenable in the real world, where the majority of students have pragmatic, instrumental reasons for wanting to attend school and learn certain subjects. Students, in his view, are generally unwilling or unable to cope with the extreme autonomy and responsibility that such a radical rethinking of classroom roles

entails and simply want to fulfill their “reasonable wish to be successful in school and career” (p. 111).

Setting aside the question of critical pedagogies, there are also reasons to question whether methods have, *pace* Kumaravadivelu, indeed run their course. Perhaps the most persuasive criticisms leveled against the idea of “postmethodism” is that the postmethodologists have carefully distorted the meaning of methods and inflated their importance in order to better undermine them. Bell (2003) points out that “method” has at least three distinct meanings within ESL. One view is that method refers to a “smorgasbord of ideas”, i.e., whatever “programs, curricula, procedures, demonstrations, modes of presentation, research findings, tests, manners of interaction, materials, texts, films, videos, [and] computers” that a teacher happens to use (Oller, 1993, as cited in Bell, 2003, p. 326). The second meaning of method refers to a rigid set of prescriptive pedagogical practices, a “set of procedures that fits all contexts” (Brown, 2000, p. 170). The third view is that method simply refers to a set of organizing principles and procedures for accomplishing or approaching a goal. Bell (2003) argues that postmethodologists make a straw man out of method by concentrating on the smorgasbord and prescriptive senses of the word, ignoring the evidence that teachers have generally understood method in its lay sense, and that the concept of methods as a set of organizing principles continues to be salient to the work of most ESL professionals. Methods, it is argued, continue to be popular because 1) they supply instructors with an understanding of how the discipline of language teaching has developed; 2) instructors are able to adopt and adapt them to fit their own teaching contexts; and 3) they can furnish instructors

(especially novices) with fundamental teaching skills while they expand their own pedagogic repertoires (Richards & Rodgers, 2006).

As Block (2001, as cited in Bell, 2003) correctly points out, “while method has been discredited at an etic level (that is, in the thinking and nomenclature of scholars), it certainly retains a great deal of vitality at the grassroots, emic level (that is, it is still part of the nomenclature of lay people and teachers)” (p. 325). In fact, there is little evidence that in the real world methods are on the wane. In a survey of 448 American and international ESL teachers, Liu (2004) found that 84% of the respondents were familiar with Communicative Language Teaching, and about half were familiar with the Grammar Translation Method (GTM), Audiolingualism, and Total Physical Response. Overall, CLT was by far the most frequently reported language teaching method at all levels of instruction, with 75% of respondents reporting its use in their classrooms. Outside the United States, 75% of the non-native speakers who returned the survey reported their use of Grammar Translation for teaching reading and writing.

While the continued prevalence of methods undermines the idea of a “post-methods” era, it says nothing about whether the methods that continue to be used are principled. There continues to be an absence of any sound AL or SLA research base to inform pedagogical decisions. The fact that so many teachers around the world continue to use Grammar Translation -- a method developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with roots traceable to at least the 16<sup>th</sup> – is testament to the fact that L2 acquisition research has not produced an ESL pedagogy compelling enough to attract anything like unanimous adoption. The GTM is described by Richards and Rogers (2006) as a method that has no theory and “no literature that offers a rationale or justification ... or that attempts to relate



it to issues in linguistics, psychology, or education theory” (p. 7). And yet wide swaths of the world’s English instructors have seen no need to throw it over for any of the many research-based approaches developed over the last century.

Given this situation, Kumaravadivelu (2001) is quite correct in stating that modern teachers must rely on a professional and personal knowledge base best developed by “keeping one’s eyes, ears, and mind open in the classroom to see what works and what does not, with what group(s) of learners, and for what reason, and assessing what changes are necessary to make instruction achieve its desired goals” (p. 550). This is probably the only practical response to the absence of any clear, empirical information about how languages are actually acquired.

*The future of SLA.* The political scientist Robert Keohane once voiced his skepticism that the field of international relations would ever approximate the rigor and accuracy of 17<sup>th</sup> century physics. It is an open question as to whether the field of second language acquisition has done any better. Despite the early promise of structuralist applied linguistics, Chomsky’s LAD, and functional understandings of language development, none of these has ever been translated into a fully satisfactory pedagogy. Today, there is interest in such fields as cognitive psychology and computational linguistics, as these fields offer new insights and ideas about the processes of language acquisition. Connectionist accounts of language learning (Elman, 2001; Harley, 2001; Saffran, 2003; Seidenberg & Zevin, 2006) have received attention in SLA circles. However, it remains unclear how findings from these various research programs might be applied to SLT contexts. Although studies in SLA have renewed interest in task-based instruction (Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004; Willis & Willis, 2007) and focus on form

(Doughty & Williams, 2009; Fotos & Nassaji, 2007), these approaches have yet to prove themselves demonstrably superior to any that have come before.

It is unclear whether SLA has – or will have – anything further to offer ESL. First, ESL has come to view SLA with some suspicion. As Lynch (1997) notes, “Many, perhaps most, language teachers regard research into language acquisition and language learning as remote and irrelevant” (as cited in Badger et al., 2001, pp. 5-6). SLA courses in SLTE programs are often characterized as overly theoretical or simply not pertinent to what goes on in the classroom (Richards, 2008). Indeed, there has been a reconceptualization of SLTE that strongly reflects ESL’s shift away from SLA. Traditionally, teacher education programs have been organized around language analysis and methodology. The language-focused courses provided academic content and the methodological courses provided pre-service teachers with instruction in how this content should be taught. An unquestioned assumption was that such knowledge created the best foundation for ESL pedagogy (Richards, 2008, p. 4). Increasingly, however, ESL training programs have rethought this emphasis on the mastery of skills and competencies and have focused instead on the socialization of pre-service teachers into professional communities of practice. The knowledge base of ESL teaching, which had largely been drawn from other disciplines, has been refocused on the work of teaching itself (Freeman, 2002). There tends to be less emphasis on language-based disciplines (e.g., linguistics, phonetics) and more emphasis on such domains as sociocultural theory and teacher cognition.

Rather than the ... course being a survey of issues in applied linguistics drawing from the traditional disciplinary sources, course work in areas

such as reflective teaching, classroom research, and action research now form parts of the core curriculum in many TESOL programs and seek to expand the traditional knowledge base of language teaching. (Richards, 2008, p. 5)

Second, the field of SLA has become increasingly sidelined as fields such as cognitive psychology and computational linguistics have rushed into the breach left by a hundred years of inconclusive research into language learning. While SLA struggles to explain L2 acquisition, technological advances such as Google Translate and Apple's Siri make such questions increasingly irrelevant to many people around the world.

This situation is not helped by the fact that a number of stumbling blocks continue to make advances in both applied linguistics and SLA theory construction – and thus research -- difficult. Widdowson (1992) famously described applied linguistics as a “patchwork of insights stitched together.” Thirteen years later, Cook (2005) argued that any apparent consensus about the nature and scope of applied linguistics remained illusory: “It is achieved only when definitions of the discipline are couched in the most general terms. When the details of theories are specified, we find fundamental differences of opinion both within applied linguistics and with linguistics” (282). This is essentially the same situation in SLA, which is hampered by problems of research methodology, the proliferation of theories, contradictions among theories, and confusion about domain and objectives (Jordan, 2004). The discipline remains a long way away from what Kuhn (1962, as cited in Cook, 2005) famously termed a period of “normal science,” “one in which there is enough consensus for researchers to conduct detailed research, untroubled by doubts about the paradigm within which they are working” (p. 287). Persistent

paradigmatic doubts in SLA stem from fundamental issues of epistemology, theoretical scope, and theory construction. Here, I briefly consider each of these in turn.

A major problem in SLA theory creation is that investigators have so far failed to even agree on what constitutes a valid research program. Jordan (2004) is particularly cogent in his appraisal of this problem:

... there is no consensus on the fundamental issues of what needs to be explained, what counts as an explanation, and what criteria should be used to assess different theories of SLA ... there is not just a lot of disagreement among SLA academics, there is also confusion and misunderstanding about the underlying principles on which any research programme rests – how do we best construct a theory, and how do we go about the task of judging among rival theories of the same phenomenon? (p. 3)

At one end of a range of views about what an SLA research program should consist of are those working within the rationalist tradition. These researchers argue that questions in SLA are amenable to the scientific method of inquiry. In general, it is believed that theory should be built on testable hypotheses: theories are valid to the extent that these hypotheses are not falsified by empirical observation of an objective reality.

At the other end of the spectrum are radical relativists, in particular the postmodernists. For postmodernists, scientific inquiry is not something to be conducted, but rather something to be challenged, refuted, and abandoned. Block (1996, as cited in

Sheen 1999), for instance, argued that there is an urgent need for SLA researchers to throw off the oppressively constricting constraints of the “scientific” approach. Lantolf (1996), who offered a “post-modernist critical analysis of the SLA theory-building literature,” claimed that

The greater the acceptance of and acquiescence to standard scientific language within a discipline, the greater chance that the productivity of the scientific endeavor will diminish. (p. 723)

Another important philosophical position is staked out by the constructivists, who highlight the socially embedded nature of knowledge and language, question the reductionist and isolationist methods of the rationalist program, and approach analysis holistically and contextually through the use of qualitative research methods.

Constructivism is aligned with postmodernism in its rejection of objective truth. Constructivists are deeply committed to the idea that “what we take to be objective knowledge and truth is the result of perspective” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 7). As Bruner (1986) states, “contrary to common sense, there is no unique ‘real world’ that pre-exists and is independent of human mental activity and human symbolic language” (as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 7).

Another of the significant problems in SLA theory building is the problem of scope. That is, what should SLA theory try to account for? Should the goal be a “grand unified theory” of acquisition or is it more profitable to focus on individual factors affecting acquisition? In other words, should theories be paradigmatic or specific? On the one hand stand the researchers who argue for a maximalist program. Long (1990, as cited

in Brown, 2007) argues that the very least a theory of SLA needs to explain are universals; environmental factors; variability in age, acquisition rate, and proficiency; cognitive and affective factors; form focused learning; cognitive and innate factors which explain interlanguage systematicity; the non-accumulative nature of acquisition; and other variables besides exposure and input. Towell and Hawkins (1994) identify five core phenomena for which, they maintain, a theory of SLA must account: transfer; staged development; systematicity; variability; and incompleteness. Mitchell and Myles (1998) proffer a somewhat different list of theoretical concerns: the role of internal mechanisms; the role of the first language; the role of psychological variables; and the role of social and environmental factors. Many (probably most) SLA researchers, on the other hand, are content with isolating and theorizing about specific acquisition variables. Yorio's classificatory framework of learner variables (1976, as cited in Brown, 2007), for instance, serves as a good example of the minimalist approach. Yorio postulated six main variables that ramify into a dizzyingly complex number of sub-variables: input is divided into free learner input and instructed learner input; instructed learner input is divided into type of instruction, length of instruction, place of instruction, material of instruction, and source of instruction; each of these is further sub-divided; and so on. Brown (2007) suggests that each of these individual variables is deserving of theoretical consideration.

Even assuming that an epistemological position has been staked out and the scope of investigation delimited, theory complexity continues to be a problem in SLA. In science, a theory should be, *ceteris paribus*, the simplest possible explanation that effectively addresses a given phenomenon. This idea of theoretical parsimony is generally associated with William of Ockham's famous dictum, *pluralitas non est*

*ponenda sine necessitate* ("plurality should not be posited without necessity"). This axiom – popularly referred to as “Ockham’s Razor” -- is usually understood to mean that "what can be explained by the assumption of fewer things is vainly explained by the assumption of more things" (Boehner, 1957, as cited in Cogan, 1998, p. 157). As Prabhu (1990) argues,

Theory ... arises not from a cataloguing of diversity, but from a perception of unity in diverse phenomena – a single principle, or a single system of principles, in terms of which diversity can be maximally accounted for. (p. 166)

Theory building in SLA suffers from a lack of parsimony, tending instead towards the kind of inductive cataloguing Prabhu refers to. Much research devolves into exercises in taxonomy. Brown (2007), for instance, explains how the variable of “self-esteem” should actually be understood in terms of “global self-esteem,” “situational self-esteem,” and “task self-esteem”; anxiety becomes “trait anxiety,” “state anxiety,” “debilitative anxiety,” and “facilitative anxiety.” Rather than serving as aids to insight, such classificatory frameworks -- the postulation of an increasing number of variables and their subsequent subdivision into still more variables -- only serve to render complicated subjects even more complex.

On the other hand, it is possible, of course, for a theory to be too parsimonious. Krashen’s (1985) input hypothesis, for instance, is deficient in that it doesn’t satisfactorily account for a number of observations about acquisition, such as the apparent interface between explicit knowledge and implicit knowledge or the importance of output in developing learner interlanguage. Be that as it may, the sparseness and

universality of Krashen's theory must be applauded if for no other reason than because its simplifactory elegance is so rare in SLA.

**Characteristics and practices of effective ESL teachers.** Since at least the 1930's, researchers have worked to uncover the mystery of successful teaching (i.e., Barr, 1932, 1935; Beaumont, 1938; Briggs, 1935; Bruce, 1930; Butsch, 1931; Torgerson, 1934; Wilson, 1932). Chen, Brown, Hattie, and Millward (2012) review the variety of terms that have been employed to describe the ideal instructor: the *National Board for Professional Teaching Standards* (1987) refers to the "highly accomplished" teacher; Watkins and Zhang (2006) write of the "good" teacher; Witcher, Onwuegbuzie, and Minor (2001) describe the "effective" teacher; Kane, Sandretto, and Heath (2004) discuss "excellent" teachers; and Darling-Hammond and Youngs (2002) make reference to "qualified" teachers. The authors note that despite this plurality of terms, all of these studies "seem to be describing a similar set of attributes concerning the very best teaching" (p. 937). In this current study, these designations are used interchangeably.

Just as in the field of general education, the FL profession has been keenly interested in defining the characteristics and practices of qualified second language instructors. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) (1988), the American Association of Teachers of French (1989), the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (1990), the American Association of Teachers of German (Schulz et al., 1993) have all presented guidelines describing the knowledge, skills, and experiences that teachers should possess in their respective areas. The ACTFL, for instance, emphasizes that teachers should demonstrate the knowledge and skills derived from a strong liberal arts education, understand the art and science of



pedagogy, and be specialized in the language and culture to be taught in the classroom (p. 71).

Borg (2006a), expressing a prevailing sentiment in the literature, argues that understanding teacher characteristics is important to understanding teaching practice:

... language teacher education presupposes an understanding of what specifically it means to be a language teacher, and therefore insight into the distinctive characteristics of language teachers is central to the work of language teacher educators. (p. 3)

In this section, I will first examine the attributes and practices of good teachers in domains outside ESL. I then survey the literature concerning the characteristics and practices of ESL teachers.

*Beliefs about the characteristics and practices of good teachers.* Beishuizen, Hof, van Putten, Boumeester, and Asscher (2001) trace empirical investigations regarding the characteristics of good teachers to the 1920s, when leadership styles were thought to correlate with student performance. It was not until the 1930's, however, that pedagogical research was systematized. In 1932, Avril Barr called for the integration of scientific techniques in educational research. In an editorial placed in the *Journal of Educational Research*, he bemoaned the number of educational investigators who knew very little about, or had very little appreciation for, the "controlled techniques of the experimentalist" (p. 219) and called for a new research paradigm based on measurement, logical thinking, and statistics. His call was taken up: a number of researchers (e.g., Barr, 1932; Barr, 1935; Beaumont, 1938; Briggs, 1935; Bruce, 1930; Butsch, 1931; Torgerson, 1934; Wilson, 1932) began the work of identifying and classifying the "specific traits,

qualities, and teaching activities” (Torgerson, 1934, p. 266) that correlate most highly with teaching ability. The longitudinal Wisconsin studies, led by Barr, are probably most associated with this effort. In a study of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers of citizenship, Barr (1940) found that the following teacher qualities correlated highly with instructional excellence:

... the emotional stability of the teacher; her social adjustments; her energy, vitality, and enthusiasm; her personal appearance and habits; the richness of her experience and background; skill in expression; and ability to work with others effectively ... (p. 683)

This desire to discover and classify the most important teacher traits and practices continues to drive much educational research (see Table 3). Medley and Shannon (1994), for instance, identify three dimensions of teacher quality: teacher effectiveness (having to

Table 3

*Traits and Practices of Effective Teachers*

<b>Author(s)</b>	<b>Traits and Practices</b>
Çelik, Arikan, & Carter (2013)	personality; content and pedagogy specific knowledge; professional skills; classroom behavior
Chen (2012)	personal trait-related characteristics; classroom teaching-related characteristics
Chen, Brown, Hattie, & Millward (2012).	personal and professional characteristics; sound subject and pedagogical knowledge; classroom climate and management; student teacher relationships; professionalism
Ghasemi and Hashemi (2011)	subject matter knowledge; pedagogical knowledge; socio-affective skills
Rotgans & Schmidt (2011)	social congruence between teacher and student; teacher knowledge of subject-matter; cognitive congruence (can teach at students' level)
Wichadee (2010)	English proficiency; pedagogical knowledge; organization and communication skills; socio-affective skills
Cubukcu (2010)	interaction; competence (effective instruction); classroom management
Helterbran (2008)	knowledge and presentation; personal qualities of the professor; professional/instructional qualities.
Park and Lee (2006)	English proficiency; pedagogical knowledge; socio-affective skills
Bell (2005)	provides learners with the grammatical (syntactical and morphological), lexical, phonological, pragmatic, and sociocultural knowledge and interactive practice they need to communicate successfully in the target language
Leu (2005)	sufficient knowledge of subject matter to teach with confidence; knowledge and skills in a range of appropriate and varied teaching methodologies; knowledge of the language of instruction; knowledge of, sensitivity to, and interest in young learners; ability to reflect on teaching practice and children's responses; ability to modify teaching/learning approaches as a result of reflection; ability to create and sustain an effective learning environment; understanding of the curriculum and its purposes; general professionalism, good morale, and dedication to the goals of teaching; ability to communicate effectively; ability to communicate enthusiasm for learning to students; interest in students as individuals, sense of caring and responsibility for helping them learn and become good people, and a sense of compassion; good character, sense of ethics, and personal discipline

(table continues)

<b>Author(s)</b>	<b>Traits and Practices</b>
Faranda & Clarke (2004)	rapport; delivery; fairness; knowledge; credibility; organization; preparation
Johnson (2004)	teacher-student interaction styles; teaching methods and techniques; planning and organization; interest and attention; personality
Mullock (2003)	pedagogical content knowledge and skills; attitudes and behavior towards students; personal characteristics and attitudes; content knowledge; broader educational goals and skills
Witcher et al. (2001)	student-centeredness; enthusiasm for teaching; ethicalness; classroom and behavior management; teaching methodology; knowledge of subject
Hativa et al. (2001):	lesson organization; clarity; interest/student engagement; positive classroom climate
Hay McBer (2000)	professional characteristics (the underlying dispositions and patterns of behavior that drive what teachers do); teaching skills (the “micro-behaviors” or the specific skills of teaching); classroom climate (an “output measure” of students’ collective perceptions about working in a particular teacher’s classroom)
Tsai (1999)	linguistic ability; pedagogical skills; psychological traits; professional training and readiness; teacher-student communicative and interactive strategies
Whitty (1996)	professional characteristics; professional competencies
Hopkins and Stern (1996, as cited in Nuthall, 2004)	passionate commitment to doing the best for students; love of children enacted in warm, caring relationships; pedagogical content knowledge; use of a variety of models of teaching and learning; collaborative working style with colleagues; reflective practice
Dunkin (1995):	structuring; motivating; activity/independence; interpersonal relationships
Medley and Shannon (1994)	teacher effectiveness; teacher competence; teacher performance
Collins (1990)	commitment to students and learning; knowledge of the subject matter; class management skills; ability to think systematically about their own practices; membership in the learning community
Modern Language Association of America (cited in Verghese, 1989)	aural understanding; speaking; reading; writing; language analysis; cultural awareness; professional preparation
Murray (1985)	enthusiasm; clarity; interaction; task orientation, rapport; organization

(table continues)

<b>Author(s)</b>	<b>Traits and Practices</b>
Vogt (1984)	the ability to provide instruction to different students of different abilities while incorporating instructional objectives and assessing the effective learning mode of the students

do with a teacher's impact on student learning), teacher competence (having to do with a teacher's knowledge and skills) and teacher performance (having to do with a teacher's professional behavior). Whitty (1996) identifies two sets of qualities that characterize an effective instructor: professional characteristics and professional competencies.

Professional characteristics include personal and professional values and development, communicative ability, and relationships. Professional competencies include knowledge and understanding of students, the subject, the curriculum, the educational system, and the teacher's role.

Despite the great number of traits and practices that have been identified in the literature, probably most of these can be divided into just two basic categories: those having to do with personality and those having to do with professional ability (Beishuizen et al., 2001; Kottler & Zehm, 2000; Thompson, 2008). Most student and teacher responses to questions about good teaching can be placed within one or the other of these two groupings. For instance, when asked about excellent teachers, research participants are inclined to identify, on the one hand, personal characteristics (i.e., warmth, enthusiasm, seriousness, sensitivity, authoritativeness, etc.) and, on the other, teaching abilities (i.e., classroom management skills, organization, planning, a sound knowledge base, etc.) (Cubukcu, 2010; Emmelman & DeCesare, 2007; Forston & Brown, 1998; Feldman, 1986). Below, I briefly consider these two basic categories.

*Personality.* Research on the relationship between pedagogic effectiveness and teacher personality has come in out and out of fashion over the years. In the 1930s and 40's, the role of teacher traits was considered an important concern. It was assumed that such specific traits as personality could be identified, isolated, and measured in terms of their contribution to teacher effectiveness. An early study by Rostker (as cited in Barr, 1940), for instance, found that personality had no significant relationship with teaching ability. Instead, he argued that instructional proficiency was highly correlated with a teacher's intelligence, social attitudes, stance towards teaching, and knowledge of "mental hygiene and ability to diagnose and remedy pupil mental maladjustment" (pp. 183-184). Rostker (1945) concurred, writing that "the correlations between personality ... and the criteria of teaching ability do not reveal any statistically significant correlations" (p. 45). Bruce (1930), on the other hand, reported that the majority of failures among beginning teacher were directly traceable to defects in their personality (p. 191). Torgerson (1934) found that students tended to judge their teachers in terms of their personal and social qualities.

Beginning in the 1950s, educational research into teacher personality fell increasingly out of favor. First, behaviorist explanations of pedagogic excellence took center stage. The goal of behaviorist educational research was to first identify those instructional actions that engendered positive learning outcomes and then to train teachers to imitate them in their own professional practice. However, this research program failed to satisfactorily locate the relationship between teaching practices and successful learning. Beginning in the 1980s, many educational research programs rejected positivist investigative methods in favor of interpretivist approaches to data

collection and analysis. Research in this vein has tended to reject single-trait explanations: critics of personality studies – or trait studies of any kind -- contend that such research caricaturizes teaching excellence and reduces the subject to a one-dimensional and superficial checklist of positive dispositional attributes (Beishuizen et al., 2001). Rather, a holistic perspective is preferred. The teaching-learning relationship is explained in terms of a complex of interacting factors which are not amenable to atomistic or quantitative analysis. According to this school, the purpose of educational research is to understand the intricacy, interdependency, and holism of teacher actions, thoughts, and beliefs (Verloop, 2001).

Despite the influence of different research paradigms over the years, many scholars, instructors, and students have stubbornly continued to identify positive personality traits as defining features of a good teacher. Indeed, personality remains a perennial focus of educational research attention:

Barr (1935): others have emphasized this fact by stressing the importance of the teacher's personality. The matter has been expressed differently by different persons, but most any of us who have had any contact with teachers whatsoever know that while a teacher's knowledge of method and subject matter are exceedingly important that they are only aspects of some larger whole not yet very well recognized nor defined. (p. 567)

Odenwell (1936): The outstanding trait, the one most closely associated with teaching, is personality. (p. 51)

Dawes (1948): To be sure, the trainee must have command of his subject matter. Certainly he should have an adequate knowledge of the philosophy

and the techniques of his profession. Nor can it be denied that some study of the psychology of those pupils whom he will instruct will be beneficial to him. Nevertheless, his success as a teacher will be determined, in great part, by his own personality and by his conduct as an individual. (p. 47)

Barr (1960): Many educators believe that the teacher's personality is important in teacher effectiveness, and research seems to support the belief. (p. 400)

Webb (1971): The way a teacher behaves, not what he knows, may be the most important issue in the transmission of the teaching learning exchange. (p. 13)

Penner (1992): One who teaches effectively, teaches not only his subject but himself. Personality is that part of a teacher's self which he/she projects into every classroom activity, thereby affecting and conditioning every learning situation. (p. 45)

Brosh (1996): Since thought, speech, and manners are a reflection of personality, teaching styles vary with the personality of each teacher. While subject matter, knowledge, and skills enable effective communication, what is actually heard and taken in by the listener may not depend so much on content or skill but rather on the personality of the speaker or on the nature of the personal relationship between the instructor and the learner. (p. 127)

Banner and Cannon (1997): We may know our subjects and perfect our techniques for teaching them, without recognizing that, for our mastery to



make a difference to our students, we must also summon from within, certain qualities of personality that have little to do with subject matter or theories of instruction. We don't learn these qualities, we call them forth -- and by understanding them, use them for the benefit of others. (p. 3)

Kottler and Zehm (2000): ... it is the human dimension that gives all teachers, whether in the classroom, the sports arena, or the home, their power as effective influencers. (p. 2.)

Helterbran (2008): Personal characteristics ... are integral in the overall portrait of a professional teacher ... Most educators can reflect on their past formal education and identify a teacher whom they remember fondly.

Although it is quite possible that this remembrance may be heavily influenced by this teacher's formidable content knowledge or captivating methods of instructional delivery, it is also those intangibles, those elements of personality and practice that blended into the mosaic of being a "good teacher." (p. 126)

Although personality continues to be identified as an indispensable constituent of teacher excellence, defining what personality is, exactly, has proven to be a challenge. Scientific studies of the human condition generally attempt to define personality by first identifying specific characteristics (i.e., happiness, motivation, kindness, etc.). Indeed, Hofstee (1994) argues that any discussion of personality, "sooner or later ... translates into defining personality traits, for even if there is more to personality than just traits, no definition can do without explicit reference to them" (p. 151). These individual traits are then generally placed into more general categories. Perhaps the most famous typology is

the Five Factor Model (or, more informally, the “Big Five”). The factors are openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism (Wiggins, 1996).

Another well-known typology is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. This system, based on Jungian psychological principles, measures four, bi-polar dimensions of personality: extraversion and introversion; sensing and intuition; thinking and feeling; and judging and perceiving (Rushton, Morgan, & Richard, 2007). Other, less famous typologies, have of course, been developed. Penner (1992), for instance, separated out five distinct threads of personality: 1) physical appearance; 2) intelligence, including natural abilities and acquired knowledge and aptitudes; 3) social capacity, including adjustment to situations and interaction with others; 4) cultural qualities, such as speech and manners; and 5) psychological makeup, including emotional stability and the ability to cope with problems, enthusiasm, ability to stimulate, inspire, and arouse positive reactions (p. 45).

*Ability.* Like personality, the construct of “ability” is both enduring and difficult to pin down with any definitional rigor.

Beishuizen et al. (2001) divides ability into three primary components: (1) teacher knowledge, (2) teacher skills, and (3) teacher experience. However, there is a great deal of overlap in the literature in how these terms are defined and employed. For instance, subject matter knowledge and teaching skill are often conflated (Olaitan & Agusiobo, 1981; Tok, 2010). Mullock (2003), citing Shulman (1987), fuses pedagogical knowledge and skills. Connelly and Clandinin (1988) famously coined the term “personal practical knowledge” to underline how teacher experience informs teacher knowledge and teacher practice, thus conflating all three concepts:

A term designed to capture the idea of experience in a way that allows us to talk about teachers as knowledgeable and knowing persons. Personal practical knowledge is in the teacher's past experience, in the teacher's present mind and body, and in the future plans and actions. Personal practical knowledge is found in the teacher's practice. (p. 25)

Below, I consider the concept of ability in terms of each of the three sub-categories identified by Beishuizen et al. (2001).

(1) Teacher Knowledge: Shulman's (1986) conception of teachers' professional knowledge is almost certainly the most cited in the literature. Shulman identified three branches of what he referred to as content knowledge. First, subject knowledge refers to the amount and organization of knowledge per se in the mind of the teacher. For Shulman, a command of the facts of a given domain was a necessary but insufficient basis for subject knowledge: a rich subject knowledge also demands an understanding of how a discipline arranges its facts. For Shulman, instructors should be able to go beyond simply defining the accepted truths of a discipline: they should be capable of elucidating why a particular proposition is "deemed warranted, why it is worth knowing, and how it relates to other propositions, both within the discipline and without, both in theory and in practice" (p. 9). Second, Shulman defines pedagogic content knowledge as a type of subject matter knowledge for teaching. A teacher with strong pedagogical content knowledge has the ability to make a subject comprehensible to others. Such a teacher possesses a large repertoire of approaches for communicating the ideas of a domain, including "powerful analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations, and demonstrations" (p. 9). Shulman explains that since there is no single best way of representing a given

subject, instructors must have a “veritable armamentarium” of alternative representations at their disposal, some derived from research and others originating in the “wisdom of practice” (p. 9). Third, Shulman defines curricular knowledge as an understanding of options available to an instructor. Curricular knowledge, he explains, is the “*materia medica*” of pedagogy, the “pharmacopeia” from which a teacher draws his or her tools:

We expect the mature physician to understand the full range of treatments available to ameliorate a given disorder, as well as the range of alternatives for particular circumstances of sensitivity, cost, interaction with other interventions, convenience, safety, or comfort. Similarly, we ought to expect that the mature teacher possesses such understandings about the curricular alternatives available for instruction. (p. 10).

Specific examples of curricular alternatives might include primary texts, alternative texts, software programs, visual materials, single-concept films, laboratory demonstrations, and “invitations to enquiry” (p. 10).

Borg (2006a) problematizes Shulman’s typology, stating that it may not be entirely applicable to the field of ESL. Citing Freeman (2002) and Grossman and Shulman (1994), he suggests that, within the field of ELT, Shulman’s conception of pedagogic content knowledge is complicated by the special relationship between subject matter and the medium of instruction, i.e., the second language. Borg goes on to assert that because the majority of notions about teacher knowledge come from fields characterized by paradigmatic knowledge (e.g. science and mathematics) “these may not be ideally suited to an understanding of areas ... which are defined more by narrative ways of knowing” (p. 28).

Johnson (1999) usefully clarifies Shulman's terminology and expands the number of his categories from three to four. First, she rechristens content knowledge as professional knowledge. Professional knowledge is composed of subject matter knowledge, general pedagogic knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and contextual knowledge. Johnson defines the first of these, subject knowledge, in the same way as Shulman: "knowledge of the major facts and concepts in a subject area, as well as its major paradigms; how they are organized; the fundamental theories, claims and truths; and central questions for further inquiry" (p. 24). General pedagogic knowledge refers to understandings about teaching and includes beliefs and abilities having to do with instructional practices and classroom management and conceptualizations of learners and learning that cut across particular domains. For Johnson, pedagogical content knowledge is the admixture of subject knowledge, general pedagogic knowledge, and what Shulman called curricular knowledge: "this concept includes a combination of knowledge related to the purposes for teaching a particular topic, students' understandings or misunderstandings of the topic, a host of curricular materials available to teach the topic, and specific strategies and representations that teachers use to make the topic comprehensible to students" (p. 24). In SLT settings, pedagogic content knowledge is a combination of a teacher's own experiences as students and L2 learners, and what they know about SLA processes and approaches to teaching second languages. Finally, to these, Johnson adds knowledge of context, which refers to an understanding of the ecology of learning in the classroom. That is, contextual knowledge is the knowledge a teacher has of his or her particular situation, including an institution's particular demands,

the physical reality of the classroom, and the needs and personalities of individual students.

In short, teacher knowledge is made up of both experiential and professional understandings about instructors, teaching, learning, and students. As Johnson (1999) correctly observes, the exact configuration of this knowledge will quite obviously be idiosyncratic, since the teaching and learning experiences that form the foundation for knowledge and reasoning will be different for every teacher.

(2) Teaching Skills: In the literature, “teaching skills” is a particularly murky concept. While it seems to be universally acknowledged that teachings skills are inherently important – particularly the ability to execute skills routinely (Beishuizen et al., 2001) -- no-one seems to agree on what, exactly, they are. For instance, the *Student Evaluation of Educational Quality* (SEEQ) is a feedback questionnaire widely used in the United States. According to Gibbs & Coffey (2004), the questionnaire concentrates on “low inference” teaching behaviors (i.e., concrete, denotable instructor actions that can be recorded with little or no inference on the part of the observer) that have been shown to correlate with learning outcomes. Five of the scales used in the SEEQ are concerned with “skills”:

- |                    |                                                                     |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Enthusiasm:        | i.e., the teacher was enthusiastic about teaching the course.       |
| Organization:      | i.e., the teacher’s explanations were clear.                        |
| Group interaction: | i.e., students were invited to share their ideas and knowledge.     |
| Rapport:           | i.e., the teacher showed a genuine interest in individual students. |

Breadth: i.e., the teacher contrasted the implications of various theories.

What is immediately apparent from this list is that at least two of the skills identified, enthusiasm and rapport, are generally considered socio-affective characteristics. This example highlights the fact that “skill” is an extremely inclusive, flexible, and contested term. Kyriacou (2007) writes that successful teaching skills crucially involve knowledge, decision-making, and action, and that a teachers’ level of expertise is evidenced by his or her display of precision, smoothness, and sensitivity to context (p. 2). Most authors define teaching skills more concretely. Hay McBer (2000) lists a number of specific skills, such as high expectations, planning, methods and strategies, pupil management / discipline, time and resource management, assessment, and homework. Olaitan and Agusiobo (1981) includes subject matter knowledge, motivation, communication, and behavior management among the teaching skills. Tok (2010) categorizes teaching skills as planning, subject matter knowledge, using instructional materials, motivation, communication, time management, and behavior management. Hotaman (2010) writes that the chief teaching skills are planning the teaching process, offering variety, using the instruction time effectively, creating a participatory learning environment, monitoring the development of the students, and ensuring the students’ self-control. Other authors (Campbell, Kyriakides, Muijs, & Robinson, 2004; Kerry and Wilding, 2004; Muijs and Reynolds, 2005) have defined teaching skills as those behaviors displayed by teachers considered to be effective. Such behaviors include:

Establishing an orderly and attractive learning environment

Concentrating on teaching and learning by maximizing learning time and maintaining an academic emphasis

Purposeful teaching through the use of well-organized and well-structured lessons coupled with clarity of purpose

Conveying high expectations and providing intellectual challenge

Monitoring progress and providing quick corrective feedback

Establishing clear and fair discipline.

In studies which report on student and teacher conceptualizations of skills, participants generally offer responses that are an admixture of pedagogic and content knowledge, organizational ability, and classroom behavior. Typical responses (taken from Çelik, Arikan, & Carter, 2013; Chen, 2012; Wichadee, 2010) include:

Classroom activity organization

Classroom atmosphere creation

Focus on learning outcomes and growth, not content taught

Good at classroom management

Has sound knowledge of grammar

Has sound knowledge of vocabulary

Lesson delivery

Motivate students by supporting their self-efficacy

Plays games during teaching

Promote communicative language learning through activities & discussion

Reduces students' anxiety

Regularly gives tests and quizzes



Takes attendance

Use various materials including video, audio, and multimedia

Uses technology and visual materials well

(3) Teacher Experience: Of the three dimensions of ability offered above (knowledge, skills, and experience), clearly the easiest to define is experience, which simply refers to the amount of time a teacher has spent at his or her job. Experience is widely believed to be an essential trait of effective teachers. Whereas studies of knowledge and skills have not been able to demonstrate strong or consistent correlations between these qualities and student achievement (largely because of the difficulties inherent in defining and operationalizing these terms), the majority of research supports the prevailing view that teacher experience positively effects student learning (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2006; Ferguson, 1991; Greenwald, Hedges, & Laine, 1996; Hanushek & Rivkin, 2004; Hunt, 2009; Klecker, 2003; Murnane & Phillips, 1981; Nye, Konstantopoulos, & Hedges, 2004; Rowan, Correnti, & Miller, 2002; TALIS, 2009). For instance, TALIS (2009) reports that years of professional experience have a significant impact on instructional practices, co-operation and collaboration among staff, classroom disciplinary climate, and self-efficacy (p. 115). Hunt (2009) summarizing the research, notes that one of the consistent findings across all studies is that instructors improve with experience, regardless of their path into the profession. However, such statements must be heavily caveated, since there is considerable evidence that teacher experience matters most during the first several years of a teacher's career, after which effects diminish (Ferguson, 1991; Hanushek & Rivkin, 2004; Staiger, 2006). Chingos and Peterson (2011) explain that instructors do generally become more effective after a few years of

experience, but that they may become less effective with experience, particularly later in their careers. And other studies dispute the positive impact of experience. Hay McBer (2000), for instance, found that information about teachers' age, qualifications, and experience is not predictive of teaching effectiveness.

*Investigations of teacher effectiveness.* Since the inception of research into teacher effectiveness, investigators and those responsible for teacher development have attempted to establish criteria for evaluating effective instruction. While there continues to little agreement about which particular behaviors account for teacher effectiveness, there is a fair amount of agreement about some dimensions of effective teaching in general. These include knowledge of the subject matter, enthusiasm, expressiveness, rapport, student teacher interaction, clarity of explanation, and the use of concrete example to elucidate concepts (Lee, 2010, Murray, 1991). Summarizing the literature, Hunt (2009) offers a general definition of teacher effectiveness:

The collection of characteristics, competencies, and behaviors of teachers at all educational levels that enable students to reach desired outcomes, which may include the attainment of specific learning objectives as well as broader goals such as being able to solve problems, think critically, work collaboratively, and become effective citizens. (p. 1)

Investigations into the concepts of teaching and teacher excellence in education have been approached from a multiplicity of perspectives, including those of students with different majors (Check, 1986), males and females (Witcher, Onwuegbuzie, & Minor, 2001; Minor et al., 2002), and high and low achieving students (Koutsoulis, 2003). Because of the composition of the student population in the University of

Guanajuato's LEI program, three types of investigation are particularly relevant to this present study: studies concerned with (1) the perceptions of university students about their professors (e.g., Broder & Dorfman, 1994; Emmelman & DeCesare, 2007; Feldman, 1986; Forston & Brown, 1998; Merrit, 2007; Murray, 1985; Murray, Rushton, & Paunonen, 1990; Naftulin, Ware, Jr., & Donnelly, 1973; Strage, 2008); (2) the perceptions of pre-service teachers about the characteristics of effective teachers (e.g., Helterbran, 2008; Minor et al., 2002; Mowrer-Reynolds, 2008; Morine-Dershirner et al., 1992; Proctor, 1989; Walls, Nardi, Minden, & Hoffman, 2002; Weinstein, 1989); and (3) the perceptions of experienced teachers about effective teachers (e.g., Dunkin, 1995; Hativa, Barak, & Simhi, 2001). The majority of LEI students are practicing teachers who are studying at the University of Guanajuato in order to broaden their knowledge and extend their pedagogic skills. They therefore fit into each of the three categories mentioned above: at one and the same time, they are university students, teachers in training, and practicing instructors. Below, I examine the idea of teaching excellence from the perspective of each of these categories.

(1) Student Perceptions of Effective Teachers' Characteristics and Practices: The most significant finding from research on student perceptions of teacher excellence is the prepotent influence of teacher personality traits on student judgments about instructional efficacy. One of the most well-known studies concerning the influence of personality on perceived teaching effectiveness was conducted by Naftulin, Ware, Jr., and Donnelly in 1970 (as cited in Naftulin et al., 1973). The researchers hypothesized that "given a sufficiently impressive lecture paradigm, an experienced group of educators participating in a new learning situation can feel satisfied that they have learned despite irrelevant,

conflicting, and meaningless content conveyed by the lecturer” (p. 631). They set about conducting their experiment by hiring a charismatic, authoritative, and distinguished-looking actor to play the role of one “Dr. Myron L. Fox,” a supposed expert on the application of mathematics to human behavior. The researchers contrived a nonsensical lecture on “mathematical game theory as applied to physician education,” and coached Fox to deliver it “with an excessive use of double talk, neologisms, non sequiturs, and contradictory statements,” all of which were to be “interspersed with parenthetical humor and meaningless references to unrelated topics” (p. 632). (Excerpts from the lecture may be viewed on Youtube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RcxW6nrWwtc>).

Naftulin et al.’s (1973) hypothesis was strongly supported by the results of their experiment. Dr. Fox was so convincing that he managed to fool three separate audiences composed of psychiatrists, psychologists, educators, graduate students, and other professionals. Evaluations of his lecture were overwhelmingly positive, lauding Fox’s “warm manner,” “lively examples,” and “good analysis of subject.” Commenting on these findings, Merritt (2007) reflects that

Fox’s use of warm, enthusiastic, and lively nonverbal behaviors would have been admirable if it had complemented a substantive presentation.

Most faculty use stylistic elements to engage student interest and motivate learning. The disturbing feature of the Dr. Fox study, as the experimenters noted, is that Fox’s nonverbal behaviors so completely masked a meaningless, jargon-filled, and confused presentation. (p. 243)

The “Dr. Fox Effect” was supported by subsequent studies. In his investigation of student assessments of university teachers, Murray (1985) determined that a professor’s

speech patterns, facial expressions, and humor had the greatest impact on student evaluations, whereas learning-focused behaviors, such as giving concrete examples of concepts, specifying practical applications, reiterating difficult ideas, and providing sample exam questions had less impact. In an early review of the literature, Feldman (1986) concluded that, on average, the students in his study strongly associated positive personality traits with teacher efficacy. Feldman divided these positive traits into 10 categories: energetic and enthusiastic; sympathetic and warm toward others, and tolerant and supportive of them; ascendant, forceful, conspicuous, showing leadership; high in self-regard and self-esteem; flexible, adaptable, open to change, adventurous; emotionally stable; sociable, gregarious, friendly, agreeable; bright, intelligent, sophisticated; and responsible, conscientious, persistent and orderly. Murray et al. (1990) reported that 40 to 70% of between-teacher variance in student instructional ratings was predictable from ratings of as few as five personality traits. In another study of student teacher evaluations, Broder and Dorfman (1994) found that the inter-personal skills of the instructor (enthusiasm, ability to stimulate thinking, ability to maintain interest and stimulate study) accounted for over half of the explained variation in instructor ratings, and concluded that “While the candidate's knowledge is important, the ability to deliver that knowledge is equally, if not more, important” (p. 246). In a mixed methods study of 115 graduate students conducted by Forston and Brown (1998), graduate students appeared to place more weight on course organization and the use of varied teaching methods than did undergraduates. However, having a sense of humor was reported to be the second most important feature in a graduate professor, suggesting that positive socio-affective traits are crucially important at every level of education.

Intentionally or not, the kinds of studies discussed above strongly suggest that students are more interested in being entertained than they are in learning. However, more recent scholarship has complicated this argument in at least three ways. First, early research has been criticized on the grounds of insufficient validity (see Greenwald, 1997) and methodological rigidity (Emmelman & DeCesare, 2007). In order to standardize data, most studies have relied on Likert-type rating scales. However, such elicitation instruments run the danger of overstating or suppressing potentially important aspects of student opinion. Qualitative investigations, which are now the norm in this type of research, have served as a corrective to this problem. For instance, Emmelman and DeCesare (2007) used open-ended questions in their study of “best” and “worst” teaching characteristics. Their findings highlight how teacher comportment is inextricably tied to pedagogical activities. Students in their study preferred courses in which the material was presented in a clear and organized manner and professors who explained and simplified material in class, used a variety of activities, and presented material in an interesting and enjoyable manner.

Second, early studies were focused almost exclusively on “traditional” students, i.e., “18-22 year old, non-minority students from middle-class backgrounds whose parents had attended college” (Strage, 2008, p. 225). Strage’s (2008) investigation of “non-traditional” students found that older students and students transferring from community colleges favored instructors that were rigorous, serious, and who taught content that was readily applicable to the “real world.” Older students described their “ideal” professor as organized and flexible. In contrast, younger students matriculating straight from high school described their ideal teacher as funny and enthusiastic. The

inference that different types of students will necessarily conceive of teachers and teaching in different ways is significant to this study, since the University of Guanajuato's SLTE program is composed of both traditional and non-traditional pupils.

Third, there is growing evidence that students don't link positive personalities traits with effective instruction because they are easily beguiled, but rather because they recognize, perhaps intuitively, that positive character traits are highly correlated with better learning outcomes. Murray et al. (1990) write that many personality traits found in teachers, such as orderliness, are expressed in particular pedagogic behaviors, such as writing outlines on the blackboard; in turn, these behaviors are reflected in student judgments about teaching excellence. The authors note that because student judgments about teacher personality traits are systematically related to pedagogically relevant behaviors, "it is not unreasonable to conclude ... that a correlation between teacher personality and student ratings provides positive (rather than negative) evidence with respect to the validity of student ratings ..." (p. 259). In a brief review of the current literature, Caplan, Mets, and Cook (n.d.) argue that

When students are not highly motivated (e.g., in introductory, required courses), instructor expressiveness has a larger effect on student achievement than does the amount of content covered. Expressive instructors stimulate and maintain student attention, and students learn more when they are engaged in the subject. ... Furthermore, expressiveness includes a range of specific behaviors related to good lecturing, such as speaking emphatically, using humor, and moving about

during lecture. Trained observers found that highly-rated faculty exhibit these behaviors more frequently than other faculty. (p. 1)

The characteristics and behaviors presented above are, of course, drawn from a fragmentary sampling of the literature and in no way represent a scientifically valid set of data. However, taken together, the findings do depict some of the significant themes encountered in studies of student perceptions of teacher traits and practices. As can be seen in Tables 4 and Figure 1, the most important finding uncovered by these studies is the importance of personal attributes in student perceptions of teacher effectiveness. Table 4 lists major findings from each of the studies discussed above in the form of key words. Figure 1 is a “word cloud” that gives an impressionist sense of how students perceive the important characteristics and practices of their teachers.



Table 4

*Student Perceptions of Effective Teachers' Characteristics & Practices: Key Words*

<b>Study</b>	<b>Teacher Characteristics or Behaviors</b>
Murray (1985)	Pleasing speech patterns; pleasing facial expressions; humor
Feldman (1986)	Energetic and enthusiastic; sympathetic and warm toward others, tolerant and supportive; ascendant, forceful, conspicuous, showing leadership; high in self-regard and self-esteem; flexible, adaptable, open to change, adventurous; emotionally stable; sociable, gregarious, friendly, agreeable; bright, intelligent, sophisticated; and responsible, conscientious, persistent and orderly
Broder & Dorfman (1994)	Enthusiastic; ability to stimulate thinking; ability to maintain interest and stimulate study
Forston & Brown (1998)	Course organization; humor; varied teaching methods
Emmelman & DeCesare (2007)	Present clear and organized material; explain and simplify; use a variety of activities; present material in an interesting and enjoyable manner
Strage (2008)	Teach material applicable to the real world; organized; flexible; funny; enthusiastic



*Figure 1.* Word cloud of student perceptions of effective teachers’ characteristics & practices

(2) Pre-service Teacher Perceptions of Effective Teachers’ Characteristics and Practices: The study of pre-service teacher views of teacher and teaching excellence is of particular importance in the field of educational research. According to students enrolled in education programs, the characteristics of their professors have an enormous impact on how they learn to become effective in-service educators (Reynolds, 2008).

In their literature review of pre-service teacher beliefs, attitudes, and expectations, Chong, Wong, and Quek (2005) note that many pre-service instructors believe that a “teaching personality” is more important than cognitive skills or pedagogical or subject-matter knowledge. This finding is consonant with other studies which suggest that pre-service teachers conflate personality characteristics with teaching excellence. For instance, beginning students in educational programs tend to believe that motivating

one's students and being warm and personable are primary characteristics of good teachers (Holt-Reynolds, 1992; Weinstein, 1989).

In a quantitative study, Proctor (1989) studied perceptions of self and the "ideal" teacher among 264 pre-service teachers. Proctor wanted to know if pre-service teacher perceptions of the ideal teacher differed from perceptions of self-as-teacher and how pre-service teacher perceptions differed at different levels of training. Proctor found that authority, sensitivity, and capability were the traits most associated with the ideal teacher. When Proctor compared students from two levels of the teacher training program in which they were enrolled, he found no statistical difference in how they viewed the ideal teacher. However, their ratings of "self" diverged, with junior level students rating themselves significantly higher in capability than the underclassmen. Comparing all student perceptions of the ideal teacher and of self-as-teacher, Proctor found that the study participants perceived themselves as more conventional, cautious, controlling, correcting, empathetic, compassionate, gentle, feeling, patient, and directive than their ideal teacher, but less competent, organized, well-read, stimulating, and practical. Data suggested that conceptions of the ideal remain fairly stable over time.

Morine-Dershirner et al. (1992) carried out a five-year longitudinal study of students enrolled in a teacher preparation program. The authors reported that student perceptions of effective pedagogy were not significantly altered by their education: over the course of five years, the pre-service teachers held tightly to the idea that positive socio-affective traits were the most important factors in teaching excellence. Walls et al. (2002) conducted a qualitative study of 30 beginning teacher-education students, 30 novice teachers, and 30 experienced teachers. The most important themes that emerged

dealt with emotions, teaching skill, teacher motivation, student participation, and rules and grades. The authors reported that all three groups perceived affective factors to be highly correlated to good teaching. Caring about students was seen to be particularly important: good teachers were described as warm, friendly, and caring. The study participants saw teaching skill as tied to organization, preparation, and clarity. In terms of teacher motivation, effective teachers were described as enthusiastic, as well as caring about learning and teaching. Stimulating student participation was also important to all three groups, with good teachers described as those that involved their students in authentic learning, interactive questioning, and discussion. Finally, in the category of rules and grades, participants responded that effective teachers are able manage their classroom through motivation, attention to student accomplishment, and advocacy for student achievement. The authors note that the views about effective teachers were “remarkably similar” among the prospective teachers, novice teachers, and experienced teachers, with the only remarkable difference being that experienced teachers appeared to dwell less on teacher motivation and more on rules and grades (p. 46). These results support the position that teacher education is a weak intervention.

A handful of pre-service teacher studies have considered how gender may relate to differences in perceptions about effective educators. For instance, Minor et al. (2002) investigated 134 pre-service teachers enrolled in several sections of an education class for education majors at a large southern university. Using qualitative-quantitative analysis, the researchers discovered seven major themes in participant responses. Good teachers were defined in the following terms: student centered, effective classroom and behavior manager, competent instructor, ethical, enthusiastic about teaching, knowledgeable about

subject, and professional. Student centeredness was found to be most significant of these, with more than one half of student teachers noting one or more teacher characteristics related to this theme. One interesting finding was that alignment with the enthusiastic-about-teaching and knowledgeable-about-subject themes were inversely related. That is, student teachers who were most likely to endorse enthusiasm as a characteristic of effective teaching were least likely to endorse subject knowledge as an effective trait. The authors attribute this difference to gender: whereas men and women were equally likely to endorse enthusiasm about teaching, men were two-and-a-half times more likely to endorse knowledge of subject. This finding is supported by Mowrer-Reynolds (2008), who found that both men and women in her quantitative study of 137 pre-service teachers focused primarily on personality traits, with enthusiasm being the most important characteristic of a good teacher. However, whereas the women only identified personality traits (enthusiastic, respectful of students, high expectations, humorous, provides outside help) the men identified subject matter knowledge as of prime importance. Minor et al. (2002) write that these results implicate gender as "... being important in forming the perceptions of pre-service teachers" (p. 122) and go on to suggest that teacher educators should develop and use activities that deal specifically with gender issues and multicultural education: "Such activities include encouraging pre-service teachers to identify their beliefs ... and to link these beliefs to curricula and pedagogy" (p. 125).

Using data mined from RateMyTeacher.com, Helterbran (2008) conducted a mix-methods investigation of student ratings of professors at three educational colleges. Helterbran concluded that for the pre-service teachers in her study, the most important teacher characteristics could be categorized in terms of personal qualities, knowledge and

presentation, and professional/instructional qualities. As in the other studies reviewed in this section, personal qualities were considered very important to the pre-service teachers in Helterbran's investigation; their teacher ratings indicated that treating students respectfully and compassionately was the most important quality of an effective teacher. The pre-service teachers also underlined the importance of teachers exhibiting interest and enthusiasm in their work, possessing a sense of humor, and being approachable or "human." In terms of knowledge and presentation, Helterbran reported that the student teachers she investigated were very aware of what teachers should cover in their classes and were highly critical when they believed that their teachers were lacking knowledge in their disciplines. The pre-service teachers were especially critical of teachers who depended excessively on PowerPoint presentations, packets of material, or book or lecture notes. Finally, the pre-service teachers stressed the importance of classroom skills. For instance, the students rated highly those teachers who exhibited organizational skills and the ability to teach in a seamless fashion. It was important to them that their assignments were meaningful and that they were encouraged to be actively involved in their schoolwork. Most significantly, students reported that they valued teachers who gave them pedagogical tools they could use in their own future classrooms and who supplied formative and prompt feedback on assignments. Helterbran concludes that

...for pre-service teachers, it is critically important that teacher educators consider and model ... qualities of effective teaching. Despite the fact that pre-service teachers have experienced many teachers and teaching styles during their multi-year occupation as students, the impact that teacher educators have on these students is enormous and serves as a last best

chance to influence pre-service teachers before they leave their teacher education programs for their own classrooms. (p. 136)

As in the previous section, I present below a table and an image summarizing the attributes and classroom behaviors judged by pre-service teachers to be most correlated with teacher effectiveness. Table 5 lists major findings from each of the studies discussed in this section. The word cloud presented in Figure 2 offers an impressionist sense of how pre-service teachers perceive the important characteristics and practices of successful instructors.

Table 5

*Pre-Service Teacher Perceptions of Teachers' Characteristics & Practices: Key Words*

<b>Study</b>	<b>Teacher Characteristics or Behaviors</b>
Proctor (1989)	Authority; sensitivity; capability
Weinstein (1989)	Motivation; warm; personable
Holt-Reynolds (1992)	Motivation; warm; personable
Morine-Dershirner et al. (1992)	Positive personality traits
Walls et al. (2002)	Emotions; teaching skills; motivation; participation; rules; grades; caring; warm; friendly; organization; preparation; clarity; enthusiastic; caring about learning and teaching; authentic learning; interactive questioning; discuss; attention to student accomplishment; advocacy
Minor et al. (2002)	Student centered; effective classroom and behavior manager; competent instructor; ethical; enthusiastic about teaching; knowledgeable about subject; professional
Chong, Wong, and Quek (2005)	Teaching personality
Mowrey-Reynolds (2008)	Personality traits; enthusiasm; respectful of students; high expectations; humorous; provides outside help; subject matter knowledge; entertaining
Helterbran (2008)	Personal qualities; knowledge; presentation; professional qualities; instructional qualities; respecting students; compassion; interest and enthusiasm for work; sense of humor; approachable; human; classroom skills; organization; seamless teaching; supply pedagogical tools





*Figure 2.* Pre-service teacher perceptions of teachers' characteristics & practices

(3) Teacher Perceptions of Teacher Effectiveness: As compared to investigations of student conceptions of good teaching, there are relatively few studies focused exclusively on how teachers perceive the characteristics of good teachers.

Dunkin (1995) conducted a qualitative study of 55 newly appointed, tenure-track members of the University of Sydney faculty in order to discover their thoughts about effective university level teaching. He then compared novice teacher responses to those of 12 award winning, tenured professors deemed to be experts in their fields. Based on participant responses, Dunkin created a four-dimensional model of effective teaching: teaching as structuring learning (careful planning, organization, and assessment); teaching as motivating learning (arousing interest, enthusiasm, and love for the subject); teaching as encouraging activity and independence in learning (training students to be

more autonomous); and teaching as establishing interpersonal relations conducive to learning (creating an atmosphere of trust and security). Dunkin discovered that both novices and experts shared a common understanding of effective teaching, with each group subscribing to these same basic categories of structuring, motivating, activity/independence and interpersonal relationships. However, whereas the novices viewed teaching as an essentially uni-dimensional activity, the experts in his study were multi-dimensional, capable of considering and implementing two or three of these strategies simultaneously. Dunkin concluded that the typical, new university teacher "... had a meager conceptual repertoire regarding teaching effectiveness ..." (p. 24). Expert teachers, on the other hand, had more extensive, elaborate, and flexible conceptual repertoires regarding teaching than the novices and were able to speak more meaningfully about their own practice in relation to each dimension. Compared to the novices, the experts also possessed a greater sense of self-efficacy, used a wider range of criteria for self-evaluation, and were more self-reflective, more confident, and more inclined to consider the views of others.

Hativa et al. (2001) carried out a qualitative study aimed at understanding how four exemplary university professors understood the relationship between their beliefs and pedagogical knowledge, on the one hand, and their actual teaching practices, on the other. The authors reported that all four instructors recognized the importance of clarity, of providing motivation for learning, and of creating a classroom environment conducive to learning. The teachers' knowledge of effective pedagogic strategies varied greatly. They knew relatively little about strategies related to organization and clarity. Instead, the professors were better versed in how to keep classes interesting and engaging.

Interestingly, the teachers were unable to articulate some strategies that that actually utilized in their practice.

Ursano, Kartheiser, and Ursano (2007) present six dimensions of good teaching and effective learning. According to the authors, an excellent teacher provides feedback to the learner; is active, specific and engaged; creates contexts for relevant learning; is a mentor; is able to take the student's perspective; and lets student identify what is to be learned. The authors, however, go beyond this simple typology and locate the heart of good pedagogy in the "teacher alliance," the fundamental relationship between teacher and student that is the "necessary but not sufficient component of effective learning" (p. 188). Teaching, they argue, is not simply a display of knowledge. Much like a therapeutic alliance between doctor and patient, the teaching alliance is a shared endeavor between instructor and student in which both parties tacitly agree that, in the spirit of reciprocal responsibility, they will partner together in the service of the student's best interests. The student's central responsibility is to expend the time and energy necessary to absorb new knowledge and to learn. The instructor, basing pedagogical decisions on both established and evolving goals and practices, advances learning by furnishing opportunities for both success and constructive failure in a safe, interpersonal environment. The teacher's primary tasks include establishing the learning context, communicating with the student, and making educational diagnoses and identifying impediments to learning (p. 190). This latter responsibility is particularly important. The educational diagnosis refers to the determination of problems that arise during the student's learning process and the identification of appropriate educational interventions.

Lastly, Helterbran (2008), in her study of three Pennsylvanian teacher education programs, found that pre-service teachers and their professors viewed instructor effectiveness in markedly different ways. She concluded that the students in her study tended to view instructors favorably if they made learning easier for them. The professors, on the other hand, considered their ability to encourage student autonomy to be the of utmost importance.

***Beliefs about the characteristics and practices of effective ESL teachers.***

Compared to studies in other academic disciplines, there have been relatively few studies profiling teacher characteristics in the field of EFL. The vast majority of studies on L2 teacher characteristics have been focused on student perceptions of their instructors. A summary of student and teacher beliefs about the qualities and practices of ESL instructors is presented in Table 6. As in the sections above, words clouds are also presented in order to offer a visual representation of how students (Figure 3) and teachers (Figure 4) perceive good language teachers.

Table 6

*Student & Teacher Perceptions of Effective ESL Teachers' Characteristics & Practices:  
Key Words*

<b>Study</b>	<b>Teacher Characteristics or Behaviors</b>
Betrand (1969)	Students: youthful; cultured; help students succeed in life; cultural sensitivity; deal with present-day problems; entertaining
Taskafa (1989)	Students: friendliness; positive reinforcement
Prodromou (1991)	Students: manager; monitor; model; counselor; facilitator; friend; informant; social worker; authority; empathetic; attitude towards error; knowledge of ELT theory; knowledge of language; knowledge of other subjects; have a concept of education
Cortazzi & Jin, (1996)	Students: deep knowledge; patient; humorous; good moral example; answer questions; arouse student interest; explain clearly; use effective methods; variety of activities
Brosh (1996)	Teachers and Students: command of L2; organize material; explain clearly; clarify doubts; motivate students; fairness; teacher availability
Cotterall (1999)	Students: help students learn effectively; discuss student progress; create practice opportunities; explain learning activities; guide student learning; identify learning difficulties; assess learning outcomes
Tsai (1999)	Students: arouse student interest; teach real-life, practical English; good sense of humor; speak correctly; practice speaking and listening skills
Mullock (2003)	Students: subject matter knowledge; understands students' needs, strengths, and weaknesses; personal qualities; courteous; respectful; empathetic; motivating; sense of humor; enthusiastic; skilled in techniques and methods; up-do-date; can pass on knowledge; well prepared; well organized

(table continues)

Study	Teacher Characteristics or Behaviors
Johnson (2004)	Teachers and Students: preparation; organization; motivation; autonomous learning; interesting classes; comprehensibility
Bell (2005)	Teachers: use communicative approach; group work; negotiate meaning; learning strategies; teacher qualifications
Chacón (2005)	Teachers: L2 proficiency
Andrew & McNeill (2005)	Teachers: engagement; self-awareness; subject matter knowledge; self-improvement; reflection; mediate input for learning; awareness of student potential and difficulties; love of language
Park & Lee (2006)	Teachers: English proficiency Students: pedagogical knowledge; reading and writing ability; motivate students; sense of humor; pronunciation; strategies; fairness; speaking proficiency; help students; tailored to student needs
Zhang & Watkins (2007)	Teachers: personal knowledge; subject knowledge; team player; adaptable Students: demonstrate knowledge; proper appearance; manners; personality; attitudes
Arikan, Taser & Sarac-Suzer (2008)	Students: native; young; enthusiasm; creativity; fairness

(table continues)

Study	Teacher Characteristics or Behaviors
Thompson (2008)	<p>Teachers and Students: creativity; open-mindedness; enthusiasm; patience; respect; caring; empathetic; confident; flexible; language knowledge; teaching methodology; error correction; relevant feedback; interesting classes</p> <p>Teachers: management</p> <p>Students: clear instructions; awareness of learning styles; demonstrate interest in student progress.</p>
Chen (2008, 2012)	<p>Students: proficiency in English; functionalism; cultural awareness; empathetic; shared background; grammar; language strategies; content knowledge; native</p>
Shishavan & Sadeghi (2009)	<p>Teachers: language knowledge; pedagogic knowledge; techniques and methods; lesson preparation; lesson plans; fair assessment; group activities; homework</p> <p>Students: personality; behavior</p>
Brown (2009)	<p>Teachers: communicative approach; use of group and pair work</p> <p>Students: explicit correction; grammar instruction</p>
Çubukcu (2010)	<p>Students: lesson planning; clear objectives; interesting activities; enthusiasm; motivating; authority; affection; multiple activities; caring; respect; fairness; availability; created stress-free environments</p>
Wichadee (2010)	<p>Teachers: English language proficiency</p> <p>Students: well-prepared; communication skills; pleasant personalities; organization skills</p>

(table continues)

Study	Teacher Characteristics or Behaviors
Lee (2010)	Students: teacher personality; positive; cheerful; eager; enthusiastic; passionate; vital
Barnes & Lock (2010, 2013)	Students: rapport (sociability, empathy; personality; receptiveness); delivery (personal style; communication; methodology; content); fairness; knowledge; credibility; organization; preparedness; knowledge of English.
Ghasemi & Hashemi (2011)	Students: follow syllabus; appropriate techniques; sociable; assign homework; teach in English; provide opportunities to learn English; motivate students; alleviate student anxiety; follow administrative rules; be well-dressed
Korkmaz & Yavuz (2011)	Students: knowledge of how to teach effectively; motivate students; various methods; fairness; professional development
Khodadady, Fakhrabadi, & Azar (2012)	Students: qualified; social; stimulating; organized; proficient; humanistic; self-confident; lenient; proficient in English; good pronunciation; content knowledge; vocabulary; up-to-date; grammar knowledge; cultural knowledge; teach in English; know SLA theories
Çelik, Arıkan, & Carter (2013)	Students: fair; reduce anxiety; enthusiastic; pronunciation; teach speaking skills; vocabulary; teach reading skills; knowledge of grammar; provide explanations in Turkish; classroom management





Figure 3. Student perceptions of effective teachers' characteristics & practices



Figure 4. Teacher perceptions of effective teachers' characteristics & practices

Barnes and Locke (2013) point out that investigations into student perceptions of effective FL teachers are necessary, in order that

teachers in training and practitioners can understand how to approach and improve their practice. When a teacher and his or her students have opposing views about what should occur in the classroom, the students may lack confidence in the teacher's ability. Without this confidence, motivation and effective learning are unlikely. (p. 19)

This is certainly true. However, the relatively large number of student perception studies in ELT highlights the paucity of other stakeholder perspectives: there are very few studies of how ESL pre-service and in-service teachers understand the desirable characteristics and practices of language instructors. Because there are so few such studies, this section (unlike the section on general education research, above) is organized according to the region in which the studies to be discussed were conducted.

The preponderance of the studies that have been carried out come from just two regions: Asia (Andrew & McNeill, 2005; Barnes & Lock, 2010, 2013; Chen, 2008, 2012; Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Cotterall, 1999; Lee, 2010; Mullock, 2003; Park & Lee, 2006; Tsai, 1999; Wichadee, 2010; Zhang & Watkins, 2007) and the Middle East (Arikan, Taser & Sarac-Suzer, 2008; Çelik et al., 2013; Brosh, 1996; Çubukcu, 2010; Ghasemi & Hashemi, 2011; Khodadady, Fakhrabadi, & Azar, 2012; Korkmaz & Yavuz, 2011; Shishavan & Sadeghi, 2009). Relatively little research concerning foreign language teacher characteristics has been carried out in the United States (Bell, 2005; Brown, 2009; Thompson, 2008) or Europe (Girand, 1977; Prodromou, 1991). Hardly any research has taken place in Latin America: in Venezuela, Chacón (2005) investigated how EFL

teachers perceived their own efficacy; in Mexico, there has been only one study on the subject of language teacher characteristics, which was carried out by Johnson in 2004.

*Asia.* Of the Asian studies looking at EFL teacher attributes, the most cited investigation is almost assuredly the one conducted by Park and Lee (2006). The authors gathered self-report questionnaire data from 169 high school teachers and 339 high school students in Busan, Korea. The information was analyzed from the perspectives of English proficiency, pedagogical knowledge, and socio-affective skills. Their findings demonstrated that the teachers in the study perceived excellent EFL instruction differently than the students in terms of all three of these categories. The instructors ranked English proficiency as the most important characteristic while the students ranked pedagogical knowledge as the defining feature of effective teachers. Almost unique among studies of teacher characteristics, Park and Lee also carried out contrastive analyses which looked at how men and women and high and low achievement students viewed EFL teacher attributes. They found that some teacher characteristics were universally prized by all the groups, such as proficiency in reading and speaking and an ability to animate student interest. However, other traits were group-specific. The male students reported that a good sense of humor was important in EFL teachers, whereas the females reported that proficiency in pronunciation, teaching strategies for learning English, and the fair treatment of students were important teacher characteristics. Similarly, differences were discovered between the high and low achievement students. High achievement students valued the teacher's speaking proficiency and their willingness to help students in and outside the classroom; lower achieving students

valued instruction that was tailored to student proficiency levels and individual learning styles.

Lee (2010) investigated undergraduate opinion about good teaching at a national college of technology in southwestern Japan. Among 33 responses to an open-ended item, 22 respondents included comments about teachers' personalities. The students described good EFL instructors as "positive," "cheerful," "eager," and as possessing "an excess of enthusiasm," "passion," and "vitality."

Barnes and Lock (2010, 2013) carried out two studies of positive EFL teacher attributes as defined by students. In the first, they employed a free writing instrument and asked 38 students at a women's university in Korea to list in their own words the characteristics of an effective EFL lecturer. The researchers then analyzed the data and produced an inventory of 40 key attributes. Borrowing a classification scheme from Faranda and Clarke (2004), they assigned these attributes to five categories: rapport; delivery; fairness; knowledge and credibility; and organization and preparation. They discovered that rapport and delivery were by far the two most important categories (between them, they represented 73.5% of the student responses). Rapport was defined as sociability, empathy, personality, receptiveness; delivery was defined as personal style, communication, methodology, and content. These attributes were followed by fairness, knowledge and credibility, and organization and preparation.

In a quantitative follow-up study (2013), Barnes and Lock administered a questionnaire to 222 students at the same Korean university. Again using Faranda and Clarke's typology, they found that students considered delivery to be the most important quality of an EFL teacher. As in the previous study, rapport and delivery received the

highest student ratings. Knowledge of English was considered the second most important attribute. These results concur with findings from Park and Lee (2006).

At least two studies have been conducted in Thailand. In one, Chen (2012) used an open-ended questionnaire and a semi-structured interview to collect the impressions of 60 EFL undergraduate students enrolled in Vongchavalitkul University. Chen organized teacher attributes into two major themes: personal trait-related characteristics (e.g., emotions, kindness, fairness, lenience, and responsibility) and classroom teaching-related characteristics (e.g., lesson delivery, language used in teaching, organization of classroom activities, and the creation of a positive classroom atmosphere). Personal trait-related characteristics were deemed more important than teaching skills, with almost all of the participants (n = 52) underlining the importance of kindness. By comparison, only about half the students in the study (n = 29) felt that making the subject “comprehensible, understandable, and interesting” was crucially important. Instructional skills just barely beat out the teacher’s ability to create an entertaining, comfortable, relaxing, and pleasant classroom atmosphere (n = 27).

Also in Thailand, Wichadee (2010) carried out a contrastive study exploring the perceptions of teachers and students about the attributes of effective EFL teachers. Four hundred Bangkok University students and 53 full-time EFL teachers answered questionnaires modeled on Park and Lee’s (2006) categories: English proficiency, pedagogical knowledge, organization and communication skills, and socio-affective skills. The university students characterized effective EFL teachers as those who are well prepared, possess effective communication skills, and have pleasant personalities. EFL teachers, on the other hand, responded that good English language proficiency was the

most important quality of an effective EFL teacher. Like Park and Lee (2006), Wichadee analyzed responses according to gender. Wichadee found that both male and female students ranked organization and communication skills as the most important teacher characteristics. Female students, however, rated organization and communication skills, socio-affective skills, and pedagogical knowledge more highly than did male students; conversely, the male students rated English proficiency more highly than the female participants.

Andrews and McNeill (2005) approached the question of teacher characteristics from the perspective of teaching language knowledge. Their research focused on three highly-experienced, “good” EFL teachers, all of whom had been awarded “distinction” for the practical component of their professional training. Two of the teachers in the study resided in Hong Kong, while the third lived in the United Kingdom. Data was collected through a test of language awareness, lesson observations, interviews, and stimulated recall. Andrews and McNeill discovered a number of characteristics that they hypothesized could be generalizable to “good” language teachers everywhere:

... willingness and ability to engage with language-related issues; self-awareness (with particular reference to awareness of the extent of their own subject-matter knowledge) accompanied by a desire for continuing self-improvement of their teacher language awareness; willingness and ability to reflect on language-related issues; awareness of their own key role in mediating input for learning; awareness of learners' potential difficulties; and a love of language. (p. 174)

Zhang and Watkins (2007), in introducing their study of characteristics of EFL teachers in China, underscore the millenniums-long tradition of education in that country. He highlights Han Yu's dictum that "A teacher is the one who shows you the way of being human, teaches you knowledge, and enlightens you while you are confused" and the Chinese saying that "profound knowledge makes teachers, upright behavior makes models" (p. 783). Zhang and Watkin's investigation involved 100 Chinese students from two universities, 20 Chinese tertiary English teachers, and 20 Western teachers teaching in-country. Each participant was asked to write a short essay in his or her native language on the topic "What makes a good English teacher at the tertiary level?" These essays were then subjected to content analysis. The authors discovered statistically significant differences between the three groups of participants in several areas. Overall, the Chinese teachers valued their personal knowledge base and subject knowledge as EFL teachers. The Chinese students, on the other hand, held the belief that excellent teachers should not only demonstrate knowledge, but also proper appearance, manners, personality, and attitudes. Thus, the Chinese students echoed the traditional views that teaching is a combination of "profound knowledge and upright behavior." Western teachers attached importance to the qualities of being a team player and adapting to diversity. Zhang and Watkins speculated that this last perspective was possibly a result of the teachers' relative cultural and linguistic isolation.

Cortazzi and Jin (1996) investigated the opinions of university students in China about teacher excellence. The authors collected 135 student essays on the subject. The majority of students agreed that a good teacher possesses "deep knowledge." Other commonly used phrases included "patient," "humorous," and "good moral example."

Based on these initial findings, the authors went on to administer a questionnaire to 129 Chinese and 205 British university students. They found that Chinese and British students had significantly different views about the characteristics of a good teacher. The Chinese students reported that deep knowledge, being able to answer questions, and being a good moral example were the most important features of quality instructors. The British students, on the other hand, reported that good teachers should arouse student interest, explain the subject clearly, use effective teaching methods, and employ a variety of classroom activities.

Tsai (1999) asked 111 students at the Chinese Culture University in Taiwan a single, open-ended question: What are the three most important qualities of an ideal teacher of the English Conversation Laboratory course? The top five participant responses were as follows: arouse student interest in learning; teach real-life and practical English; possess a good sense of humor; speaks correctly, with clear pronunciation, intonation, and fluency; and enforces the practice of speaking and listening skills. Chen (2008) used a questionnaire to ask 75 language students at the Guangdong University of Technology about their preferences regarding native- or non-native English teachers. The participants reported that they valued the native-speakers' high proficiency in English, their ability to use English functionally, and their awareness of the cultures associated with the English language. At the same time, they recognized the contributions of non-native speakers, including their ability to empathize with students as fellow L2 learners, their shared cultural background, and the emphasis they placed on grammar and language learning strategies. Overall, however, the participants demonstrated a clear preference for



native English speaking teachers, citing their fluency, pronunciation, and thorough knowledge of the target language.

Mullock (2003) used questionnaires to gather data about 42 postgraduate students of applied linguistics and TESOL (in Graduate Diploma or MA) at three universities in Sydney. Subjects hailed from countries from all over Asia: Australia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Mongolia, Thailand, and Vietnam. Subject matter knowledge was considered very important in the Mullock study, but was second to “knows and understands students’ needs, strengths and weaknesses.” Indeed, as in most of the studies under review, student responses stressed the importance of personal qualities. Among the top 10 categories recorded by Mullock, half of them concerned personal qualities, such as “treats students with courtesy and respect and shows empathy to students,” “can motivate students,” “sense of humour,” and “enthusiastic about teaching.” The other half of the responses had to do with teaching skills and knowledge: “skilled in teaching techniques and methods,” “keeps up-to-date in knowledge and skills,” “can pass on knowledge to students,” and “well prepared/well organized.” Mullock contrasted her study with Cortazzi and Jin’s (1996) Chinese study. In Cortazzi and Jin’s questionnaire study of university students at two Chinese universities, 67% of the participants rated knowledge of subject matter as the most important quality of an EFL instructor. The authors attributed this to the traditional Chinese notion that the central aim of teaching is to provide knowledge for the students. Mullock’s findings, which highlighted the importance of personal characteristics, obviously complicate this claim and counsel against any temptation to make broad generalizations about student opinion based on culture.

Finally, Cotterall (1999) used questionnaire data to examine the beliefs of 131 English learners enrolled in three different language courses. The students came from 19, predominantly Asian countries. Findings showed that the participants saw the EFL instructor's role as consisting of helping students learn effectively, discussing student progress, creating practice opportunities, explaining the purpose of learning activities, guiding student learning, identifying learning difficulties, and assessing learning outcomes.

*Middle East.* Turkey has been a particularly prolific site for studies related to foreign language education. In a review of the literature, Alptekin and Tatar (2011) found 130 research articles on applied linguistics and foreign language education in Turkey that had been published during just the five-year period between 2005 and 2009. The effectiveness of foreign language instructors has drawn considerable research attention. Findings indicate that, in general, students perceive teacher efficacy as being highly correlated with a number of teacher attributes: the capacity to create comfortable learning environments; an ability to motivate; the use of a variety of instructional methods; rapport with students; and pedagogic knowledge (Çelik et al., 2013). In another overview of Turkish studies of teacher characteristics, Hotaman (2010) identified a number of key themes. Teachers, according to Hotaman's review, should be patient and tolerant; open-minded, flexible and adaptive; affectionate, understanding and humorous; encouraging and supportive. They should also have high expectations for their students and possess a "democratic" personality.

Turkish interest in foreign language pedagogy has manifested itself in numerous studies carried out concerning student and teacher views of EFL teacher characteristics

and practices. For instance, Taskafa (1989, as cited in Çelik et al., 2013) found that EFL students valued friendliness and positive reinforcement as the most desirable characteristics of an effective foreign language teacher. Arikan, Taser, and Sarac-Suzer (2008) found that students at a state university in Turkey valued non-native EFL teachers over native speakers of English, and preferred young teachers over older, more authoritative instructors. Echoing the many studies of general education student preferences discussed above, the participants in the Arikan, Taser, and Sarac-Suzer investigation valued personal qualities (e.g., enthusiasm, creativity, fairness) more than pedagogical skills (e.g., error correction techniques, technological expertise, language skills, classroom management). In the largest of the Turkish studies, Çelik et al. (2013) carried out a quantitative study of 998 undergraduates enrolled in a Turkish state university using data collected from questionnaires and Likert scales. Effective EFL teachers were described as those who exhibit fairness in decision-making; are successful in reducing students' anxiety; demonstrate enthusiasm; teaches pronunciation well; teach speaking skills adequately; have a sound knowledge of vocabulary; teach reading skills adequately; have a sound knowledge of grammar; are adept at providing explanations in Turkish (mother tongue); and are good at classroom management.

In Çubukcu's (2010) study, 90 student teachers from the Department of English in Dokuz Eylul University in Izmir, Turkey, were asked to write daily journals about issues or experiences of concern. Journal entries were thematically analyzed and three primary categories emerged: instruction, management, and interaction. In terms of instruction, the participants emphasized teaching skills (including lesson planning, having clear objectives, and using interesting activities) and personal characteristics (teacher

enthusiasm and the ability to motivate students). In terms of management, the students reported that FL teachers should balance authority with affection for their students, and that planning and multiple activities were the keys to effective class organization. Finally, in terms of interaction, the pre-service teachers rated highly those instructors who demonstrated caring, respect, and fairness, who were available both inside and outside of class, and who created stress-free learning environments.

In yet another study set in Turkey, Korkmaz and Yavuz (2011) used a mixed methods approach to better understand the opinions of 100 pre-service teachers in the final year of a SLTE program at Uludag University. The participants in the study judged the most important qualities of EFL teachers to be knowledge of how to teach efficiently, how to motivate students, and how to use various methods. Being fair and knowing how to develop oneself professionally were also cited as important attributes. The least important qualities all had to do with teachers' competencies regarding their role in society, such as knowing how to promote harmonious relationships and acting as a leader in society.

Many similar studies have been undertaken in Iran. Khodadady, Fakhrabadi, and Azar (2012) set out to design a comprehensive scale of English language teacher attributes. A 102-item *English Language Teachers' Attribute Scale* (ELTAS) was devised and validated using feedback from 1,317 high school students studying EFL in 18 Iranian high schools. Demographic information and self-report scores concerning English language achievement were also collected in order to correlate teacher effectiveness with English performance. Analysis of ELTAS data showed that eight distinct attributes defined good L2 teaching: qualified, social, stimulating, organized, proficient,

humanistic, self-confident, and lenient. Each of these major categories incorporated a number of subordinate categories. For instance, proficient was defined as EFL teachers who have a high proficiency in English, possess good L2 pronunciation, demonstrate solid knowledge of course content, have a wide vocabulary, are professionally up-to-date, understand English grammar, understand English-speaking cultures, teach English in English, and know SLA theories. The highest correlations obtained between various main categories demonstrated that qualified EFL teachers tend also to be stimulating, organized and proficient, while social instructors tend to be humanistic and lenient. Perhaps the most interesting finding of the Khodadady, Fakhrabadi, and Azar study is that EFL achievement among the students in the investigation correlated the highest with the category lenient.

Shishavan and Sadeghi (2009) studied perceptions of EFL teacher excellence among Iranian language teachers and learners. A questionnaire was administered to 59 English language teachers and 215 learners enrolled in Iranian universities, high schools and language institutes. Again corroborating findings by Park and Lee (2006), most of the teachers in Shishavan and Sadeghi's study reported that knowledge of language was the most important characteristic of an effective English language teacher. EFL instructors highlighted the importance of pedagogic knowledge and the use of particular techniques and methods, such as lesson preparation, lesson plans, fair assessments, group activities, and homework. Students, on the other hand, assigned more weight to a teacher's personality and behavior towards students. Shishavan and Sadeghi conclude that the learners in their study tend to associate subject matter with the personality of the

teacher, and that the teacher's positive and favorable personality psychologically influences the learners' effective learning" (p. 135).

In another Iranian study, Ghasemi and Hashemi (2011) applied a questionnaire to 200 male and female students at Islamic Azad University. Most of the characteristics of a good EFL identified in this study are common to many of the studies discussed in this section. Participants believed that good teachers follow the syllabus, use appropriate teaching techniques, and are sociable. They also believed that assigning homework, teaching English in English, providing opportunities to use English in meaningful activities, motivating learners, and alleviating student anxiety are hallmarks of a good EFL teacher. However, a further set of findings was highly idiosyncratic to the Ghasemi and Hashemi study. The participants underlined the importance of following administrative rules and regulations and of being well-dressed. Also rather curiously, the students in the study believed that female teachers pronounce English better than male teachers.

In a much-cited study, Brosh (1996), investigated EFL teaching effectiveness from the perspective of teacher-student interaction styles, arguing that it is often the ineffectiveness of communication that undermines the execution of successful pedagogy (p. 127). Brosh used questionnaires and interviews to investigate 200 foreign language teachers working in the Israeli educational system and 406 ninth-grade high school students from 10 schools in Tel Aviv who were studying English, French, Arabic, or Hebrew. The most interesting finding was the high degree of symmetry between instructors and students as to perceived characteristics of effective language teachers. Both groups saw command of the L2 as the most important feature of SL instructors. This

should not be surprising, since in non-native environments, “students are often aware of their teachers’ poor knowledge of the language” (p. 130). Because of the teachers’ inadequate command of the language skills they were purportedly teaching, 90% of the teachers in the study felt it was unimportant to teach a foreign language through the target language itself. Both students and teachers also felt that teachers should possess the abilities to organize material, explain the subject, clarify doubts, and motivate students. Fairness and teacher availability were also ranked highly by both students and instructors. One surprising finding was that both students and teachers agreed that cultural knowledge of the target language and positive attitudes towards native speakers were largely irrelevant to effective language teaching and learning.

*Europe.* Bertrand (1969, as cited in Girard, 1977), a German teacher in France, carried out one of the earliest studies of student perceptions of EFL teachers. Analyzing data from 300 students, he found that the highest rated characteristics in his sample were almost all socio-cultural in nature: a sense of youth, highly cultured and interested in developing students’ culture, helped students succeed in life, helped them understand and have sympathy for foreigners, deal with present-day problems and make them forget the restricted world of the school.

Prodromou (1991) presents the findings of a survey of 40 Greek students, who provided an extensive list of positive attributes. From this list, Prodromou created a diagram (Figure 5) summarizing the most salient patterns found in the data. The diagram shows the teacher “trapped” by a number of constraints (the inner circle), which, when overcome, activate a wider range of teacher-roles (outer circle). “Having broken out of the inner circle of professional and pedagogic constraints, the teacher finds herself with

many parts to play: friend, manager, monitor, counselor, facilitator of learning, reliable informant on the language, social worker, model for the students, and so on” (p. 4).

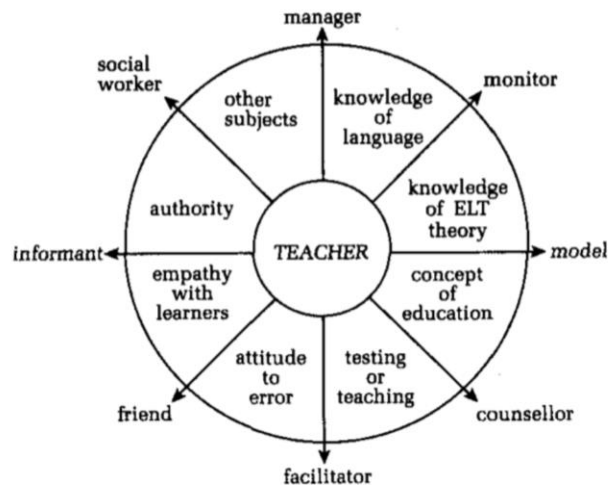


Figure 5. Positive attributes of a successful ESL teacher

*United States.* Studies of EFL teaching in the United States have tended to emphasize instructor pedagogic approaches and beliefs more than their personal characteristics. For instance, Bell’s (2005) study focused on teacher behaviors and beliefs vis-à-vis principles of L2 pedagogy and abstract SLA theory. Employing an 80-item questionnaire, Bell examined the attitudes of 457 postsecondary foreign language teachers about nine categories of FL pedagogy, ranging from the *American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages’ National Standards in Foreign Language Education* (1999), to corrective feedback, to theories, and to concrete teacher behaviors. Bell reports that there was strong agreement among the respondents on more than 50% of the items listed in the National Standards as well as the importance of communicative approaches to L2 instruction, small group work, negotiation of meaning, strategies for foreign language learning, and teacher qualifications. She interpreted these findings as a sign of



emerging professional consensus about how languages should be taught, although she noted that major uncertainty continues around several key questions: the place and role of error correction in foreign language teaching and learning; how and when to implement a focus on grammatical form; and the importance of learning differences among individual students.

In Brown's (2009) study of students' and teachers' perceptions of effective FL teaching, the students in the study reported considerably more favorable views towards explicit correction and grammar instruction, and hesitancy about group and pair work than the teachers in the investigation. The study was made up of 83 first and second year language classes across nine languages at the University of Arizona, and included 49 teachers and approximately 1,600 students. The teachers and students responded to a 24-item Likert scale questionnaire derived from Bell's (2005) data collection instrument. The major finding was that the teachers in the study reported valuing communicative approaches to L2 instruction over more traditional, discrete-point grammar practice; students, however, preferred to receive formal grammar instruction rather than be given opportunities for communicative exchanges.

Thompson (2008) evaluated the opinions of 54 EFL teachers, teachers-in-training, and students about their belief regarding good instructors. Her findings further reinforce the idea that teacher excellence is generally seen to be a combination of personal characteristics and teaching ability. The most important personal characteristics identified in Thompson's survey were creativity and open-mindedness, followed by enthusiasm, patience, respect, being caring and empathetic, confidence, flexibility, and being knowledgeable about language rules and methodology. The experienced teachers,

trainees, and EFL students in Thompson's study had slightly different ideas about the qualities of a good EFL instructor. All three groups agreed on the importance of providing appropriate error correction and relevant feedback, and of planning interesting, relevant lessons. The practicing teachers, however, gave more weight to class management than did the pre-service teachers, who saw giving clear, concise instructions and an awareness of learning styles as important teaching abilities. Both EFL teachers and students reported the importance of demonstrating an interest in student progress; students, however, weighted this category relatively more heavily than did the instructors.

*Latin America.* There are vanishingly few studies of FL teacher characteristics in Latin America. One of the few comes from Venezuela. Chacón (2005) investigated middle school EFL teachers' perceptions of their own efficacy. A questionnaire (the *Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale*) and a self-report instrument about language proficiency was administered to 100 teachers in order to evaluate instructors' judgments about their ability to effectuate positive learning outcomes, especially among difficult or unmotivated students. Interviews were also conducted with a smaller sample of the study population. The major finding was that teachers' perceived efficacy correlated highly with their self-reported proficiency in English. That is, the better teachers felt their language abilities to be, the more effective they believed themselves to be as EFL instructors. Unfortunately, confidence about language ability was quite low among the sample group, particularly in terms of listening, speaking, and cultural knowledge. This latter finding may be causally related to the fact that most of the study participants reported using grammar-oriented approaches rather than communicative approaches in

their teaching. The use of formal lectures, translation, choral and individual repetition, and memorization of dialogues were reported to be the norm in the classrooms studied.

Only one investigation into EFL teacher characteristics has been carried out in Mexico. Johnson (2004) collected questionnaire data from 334 university students and 101 English language instructors. 65% of the participants identified “good preparation and organization” as the most important quality of EFL teachers. 61% identified a teacher’s ability to motivate students; 53% identified a teacher’s capacity to bring about autonomous learning; 46% identified a teacher’s facility at delivering interesting classes; and 43% identified teacher comprehensibility as the most important feature of successful language instructors.

**Summary and discussion.** In this section, I outlined the ways in which second language teaching may be considered different than instruction in other fields. I first examined how the distinctive practices, beliefs, and pedagogical traditions of different academic domains influence pedagogy. I then looked at the ways ESL is distinct from other teaching domains, with particular emphasis on how its unique history has shaped the understandings and actions of those in the discipline. First, ESL fits uneasily within the “hard” and “soft” paradigms that categorize most other academic disciplines. It is notable for the miscellany of sometimes competing, sometimes compatible beliefs about how language should be taught and what makes a good language teacher. There is doubt in some quarters that language is, in fact, a teachable activity. Second, the ESL discipline and ESL teachers are characterized by a number of specific features that set them apart from other domains. For instance, ESL is the only discipline in which the content under consideration is also the medium of communication between teachers and students. ESL

is also notable in terms of the degree to which teacher attitudes, energy, and personality appear to be requirements of instructional excellence. Third, the indeterminate nature of ESL is largely attributable to the fact that the field has no core theoretical basis or shared philosophical tradition. While empirical and theoretical research has long been a prime driver of ESL practice, said research has done little to advance the field in terms of demonstrably improved learner outcomes. There appears to be little reason to hope that this situation will improve in the near future. While researchers within second language acquisition struggle with the epistemological and practical problems of theory construction and investigation, ESL scholars working within the critical tradition attempt to shift the discipline towards instructional practices that break the reified relationship between theory and practice in favor of those that are context-sensitive, holistic, individualized, and socio-politically grounded. Meanwhile, in innumerable classrooms throughout the world, centuries-old pedagogic practices endure.

In this section, I also considered the attributes and behaviors of effective teachers. Both within and without the field of second language teaching, personality traits are seen as the *sine qua non* of good instructors. Teachers should be enthusiastic, energetic, patient, and motivating. Humor, warmth, and kindness are considered very important, as is flexibility. In terms of their pedagogical roles, teachers should be organized, knowledgeable, and act professionally. They should be skilled in the classroom, particularly in terms of their ability to manage class and explain concepts clearly. While language teachers, being teachers, embody characteristics of the profession more generally (Borg, 2006a), they are also judged in terms of a number of domain specific traits and pedagogical skills. It is generally felt that language teachers should possess

cultural awareness that compliments their language knowledge. They should be able to use a variety of techniques and methods and provide practice opportunities. Several studies have underlined that fact that language teachers tend to put a premium on L2 proficiency.

I presented data from Asia, the Middle East, Europe, the United States and Latin America. It is difficult to determine any strong cultural trends. For the most part, students the world over seem to value the same set of attributes in their teachers. Research by Zhang and Watkins (2007) and Cortazzi and Jin (1996) suggested that Chinese students, influenced by their Confucian cultural background, might be more inclined to value deep knowledge, moral rectitude, and a refined manner in their teachers than would students coming from other cultures. Other research, such as Mullock's (2003) study of 42 students from predominantly Confucian countries, complicates such claims by highlighting the universal appeal of teachers who are personable, motivating, and humorous.

From the standpoint of SLTE, these findings are of some concern. In second language teacher education – as in teacher education more generally – there has for some time been a de-emphasis of skills and behaviors. Instead, the “formation or transformation of teacher thinking and reflective processes, dispositions, knowledge, and beliefs” has been the new focus of pre-service teacher education (Gaies, 2002, p. 7). However, judging from the data presented in this section, both pre-service and in-service ESL teachers seem to view socio-affective qualities as far more important than either pedagogical skills or reflective practice. The ability to use techniques and methods is valued in ESL, but comes second to the possession of positive personality traits. There is

minimal awareness of or concern about reflective practice or critical engagement with the act of teaching, what Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) calls “knowledge-of-practice.” On the whole, beliefs about effective ESL pedagogy seem remarkably superficial, mostly concerned with teacher-student rapport and classroom management issues.

This situation obviously represents a serious challenge to any SLTE program that wishes to foster self-evaluation, conscious deliberation, and reflective practice. As has been noted, altering core beliefs is difficult: Pennington (1995) asserts that lasting change in teaching habits is not easy to accomplish because precipitating transformation implies “challenging, ultimately deconstructing, and then reconstructing ingrained practice and long-held beliefs” (p. 705). And yet if SLTE programs wish to transform their students’ “reflective processes, dispositions, knowledge, and beliefs,” the field must find ways to do just that.

In the final section of this literature review (below), I briefly explore the frames of mind and types of behavior that inform expert practice. If indeed it is possible for SLTE to help students alter their conceptions of learning and teaching – a proposition that is far from certain – it may be useful to consider how expertise is developed.

### **Expertise in ESL Teaching**

The previous discussion focused on how scholars, students, pre-service instructors, and practicing teachers define and understand teacher effectiveness, particularly in terms of the characteristics and pedagogic behaviors of “good” teachers. Another lens through which to view teacher effectiveness is the concept of “expertise.” While the terms effective and expert are often used interchangeably, here expertise refers to the hidden cognitive processes that inform effective practices. Many of the specific

actions of experts are agreed upon, at least in general terms, but what drives expert behavior continues to be a difficult research question. Chi (2006) identifies seven specific traits and behaviors of experts: they excel in generating the best solutions; they can perceive the “deep structure” of a problem or situation in a way that novices cannot; they spend a great deal of time analyzing problems qualitatively; they have more accurate self-monitoring skills in terms of their ability to spot problems with their own understanding; they are more successful than others at choosing appropriate strategies for solving problems; they opportunistically make use of whatever sources of information and resources that are available; and they can retrieve relevant domain knowledge with minimal cognitive effort (pp. 23-24). However, despite this general understanding of expert characteristics, what exactly constitutes expertise itself is something that is not yet fully understood (Tsui, 2003, p. 1).

De Groot, who in the 1960s investigated the knowledge and practice of chess masters, is generally acknowledged as the first researcher to systematically study expertise. Subsequent studies in the 1970s looked beyond chess to a wide variety of activities and professions in such fields as mathematics, law, science, and medicine. Interest in teaching expertise sprang up at about the same time, and today the study of teaching expertise is an established field of inquiry. Only very recently, however, have scholars within the field of ESL begun to explore this issue. In this section, I first review competing conceptions of expertise. I then examine the question of expertise in teaching. Next, I discuss expertise in the field of language instruction. Finally, I consider how knowledge about expertise can support the development of second language teacher education (SLTE).

**Conceptions of expertise.** There are essentially two competing versions of expertise: expertise as a state of being and expertise as a process. The first version, which draws heavily on the work of Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986), is essentially a description of expertise. One of its fundamental principles is that “knowing how” is more important to expertise than “knowing that.” That is, expertise is not principally defined by area-specific knowledge but is rather characterized by the automaticity of an expert’s habituated actions when operationalizing such knowledge. Expertise is intuitive and non-reflective, in Schon’s (1983) deft phrase “a tacit knowing-in-action.” Indeed, it has been observed that when experts attempt to simultaneously act while consciously thinking on their behaviors, their performances deteriorate. Johnson (2005) underscores the apparent effortlessness of expert performance: “Those who have knowledge do not need to think so much, while those lacking the knowledge base are forced into the harder route” (p. 15). This view is well articulated by George Bernard Shaw, who wrote that the “...unconscious self is the real genius. Your breathing goes wrong the moment your conscious self meddles with it” (1903). This perspective on expertise, however, has been criticized for its primary focus on routine and repetitive tasks and for the fact that it does not address how experts deal with novel situations.

The second version of expertise (i.e., the view that expertise is a process) is grounded in the work of Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993). These authors are chiefly concerned with understanding the development of expertise. Findings from their influential research of writing processes challenge the image of expert practice as something unconscious and effortless. Instead, the authors foreground the importance of critical thought, hard work, and challenge. Whereas merely experienced practitioners fall



back on well-worn routines to guide their actions, Bereiter and Scardamalia argue that experts problematize their work, constantly pushing themselves “to the edges of their competence” (p. 3). As Johnson (2005) notes, “the apparent ease of experts often belies immense effort ... (Experts) work long hours. and they tend to set standards for themselves and others that are always at least slightly beyond reach” (pp. 15-16). The difference between an expert and an experienced non-expert, then, is not necessarily that the former does things well and that the latter does not, but that experts seek out and engage with challenging problems that add to their expertise. The authors refer to the expert’s habit of constructing problems that they can then work to solve. Experienced non-experts, on the other hand, depend on the safety of what they already know and thus fail to extend themselves and grow.

The Bereiter and Scardamalia view of expertise is consonant with that of Schon (1983, as cited in Tsui, 2003), who focuses on the reflective nature of expertise. Schon argues that experts regularly engage in two types of self-evaluation: “reflection-on-action” and “reflection-in-action.” The former refers to the process of critically examining past behaviors while the latter refers to how experts monitor themselves during action, particularly when they encounter a new problem. In reflection-on-action, the practitioner "shapes the situation in accordance with his initial appreciation of it, the situation ‘talks back,’ and he responds to the situation's back-talk" (p. 79). As Farrell (2013) points out, such reflection is a crucial component in the process of developing expertise since it “can act as tool to bring this usually unarticulated concept to the level of awareness” (p. 1071). Glaser and Chi’s (1988) work harmonizes with this view: for these

authors, experts are characterized by both the specificity and depth of their knowledge base and by their strong habits of self-evaluation, conscious deliberation, and reflectivity.

**Expertise in teaching.** Like studies of expertise in other fields, most studies of teacher expertise are generally premised on distinguishing the practices of novices from those of experienced practitioners. A high correlation between teacher experience and teacher effectiveness has been observed (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor 2007; Harris & Sass 2007; Kane, Rockoff, & Staiger 2006; Ladd 2008). The early professional experiences of teachers have a bigger impact on student-learning outcomes than the effect of most other teacher-related variables, including teacher education, licensure test scores, and class size (Rice, 2010). A meta-study conducted by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (2012) shows that K-12 teacher effectiveness, as measured by changes in student test scores, increases steadily in the first 5 to 10 years and then tends to level off.

Many educational studies of expertise have looked at differences between novices and experienced teachers during the preactive (planning) and interactive (teaching) phases of instruction (Calderhead, 1984, 1988, 1993; Nunan, 1992; Yinger, 1979, 1980, 1986). In both the preactive and interactive phases, findings show that expert teachers are more efficient, improvisational, and integrated than novice teachers. When expert teachers plan, they do so more quickly than novices, and yet their classroom work is more effective. Expert teachers are more sensitive to contextual clues than novices and can change course according to situational exigencies. This is attributed to the facts that expert teachers have routinized planning and teaching processes, can reflect back on past experiences, and are better at seeing patterns in their work. The ability to draw from past experiences may be especially important. Indeed, Ericsson and Smith (1991) argue that

“access to aggregated past experience is the single most important factor accounting for the development of expertise” (p. 30). When novices teach, on the other hand, their work is usually guided by acontextual rules and models that they attempt to stick to regardless of whatever classroom events may be unfolding.

A weakness of these types of studies is that they conflate the concepts of experience and expertise. Pace the studies mentioned above, Andrews (2006) notes that it is clearly not the case that years of experience necessarily lead to expertise. Comparing the knowledge and actions of novice and expert teachers is not overly helpful in discerning how some novices develop and grow into experts while others merely transition into becoming experienced non-experts (Carter, 1990). As Adams and Pierce (1999, as cited in Chen, 2012), correctly observe, "experience is useful only when the teacher continually engages in self-reflection and modifies classroom techniques to better serve the needs of students" (213). A danger, then, of conflating expertise and experience is that the two do not always correlate. In medicine, for example, research has found an inverse relationship between the experience of a physician and the quality of care provided (Choudhry et al., 2005, as cited in Farrell, 2013).

In their oft-cited article on the relationship between teacher knowledge and pedagogic practice, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) discuss the conception of expertise from three different perspectives of teacher knowledge: knowledge-for-practice, knowledge-in-practice, and knowledge-of-practice. Knowledge-for-practice is defined as the formal knowledge generated by university researchers. From this perspective, expert teachers are those who are most familiar with this knowledge base and who constantly update their command of subject matter. Expertise in this view is largely viewed in

intellectual terms. Knowledge-in-practice is defined as the teacher knowledge embedded in professional work. That is, teaching is seen as an art that is best learned by doing. Novice teachers become experts through reflecting on their experiences of doing and by imitating the effective strategies of accomplished teachers. Expertise in this sense, then, is viewed in terms of practical teaching ability. Lastly, knowledge-of-practice is defined as the knowledge generated by teachers when they use knowledge generated by others as a point of departure for their own classroom-based inquiry. Expertise here is seen as the accumulated knowledge resulting from both formal research and practice, but also from a critical stance towards both. Knowledge-of-practice encourages exploration of variances between theory and practice, challenging received truths, posing new problems, etc. This conception of expertise has much in common with Bereiter and Scardamalia's in that expertise is understood as a matter of personal development through the problematization of both received knowledge and routinized practice, what Sternberg and Horvath (1995) term "continuous learning through experience" (p. 13).

**Expertise in language teaching.** There are few studies on the topic of language teacher expertise (see Andrews, 2006; Akyel, 1997; Farrell, 2013; Johnson, 2005; Mok, 1994; Nunan, 1992; Tsui, 2003; Richards, 1996). In an early study of expertise in the field of ESL, Akyel (1997) compared experienced and student instructors. He reported that in many ways, the two groups were similar. Both implemented comparable instructional behaviors in response to student errors. The two groups also demonstrated similarities in terms of the instructional goals they reported pursuing. The difference, however, was one of degree: the experienced instructors in Akyel's study demonstrated a

larger repertoire of instructional actions, a wider range of instructional goals, and a greater store of prior knowledge when making classroom decisions.

In a recent study by Farrell (2013), the author focuses on three female ESL college teachers in Canada as they participated in a teacher reflection group over the course of two years. The author identified five characteristics of second language teaching expertise: knowledge of learners, learning, and teaching; critical reflection; access to past experiences; informed lesson planning; and active student involvement. Farrell reports that the most significant characteristic of ESL teacher expertise is knowledge of learners and learning, which includes sensitivity to students' needs, moods, motivation, enjoyment, and learning styles. The author reports that all three teachers in his study worked to build strong relationships with their pupils and strived to instill in them a sense of autonomy and personal responsibility. Knowledge of learners and learning

... was the most prevalent characteristic ... among all three teachers and is consistent with the literature in general education research which reports that expert teachers are aware of the ability levels and backgrounds of their students and use this knowledge when engaging their students in active learning. (p. 1074)

The second most important expert characteristic observed by Farrell was the teachers' engagement in critical reflection and critical examination of their own practices. Taken together, Farrell notes that the five characteristics of ESL teacher expertise which he identified should be seen in a holistic manner, each linked to and building on the others.

Probably the most cited work on language teacher expertise comes from Tsui (2003), whose book-length treatment of the subject examines the expertise of language teachers in Hong Kong. Tsui tracked one expert teacher, one novice, and two experienced teachers for a year-and-a-half. Her study identified several differences between the expert teacher and the rest. The expert saw language as a unified whole rather than as an assortment of discrete pieces to be taught piecemeal. In general, she had a more coherent and unified approach to instruction. She was able to synthesize aspects of teaching, such as “fun” and “learning,” that the less expert teachers tended to dichotomize. Another important difference is that the expert was able to articulate her principles and criteria for the pedagogical decisions she made, and these principles and criteria often had a theoretical rather than a strictly pragmatic (e.g., finishing a unit on time) or experiential (i.e., based on routinized behaviors) basis. Finally, Tsui underlines how the expert teacher consistently found opportunities for learning in her work, challenged herself, and “problematized the unproblematic” (Tsui, 2009, p. 30). This is consistent with Bereiter and Scardamalia’s (1993) findings: whereas non-experts tend to work on fewer problems or on unchallenging problems, experts engage in ongoing progressive problem solving.

In conclusion, Tsui (2009) characterizes teacher expertise in terms of the management of the “multidimensionality, simultaneity, immediacy, and unpredictability of classroom events” (p. 192). Expert teachers are skillful at spotting and interpreting patterns in the classroom, are discriminating about the classroom events they pay attention to and act on, and are improvisational, automatic, and effortless in the way they draw on their pedagogic repertoires.

Finally, Tsui (2003) underlines the irregularity of teacher growth. Research findings suggest that even experienced language teachers' pedagogical expertise is distributed unevenly. That is, a given teacher may have a limited instructional repertoire for grammar instruction while possessing a thorough content knowledge of vocabulary or reading. Andrews (2006) notes that teacher professional development proceeds unevenly, with "progress in the various dimensions occurring to a different extent and at different rates" (p. 16). For this reason, Tsui suggests that teaching expertise might be better understood as applying to certain types of practice rather than all. That is, because teaching is a complicated and difficult to define, it may be more relevant to discuss expertise in terms of multiple "expertises" rather than to generalize about expert teachers.

**Summary and discussion.** In this section, I considered expertise both generally and from the point of view of pedagogic practice. While Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) emphasize the non-reflective, intuitive nature of expertise, a growing consensus has formed around the idea that expertise is best understood as the product of reflection and deliberation, both on past experiences and on present action. Tsui (2003) characterizes expertise as "constant engagement in exploration and experimentation, in problematizing the unproblematic, and responding to challenges" (pp. 277-278). It has also been suggested that expertise in language teaching involves five critical components: knowledge of learners, learning, and teaching; critical reflection; access to past experiences; informed lesson planning; and active student involvement (Farrell, 2013).

Potentially, there are large rewards to be gained from a deeper understanding of language teacher expertise. In terms of SLTE, the benefits are clear. In the future, greater insight into expertise would allow us to identify and support emerging characteristics of

expertise in our students. While we wait for such findings, what we currently know about language teacher expertise can be put to immediate use. First, Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993) point out that teachers who fall into routines are generally those who never transcend their own mediocrity. So a key function of teaching about expertise would be to warn students of this potential trap and encourage students to continue problematizing their practice and to view teacher learning as a lifelong process.

Second, findings can spur change to certain traditional curricular activities within SLTE. One example: most programs encourage a linear model of lesson planning in which specific tasks are presented according to a rigid schedule. However, we know from expertise studies that this “aims and objectives” approach has little to do with how actual teaching is conducted (Tsui, 2003). Expert teachers generally view class planning from the perspective of a problem to be solved rather than a procedure to be followed. They tend to plan in the recursive, caroming manner of much thoughtful writing rather than in the linear, list-making style encouraged by many teaching programs.

Finally, and probably most significantly, knowing something about the nature of experience and expertise may help SLTE students better reflect on their professional growth, suggest benchmarks for development, and calm anxieties about initial teaching experiences by showing a road forward. The need to teach reflective practices is especially crucial. Freeman (2002) argues that “teacher education must ... serve two functions. It must teach the skills of reflectivity and it must provide the discourse and vocabulary that can serve participants in renaming their experience” (p. 11). In the same vein, Pennington (1995) remarks



The means by which teachers' awareness and practice change involves the interplay of two processes: innovation and critical reflection. Innovation is the source of new information that triggers change (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992), and critical reflection is the processing of information gained through innovation in relation to the teacher's existing schema for teaching. (p. 706)

## Chapter 3

### Methodology and Data Collection

My research concerns the impact of teacher education on the beliefs and classroom practices of pre-service language instructors. Specifically, it explores how teachers in training think about language pedagogy, to what degree trainee beliefs are congruent with their actual instructional work, and to what degree beliefs and practice develop and converge as a result of advancement through a four year SLTE program. Such a study is necessarily also a study of the origin of core pedagogical beliefs. Where do ideas about teaching come from? And to what extent are they shaped by formal training? The current research is also concerned with how participants understand themselves as teachers in training, and how their self-images compare to their conceptions of other teachers and to their “ideal” teaching selves.

This study centers on the SLTE program at the University of Guanajuato in central Mexico. Research participants included 10 students from each of the four levels of the program. I also interviewed 10 graduates of the program, and 10 English language teachers who lack formal pedagogical training. In all, 60 participants took part in the research.

What counts as evidence of language teacher cognition is a fundamental methodological question. The literature describes a wide array of data collection techniques: responses to questionnaires, tests, and rating tasks (Allen, 2002; Burgess & Etherington, 2002; Karavas-Doukas, 1996; Kern, 1995; Peacock, 2001; Schulz, 1996); verbal commentaries elicited through structured, semi-structured, stimulated recall, and repertory grid interviews (Basturkmen et al., 2004; Mangubhai, Marland, Dashwood, &

Son, 2004; Tsui, 2005); structured and less structured observational data (Farrell & Lim, 2005; Freeman, 1993; Johnston & Goettsch, 2000; Tsang, 2004); and different forms of narrative and schematic reflective writing (Bigelow & Ranney, 2005; Farrell, 1999; Mok, 1994; Tsang, 2004).

Each of the methods mentioned above are characterized by particular strengths and potential weaknesses. Because no one data collection technique can be totally free of problems, many researchers have adopted multi-method strategies. A multi-method approach may combine, for example, self-report instruments, interviews, and questionnaires. A mixed methods research design is a pragmatic approach to research that places an emphasis on (1) the specific intent of the research project (Newman et al., 2003) and (2) the practicality and feasibility of a given technique within the framework of a particular investigation (Creswell, 1999, 2003).

For my research, I used three complementary data collection techniques: repertory grids, observations, and questionnaires. Data collection was divided into three phases. First, repertory grid interviews were conducted in order to determine the existing pedagogical beliefs of the teachers who took part in my study. Second, observations of a subset of these teachers' instructional practices were carried out. Lastly, questionnaires having to do with the sources of teacher beliefs was sent to all of the participants.

Although repertory grid data was analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively, it is important to note that the current study is guided by phenomenological assumptions and that all quantitative data must be understood within the study's overarching qualitative position. Qualitative research can be characterized as:

a holistic approach which takes account of contexts within which human experiences occur and is thus concerned with learning from particular instances or cases. Qualitative research seeks to access the inner world of perception and meaning-making in order to understand, describe, and explain social process from the perspective of study participants. This approach does not commence with a prior hypothesis to be tested and proved but with a focus of inquiry that takes the researcher on a voyage of discovery as it takes an inductive approach to data analysis, and research outcomes are not broad generalisations but contextual findings; qualitative researchers tend to speak of ‘transferability’ (from context to context) rather than generalisability. (Owens, 2000, p. 22)

The use of observations is well documented in the literature and probably needs little explanation or justification. As Borg (2003) correctly notes, those interested in language teacher cognition are interested in understanding the professional conduct of instructors, not what or how teachers think “in isolation of what they do” (p. 105). Because my research was concerned with the interplay between beliefs and actual classroom action, it was necessary to observe teachers engaged in their instructional practice.

In contrast to observations, repertory grids are much less familiar in the fields of ESL and SLA. For this reason, the bulk of this current chapter concerns the provenance, use, and place in the literature of repertory grid interviews. I also include three case studies in order to better illustrate the use of the RGT. In the first section of this chapter, I

provide this necessary context. In the second section, I provide an audit of the data collection and analysis procedures utilized in this current research.

### **The Repertory Grid Technique**

The repertory grid technique (RGT) is a kind of interview used to examine the structure and content of the implicit theories through which people construe reality. The RGT is the most famous of the methodologies associated with George Kelly's theory of personal construct psychology (PCP). Although PCP was initially developed by Kelly for use within the field of clinical psychotherapy, scholars and practitioners in various other disciplines have adopted its premises and employed its methods. Personal construct psychology is used in such areas as education, management development, and occupational counseling (Jankowicz, 1987; Scheer, 2006). Today, the PCP movement is relatively small but growing. Those interested in PCP share ideas and research through two peer-reviewed journals (*Journal of Constructivist Psychology* and *Personal Construct Theory and Practice*), a significant literature (see <http://www.oikos.org/content.htm>), and two dozen associations, research groups, and training centers in North America, Europe, and Australia (see <http://pcp-net.de/info/homepages.html>).

Despite growing awareness of and interest in personal construct psychology, and despite the occurrence of Kelly's repertory grid technique in a wide range of scholarship, "rep grids" have made few inroads into the field of applied linguistics. This is unfortunate, as repertory grid interviews are a compelling research instrument. Within applied linguistics, they are particularly apposite to investigations in a number of areas,

including sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, methodology, pedagogy, and learning strategies.

In the following overview, I first discuss the rep grid interview's situation in Kelly's (1955) work on personal construct psychology and consider the theoretical justification for the technique. I then provide a brief overview of how repertory interviews are conducted and consider how resulting grid data is analyzed. I next review the method's use in educational research generally and in studies of language teacher training specifically. In order to illustrate the use and analysis of repertory grids, I provide three short case studies that were conducted as part of my pilot research for this current investigation.

**Personal construct psychology.** The theoretical justification for the repertory grid technique lies in George Kelly's personal construct psychology, an approach to understanding how people generate, organize, maintain, and develop their beliefs. Laid out in the two volumes of *The Psychology of Personal Constructs* (1955), PCP was initially developed within the context of clinical psychotherapy. Kelly's theory is generally described as a cognitivist constructivist approach to psychotherapy (although Kelly himself would have almost certainly challenged this claim).<sup>3</sup> It is cognitive in its focus on mental activity and in its basic assumptions about knowledge, learning, and individual agency. It is constructivist in that reality, whatever that might be, is viewed as

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<sup>3</sup> It has been argued that Kelly was strongly influenced by phenomenology, Dewey's functional psychology, and mathematical constructivism, and his personal construct psychology is often associated with cognitivism, humanism, and post-modern constructivism (Scheer, 2006; King & Horrocks, 2010; Warren, 2003; Butt, 2003; Fransella, 2005; Hinkle, 1970). However, Kelly himself was suspicious of categories. Writing in *A Brief Introduction to Personal Construct Psychology*, he observed that his theory had been categorized by "responsible scholars" as an emotional theory, a learning theory, a psychoanalytic theory, a Marxist theory, a behaviorist theory, a reflective theory, and "no theory at all." He wryly noted that in each case there were some convincing arguments for these categorizations, but he had "forgotten what most of them were" (p. 8).

being only mediately accessible to us. That is, objective reality is unknowable except through the lenses of our own senses and socially-situated cognitions. Humans create internal representations of their worlds, but they can never actually know the world as it really “is” (Fromm, 1995). Kelly (1955), outlining his convictions about “the kind of universe we envision,” encapsulated his views thusly:

We presume that the universe is really existing and that man is gradually coming to understand it. By taking this position, we attempt to make clear from the outset that it is a real world we shall be talking about, not a world composed solely of the flitting shadows of people’s thoughts. But we should like, furthermore, to make clear our conviction that people’s thoughts also really exist, though the correspondence between what people really think exists and what really exists is a continually changing one. (p. 6)

Kelly’s theory of personal construct psychology is laid out in the form of a fundamental postulate and eleven corollaries.<sup>4</sup> The Fundamental Postulate states that “A person’s processes are psychologically channelized by the ways in which he anticipates events” (Kelly, 1955, p. 46). Kelly viewed people as essentially oriented towards the future rather than the past, and believed that how a person anticipates the future determines that person’s actions. In this sense, Kelly believed that mental representations of reality are constantly assembled and assessed in the same way that scientists build and test theories. In fact, his view that people should be viewed as scientists is central to personal construct psychology. Humans, Kelly asserted, create personal theories. They

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<sup>4</sup> By “postulate” Kelly refers to “an assumption so basic in nature that it anteceded everything which is said in the logical system which it supports” (pp. 46-47). By “corollary” Kelly means “certain propositions which, in part, follow from the postulate and, in part, elaborate it in greater detail” (p. 50).

then develop hypotheses based on those theories which, in turn, are tested through on-going “experiments” (i.e., interactions) with their environments (Beail, 1985; Gaines, Hardison & Neimeyer, 2012; Fromm, 1995). Kenny (1984) writes that “Each person has expectations, anticipations, hypotheses to test and experiments to conduct. The individual differences that we find between alternative personal viewpoints are the type of differences which are to be found in the theoretical disagreements among scientists, and it is these differences which lead us to attempt different experimental enterprises” (para 37).

In other psychological approaches, personal theories may be variously referred to as attitudes, habits, reinforcement history, information coding system, psychodynamics, concepts, or philosophy (Fransella, Bell, & Bannister, 2004). Kelly, who emphatically made no commitment to the terms of other disciplines, referred to personally held theories as “constructs.”

In Kellian psychology, personal constructs are the building blocks of human understanding. They are defined by three primary characteristics. First, constructs are bipolar. This is captured by Kelly’s Dichotomy Corollary, which states that “A person’s construction system is composed of a finite number of dichotomous constructs” (p. 59). According to Kelly (1955), humans construct meaning by ascribing differences, by making discriminations, by differentiating between what things are and what they are not. By classifying some things as being the same, we ineluctably determine that they are different from other things. All constructs, then, consist of dichotomous relationships. For instance, we are accustomed to categorizing people as short or tall, fat or thin, good looking or ugly, etc.



Kelly's conception of how opposites are distinguished diverges from conventional logic involving constructs of the "A, not A" variety (as cited in Sechrest, 2009, p. 215). For Kelly, the minimum context for a construct is three "elements," i.e., instances of the thing being construed. For example, in the case of people, it is necessary to locate some similarity between two individuals before it is possible to make a contrast with a third; conversely, it is impossible to locate a similarity between these individuals without reference to one or more additional persons. Contrasts are often implicit and so it is often unnecessary to specifically reference a third element. Nevertheless, according to Kelly, no similarity or difference between any two things can be conceived except as they are compared or contrasted with at least one other thing. This view has implications for Kelly's methodology, specifically the elicitation of constructs (see below).

For Kelly, discriminations are not necessarily verbal, although constructs are often confused with the verbal labels assigned to them. Lyons (1977, as cited in Karapanos & Martens, 2009) posited that "categorizing experience in dichotomous contrasts is a universal human tendency which is only secondarily reflected in language" (p. 3). Lyons identified three categories of bipolarity: negation (i.e., practical - impractical); opposition (i.e., professional - amateurish); and non-contiguous (where the opposite pole of a construct does not constitute a negation or linguistic opposition, i.e., easy - powerful).

The second major characteristic of constructs is that their differentiations are not binary. Constructs are not "either / or." Instead, poles mark the endpoints of a spectrum. People, of course, are not short or tall, fat or thin, good looking or ugly in any absolute

sense. Humans fall within ranges delimited by these poles, and the poles themselves can change in meaning depending on context, new evidence, etc.

Third, constructs are arranged hierarchically within a system, such that each is superordinate to some constructs and subordinate to others. This idea is captured by Kelly's Organizational Corollary which states that "each person characteristically evolves, for his convenience in anticipating events, a construction system embracing ordinal relationships between constructs":

Within a construction system, there may be many levels of ordinal relationships, with some constructs subsuming others and those, in turn, subsuming still others. When one construct subsumes another its ordinal relationship may be termed superordinal and the ordinal relationship of the other becomes subordinal. Moreover, the ordinal relationships between the constructs may reverse itself from time to time. For example, "intelligent" may embrace all things "good" together with all things "evaluative," and "stupid" would be the term for "bad" and "descriptive" things; or, if the other kind of subsuming is involved, "intelligent" might embrace the construct evaluative vs. descriptive while "stupid" would be the term for the good vs. bad dichotomy. (Kelly, 1955, pp. 57-58)

The construct system, then, is dynamic, such that the position of constructs can change, and in doing so restructure the networks of meanings associated with them. For Kelly, the personal construct system is always subject to modification: "All of our present interpretations of the universe are subject to revision or replacement" (Kelly, 1955, p. 15). Such revision comes about when one or more of the three construct features outlined

above is altered: a person may re-imagine the poles of a construct, or move along a construct's dimension, or relocate a construct and thus shift its functional relationships with other constructs in the system (Roberts, 1999, p. 4). An individual may, indeed, reject a construct and replace it entirely.

Kelly's (1955) view that our systems of understanding are always tentative and subject to revision extended even to his own theory. He held that personal construct psychology itself would survive only as long as it was useful: "Let it be clearly understood," Kelly (1955) stated, "that we are not proposing this [fundamental] postulate as an ultimate statement of truth. In modern scientific thought it is always customary to accept even one's postulates as tentative or *ad interim* statements of truth and then to see what follows" (p. 47). Elsewhere, he observed that personal construct psychology had been classified by some as "nonsense" and conceded that, by the very terms of his theory, it would "likely some day turn out to be" (Kelly, 2003, p. 8). Sechrest (2008) comments that

Kelly is particularly frank and disarmingly direct in admitting that even his own theory is suggested only as a temporarily expedient way of dealing with events commonly construed from a psychological point of view. It is more than a little remarkable to find a personality theorist proposing that the product of his own intellectual energies is to be regarded as a short-term effort, probably ere long to be discarded or significantly modified. (p. 209)

Kelly's (1955) view of change is informed by his view of experience, as encapsulated in his Experience Corollary: "A person's construction system varies as he or she successively construes the replication of events" (p. 90). This refers to the view that people learn and develop from experience. It also implies that as people develop, they do not merely add on new experiences, but almost certainly change the entire way in which they approach these experiences (Easterby-Smith, Holman, & Thorpe, 1996a).

Kelly (1955) argued that individual change is largely a matter of individual choice. The Choice Corollary states that "A person chooses for himself that alternative in a dichotomized construct through which he anticipates the greater possibility for extension and definition of his system" (p. 64). That is, when individuals find themselves in a situation in which a choice must be made (i.e., they must construe an event in one way or another), they can either elect to make the choice that amplifies their understanding of the world or they can elect to make the choice that further solidifies their current construct system. "What the person is looking for, then, is either constricted certainty or broadened understanding in relation to his construction system" (Sechrest, 2009, p. 219). Kelly refers to this situation as the "elaborative choice." Obviously, the concept of elaborative choice is significant to any study which seeks to explain cognitive change. The current study is concerned with how SLTE students modify their thinking about "good teaching" over the course of a four-year teacher education program. In Kellian terms, the question is whether new information and new experiences lead students to expand their repertoire of constructs and embrace new understandings or if new information and experiences prompt students to "dig in" and psychologically defend sacrosanct positions.

How an individual comes to internalize and understand differences in the first place depends on several factors. Personal constructs are, to some extent, a product of particular macro- or micro-cultures. Kelly devotes two corollaries to the role of others on construing. The first of these is the Commonality Corollary:

To the extent that one person employs a construction of experience which is similar to that employed by another, his psychological processes are similar to those of the other person. (p. 90)

The second is the Sociality Corollary:

To the extent that one person construes the construction processes of another, he may play a role in a social process involving the other person. (p. 95)

People share subjective cultures on the basis of shared race, religion, sex, language, age, occupation, activities or geographic proximity, and these subjective cultures are largely based on the categories that they employ, the most general social category likely being "us versus them" (Diamond, 1982, p. 401).

Most constructs, however, are individually held and highly personalized. In one of his fundamental axioms, his Individuality Corollary, Kelly (1955) states that "persons differ from each other in their construction of events." Gaines, Hardison and Neimeyer (2011) explain that "even though individuals may draw upon common and publicly shared discriminations ... they typically develop construct systems that are in some degree idiosyncratic, giving their construct systems a richer personal significance than relying on simple dictionary antonyms" (p. 5).

**The repertory grid technique.** Personal construct psychology is grounded in constructivist epistemology and associated with interpretivist approaches to research. For constructivists, objective reality is ultimately unknowable. It can only be glimpsed through the lenses of our senses and then imperfectly construed using our mental faculties. As Stafford (2012) writes, “what we experience is our brain’s best guess about the world.” It follows, then, that research within the constructivist tradition can never be an impartial study of objective reality. It must of necessity be an interpretive act. Along with all other constructivist theories, PCP shares the goal “of understanding the world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it” (Schwandt, 1994, p. 118). PCP’s primary method of accomplishing this is through the use of an idiographic “knowledge analysis technique” (Yaman, 2005, p. 28) known as the “repertory grid.”

The repertory grid technique actually refers to a number of different interview methods. These various types of grid interviews include “role construct grids,” “implication grids,” “resistance to change grids,” “dependency grids,” “textual grids,” and “qualitative grids,” among others. The “standard” version of a repertory grid is usually understood to consist of a set of elicited elements, a set of elicited constructs, and a set of elicited numerical ratings that join them together (see Figure 6).

	<b>ELEMENTS</b>							
	Element 1	Element 2	Element 3	Element 4	Element 5	Element 6	Etc	
<b>Emergent Pole</b>								<b>Contrast Pole</b>
Construct 1								Construct 1
Construct 2								Construct 2
Construct 3								Construct 3
Construct 4		<b>RATINGS</b>						Construct 4
Construct 5								Construct 5
Construct 6								Construct 6
etc.								etc.

Figure 6. A standard repertory grid.

The following discussion refers to this standard version. Regardless of the form a grid takes, all grids are essentially sorting tasks which enable a psychotherapeutic client or research participant to explain the way in which he or she orders the world (Fransella et al., 2004, p. 81).

The general procedure for completing a standard repertory grid is as follows. (1) A number of elements are elicited. (2) A construct is elicited. (3) All elements are rated on this construct. Steps (2) and (3) are repeated until the participant can no longer offer new constructs. (4) The grid is analyzed statistically. Below, each of these steps is considered in detail.

**Element elicitation.** In order to begin a standard grid interview, the researcher must first determine grid elements. Elements are defined by Kelly (1955) as “the things or events which are abstracted by a construct” (p. 95). In other words, elements are people, objects, events, or even concepts that are representative of the topic of the interview. For instance, if the point of a given interview is to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of textbooks, the elements could be the names of different textbooks. If the

subject of an interview is the strengths and weaknesses of various teaching methods and approaches, the elements could be the names of a number of methods and approaches. If the goal of the repertory grid is to analyze teaching styles, the elements would most likely be the names of different teachers (see Figure 7).

	<b>ELEMENTS</b>							
	<b>Teacher 1: Ann</b>	<b>Teacher 2: Bill</b>	<b>Teacher 3: Cathy</b>	<b>Teacher 4: Dan</b>	<b>Teacher 5: Elle</b>	<b>Teacher 6: Fred</b>	<b>Teacher 7: Gwen</b>	
<b>Emergent Pole</b>								<b>Contrast Pole</b>

Figure 7. Grid with teachers as elements.

Elements may either be elicited from the research participant or provided by the researcher, depending on the purpose of the grid. The number of elements may range from 8 to as many as 24, although any more than nine elements substantially increases the time needed to administer the repertory grid (an interview with just nine elements can easily take up to two hours to conduct). Fortunately, eight or nine elements are sufficient to generate a wide enough range of constructs for a thorough analysis of how a participant views a particular research domain (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Holman, 1996b; Stewart & Stewart, 1981).

According to Wright (2004), all elements must demonstrate the following four characteristics:



1. Discrete and homogeneous. Elements must either be all objects, all people, all events, or all situations; which means they basically have to be drawn from the same category, otherwise respondents will find it very difficult to give meaningful constructs
2. Representative. Elements should provide a reasonable coverage of most aspects of whatever is being investigated, though elements that are subsets of another must not be included, as this will make differentiation between them problematic.
3. As short as possible. Elements must be specific and easily understood by the respondent. In this respect, about nine elements is an adequate number for most ... applications.
4. Previously experienced. When choosing elements, they must be well known to the person to whom the grid is being administered. A general rule is for the respondent to have had actual experience (current or recent experience) with each of the elements so that the personal constructs generated from the grid interview are relevant and meaningful. (p. 346)

***Construct elicitation.*** Although constructs may be non-verbal, in clinical or research contexts they must of necessity be elicited, conveyed, and understood through the medium of language. Therefore, once a set of elements has been selected, the researcher then begins to elicit constructs. There are a number of ways in which this may be done (see Neimeyer, 1981; Shaw, 1979; Winter, 2013; Yorke, 1978). Constructs may be prompted by asking the research participant to describe each element in turn or to consider all the elements at once. Participants may be provided with a set of materials

(e.g. cards of different designs, colors, or textures, or pictures of people or events) which they can place into meaningful categories or use to symbolize their discriminations between elements. In order to elicit superordinate and subordinate constructs, the researcher may employ “laddering” and “pyramiding” techniques (Caputi, Viney, Walker, & Crittenden, 2012; Fransella et al., 2004; Jankowicz, 2004).

The most common method of eliciting constructs is by asking participants to make triadic or dyadic comparisons of the elements. Dyadic elicitation, in which a participant is asked to detect a similarity or a difference between two elements, is probably the simplest method of inducing constructs. However, it has been noted that the constructs produced are not as cognitively complex as when produced using triadic elicitation (Caputi & Reddy, 1999).

The idea of triadic elicitation flows directly from Kelly’s theory of how humans create contrasts, i.e., that the minimum context for a construct is three elements. There are essentially two methods of triadic elicitation (although others have been suggested; see Neimeyer, Baker, & Neimeyer, 1990). The “difference method” is the standard procedure for construct elicitation. In the difference method, research participants are presented with three elements (e.g., people) and asked to “identify any two people that are alike in some way, yet different from the third” (Neimeyer et al., 1990, pp. 239-240). For instance, in the case that the topic of the interview is “teaching styles in ESL” and the elements that have been chosen are different teachers that the participant is familiar with, the researcher might elicit a construct by providing the following directions:

“I’d like you to consider the instructors Ann, Cathy, and Fred. Think about their teaching styles. Select the two that are most similar in terms of their teaching styles and tell me why. Then tell me how the third one is different.”

In this case, the participant might respond that Ann and Cathy are similar because they both teach “too much grammar.” “Too much grammar” is the first half of a construct and is referred to as the similarity or emergent pole. The participant might then respond that Fred is different because he teaches in a very “communicative style”; this is the second half of the construct, and is referred to as the implicit or contrast pole (see Figure 8).

		<b>ELEMENTS</b>							
		<b>Teacher 1: Ann</b>	<b>Teacher 2: Bill</b>	<b>Teacher 3: Cathy</b>	<b>Teacher 4: Dan</b>	<b>Teacher 5: Elle</b>	<b>Teacher 6: Fred</b>	<b>Teacher 7: Gwen</b>	
<b>Emergent Pole</b>									<b>Contrast Pole</b>
<i>too much grammar</i>									<i>communicative</i>

Figure 8. Grid with the first elicited construct.

The difference method has been criticized on the grounds that its instructional set is relatively complex (Neimeyer et al., 1990). Moreover, there is no requirement that the contrasts are genuinely bipolar, and the method has been linked to the development of a greater percentage of “bent” (i.e., non-antonymous) constructs (Björklund, 2008; Neimeyer et al., 1990), what Lyons (1977) referred to as non-contiguous bi-polarity. For instance, examples of truly antonymous construct pairs are *male – female* and *black-*

*white*. These types of constructs are rare, however: generally, the contrast pole is not readily predictable. For example, as in the example above, the opposite of “too much grammar” might be “communicative.” But for another participant, it might be “not enough grammar.” For yet another participant, it might be “no grammar” (Richter & Derry, 2013). Constructs are considered “bent” when participants formulate contrasts that may be personally meaningful but that do not represent clear opposites. For instance, in the current example, a participant -- perhaps thinking of a teacher who provided her students with many opportunities to engage in communicative games and activities -- might determine that the opposite of “too much grammar” is “entertaining.” In such a case, the two descriptors would not represent clear opposites.

The problem of bent constructs is rectified by using the “opposite” method. Like the difference method, the opposite method begins by asking the participant to identify two elements that are alike in some way. Once a similarity has been determined, the researcher then asks the participant to identify the “opposite” of the emergent pole. This method ensures the bipolarity of the construct. Neimeyer et al. (1990) remark that the opposite method generates a significantly higher number of genuinely bi-polar constructs, but

... it also produces significantly less complex (i.e., more poorly differentiated) personal construct systems, an effect that has been replicated repeatedly in subsequent research ... In other words, the use of the opposite technique enhances the construct bipolarity while it decreases construct system differentiation (i.e., the number of independent constructs within the personal construct system). (p. 241)

Two other criticisms of the opposite method have been raised. First, there is no guarantee that the contrast poles elicited using the opposite method will correspond to the grid elements. Second, the opposite method tends to produce more extreme, negative contrast poles and, as a result, lower levels of construct system differentiation (Neimeyer et al., 1990).

Construct elicitation is the most important step in the rep grid interview process. Articulating the emergent and contrasting poles is a collaborative process between researcher and participant which requires time, patience, and mental energy. The meaning of each construct must be assiduously negotiated to ensure that both parties understand the exact meaning the participant is trying to convey. An effective repertory grid interview relies on a researcher's interpersonal and technical skills, underpinned by a genuine respect for the individuality and agency of participants (Roberts, 1999, p. 15). These skills are necessary at every point in the rep grid interview, but are especially important during the construct elicitation phase. If constructs are not recorded accurately, the resulting grid cannot be a true representation of the participant's beliefs.

*Elements rated on the construct.* Up until this point, the standard repertory grid interview resembles a typical semi-structured interview in that a researcher uses a list of questions or topics to guide discussion but maintains the freedom to “digress and probe” for more information (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 173). Depending on the skill of the interviewer and the reflectivity of the participant, steps 1 and 2, above, can produce thoughtful and interesting exchanges. If done correctly, the themes (i.e., the constructs)

that will have emerged from the interview can be very revealing of the participant's underlying beliefs and cognitive processes. In some cases, the interview may end here.

There is, however, another step in the rep grid procedure that allows researchers to analyze participant responses quantitatively. After the elicitation of each construct, the participant is asked to assign a numerical rating to each element in terms of where it lies on the continuum between the emergent and contrast poles. Kelly (as cited in Wright, 2004) referred to this process of rating the elements based on the elicited bipolar constructs as "putting numbers to words" (p. 352). Generally, a 5- or 7-point scale is employed. For example, still working with the example above, it can be said that "1" represents "too much grammar" and "7" represents a fully communicative approach. All the other numbers, 2 through 6, represent mid-points between these positions. The researcher asks the participant to rate each of the teachers on this scale. For instance, the participant may feel that Ann, above, teaches nothing but grammar and assign her a "1." She may feel that the next teacher listed as an element, in this case Bill, uses a mostly communicative approach, and assign him a "6." Perhaps she rates Cathy a "2," since although Cathy teaches a great deal of grammar, she doesn't focus on it as much as Ann. The participant continues in this way until all the elements have been rated on the construct (see Figure 9).

1	ELEMENTS							7
	Teacher 1: Ann	Teacher 2: Bill	Teacher 3: Cathy	Teacher 4: Dan	Teacher 5: Elle	Teacher 6: Fred	Teacher 7: Gwen	
<b>Emergent Pole</b>								<b>Contrast Pole</b>
<i>too much grammar</i>	1	6	2	4	5	7	1	<i>communicative</i>

Figure 9. Elements rated on a construct.

Steps 2 and 3 are then repeated. After the elements have been rated, the process of construct elicitation begins again. Each time this cycle is repeated, the researcher chooses a new combination of two or three elements for the participant to compare. New constructs are elicited and elements are rated on them until the participant struggles to identify any new constructs. At this point, the grid is considered complete and the elicitation process ends (see Figure 10).

1	ELEMENTS							7
	Teacher 1: Ann	Teacher 2: Bill	Teacher 3: Cathy	Teacher 4: Dan	Teacher 5: Elle	Teacher 6: Fred	Teacher 7: Gwen	
<b>Emergent Pole</b>								<b>Contrast Pole</b>
<i>too much grammar</i>	1	6	2	4	5	7	1	<i>communicative</i>
<i>uses textbook</i>	2	2	4	5	6	6	2	<i>authentic material</i>
<i>boring delivery</i>	1	4	2	7	6	7	4	<i>energetic</i>
<i>uses board</i>	2	3	2	3	7	6	3	<i>no board work</i>
<i>stdts work together</i>	6	5	7	5	3	1	4	<i>teacher lectures</i>
<i>uses L1</i>	2	3	1	4	6	6	5	<i>only uses L2</i>
<i>uses games</i>	7	5	7	2	6	1	1	<i>uses exercise sheets</i>

Figure 10. A completed grid with seven constructs.

A problem that sometimes arises in the rating process is that a participant may find it impossible to assign a rating when a construct is not perceived to have any meaningful connection to the element being evaluated. For instance, in the example above (Figure 10), the construct *too much grammar – communicative* would be completely inapplicable to Teacher 2 if this instructor happened to, say, teach math or history. In these cases, the constructs are said to lie beyond the “range of convenience” of the element in question. As Fransella et al. (2004) explain, the idea of a range of convenience is “something we recognize very readily in speech when, for example, we categorize furniture as antique or modern or numbers as prime or non-prime, whereas it bends our minds to consider antique or modern numbers and prime or non-prime furniture” (p. 9). In practical terms, this problem is generally dealt with by giving the element the middle-most rating possible (i.e., a 4 in the case of a 1-7 scale) or, if one’s software package is sufficiently robust, by leaving the rating blank.

Because producing new constructs can be cognitively demanding, it is not unusual for an interview to end after six or seven constructs have been identified. This is



especially true if participants are unfamiliar with the topic of investigation or if they have not considered the topic in any depth. If a participant is well-versed in a particular subject and has devoted time to considering it, he or she may well be able to supply 10 or more constructs. In some cases, a participant may be able to supply twenty or more constructs. Research findings suggest that very few new constructs are likely to be elicited after twenty or thirty have been generated (Winter, 2013).

*Statistical analysis of grids.* After all the elements have been rated on all constructs, grids can be statistically analyzed in order to uncover patterns in a participant's responses. The use of mathematical measurement and statistical analysis is, of course, a controversial practice within the context of qualitative research. It is justified on the grounds that statistical relationships within the grid reflect psychological relationships within an individual's construing system (Fransella et al., 2004, p. 81). It is important to emphasize, however, that while statistical analysis is typical, it is only one step in the interpretation of interview data. Indeed, Kelly suggests that grids should first be looked at without their "statistical nightshirts" to allow one to directly see something of what the person is actually saying (in Fransella, Bell, & Bannister, 2004, p. 55). Some researchers never carry out statistical analyses at all (see, for example, Murray, 2003, reported in Borg, 2006b). In any case, it is important to note that the repertory grid technique is grounded in qualitative, constructivist practices. To interpret statistical information outside the context of the socially situated interview process, a researcher would not only run the risk of producing erroneous interpretations but would violate the spirit of the method's theoretical orientation. For this reason, it is standard practice for the researcher to explain and discuss statistical findings with participants. This serves as a

crucial check on the validity of the findings. It also means that any statistical analysis is part of the interview process rather than an end to the process. The researcher does not surrender the hermeneutic task to the mechanical output of statistical equations, but instead uses this output as one way of interpreting a participant's construing. As Fielding and Lee (1998) correctly observe, qualitative researchers "want tools which support analysis, but leave the analyst firmly in charge" (p. 167).

As outlined above, repertory grid data consists of elements, constructs, and the numerical data that connects the two sets of information. Taken together, this can produce an impressive amount of data. A 4 x 4 grid, for instance, contains 28 pieces of data; an 8 x 8 grid contains 86 pieces of data; and a 12 x 12 grid contains 180 pieces of data. Since most of this data is numerical, it is amenable to various types of multivariate statistical procedures, such as two-way cluster analysis or principal component analysis (see below). To help with this analysis, there are a number of software packages and publicly accessible, web-based applications available, such as WebGrid 5 and Sci:Vesco.Web (see also <http://www.pcp-net.de/info/comp-prog.html>).

**Repertory grids in educational research.** Since its development in the 1950's, the repertory grid has been adopted by a wide range of researchers with interests outside its original psychotherapeutic context (King & Horrocks, 2010). Indeed, "rep grids" have proven to be such a useful instrument for eliciting and analyzing verbal commentaries that the technique is often dissociated from its underlying theory. Although scholars within the field of PCP warn against decoupling repertory grid interviews from Kelly's theories of personality (Beail, 1985; Denicolo & Pope, 1997), researchers outside the area of personal construct psychology have found rep grids to be a practical, stand-alone data

collection technique. They have even been used by those openly critical of Kelly's personal construct theory (see, for instance, Ryle, 1985). Currently, rep grids are used as a research instrument in a wide range of fields and have appeared in more than 2,000 journal articles, books, book chapters, and doctoral dissertations (Luque, Rodriguez, & Mamacho, 1999; Neimeyer et al., 1990; Saúl et al., 2012). Over the course of the last decade, more than 100 works utilizing the rep grid technique have been published each year (Saúl et al., 2012).

In the field of general education, there are numerous studies of teacher development and cognition based on repertory grid data (see, for example, Ben-Peretz, 1984; Boei, Corporaal, & Wim, 1989; Davis, 1985; Lifshitz, 1974; Munby, 1982; Philips, 1985; Pope, 2005; Runkel & Darmin, 1961; Thomas & Harri-Augstein, 1985a, 1985b; Yorke, 1978). However, only a few investigations in the field of applied linguistics have used the RGT. Below, three peer-reviewed studies are briefly reported.

Bodycott (1997) elicited constructs concerning the "ideal teacher" from twelve L2 pre-service instructors preparing to teach in Singaporean elementary schools. The author supplied 16 elements based on roles (e.g., "self," "past self," "ideal self," "mother," "father," "school principal," "past language teacher") and used triadic elicitation to derive constructs. He then subjected data to cluster analysis. Bodycott found that the pre-service language teachers were profoundly influenced by their relationships with their mothers: "This influence resulted in tight ... views concerning the status of child as learner and the context required for language learning ... a 'natural-immersive' approach to language learning and teaching was seen to emerge. An approach grounded in the way language is learned and taught in the home." Bodycott also found that the pre-service teachers' core

views related more to the personal characteristics and values of the ideal language teacher than they did to matters of pedagogical technique.

Sendan and Roberts (1998) used the repertory grid technique in their longitudinal investigation of a student teacher's personal theories about effective language instructors. In a larger study from which this paper was drawn, the authors asked six student teachers to complete three repertory grids during the last two years of their BA program. Elements were provided and consisted of "types" of English language instructors: effective; typical; and ineffective. Through a diachronic, statistical analysis of one student teacher's repertory grid data, Sendan and Roberts found that the students' conceptions about effective teaching changed not only in terms of content but also developed structurally.

Murray (2003, as cited in Borg, 2006b) used repertory grids as part of a longitudinal investigation into the development of language awareness among pre-service EFL teachers. Student teachers were interviewed three times over the space of a 7-month course in teacher education. The elements for this study were based on learner language, native-speaker language, and coursebook language. Departing from traditional repertory grid methodology, Murray provided different samples of each kind of text and uncovered perceived similarities and differences between them through dyadic elicitation. Murray's data analysis was unconventional as well in that actual grids were not constructed. Instead, the researcher transcribed the elicitation interviews, analyzed the transcripts for constructs, and noted changes in successive data sets.

**Pilot studies.** Below, I report on the findings of three pilot studies carried out to support the use of the repertory grid technique as the primary data collection instrument for my dissertation research. It is hoped that these will serve to support the foregoing

discussion by demonstrating the use of rep grids in actual research contexts. In particular, various methods of data analysis are discussed and illustrated. I first present findings from individual case studies of the teaching beliefs of two pre-service teachers. I then present findings from a study of seven pre-service teachers and analyze their beliefs as a group.

*Case study 1: Brenda.* Data for this present case study were taken from a repertory grid interview with “Brenda,”<sup>5</sup> an in-service ESL teacher with two years of classroom experience who has decided to return to school for pedagogic training.

Following Sendan and Roberts’ (1998) repertory grid protocol, elements were captured by asking Brenda to supply the names of three “bad” teachers she has had and “three excellent ones.” (The “bad” teachers are represented in Figure 6 by the codes Bad Teacher 1, Bad Teacher 2, and Bad Teacher 3. The “good” teachers are represented by the codes Good Teacher 1, Good Teacher 2, and Good Teacher 3). Because I was interested in knowing how LEI students view themselves and their own development, I also added “Brenda as she is now” and “Ideal Brenda” to the elements.

Constructs were then elaborated using triadic elicitation with the difference method. After each elicitation, the elements were rated numerically using a seven-point scale. In all, the interview generated eight constructs (see Figure 11).

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<sup>5</sup> Here, and throughout this dissertation, the names of all research participants have been changed to protect their anonymity. For the same reason, the names of the teachers that participants discuss during their repertory grid interviews have also been coded.

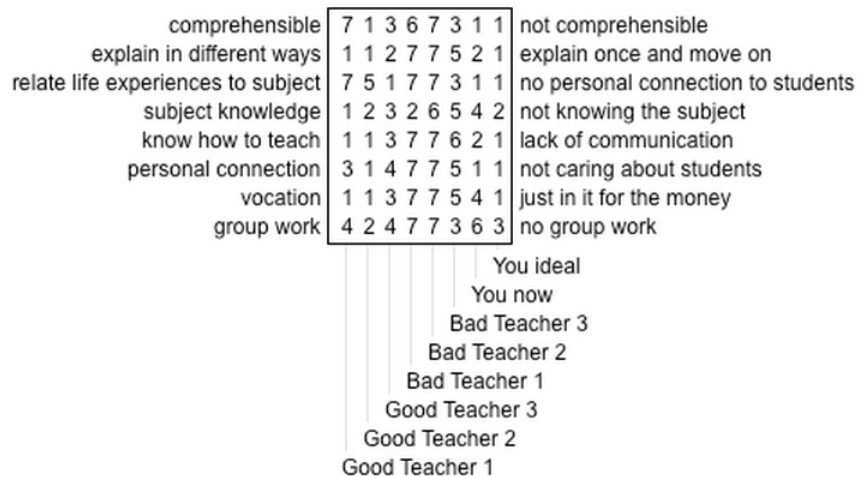


Figure 11. Brenda's completed repertory grid.

The three most common ways to analyze repertory grid data are through "eyeball" analysis, cluster analysis and principal components analysis. These last two involve statistical techniques. Each of the three modes of analysis will be briefly considered.

*Eyeball analysis.* The first step in any RGT analysis is for researchers to familiarize themselves with the grid that has been elicited. If possible, this should be done with the collaboration of the research participant in order to ensure the grid's completeness and accuracy. A simple "eyeball analysis" can address a number of questions: How many constructs were obtained? Are there notable differences and similarities between the constructs? Are there particular constructs that stand out and call for further investigation? Is it possible to interpret the participant's understanding of the topic through the constructs? Are there obvious patterns in the ratings?

A preliminary eyeball analysis of Brenda's grid reveals several things. First, and most obviously, the characteristics she values most highly in an English teacher are the clear and correct use of language; an ability and willingness to explain concepts in a variety of ways; an interest in connecting the language to real-life experiences;

knowledge of both language and pedagogy; a personal connection with students; a passion for the job; and the use of group work to facilitate learning. Looking next at the ratings, one can see that while she prizes the aforementioned teacher traits and teaching approaches, she does not possess or apply all of them in her own teaching. For instance, she rarely uses group work in her own classes and is unsure about her subject knowledge. Perhaps most interestingly, she seems ambivalent about her vocation for the work of teaching, giving herself a rating of “4” on that construct. Not surprisingly, Brenda rates her “ideal self” very highly on most of the constructs she supplied. It is interesting to note, however, that she gave herself a “2” on the construct *subject knowledge-not knowing the subject*; this suggests that she doesn’t believe she will ever attain the level of professional expertise she desires. Issues such as these can (and should) be further explored and developed in subsequent interviews.

Finally, we see that Brenda has supplied eight constructs. This is an average number of constructs for a typical rep grid and is in line with most of the pre-service students I interviewed; however, the fact that Brenda supplied fewer constructs as compared to other practicing teachers I interviewed might be worth investigating. First, the number of constructs obtained is often related to the personal meaningfulness of the rep grid interview for the participant. Participants are generally able to produce more constructs about issues which interest them, which they frequently confront in their personal or profession lives, in which they have special expertise, or to which they have given previous thought (Jankowicz, 2004). Second, the number of constructs a participant is able to produce is often associated with measures of cognitive complexity, “the capacity to construe social behavior in a multidimensional way” (Bieri et al., 1966).

*Cluster analysis.* Another method of uncovering relationships among constructs and elements is the use of a hierarchal cluster analysis of correlations. (This type of analysis is also often referred to as “tree” or FOCUS analysis.) Correlations are represented by a dendrogram. The more that constructs or elements are alike, the closer they approximate a score of 100, which would signify a perfect correlation. Thus, in Figure 12, the constructs *vocation-just in it for the money*, *explain in different ways-explain once and move on*, and *know how to teach-lack of communication* are all closely linked (a 93.8% match).

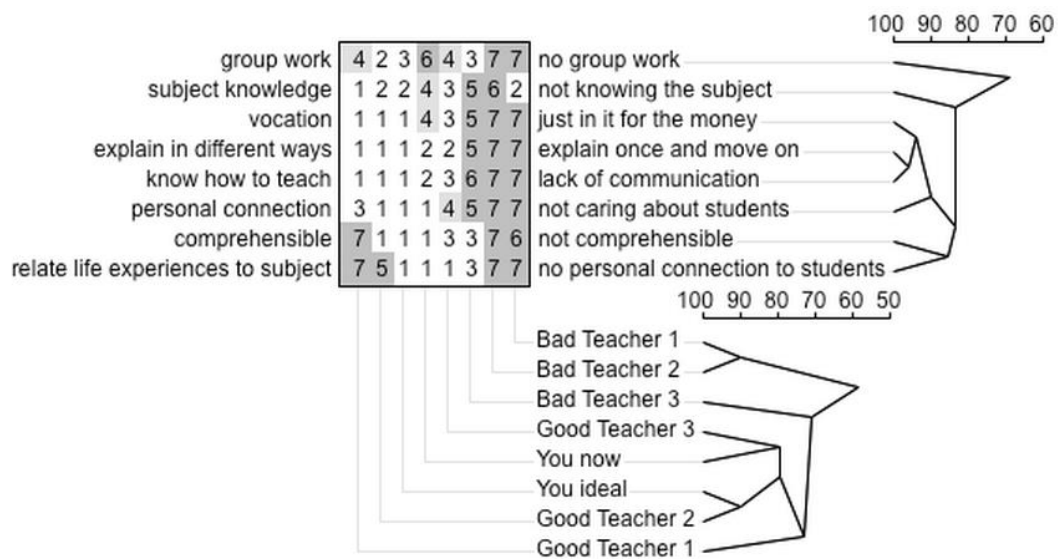


Figure 12. Cluster analysis, Brenda's elements & constructs.

This suggests that for Brenda, a teacher who is passionate about his or her job will also tend to be a person who knows how to teach and who explains things in different ways. Conversely, a person who sees teaching as simply a job will also move through material without much explanation and won't communicate well with students. Correlations



between elements can also be represented in a dendrogram. Looking at Figure 12 once again, one can see that the Bad Teacher 1 and Bad Teacher 2 are closely associated with one another (a 90% match), while these two teachers and Bad Teacher 3 have very little in common (less than 60% match). Of particular interest is the fact that Brenda's ideal self is a 90% match with Good Teacher 2.

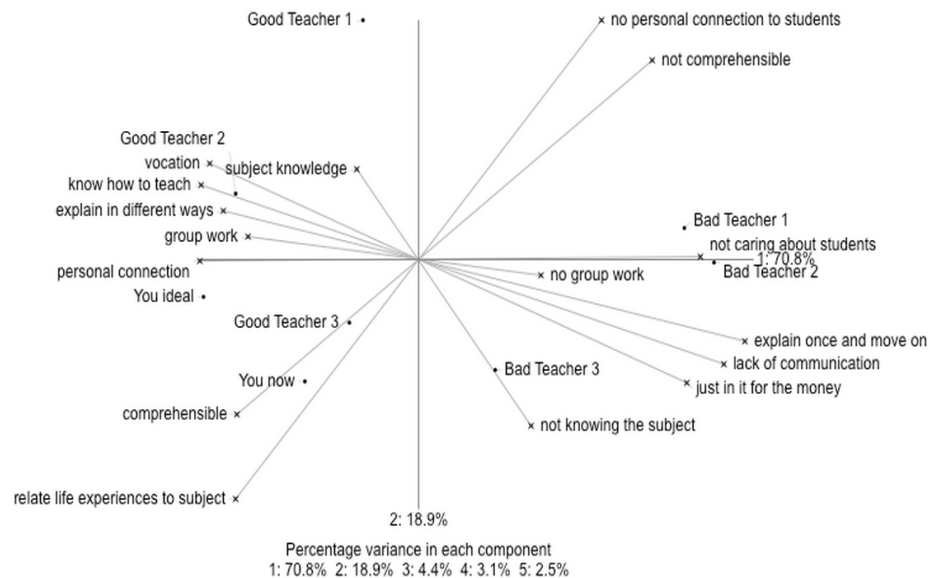
*Principal components analysis.* Principal components analysis (PCA) is another common type of statistical analysis carried out on rep grid data.<sup>6</sup> Principal components analyses calculate the similarities and differences between the elements and constructs in a given grid. Elements and constructs can be plotted in a geometrically graphic form as variables in a system of coordinates that represent a person's "psychological space" (Kelly, 1955).

Figure 13 shows a principal components analysis graphing Brenda's elements and constructs. The vertical and the horizontal lines represent maximally distinct patterns within the ratings and are called the principal components. Each component is a statistical

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<sup>6</sup> Many researchers prefer cluster analysis because it tends to be easier to interpret for both researchers and participants (Easterby-Smith, 1980; Jankowicz, 2004). However cluster analysis does have a number of potential drawbacks. Easterby-Smith, Holman, and Thorpe (1996a) identify several of these: (1) when using cluster analysis, it is sometimes difficult to attach labels to the clusters; (2) different statistical routines can lead to different clusters; (3) some constructs appear in clusters because they correlate mathematically but may not fit naturally, i.e., they may not actually represent the true views of the participant. Perhaps the greatest problem with cluster analysis is that (4) it does not show the relationships between constructs and elements, therefore missing an important part of the usefulness of the grid technique. Principal component analysis is generally seen to be statistically more robust than cluster analysis, and in practical terms, PCA has two distinct advantages: it enables a visual map of elements and constructs to be made, and it also demonstrates the linkages between constructs and elements. For a comparison of the relative strengths and weaknesses of cluster and principal components analyses, see Stewart and Stewart (1981). For a discussion of the mathematical complexities involved in the statistical analyses of repertory grids, see Caputi, Bell, and Hennessy (2012) and Fransella, Bell, and Bannister (2004). In sum, the choice between the two types of analysis should depend on the context in which the grid is being used. Easterby-Smith (1980) writes that "FOCUS may be preferable in 'operational' applications, where the grid is being completed and interpreted by the subject; [PCA] may be preferable in 'research' applications where some other person is attempting to interpret the grid data" (p. 17).

invention the purpose of which is to represent the most significant patterns in the grid (Jankowicz, 2004). It must be kept in mind that the biplot does not furnish an entirely accurate representation of a participant's construct system in that it is, by definition, a two-dimensional rendering based entirely on the percentage of variation accounted for by the first two components in the grid. More accurate three dimensional plots, which take into account the third component (i.e., the z-axis), are possible to construct but are quite difficult to read and interpret. Biplots, while less exact, provide a practical, easily interpretable map of interesting features of the repertory grid that can then be verified by



*Figure 13.* A biplot derived from a principal components analysis of Brenda's grid data.

checking the relevant scores in the output and by consulting with the research participant (Wright, 2004).

In the PCA graph depicted in Figure 13, the first component accounts for 70.8% of the variance. The second component accounts for 18.9% of the variance. Together, they identify 89.7% of the variance in the data. Generally speaking, if the first two

components account for 80% or more of the total variance in a grid, it is not considered necessary to analyze further components (e.g., the z-axis) (Jankowicz, 2004). Many studies limit themselves to an analysis of the first two components if these account for approximately 70% or more of the variance in a grid (Easterby-Smith et al., 1996b; Smith, 1980; Wright, 2004).

Constructs are placed in relation to the two main components, their poles linked by a line. The closer constructs lie to one of the components, the more similarities there are between them. In the plot above, as in most such plots, the horizontal Component 1 splits the constructs and elements into what is “good” and “bad” and so indicates that the biplot is a reasonably reliable cognitive map of the participant’s construing. In such cases, the “ideal self” can be found somewhere on the “good” pole of the component (Fransella et al., 2004).

The closer that constructs lie to each other, the more similar are their ratings. Here, one can see the same relationship between constructs that was seen in the cluster analysis, above: the constructs *vocation-just in it for the money*, *explain in different ways-explain once and move on*, and *know how to teach-lack of communication* are all tightly clustered together.

Of particular interest is the fact that the construct *personal connection-doesn’t care about the students* lies almost on top of the x axis. This suggests that Brenda views the other components which also lie close to the x component within the context of how much a teacher cares about and relates to his or her students. That is, the fact that a teacher is “just in it for the money,” “explains things once and then moves on,” and “doesn’t communicate with students” can largely be explained by the fact that the teacher

simply doesn't care about his or her pupils. This finding was corroborated by Brenda in a follow-up interview. Taken as a whole, the x axis seems to primarily concerned with matters of teaching style. This can be compared to the y axis, which accounts for relatively little variance in the grid. In fact, no constructs lie particularly close to the second component. It is perhaps most closely associated with the idea of subject knowledge. It seems clear from this cognitive map that, for Brenda, style (chiefly defined in terms of classroom technique and rapport with students) and subject knowledge are the two most important dimensions of her pedagogic construing.

Elements (in this case, the teachers that Brenda has had in the past) are represented by dots and are placed in relation to the constructs. Elements in opposing quadrants of a participant's biplot are usually considered to be the most dissimilar; those that are most remote from the origin are the most extremely perceived (Winter, 2013). As was seen in the dendrogram, above, Bad Teacher 1 and Bad Teacher 2 are closely linked in Brenda's mind. Here, the biplot allows one to not only see their relationship to each other, but also to glean something about Brenda's opinion of them: their position on the x axis clearly indicates how poorly they are viewed by Brenda in terms of the teaching criteria she specified. On the other hand, the teacher Good Teacher 2 is very closely associated with all the qualities Brenda looks for in a good teacher. Interestingly, Brenda "as she is now" and Good Teacher 2 are essentially equidistant from Brenda's ideal professional self. While Brenda judges Good Teacher 2 to be the best teacher she has had, her graphical distance from this teacher indicates that she doesn't wish to emulate Good Teacher 2 in every respect. Looking again at the primary data in Figure 13, one can see that despite being an excellent teacher, in Brenda's view Good Teacher 2 didn't relate

to students very well. Since her relationships with her students are of primary importance to Brenda, the fact that her ideal self and Good Teacher 2 don't overlap is clearly explicable.

*Case study 2: Greg.* This research participant was chosen opportunistically through personal networks. "Greg" is an English language teacher with more than 10 years of experience teaching in public and private institutions in Guanajuato, Mexico.

Again following Sendan and Roberts (1998) rep grid protocol, I captured elements by asking Greg to supply the names of three "bad" teachers he knows and "three excellent ones." Greg indicated that he would also like to discuss his own professional development. I therefore added "Greg as he is now" and "Ideal Greg" to the elements.

Constructs were then generated using triadic elicitation with the difference method. After each elicitation, the elements were rated numerically using a 7-point scale. In all, the interview generated nine constructs (see Figure 14). These constructs reveal that, for Greg, expertise in EFL teaching is an amalgam of professional ambition, educational development, social roles, social integration, sharing, altruism, cultural sensitivity, attentiveness, technical knowledge, and pedagogical creativity.

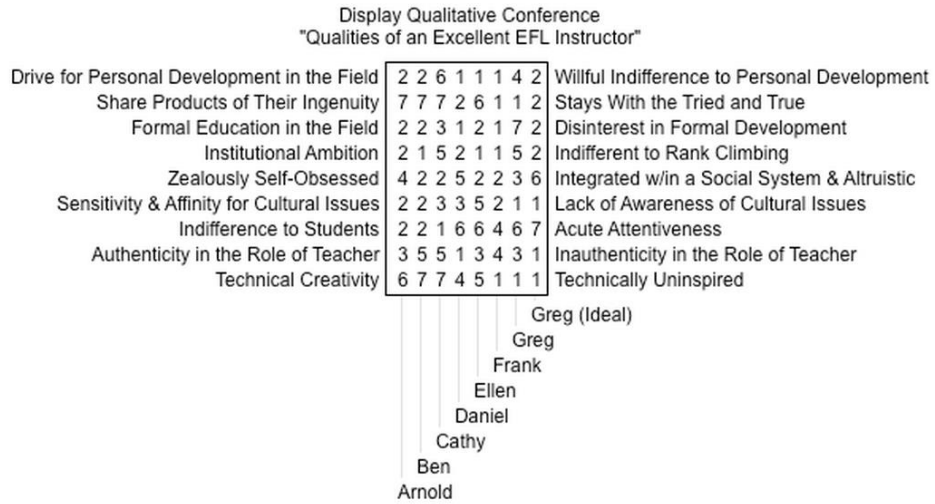


Figure 14. Greg's completed repertory grid.

A principal components analysis was conducted on the data obtained from Greg's interview (Figure 15).

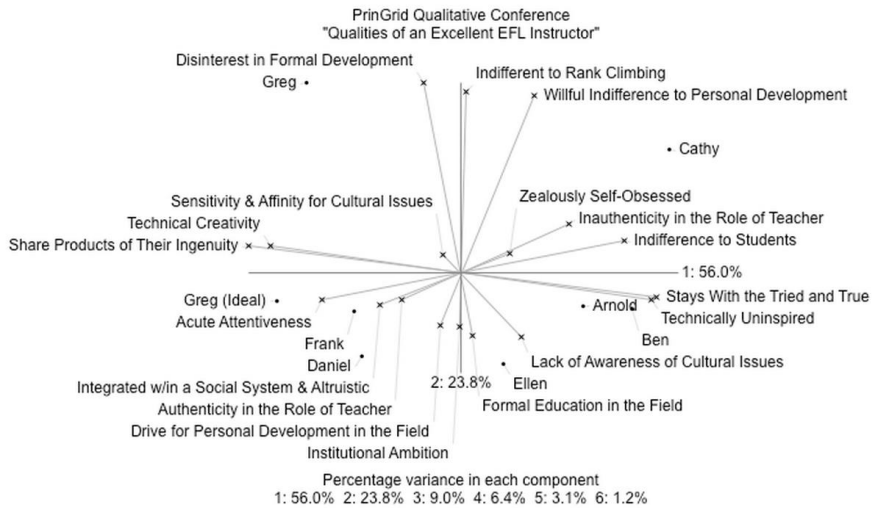


Figure 15. A biplot derived from a principal components analysis of Greg's data.

As explained above, principal components analyses calculate the similarities and differences between the elements and constructs in a given grid. Elements and constructs can be plotted in a geometrically graphic form as variables in a system of co-ordinates which represents a person's "psychological space" (Kelly, 1955). The x and y axes represent the first two components derived from the grid data. Their orthogonal orientation represents maximally distinct patterns in the data. Constructs are plotted as straight lines. By calculating their angles with respect to each component, the extent to which a construct is represented by a component can be determined (Jankowicz, 2004).

The first step in the PCA is to list those constructs which load most highly on, and therefore define, each of the major components. Those constructs with the highest loadings on the first principal component can be considered to be superordinate (Winter, 2013). Any groupings of constructs which lie near one of the principal component axes can be considered to be (in some sense) independent of groupings which lie near the other principal component axis (Jankowicz, 2004).

The most significant constructs are those that lie at one extreme or the other on the components (Francella et al., 2004). For Greg, the close proximity of the constructs *technical creativity-technically uninspired, share products of their ingenuity-stays with the tried and true, acute attentiveness-indifference to students, integrated with a social system and altruistic-zealously self-obsessed, and authenticity in the role of teacher-inauthenticity in the role of teacher* with the first component suggests that the x axis represents pedagogical knowledge and social roles. This was confirmed in consultation with Greg. By finding the element "Greg" in the diagram and comparing it to "Greg

Ideal,” it is clear that the two are very close on the x axis. This indicates that Greg feels comfortable with himself as a teacher in terms of these criteria.

The constructs that lie closest to the second component are *disinterest in formal development-formal education in the field*, *indifferent to rank climbing-institutional ambition*, and *willful indifference to personal development-drive for personal development in the field*. After discussing the matter with him, Greg decided that the y axis represents professional development. Plotting the distance between “Greg” and “Greg Ideal” on the y axis reveals that Greg has a considerable distance to travel in order to achieve his professional and educational goals. While this was hardly new information to Greg, he reported that the clarity of the visual representation placed in stark relief issues that he might have otherwise tried to attenuate or avoid in a traditional interview.

The construct *sensitivity and affinity to culture issues – lack of awareness of cultural issues* lies almost exactly between the x and y axes, and is therefore ambiguous in terms of its relationship to the meaning of the major constructs (i.e., pedagogical knowledge, social roles, and professional development). This dimension is also considerably shorter than most of the other constructs represented in the biplot. In general, those constructs and elements that are close to the intersection of the two principal components are considered too vague to be interpreted clearly (Fransella et al., 2004).

The degree of variance represented by each component is often associated with measures of “cognitive complexity.” Cognitive complexity is defined by Bieri et al. (1966, as cited in Fransella et al., 2004) as



... the capacity to construe social behavior in a multidimensional way. A more cognitively complex person has available a more differentiated system of dimensions for perceiving others' behavior than does a less cognitively complex individual. (p. 64)

The higher the percentage of variance accounted for by the first principal component, the more tightly organized and unidimensional an individual's construing may be (Winter, 2013). This can be seen visually in the biplot. If a participant's constructs are tightly clustered together along a single component, this may suggest black-and-white thinking in regards to the topic of the rep grid interview. On the other hand, if a participant's constructs are more spread out, this suggests that he or she has a more complex way of discriminating (Easterby-Smith et al., 1996b).

According to Zinkhan and Biswas (1988), cognitive complexity is a domain-specific phenomenon: an individual may have a complex cognitive structure for organizing information in one domain (e.g. cameras), but have a much simpler cognitive structure for organizing information in another (e.g., automobiles). Degree of complexity depends largely on one's experience and expertise within a specific domain (Linville, 1982). Measures of cognitive complexity, then, can provide an interesting picture of an individual's construing within a particular realm of activity and are therefore useful to this current study.

The variance in the two biplots discussed in this section can be compared. As was noted above, the first component in Brenda's plot accounts for 70.8% of the total variance of her repertory grid. In contrast, the first component in Greg's biplot accounts for only 56.0%, of the total variance. Looking at the two biplots, it is clear that Brenda's

constructs cluster tightly around the first component, whereas Greg's constructs fan out over the entire space of the plot. This strongly suggests that Greg thinks about the characteristics of good and bad teachers in more complex ways than does Brenda, i.e., that his judgments are more nuanced, his discriminations more finely calibrated. This might well be explained by the fact that Greg has over 10 years teaching experience whereas Brenda has only two, and has thus had more opportunities to consider different aspects of successful pedagogy.

*Case study three: Group analysis.* Most cognition research within the field of personal construct psychology has focused on the individual level of analysis; relatively little work has been done to broaden our understanding of cognitions at the collective level. The use of repertory grids in order to analyze and understand ideas shared by groups is controversial. This is because personal construct psychology emphasizes the idiosyncrasy of individual construal (Blundell, Wittkowski, Wieck, & Julian Hare, 2011). That is, two people in precisely the same situation may perceive and react to said situation in utterly unlike ways. Some researchers within the field hold that any attempts to combine data from different individuals can result in "substantial distortions" (Esterby-Smith et al., 1996a, p. 7).

Other researchers, however, argue that individuals who are part of a shared culture often tend to view the world in similar ways. Ethnic and sexual minorities, the social elite, professional or occupational groups, and age cohorts each represent a sub-culture built on a shared perspective that orders their respective "fields of experience to provide identification and solidarity for its members" (Kay, 1970, as cited in Diamond, 1982, p. 13). Kelly's (1955) "commonality" and "sociality" corollaries specifically

addresses the tendency of groups to create tacit theories of the world. Sechrest (2009) argues that these two corollaries likely have more definite implications for research than any other statements in Kelly's theory (p. 218).

It makes sense, then, to apply PCP data elicitation and analysis techniques to the study of groups. As Wright (2004) points out

When individual constructions are brought together, certain underlying collective frames of reference emerge that reflect a sense of common understanding and shared meaning. It is this underlying commonality that can help explain how people act and react in a socially constructed world.  
(p. 354)

For this case study, I conducted seven interviews with in-coming students to the University of Guanajuato's SLTE program. Three of these students were already experienced instructors who have taught EFL for more than 10 years. The other four participants were relative novices, each with less than two years of teaching experience. I wished to know the students' thoughts about what characteristics define an "excellent" language teacher. I carried out interviews with each participant using the same protocol followed in the case studies, above. Each rep grid was then individually subjected to cluster and principal components analyses.

A number of methods of administering group grids has been suggested. One option is to elicit constructs and elements from the population to which the subjects belong, and then to pool a selection of these in a standard grid (e.g. Winter and Gournay, 1987). Another is to employ a grid in which some of the elements and constructs are elicited and some supplied. The investigator who supplies 'constructs' to the subject

should remember, however, that what are supplied are construct labels rather than constructs, and they may carry a very different meaning for the subject than they do for the investigator (Winter, 2013). A third way to create group grids is through the use of content analysis. Content analysis refers to the process by which patterns are found within the words of the research participant(s) and by which those patterns are presented for others to inspect “while at the same time staying as close to the construction of the world as the participants originally experienced it” (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 18). Within the context of the RGT, Jankowicz (2004) has described content analysis as the “only feasible way of aggregating the information in a large set of repertory grids” (p. 292).

Different qualitative research traditions promote different data-analysis approaches. Grounded theory, case studies, ethnographic investigations, and phenomenological research all take different tacks in terms of how they collect, organize, and interpret data. However, all qualitative research shares some underlying assumptions about how content should be analyzed:

Whatever tradition or genre one adopts, perhaps the most fundamental underlying operation in the analysis of qualitative data is that of discovering significant classes or sets of things, persons, and events and the properties that characterize them. In qualitative research, we are interested in the language of the participants or texts. We work with the data (words) to identify units of information that contribute to themes or patterns – the study’s findings. Therefore, analysis has to do with data reduction and data display. (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p. 98.)

Compared to other genres of research, content analysis within the context of the repertory grid technique is relatively simple. Investigators who rely on traditional unstructured and semi-structured interviews, for instance, must grapple with the vast array of words, sentences, and paragraphs that such elicitation procedures produce. Reducing this sea of data into manageable, coherent, and theoretically justifiable categories requires a laborious process of reading, classification, and coding. With the RGT, however, the process of eliciting constructs at the individual level is essentially synonymous with the process of categorization. An individual's constructs are, after all, a representation of how they mentally arrange the world.

At the group level, categorization is made more challenging by the fact that while many constructs may possess equivalent or overlapping meanings, participants may use different types of language to specify them. In order to analyze a group, therefore, it is necessary to homogenize individual responses. This is usually achieved by pooling all the participants' constructs and categorizing them according to the meanings they express. There are essentially two ways of going about this. The first, referred to as "bootstrapping," consists of analyzing the collected constructs systematically and identifying the most salient connections or themes. The second method requires that the researcher preselect a set of constructs, generally one encountered in the literature or one that is theoretically based. In this present case study, a bootstrapping approach was used: constructs of all the interviews were pooled and categorized according to the meanings they expressed (Jankowicz, 2004). In all, 10 major categories (or themes) were identified (Table 7).

Table 7

*Group Analysis: Categorization of Major Themes*

THEMES & PERSONAL CONSTRUCTS	%	EXP	
<b>MATERIALS:</b> brought inspiring materials / boring materials (d5); no authentic materials / authentic materials (c5)	2.8%	novice	
<b>METHOD:</b> explain in different ways / explain once and move on (b2); group work / no group work; many practice opportunities / few practice opportunities (b8); ability to speak about different things / limited scope of topics (g10)	5.6%	novice	4.2%
		exper	1.4%
<b>MOTIVATION:</b> motivate students (give examples of uses of English) / demotivate because of poor attitude (e8); boring / keeps students motivated (f12)	2.8%	exper	
<b>PEDAGOGIC EMPHASIS:</b> very grammar based, artificial language / grammar in real contexts, daily language (c4); by the book, copy, memorize, rote / examples (a2); emphasized production: games, roll plays, play / emphasized passive skills: reading, writing, music (e5); taught (badly) from book / added to book with own plans (e1); book centered / variety of activities (g6); little details of the language / book language (g8)	8.4%	novice	2.8%
		exper	5.6%
<b>PERSONALITY:</b> liked to hear himself talk / just sat there (a5); inhibited / uninhibited (c6); self-confident / scared of students (d2); makes me laugh / boring personality (d7); active & dynamic / boring (a1); opinionated / open to others' opinions (f2); insecure / confident (f5); tolerant / patient (f7); unfriendly / friendly (f8); rude / polite (f10); short tempered / always positive (f11); lack of personality / interesting (f13); comfortable / creative (f14); apathetic / sympathetic (f16); creative teaching style / not creative (e3); boring / creative (g1); friendly / serious (g9); self-confident / insecure (g11)	25.3%	novice	7.0%
		exper	18.3%
<b>QUALITY &amp; USE OF ENGLISH:</b> comprehensible / not comprehensible (b1); only spoke in English / used Spanish (c1); didn't know the language / dominated the language (c2); proficient in English / doesn't know the language (d3); lack of English level / good level of English (g3)	7.0%	novice	5.6%
		exper	1.4%
<b>ATTITUDE TOWARDS STUDENTS:</b> doesn't care if student learns / cares if the student learns (a3); pays attention to students / just doing his job (a4); relate life experiences to subject / no personal connection to students (b3); personal connection / not caring about students (b6); involvement with students / not knowing students (c8); tried to relate to students / didn't care about students (d4); didn't take class seriously / care about students (e2); treated us as children / be at same level as students, with respect (e6); open communication with students / no interest in students in outside contexts (e7); patience with students / impatient (e13); open to feedback / not open to feedback (e14); genuinely interested in the future of the students / indifferent to the future of the students (e9); current with student interests / antiquated (e11)	18.3%	novice	8.4%
		exper	9.8%
<b>ATTITUDE TOWARDS WORK:</b> vocation / just in it for the money (b7); no preparation / prepared (c7); well-prepared / didn't prepare (d1); passion for teaching / miserable teaching (d6); didn't care about teaching / professional (f1); unpunctual / punctual (f6); doesn't complete task / achieve task goals (f9); no class preparation / prepared for class (g4); no training as an EFL teacher / extensive training (g5); motivated / lack of desire (g7)	14.0%	novice	5.6%
		exper	8.4%
<b>TEACHING ABILITY / PREPAREDNESS / TRAINING:</b> subject knowledge / not knowing the subject; know how to teach / lack of communication; know how to teach / no knowledge; not professional / professional; prepared and continuous development / fossilized; formal training, understanding of methodology / no training; lack of knowledge / knowledgeable; no teaching ability / ability to teach	11.2%	novice	4.2%
		exper	7.0%
<b>MISC:</b> male = more reliable, confident / female = compare myself to her, not confident with her (d8); monotonous / strategic (f4); criticized / recognized (f15)	4.2%	novice	1.4%
		exper	2.8%
<b>TOTAL (does not equal 100% because of rounding)</b>	<b>99.6%</b>		

The traits that the participants identified as most important to teaching excellence could all be placed into the following categories: use of materials, pedagogic methods, ability to motivate students, pedagogic emphasis, personality, quality and use of English, attitude towards students, attitude towards work, ability and training, and misc. For instance, the category “Quality and Use of English” contains the following constructs: *comprehensible - not comprehensible; only spoke in English - used Spanish; didn't know the language - dominated the language; proficient in English - doesn't know the language; and lack of English level - good level of English.*

By simply counting up the constructs in each category, it was possible to calculate which characteristics this group of research participants believed are most desirable in an ESL instructor. Interestingly, the group identified personality as the most important characteristic of a good teacher (see Figure 16). This corroborates findings in the fields of general education and ESL (Banner & Cannon, 1997; Barr, 1960; Brosh, 1996; Chong, Wong, & Quek, 2005; Feldman, 1986; Forston & Brown, 1998; Helterbran, 2008; Holt-Reynolds, 1992; Kottler & Zehm, 2000; Murray, 1985; Mowrey-Reynolds, 2008; Murray, Rushton, & Paunonen, 1990; Naftulin et al., 1973; Penner, 1992; Webb, 1971; Weinstein, 1989).

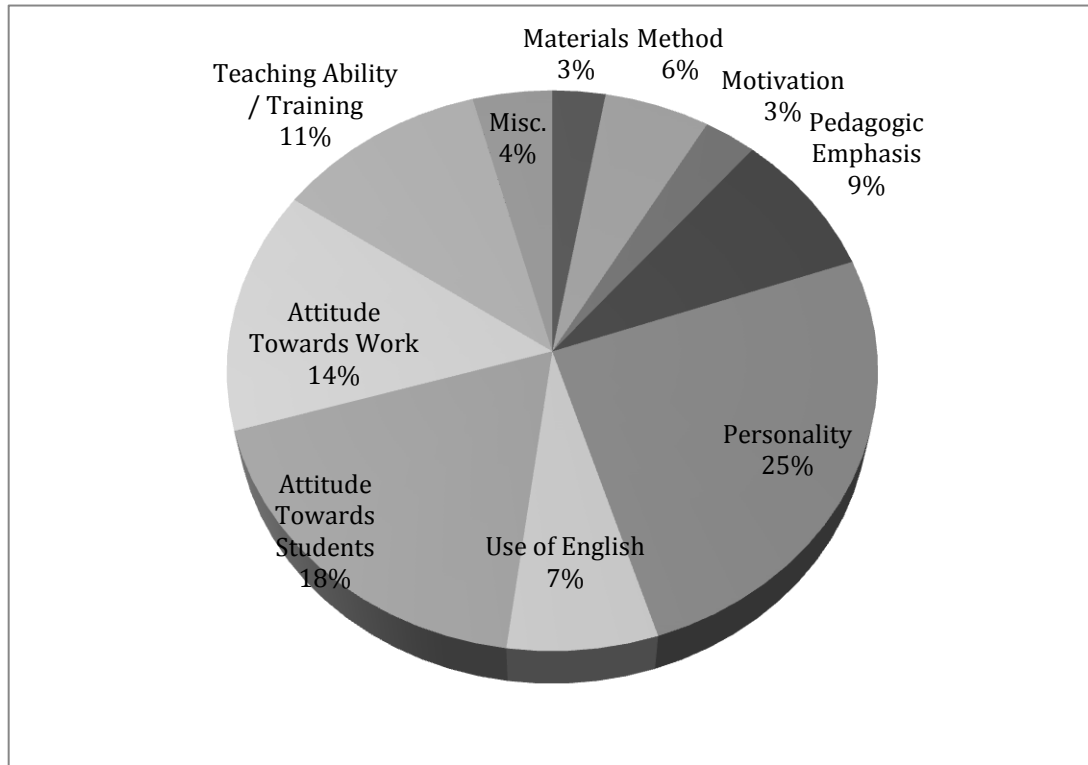


Figure 16. Group analysis: Most important characteristics of a good language teacher.

The next two most important categories have to do with an instructor's attitudes towards students and the work of teaching. Taken together, personality and personal attitudes account for more than half (57%) of all the constructs elicited. This strongly implies that for the research participants, a teacher's social abilities, connection to students, and sense of vocation are far and away the most important attributes of a successful instructor – far more important than methodology, pedagogic emphasis, training, or even natural ability.

Because the group of participants included both experienced teachers and novices, I also looked at how these two sub-groups viewed qualities of a good language instructor (Figure 17).



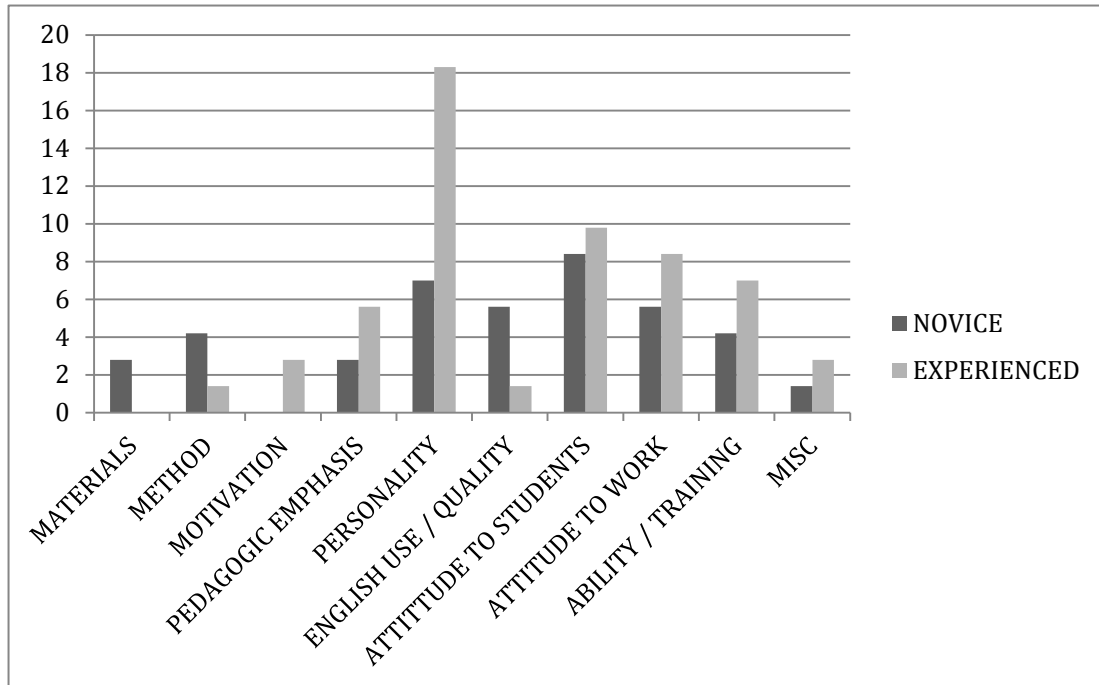


Figure 17. Qualities of a good L2 teacher, according to experienced teachers and novices.

A number of interesting inferences can be drawn from the data. First, and probably unsurprisingly, experienced teachers produced far more constructs than less experienced teachers. In total, the three experienced teachers in the study supplied 41 constructs, whereas the four novices supplied only 30 constructs between them. This suggests that the experienced group has reflected more about language instruction than the less experienced group. Second, the experienced group valued pedagogic training more than the inexperienced group. This makes sense, given that the students in the experienced group were all returning to school after having already spent considerable time in ESL classrooms, and thus were presumably more invested in the idea of formal education or saw more value in it. Third, only the novices mentioned the importance of pedagogic materials, whereas only the experienced teachers mentioned the importance of

motivating students. These are interesting omissions; follow up interviews would have to be conducted to assess the significance of these (and other) differences.

**Summary and discussion.** Quantitative surveys have long been the preferred method of data elicitation in studies of L2 learner cognitions, e.g., the *Foreign Language Attitude Scale* (FLAS), the *Attitude/Motivation Test Battery* (AMTB), the *Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale* (FLCAS), and the *Beliefs and Attitudes Language Learning Inventory* (BALLI). This type of quantitative research has been critiqued for its methodological rigidity (Barcelos, 2003; Emmelman & DeCesare, 2007; Wesely, 2012). As Corporaal (1991) notes, a weakness of many educational studies has been that students' cognitions were not researched using their own "conceptual apparatus" but were plumbed by means of researcher-developed questionnaires (p. 316). Nonetheless, the predominance of surveys has continued into the present.

Following in the footsteps of these earlier L2 learner studies, the majority of research into ESL teacher traits has also employed questionnaires as a primary data collection instrument (Arikan et al., 2008; Barnes & Lock, 2013; Bell, 2005; Brosh, 1996; Brown, 2009; Çelik et al., 2013; Chacón, 2005; Chen, 2008; Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Cotterall, 1999; Ghasemi & Hashemi, 2011; Johnson, 2004; Khodadady et al., 2012; Mullock, 2003; Park & Lee, 2006; Shishavan & Sadeghi, 2009; Thompson, 2008; Wichadee, 2010). Characteristically, the principle means of response available to participants have been Likert-type rating scales. The quantitative nature of such scales enables the standardization of data. However, because items must necessarily be pre-selected for inclusion in any questionnaire, the options available to a participant may have the effect of overstating or suppressing responses (Emmelman & DeCesare, 2007).

Relatively few studies of teacher characteristics have allowed participants to express their own thoughts in their own words (e.g., Barnes & Lock, 2010; Chen, 2012; Prodromou, 1991; Tsai, 1999; Çubukcu, 2010; Zhang & Watkins, 2007). Çelik et al. (2013) argue that questionnaire studies “cannot provide a description or explanation of complex and interacting social, cultural, linguistic, and cognitive factors relating to behaviors and attitudes of teachers” and call for more in-depth qualitative studies (p. 288).

As opposed to the fixed nature of purely quantitative investigations, repertory grids allow a great deal of flexibility. The rep grid technique can either be largely participant-directed or can be standardized by preselecting the elements and/or constructs. That is to say, depending on its purpose, a grid elicitation may resemble a semi-structured interview or a structured, Likert-like survey. (In the current research, rep grids were used in both ways.)

Once constructs have been elicited, data can be analyzed using a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods (see Cassell & Symon, 2004). One advantage that rep grids have over traditional qualitative elicitation techniques (i.e., open and semi-structured interviews) is that while the latter generally necessitate a *post-hoc* thematic analysis of interview data, repertory grids are designed such that the interview and the identification of themes are concurrent – even synonymous -- processes. This streamlines the ultimate categorization of data and makes analysis much simpler. At the same time, a great advantage of repertory grids is that data from a single individual can be analyzed using the types of group statistics, such as cluster and principal component analyses, which were previously reserved for populations of people (Fransella et al., 2004). These

statistical methods can often reveal interesting patterns of meaning. Both thematic and statistical analyses were used in the present research.

As a means of eliciting and analyzing interview data, then, the RGT has several particular strengths. First, repertory grids are extremely flexible both in terms of the purposes to which they can be put and in terms of their administration. Second, elicited data is amenable to both qualitative and quantitative interpretation. One final advantage of repertory grids should be noted. In traditional interviews, there is always the danger that a researcher may (presumably unconsciously) influence participant responses. The grid technique, while not immune to this possibility, strongly mitigates researcher bias or interference. In large part, the RGT is defined by its commitment to eliciting “as neutrally as possible the way in which respondents construe their worlds” (Corporaal, 1991, p. 317). Grid respondents are asked to “tell it as it is,” in their own words, without any influence from the researcher’s predetermined questions (Wright, 2004, p. 349). As opposed to “researcher-centered approaches,” then, the repertory grid technique can be accurately described as a “person-centered approach” (Feixas & Cornejo, 2002). Mazhmdu (1992) goes so far as to argue that the RGT reduces observer bias to almost zero.

It is important to note some potential problems with repertory grid interviews. Perhaps the most significant difficulty in carrying out the RGT is that conducting grid interviews and analyzing resultant data requires a certain amount of specialized skill. For this reason, training, practice, and piloting are essential to the success of rep grid investigations (Borg, 2006b). A second concern is that rep grid interviews can be cognitively taxing for the research participant. If not handled well, interviews can become

repetitive and even monotonous. It is therefore important that the researcher be sensitive to the demands placed on participants and remain thoughtfully engaged with the interview process. A third worry is that statistical analyses of grid data may distract from a focus on what participants are really trying to convey (King & Horrocks, 2010). There is debate over whether the RGT's emphasis on measurement and statistical analysis is even compatible with its constructivist-interpretivist theoretical base (Borg, 2006b). A fourth weakness is that RGT only elicits the constructs to which a person can attach verbal labels (Fransella et al., 2004). Fifth, it must be acknowledged that the theoretical rationale for the repertory grid technique has been contested. Critics contend that thinking is or can be multi-dimensional rather than dichotomous (Sechrest, 2009). Calderhead (1996) for example, notes that rep grids "impose a simple bipolar structure on knowledge, which some have argued may misrepresent its nature" (p. 722). Finally, the method's variations with regard to elicitation method, sorting technique, rating direction, and the examples used to introduce and explain the RGT may affect the outcomes of the method. In other words, variations in the use of the method may elicit different sets of constructs. This raises issues of validity (van de Kerkhof, n.d.). As Neimeyer, Bowman, and Saferstein (2005) point out, if different repertory grid methodologies result in consistently different effects, this may "introduce critical confounds into the interpretation of empirical literature in this field" (p. 238).

### **The Current Study**

**Context.** The *Licenciatura en la Enseñanza de Inglés* at the University of Guanajuato is a four-year second language teacher education program terminating in a BA degree. The LEI aims to prepare educational professionals in the area of teaching

English as a second language. The program stresses the development of knowledge in the areas of linguistics, pedagogy, research, material design, technology, and assessment. A humanistic, critical stance towards study and instruction is emphasized. Over the course of the program, students are required to successfully complete the following courses:

First year: Writing in Spanish

Description and Analysis of the English Language

Principles and Techniques of Self-Directed Learning I & II

Fundamentals of Teaching English I & II

Educational Technology I & II: Computing and Educational Media

Writing in English for Academic Purposes

Elective I

Second Year: Teaching Techniques: Oral Expression and Listening

Teaching Techniques: Reading and Writing

Teaching Techniques: Grammar

Vocabulary and Pronunciation Foreign Language

Sociolinguistics

Theory and Techniques: Assessment

Psycholinguistics

Methodology: Teaching English as a Foreign Language

Discourse Analysis

Elective II

Third Year: Workshop: Assessment

Analysis and Development of Educational Material

Educational Technology III & IV

Analysis: the Practice of Teaching English

Elective III & IV

Fourth Year: Analysis and Reflection: the Practice of Teaching English

Class Observation

Methodology and Research Techniques

Thesis Development

Supervised Teaching Practice

Electives V & VI

**Participants.** A mixed-sex sample of 60 research participants was drawn opportunistically from the University of Guanajuato's LEI program and through personal networks: 10 students from each of the LEI program's four years of study (Cohorts 1-4); 10 graduates of the LEI program (Cohort 5); and 10 language teachers not associated with the LEI program whose formal pedagogical training is limited (Cohort 0). Thirty-six of the participants were men and 24 were women. The mean age for all the participants was 30.3. As a whole, the participants have worked as ESL teachers for an average of 5.6 years (Table 8).

Table 8

*Demographic Information*

<b>Cohort</b>		<b>Mean Age</b>	<b>Mean Years of Exp.</b>
0	No LEI training	34.1	7
1	First year LEI	26.6	3.9
2	Second year LEI	30.6	3.4
3	Third year LEI	25.5	3.8
4	Fourth year LEI	29.9	4.3
5	LEI graduates	34.8	11.2
		<b>30.3</b>	<b>5.6</b>

Participants volunteered to assist in “research on the development of language teacher beliefs and their relationship with classroom instruction” and were treated according to the APA ethical guidelines for conducting human research (see Appendix A).

**Instrument.** Three methods of data collection were used in the current research. (1) The repertory grid technique was the primary data collection instrument in the present study. (2) Questionnaires and a prompt for a short, written response were sent to all the participants in the study. These questions were developed on the basis of an analysis of participant responses to the repertory grids. (3) Ten observations and short follow-up interviews were also conducted.

**Repertory grids.** Sample size for the study’s initial rep grid interviews was determined on the basis of a “saturation point” approach (Strauss, 1987; Kvale, 1996), whereby the number of participants in a given study is principally established by a consideration of the law of diminishing returns. That is, in any given qualitative study,



after  $x$  number of interviews has been conducted, each subsequent interview yields incrementally less new information. An advantage of repertory grids is that a large sample is not required in order reach the point at which themes begin to become redundant (Downs, 1976; Frost & Braine, 1967). A small sample size of between six and 25 is generally considered adequate to approximate the “universe of meaning” within a given population (Dillon & McKnight, 1990; Dunn, 1986; Ginsberg, 1986; Hassenzhal & Trautmann, 2001; Tan & Hunter, 2002; van de Kerkhof, n.d.). Moynihan (1996) and Dunn (1986), using samples of 14 and 17 respectively, found that no new constructs were elicited after the tenth participant. In Dunn’s (1986) study of policy making, 17 research participants generated a total of 23 unique constructs. Dunn notes that after the 10th interview, all 23 constructs had been elicited; the last seven interviews added no new data.

**Procedure.** Sixty repertory grid interviews were conducted. These interviews took place in various cities in the state of Guanajuato, Mexico, including Celaya, Leon, Salamanca, and Guanajuato. Each interview lasted from one to two hours.

Participants were allowed to select both grid elements and constructs, allowing them maximum freedom to express themselves. First, elements were elicited according to the following prompts:

A great language teacher

A great teacher, in general

An average language teacher

An average teacher, in general

A terrible language teacher

### A terrible teacher, in general

These categories were chosen in order to draw out opinions about both the domain-specific characteristics and practices of ESL teachers and the characteristics and practices of teachers, in general. In addition, the elements “You, the teacher you are now” and “You, the teacher you wish to be” were supplied in order to gauge how participants understand their own teaching practice. These elements also allowed participants to discuss teacher characteristics or behaviors that are veiled from direct observation. For instance, a construct such as “reflects about teaching” would be difficult to generate if the grid elicitation were solely concerned with observable, external behaviors. Personalized elements, on the other hand, allowed participants to generate constructs concerned with the inner lives of teachers.

In most cases, participants were able to supply the specific names of excellent, average, and terrible teachers. In such cases, the elements were imbued with particular, personal meaning for the participants. In cases where the participants could not identify specific language teachers (for instance, those who grew up in a bilingual household or learned English on their own), the generic label was retained.

Constructs were obtained through triadic elicitation using the difference method. That is, participants were given the names of three elements at a time and asked to identify “any way in which any two of these are alike in some way, yet different from the third.” The way in which two were viewed as alike (e.g., “friendly,” “used a communicative approach,” “grouped students,” etc.) formed the emergent construct. The way in which the third element differed (e.g., “unfriendly,” “used a grammar approach,” “didn’t group students,” etc.) formed the contrast pole. Once a construct was elicited, a

second set of three elements was chosen and the procedure was repeated, yielding a second construct dimension. This process continued until the participant was unable to supply any further constructs. At the end of this interview phase, participants were asked if they would like to add any constructs that they thought were missing from their grids. (Participants only rarely availed themselves of this option.) After the construct elicitation phase was finished, participants were instructed to rate each of the elements along each of their constructs using a 7-point rating scale.

The contents of the individual grids were then subjected to content analysis: using a bootstrapping approach (Jankowicz, 2004), the individual constructs of all the participants were grouped and categorized according to the meanings they expressed. For instance, the collective construct *able to improvise and adapt - unable to improvise and adapt* was assigned to a group of 10 individual constructs that all shared this essential idea (Table 9).

Table 9

*Example of How a Collective Construct is Determined by Using Individually Elicited Constructs*

	Coded constructs elicited from participants	able to improvise and adapt	<->	unable to improvise and adapt
1	113	able to teach off the cuff	<->	can only follow a plan
2	439	adapt content to the context	<->	teaching right from the book
3	445	willing to change course according to class needs	<->	sticking to the program
4	450	adapt himself to the age of the group	<->	just present grade
5	533	Ability to adapt lesson plan	<->	no ability to adapt lesson
6	565	able to improvise	<->	can't adapt
7	589	good at improvising	<->	bad at improvising
8	725	adaptable	<->	stubborn
9	773	can adjust to classroom circumstances	<->	relies on recycling material
10	825	adaptable to teaching context	<->	not adaptable

*Note.* This table shows that ten constructs elicited from 60 research participants formed the collective construct *able to improvise and adapt* <-> *unable to improvise and adapt*.

86 categories were identified. From these, 22 major categories were determined by selecting those which were associated with the greatest number of constructs. In all, these 22 major construct categories account for a full 73% of the constructs elicited in the 60 rep grid interviews. “Twelve” was chosen as the cut-off point between major and minor construct categories (see Table 10). Categories made up of fewer than 12 constructs were deemed too unrepresentative for use in the analysis of collective construing. Examples of minor categories include those made up of constructs associated, for instance, with authority, cultural sensitivity, the establishment of routines, the use of assessments, natural aptitude for teaching, the use of technology in the classroom, authenticity, the ability of instructors to play different roles, the respect of professional peers, etc. These types of responses, exactly because of their idiosyncrasy, are vitally important to a full, rich understanding of teacher beliefs (Blundell et al., 2012). However,

an analysis of the full range of individual teacher beliefs is necessarily beyond the scope of the present study, which is aimed at a better understanding of collective cognition.

Table 10

*Collective Construct Themes / Weights by Cohort*

collective constructs	number of constructs by cohort						
	No Training	1st Year	2nd Year	3rd Year	4th Year	Graduates	total
C1 cares about ss	3	3	5	2	2	6	21
C2 cares about ss learning	7	4	1	4	10	6	32
C3 content knowledge	5	1	6	3	6	2	23
C4 continuous prof dev	4	3	6	3	6	5	27
C5 creative	2	2	6	1	1	3	15
C6 good delivery	8	3	2	3	3	2	21
C7 dynamic and entertaining	8	4	1	5	3	5	26
C8 emphasis on L2 communication	2	1	5	1	2	4	15
C9 emphasis on student involvement	3	5	1	2	2	2	15
C10 enthusiasm for teaching	6	9	3	2	1	7	28
C11 focus on autonomous learning	3	1	2	0	4	10	20
C12 has training / education	2	2	4	1	2	3	14
C13 L2 language ability	3	5	5	1	5	3	22
C14 makes learning relevant to ss lives	2	3	3	4	5	2	19
C15 motivates students	5	4	4	1	1	6	21
C16 pedagogic knowledge	7	7	2	1	5	2	24
C17 planning and organization	9	8	8	12	14	10	61
C18 positive personality traits	17	10	15	12	12	3	69
C19 professionalism	4	0	8	6	11	6	35
C20 activities & materials	7	7	6	8	4	8	40
C21 student-teacher rapport	10	7	8	8	5	5	43
C22 welcomes student feedback	2	0	3	3	1	3	12
Total	119	89	104	83	105	103	603

In creating major categories, considerable effort was put into retaining the participants' original meanings. This means that in some cases major categories that could have been expanded were not. For instance, the category "pedagogic knowledge" -- if pedagogic knowledge is understood to mean instructional knowledge, skills, and techniques that are not subject-specific -- could have been expanded to include "good delivery," "emphasis on L2 communication," "emphasis on student involvement," "motivates students," "activities and materials." However, all of these were retained as

separate categories because the research participants saw them as somehow different and expressed them as distinct constructs.

Once the most important collective constructs were determined, the individual element ratings from the subset of original constituent constructs were averaged for each cohort of research participants. In this way, seven collective grids were constructed: one grid representing the collective construing of those teachers unassociated with the LEI (Cohort 0); four grids representing the collective construing of students in each of the four years of the LEI (Cohorts 1, 2, 3 and 4); one grid representing the collective construing of the graduates of the program (Cohort 5); and one additional “super grid” representing the collective construing of the students in all four years of the LEI program (an example of a collective grid can be seen in Table 11; for the individual collective grids, see Appendix B).

Table 11

*An Example of a Collective Grid: Teachers Not Associated With LEI (Cohort 0)*

emergent pole	a great language teacher	a great teacher	an average language teacher	average teacher	bad language teacher	bad teacher	you as you are now	you as you would like to be	contrast pole
cares about students	1.0	1.7	3.7	3.7	5.3	5.7	1.7	1.0	doesn't care about students
cares about student learning outcomes	2.0	1.4	3.6	3.4	5.7	5.6	2.7	2.0	doesn't care about learning outcomes
possesses content knowledge	1.2	1.0	3.0	3.7	5.2	4.3	2.6	1.0	lacks content knowledge
continuous professional development	1.5	1.8	5.5	4.0	4.0	4.3	2.8	1.8	disinterest in professional development
creative	5.0	5.0	5.0	4.0	5.5	3.0	3.0	2.0	not creative
good delivery	1.8	1.8	2.9	3.5	6.1	6.9	3.1	1.6	poor delivery
dynamic and entertaining	1.8	2.1	3.4	3.0	5.6	5.9	2.9	2.1	boring
emphasis on L2 communication	1.5	~	3.5	~	5.0	~	1.5	1.0	lack of emphasis of L2 communication
emphasis on student involvement	2.3	2.0	3.0	3.3	5.0	6.0	1.7	1.3	no emphasis on student involvement
enthusiasm for teaching	1.2	1.3	4.0	2.8	4.7	5.3	2.0	2.0	unenthusiastic about teaching
focus on autonomous learning	2.0	2.3	3.3	3.7	6.3	6.3	3.0	1.7	teacher directed
has training / education	1.5	1.5	3.0	3.0	2.5	2.5	5.5	2.5	lacks training / education
L2 language ability	1.3	~	2.0	~	4.0	~	1.3	1.0	no L2 language ability
makes learning relevant	2.5	3.0	4.5	4.0	4.5	7.0	3.0	2.0	does not make learning relevant
motivates students	1.4	2.2	3.6	3.6	6.4	6.0	2.2	1.4	does not motivate students
possesses pedagogic knowledge	1.4	2.0	3.1	3.6	5.1	6.6	2.6	1.3	lacks pedagogic knowledge
good planning and organization	2.1	1.2	3.1	2.6	5.6	5.1	2.7	1.6	poor planning and organization
positive personality traits	2.1	2.5	3.8	3.4	5.1	6.1	1.7	1.4	negative personality traits
professionalism	1.8	2.3	3.0	2.5	5.0	6.8	1.3	1.0	lack of professional
good activities and materials	1.7	2.0	3.1	4.0	5.4	5.6	2.3	1.4	poor activities and materials
good student-teacher rapport	2.0	2.8	3.8	3.1	5.1	6.3	2.3	1.6	poor student-teacher rapport
welcomes student feedback	1.5	1.0	3.0	5.5	6.5	6.5	3.0	2.0	student feedback unwelcome

These collective grids were used as the input for the RepGrid (v. 1.05) suite of programs. RepGrid generated a display grid, principal component analysis, a FOCUS analysis and statistics for each cohort.

*Questionnaires.* In a second phase of data collection, a self-report questionnaire was constructed concerning the provenance of beliefs about teacher characteristics and instructional behaviors and the impact of a number of factors on instructional beliefs (Figure 18).

<p><b>INSTRUCTIONS:</b> Please rate the following factors in terms of their influence on your thinking about the aspects of teaching listed to the right. 1 = has had a significant influence; 7 = has had no influence. For instance, if "observing fellow teachers" had a significant impact on how you view planning, you might rate that factor a "2".</p>	<p>quality &amp; variety of activities &amp; materials  the importance of a teacher's personality  caring about students on a personal level  a teacher's rapport with students  importance of continual prof develop  caring about students' learning  the ability to motivate students  a teacher's L2 ability  the importance of autonomous learning  a teacher's planning and organization  content knowledge  pedagogic knowledge</p>
The micro-culture where you work	
The national culture	
The demands of your institution	
Observing fellow teachers	
Your own personality	
Your experiences learning an L2	
Reflecting on your own teaching	
Educ experiences with L2 teachers	
Educ exp with non L2 teachers	
Reflectng on student feedback	
Your peers in the LEI program	
Your teachers in the LEI program	
Reading you've done in the LEI	

Figure 18. Questionnaire: Sources of beliefs about teaching.

The questionnaire asked respondents to rate the influence of thirteen factors on their beliefs about twelve aspects of teaching. The thirteen factors were chosen because of their relevance in the literature: the micro-cultures of educational environments and the specific demands of particular educational institutions (Andrews, 2003; Benson, 2010; Calderhead, 1992; Farrell, 2006; Hayes, 2008; Grimmet & Crehan, 1992; TALIS, 2009); the national culture (Andrews, 2003; Chiuan, 2003; Gorsuch, 2000; Ng & Farrell, 2003; Pennington & Urmston, 1998; TALIS, 2009); the observation of professional peers (Arnett & Turnball, 2007; Farrell, 2006; Kagan, 1992; Velez-Rendon, 2006; Zahorik, 1987; Zeichner & Gore, 1989); personality (Banner & Cannon, 1997; Barr, 1940, 1960; Brosh, 1996; Bruce, 1930; Dawes, 1948; Helterbran, 2008; Hofstee, 1994; Kottler & Zehm, 2000; Odenwell, 1936; Penner, 1992; Rostker, 1945; Torgerson, 1934; Webb,



1971); formative experiences learning a second language and with second language teachers (Ariogul, 2007; Baily et al., 1996; Chochran-Smith, 1991; Farrell, 1999; Hassan, 2013; Helterbran, 2008; Johnson, 1994; Numrich, 1996; Phipps, 2010); formative educational experiences with non-L2 teachers (Freeman, 1975; Gutierrez Almarza, 1996; Johnson, 1999; Kennedy, 1990; Lortie, 1975; Nias, 1989); reflection on pedagogic action (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; Farrell, 2013; Glaser & Chi, 1988; Hawkins & Norton, 2009; Sternberg & Horvath; Tsui, 2003); and reflection on student feedback (Arnett & Turnbull, 2007; Doyle, 1979; Richards & Pennington, 1998; Zeichner & Gore, 1989). Participants were also asked to rate the influence of their experiences in the LEI program in terms of their peers, their instructors, and required reading.

In the survey, respondents were asked to consider the 13 factors above in terms of their beliefs about 12 aspects of teaching. These aspects were chosen from the most heavily weighted of the 22 main thematic categories derived from the repertory grid interviews. The aspects considered were as follows:

1. The quality and variety of activities and materials
2. The importance of a teacher's personality
3. Caring about students on a personal level
4. A teacher's rapport with students
5. The importance of continuous professional improvement
6. Caring about student learning
7. The ability to motivate students
8. A teacher's second language ability

9. The importance of autonomous learning
10. A teacher's planning and organization
11. Content knowledge
12. Pedagogical knowledge

All 60 participants in the study were sent a questionnaire. Thirty-eight questionnaires were sent back, for a return rate of 63%.

*Observations.* Data was also collected through observations of the classroom practices of 10 participants (see Appendix D). Two student teachers were chosen from each level of the LEI program and two additional participants were chosen from the graduate cohort. After an observation of their teaching, a short follow-up interview was conducted. Information from these observations and the short interviews was then compared to data from the participants' rep grid interviews in order to determine the extent of coherence between their practices and pedagogic beliefs.

## Chapter 4

### Results

#### Introduction

In all, the 60 interviews generated 862 constructs and 6,896 ratings (Appendix B). Counting in the eight elements, the repertory grid interviews produced a total of 6,904 pieces of data. An examination of the number of original constructs produced by each cohort shows a slight increase in the total constructs produced by LEI students year over year, with the exception of the third-year students in Cohort 3 (Table 12).

Table 12

*Constructs by Cohort*

	constructs	running total	<i>M</i>
Cohort 0	179		18
Cohort 1	111	291	11.1
Cohort 2	140	430	14
Cohort 3	136	566	13.6
Cohort 4	148	714	14.8
Cohort 5	148	862	14.8

Fourth-year students produced 37 more constructs than first-year students. Cohort 0 produced the most constructs of any group, 179 in total. In terms of original constructs, most of these concern aspects of general teaching, as opposed to aspects of instruction particular to second language pedagogy. Of the 862 individual constructs elicited, 117 (or 13.5%) can be said to be specific to SLT. Of these, 30 constructs concern techniques and methods strongly associated with ESL instruction (i.e., communicative teaching, PPP, grouping strategies, the use of *realia*). Another 22 constructs have to do with the instructor's fluency in English. Seventeen involve grammar pedagogy (the positive poles

of all but one oriented towards traditional deductive instruction). The rest of the constructs specific to second language pedagogy relate to cultural issues, the use of the L2 in the classroom, the teacher's ability to link language with real life, pronunciation, an emphasis on production and practice opportunities, linguistic knowledge, corrective feedback, the balance between accuracy and fluency, scaffolding, etc.

The majority of constructs concern facets of instruction that are generalizable across educational contexts. Most of these have to do with teacher personality and socio-affective factors. Some come directly from general education, such as a focus on learning styles and the theory of multiple intelligences.

Of the 22 major construct categories, only two encompass educational factors specific to language teaching: content knowledge and pedagogic knowledge. The former is understood by LEI students mostly in terms of a teacher's L2 ability and understanding of grammar. The latter involves knowledge about teaching practices. Some of these practices are general and could be found in many different kinds of educational environments (the use of games, technology in the classroom, the ability to predict pedagogic problems) and some are particular to language teaching (grouping, *realia*, knowledge of methods such as the Direct Approach and PPP).

The most heavily weighted collective construct has to do with positive personality traits (69 constructs, or 11% of the total). Positive personality traits included empathy, fairness, friendliness, happiness, kindness, outgoingness, patience, self-confidence, and sensitivity, etc. The second most heavily weighted collective construct (61 constructs, or 10% of the total) concerns planning and organization. Constituent constructs from this category have to do with the pacing, sequencing and the congruence of lessons; the

quality of lesson planning (including have a back-up plan and creating materials that clearly relate to the topic); and having clear objectives. Participants particularly emphasized the importance of coming to class prepared. The remainder of the 22 categories were composed of relatively fewer original constructs (Table 13).

Table 13

*Collective Constructs / Typical Original Constructs*

<b>Collective Construct</b>	<b># constituent constructs (% const. constructs)</b>	<b>Representative original constructs (preferred poles)</b>
Positive personality traits	69 (11.4%)	Empathetic; fair; friendly; easy-going; warm; a happy person; kind; being human; altruistic; good personality; charismatic; polite; sympathetic; flexible; spontaneous; self-aware; approachable; sociable; outgoing; accessible; nurturing; reasonable; etc.
Planning and organization	61 (10.1%)	Stayed focused on subject; one topic leads naturally to the next; logical organization; prepared with a plan; good lesson planning; strong lesson planning; classes are structured; had a clear sequence; has a back-up plan; coherence between objectives and practice; prepared; always prepared for class; ready for class; well-prepared, etc.

(table continues)

<b>Collective Construct</b>	<b># constituent constructs (% const. constructs)</b>	<b>Representative original constructs (preferred poles)</b>
Student-teacher rapport	43 (7.1%)	Rapport between teacher and students; has a great relationship with students; dialogue between teacher and students; relates well with students; open communication with students; personal connection with students; builds rapport; treats students with respect; respecting your students; etc.
Quality and variety of activities and materials	40 (6.6%)	Uses a variety of activities; variety of didactic materials; high quality activities; teaches language through activities; material is very interesting; authentic materials; use of games and activities; prepares useful material; use of realia; etc.
Professionalism	35 (5.8%)	Cares about doing a good job; one who goes the extra mile; serious about teaching; committed to his job; puts effort into class; goes beyond the requirement of his job; serious about profession; good attitude towards the work; professional demeanor; professional; punctual; the teacher is always on time; is very punctual; etc.

(table continues)

<b>Collective Construct</b>	<b># constituent constructs (% const. constructs)</b>	<b>Representative original constructs (preferred poles)</b>
Cares about student learning outcomes	32 (5.3%)	Cares if students learn; the teacher cares about student learning; prepares students for future academic challenges; encourages student potential; worried about student learning; cares about student improvement; shows interest in student learning; etc.
Enthusiasm for teaching	28 (4.6%)	Motivated by love of teaching; has a deep interest in the subject; loves subject; has a sense that the subject matters; passionate about teaching; is engaged in the work; passion for profession; interested in what he does; loved her work; believes in what he's doing; etc.
Continuous professional development	27 (4.4%)	Professional development; drive for personal development in the field; always works on his own professional development; interested in getting better as a teacher; persists in improving his teaching practice; constant improvement; always updating; keeps updating; betterment; works to improve; etc.

(table continues)

<b>Collective Construct</b>	<b># constituent constructs (% const. constructs)</b>	<b>Representative original constructs (preferred poles)</b>
Dynamic & entertaining	26 (4.3%)	Has an energetic teaching style; energetic; makes students feel energized; dynamic; active and dynamic; energy; lots of energy; be entertaining; made classes fun; etc.
Pedagogic knowledge	24 (3.9%)	Ability to predict possible problems; methodology grounded in reasons; knows best way to help students; can link content to correct teaching approach; knowledge of techniques; focus on student learning styles; knows how to use grouping techniques effectively; use of teamwork; group and pair work; successful pedagogy; good knowledge of methodologies; etc.
Content knowledge	23 (3.8%)	Knows subject; command of subject matter; knowledgeable; knows linguistics; complete subject area knowledge; knowledgeable about the language; clarity within area of knowledge; knows grammar; knows a lot about grammar; knowledge of grammar; good at grammar teaching; knowledge of content (grammar); etc.

(table continues)



<b>Collective Construct</b>	<b># constituent constructs (% const. constructs)</b>	<b>Representative original constructs (preferred poles)</b>
L2 ability	22 (3.6%)	Fluent in the language; native speaker; excellent English ability; good level of English; perfect L2; good English ability; dominated the language; speaks fluently; skill in the L2; expert English level; masters the language; proficient in English; etc.
Cares about students on a personal level	21 (3.4%)	Willing to help students even outside of class; genuinely cares about students; personal involvement in students' lives; cares about students; wants students to be happy; cares about personal problems of students; involved with personal lives of students; personal interest in students; teacher cares about human side; etc.
Clarity and good delivery	21 (3.4%)	Speaks clearly; good pronunciation; has a good voice; able to communicate clearly; good presenter; clear instructions; one who teachers with clarity; teacher has communicative skills; clear instructions; explains as many times as needed; clear explanations; etc.

(table continues)

<b>Collective Construct</b>	<b># constituent constructs (% const. constructs)</b>	<b>Representative original constructs (preferred poles)</b>
Motivates students	21 (3.4%)	Motivates students; encourages students; motivating; motivates interest in the subject; helps students understand the importance of English; motivates interest in the subject; keeps students motivated; etc.

The 22 major construct categories can be further placed into a number of superordinate categories (Table 14; Figure 19). In all, five superordinate categories were identified: (1) professional development; (2) personality and socio-affective factors; (3) student-centeredness; (4) professional investment; and (5) knowledge and skills.

Table 14

*Major Themes*

Collective Categories	# of Constructs in Each Category	Major Categories
C4 continuous prof dev	27	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
C12 has training / education	14	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
C3 content knowledge	23	KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS
C6 good delivery	21	KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS
C8 emphasis on L2 communication	15	KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS
C13 L2 language ability	22	KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS
C14 makes learning relevant to ss lives	19	KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS
C16 pedagogic knowledge	24	KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS
C17 planning and organization	61	KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS
C20 activities & materials	40	KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS
C1 cares about ss	21	PERSONALITY / SOCIO-AFFECTIVE
C5 creative	15	PERSONALITY / SOCIO-AFFECTIVE
C7 dynamic and entertaining	26	PERSONALITY / SOCIO-AFFECTIVE
C15 motivates students	21	PERSONALITY / SOCIO-AFFECTIVE
C18 positive personality traits	69	PERSONALITY / SOCIO-AFFECTIVE
C21 student-teacher rapport	43	PERSONALITY / SOCIO-AFFECTIVE
C2 cares about ss learning	32	STUDENT CENTEREDNESS
C9 emphasis on student involvement	15	STUDENT CENTEREDNESS
C11 focus on autonomous learning	20	STUDENT CENTEREDNESS
C22 welcomes student feedback	12	STUDENT CENTEREDNESS
C10 enthusiasm for teaching	28	INVESTMENT
C19 professionalism	35	INVESTMENT

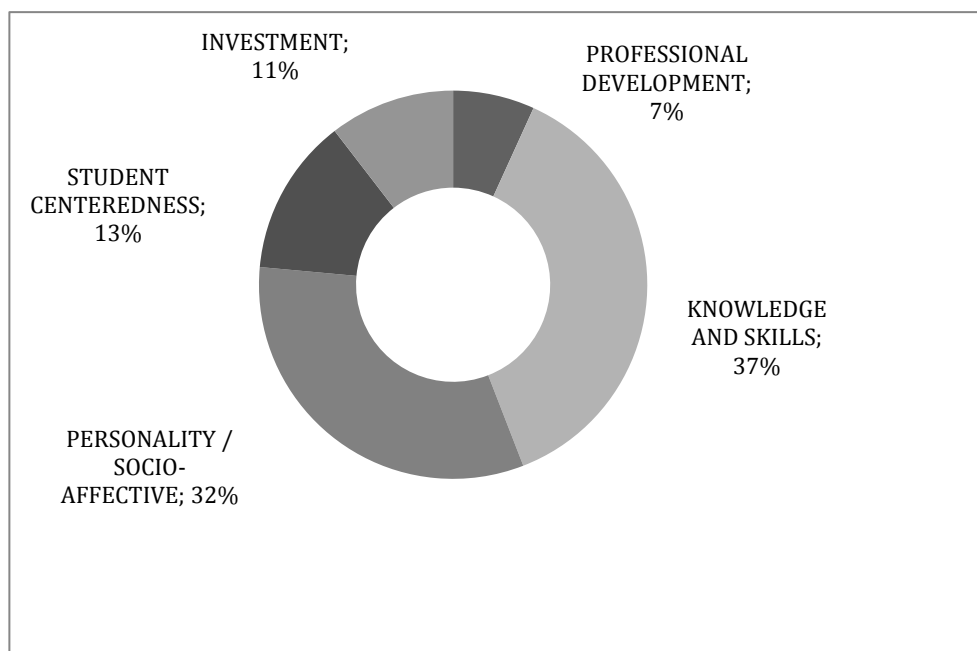


Figure 19. Superordinate constructs categories.

These categories are, of course, subjective. “Motivating students,” for instance, could be seen as either associated with socio-affective abilities or viewed as a type of pedagogic skill. The superordinate category “knowledge and skills” combines the concepts of content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge. The former is defined here in accord with Shulman’s (1986) definition of subject knowledge: an understanding of the facts and organization of a particular domain. The latter is defined as “knowledge of, and skill in, the use of teaching methods and pedagogical strategies that are not subject-specific” (Wilson et al., 1987, p. 114). These categories could have remained separate. However, a decision was made to combine them because of the notorious difficulty associated with making fine grained distinctions between the two (cf. Borg, 2006a; Johnson, 1999; Shulman, 1986).

#### **Cohort 0: Teachers Not Associated With LEI**

Cohort 0 is made up of 10 teachers who have had either limited or no formal second language teacher training. (Two of the 10 participants in this cohort hold certificates in ESL teaching. The others lack any formal education in SLT.) In a personal component analysis of Cohort 0’s collective grid data, the first component accounts for a full 89.8% of the variance (Figure 21). The second component accounts for only 3.9%.

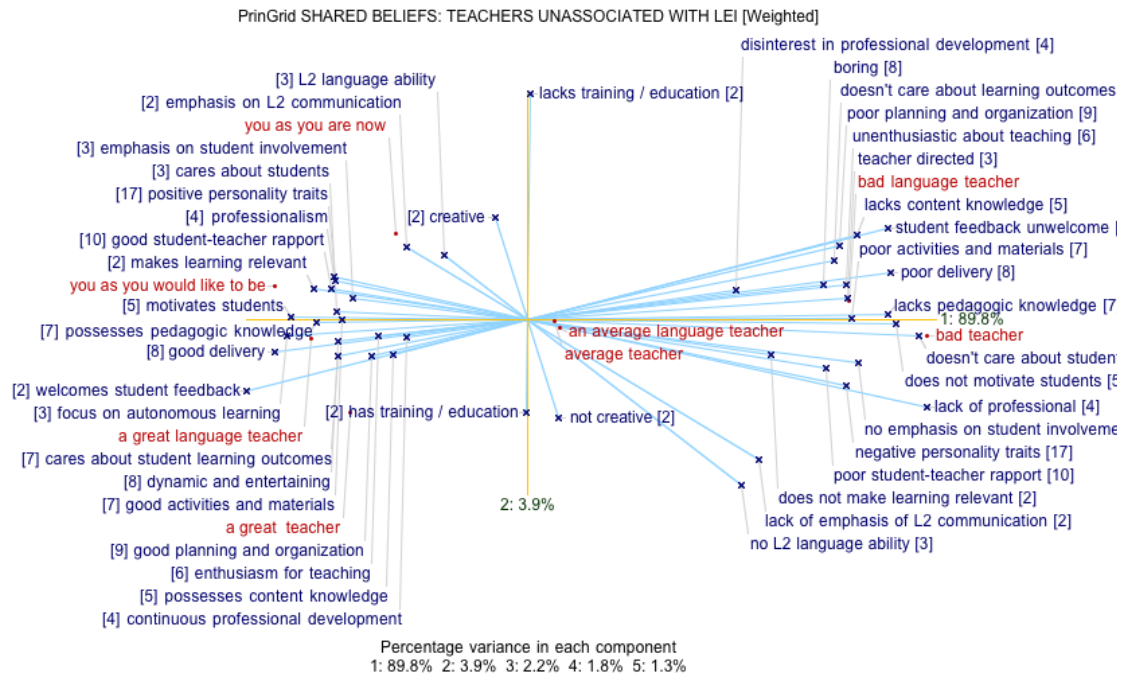


Figure 20. Collective cognitive map: Cohort 0 (no LEI training).

These components form the biplot's superstructure and represent all the other collective constructs held by the participants in Cohort 0 about second language teachers' characteristics and actions. Component 1, this group's core perceptual dimension, is most closely associated with student motivation, materials and activities, and pedagogic knowledge. The most strongly held belief (those with the highest construct loading on the first component) involves the importance of student feedback (Table 15). In all, the five most important constructs for this group are *welcomes student feedback – student feedback unwelcome*, *good delivery – poor delivery*, *motivates students – does not motivate students*, *professionalism – lack of professionalism*, and *cares about students on a personal level – doesn't care about students on a personal level*.

Table 15

*Construct Loadings on Three Principal Components: Cohort 0 (No LEI Training)*

Bipolar constructs		PrinCom 1 (x-axis)	PrinCom 2 (y-axis)	PrinCom 3
C1	<b>cares about students &lt;-&gt; doesn't care about students</b>	<b>1.64</b>	-0.07	-0.27
C2	cares about ss learning outcomes <-> doesn't care about ss learning	1.40	0.27	-0.03
C3	possesses content knowledge <-> lacks content knowledge	1.30	0.34	-0.33
C4	continuous professional development <-> disinterest in prof devel	0.93	0.14	-0.75
C5	creative <-> not creative	0.18	-0.57	-0.48
C6	<b>good delivery &lt;-&gt; poor delivery</b>	<b>1.73</b>	0.22	0.27
C7	dynamic and entertaining <-> boring	1.36	0.16	0.13
C8	emphasis on L2 communication <-> lack of emphasis of L2 comm	0.99	-0.60	-0.46
C9	emphasis on student involvement <-> no emphasis on ss involvement	1.42	-0.18	0.15
C10	enthusiasm for teaching <-> unenthusiastic about teaching	1.31	0.14	-0.14
C11	focus on autonomous learning <-> teacher directed	1.57	0.11	0.09
C12	has training / education <-> lacks training / education	0.01	0.90	-0.23
C13	L2 language ability <-> no L2 language ability	0.84	-0.65	-0.15
C14	makes learning relevant <-> does not make learning relevant	1.29	-0.19	0.03
C15	<b>motivates students &lt;-&gt; does not motivate students</b>	<b>1.70</b>	-0.02	-0.11
C16	possesses pedagogic knowledge <-> lacks pedagogic knowledge	1.61	0.03	0.11
C17	good planning and organization <-> poor planning and organization	1.32	0.31	0.09
C18	positive personality traits <-> negative personality traits	1.44	-0.30	-0.02
C19	<b>professionalism &lt;-&gt; lack of professional</b>	<b>1.67</b>	-0.37	0.33
C20	good activities and materials <-> poor activities and materials	1.43	0.01	-0.09
C21	good student-teacher rapport <-> poor student-teacher rapport	1.39	-0.23	0.09
C22	<b>welcomes student feedback &lt;-&gt; student feedback unwelcome</b>	<b>1.80</b>	0.46	-0.15

While the constructs within the biplot are tightly grouped, the elements are widely dispersed, suggesting clear differentiation in the way that teachers in Cohort 0 construe good, average and bad instructors, as well as themselves. The teachers in Cohort 0 most strongly identify themselves in terms of their mastery of English and with their use of the L2 in the classroom. In the future, they would like to improve in terms of their ability to motivate their students and to make learning relevant to their students' lives. They most closely associate excellent language teaching with the possession of pedagogic knowledge, the ability to motivate students, the promotion of autonomous learning, good

instructional delivery, instructor dynamism and energy, and student learning outcomes. Bad teachers are very highly correlated with lack of enthusiasm for teaching. For Cohort 0, bad language teachers and bad teachers are seen in very similar terms (an 86% match in element ratings). Great language teachers and great teachers are very highly correlated (an 89% match). In both cases, the major difference between language teachers and non-language teachers is explained by the fact that the constructs *L2 language ability – no L2 language ability* and *emphasis on L2 communication – lack of emphasis on L2 communication* simply lie outside of the ranges of convenience of the non-language teacher elements (Figure 21).

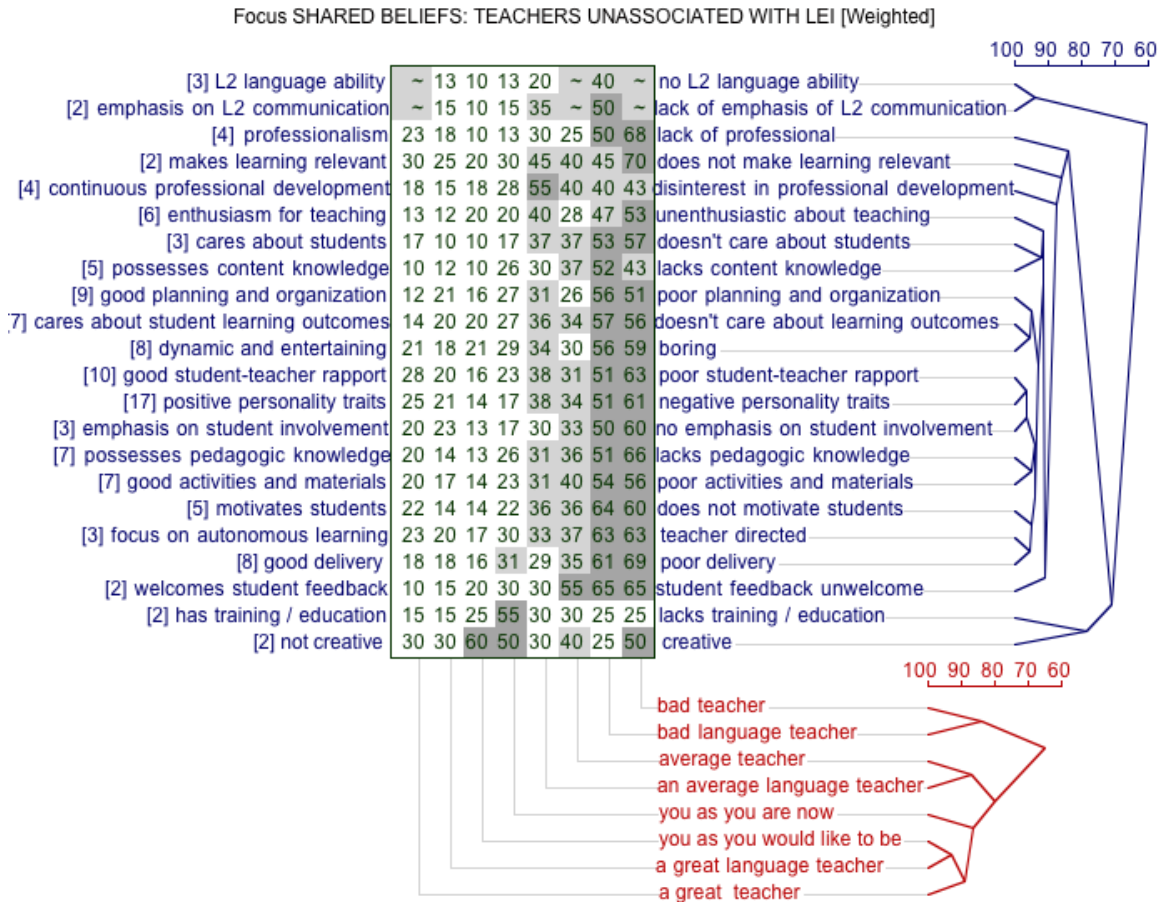


Figure 21. Focus grid: Cohort 0 (no LEI training).

When asked about the source of their pedagogic beliefs, participants in Cohort 0 identified a number of very strong influences. Their personalities, reflection on their own teaching, and educational experiences with past teachers seem to have had the greatest effect on how these participants view language instruction (Table 16).



Table 16

*Sources of Beliefs & Their Impact (Cohort 0)*

	quality & variety of activities & materials	the importance of a teacher's personality	caring about students on a personal level	a teacher's rapport with students	importance of continual prof develop	caring about students' learning	the ability to motivate students	a teacher's L2 ability	the importance of autonomous learning	content knowledge	pedagogic knowledge	
The micro-culture where you work	2.0	2.5	2.5	3.0	2.0	4.5	3.5	1.5	4.0	5.0	3.5	3.0
The national culture	5.0	5.0	3.0	4.0	2.5	4.5	6.0	3.0	4.5	6.5	6.5	6.5
The demands of your institution	2.0	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.0	4.0	3.5	2.5	2.5	4.5	<b>2.5</b>	3.0
Observing fellow teachers	1.5	1.5	2.0	3.0	<b>1.0</b>	6.0	4.0	2.0	4.5	6.0	3.0	2.5
Your own personality	<b>1.0</b>	2.0	<b>1.0</b>	<b>1.5</b>	1.5	5.5	2.5	1.5	3.5	4.0	3.0	3.5
Your experiences learning an L2	<b>1.0</b>	5.0	2.0	6.0	4.0	6.0	5.0	4.0	<b>1.0</b>	4.0	4.0	4.0
Reflecting on your own teaching	<b>1.0</b>	<b>1.0</b>	2.5	3.5	1.5	<b>3.5</b>	3.5	<b>1.0</b>	3.5	6.5	3.0	2.5
Educ experiences with L2 teachers	<b>1.0</b>	3.0	2.0	3.0	<b>1.0</b>	6.0	3.0	2.0	<b>1.0</b>	3.0	4.5	5.0
Educ exp with non L2 teachers	<b>1.0</b>	2.0	1.5	3.0	1.5	5.5	2.0	1.5	7.0	<b>2.5</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>1.5</b>
Reflectng on student feedback	2.5	2.0	2.0	3.5	2.5	6.5	<b>1.5</b>	1.5	4.0	6.5	3.5	3.5
Your peers in the LEI program	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~
Your teachers in the LEI program	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~
Reading you've done in the LEI	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~

**Cohort 1: 1<sup>st</sup> Year LEI Student Teachers**

Cohort 1 is comprised of 10 student teachers from the first year of the LEI program. After conducting a personal component analysis of Cohort 1's collective grid data, it was found that the first component accounts for 84.2% of the variance (Figure 22). The second component accounts for only 7.1%.

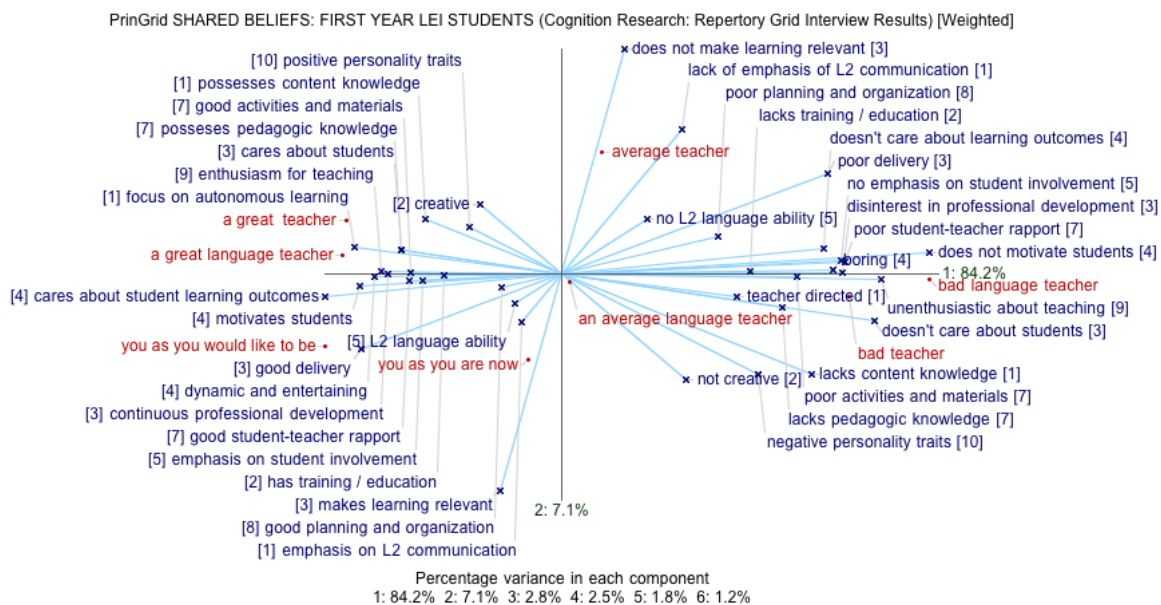


Figure 22: Collective cognitive map: Cohort 1 (1<sup>st</sup> year LEI student teachers).

Cohort 1’s core perceptual dimension, as represented by the first component, is most closely associated with continuous professional development: Construct C4 lies almost directly on the x axis. This core perceptual dimension, then, might best be designated as the “professional development axis.” Enthusiasm for teaching (C10) and the ability of a teacher to be dynamic and entertaining (C7) also lie very close to the first principal component. As can be seen in Figure 23, first-year student teachers in the LEI program do not identify particularly strongly with any of the major collective constructs. They identify somewhat weakly with their L2 language ability. First-year students see themselves as deficient in terms of each of the study’s 22 most significant collective constructs (as exhibited by their element’s rightward placement on the x axis, denominated above as the professional development axis). The element representing first-year students’ ideal self, by contrast, lies to the left of all 22 collective constructs, indicating this cohort’s desire to master all areas of language teaching. The element “bad

language teachers” lies on the far right of the professional development axis, and correlates highly with a lack of enthusiasm about teaching (C10) and a disinterest in or inability to motivate students (C15). A great language teacher is most closely associated with the promotion of autonomous learners.

The construct with the highest loading, and therefore the construct representing the beliefs most strongly held by the participants in Cohort 1, is *motivate students – does not motivate students* (Table 17). The five highest construct loadings have to do with motivation (C15), enthusiasm for teaching (C10), learning outcomes (C2), personal concern for students (C1), and the quality of instructional delivery (C6).

Table 17

*Construct Loadings on Three Principal Components: Cohort 1 (1<sup>st</sup> Year LEI Student Teachers)*

Bipolar constructs	PrinCom 1 (x-axis)	PrinCom 2 (y-axis)	PrinCom 3
C1 <b>cares about students &lt;-&gt; doesn't care about students</b>	<b>1.67</b>	-0.25	-0.21
C2 <b>cares about ss learning outcomes &lt;-&gt; doesn't care about ss learning</b>	<b>1.76</b>	0.18	-0.18
C3 possesses content knowledge <-> lacks content knowledge	1.36	-0.55	-0.15
C4 continuous professional development <-> disinterest in prof devel	1.61	0.01	-0.30
C5 creative <-> not creative	0.73	-0.62	0.23
C6 <b>good delivery &lt;-&gt; poor delivery</b>	<b>1.65</b>	0.62	0.64
C7 dynamic and entertaining <-> boring	1.62	0.03	0.34
C8 emphasis on L2 communication <-> lack of emphasis of L2 comm	0.57	0.68	-0.53
C9 emphasis on student involvement <-> no emphasis on ss involvement	1.48	0.08	0.02
C10 <b>enthusiasm for teaching &lt;-&gt; unenthusiastic about teaching</b>	<b>1.76</b>	-0.04	0.06
C11 focus on autonomous learning <-> teacher directed	1.35	-0.18	-0.21
C12 has training / education <-> lacks training / education	1.08	0.02	-0.13
C13 L2 language ability <-> no L2 language ability	0.47	0.30	-0.50
C14 makes learning relevant <-> does not make learning relevant	0.44	1.56	0.21
C15 <b>motivates students &lt;-&gt; does not motivate students</b>	<b>2.01</b>	0.12	0.11
C16 possesses pedagogic knowledge <-> lacks pedagogic knowledge	1.35	-0.21	0.18
C17 good planning and organization <-> poor planning and organization	0.77	0.18	-0.36
C18 positive personality traits <-> negative personality traits	1.02	-0.52	0.04
C20 good activities and materials <-> poor activities and materials	1.36	-0.02	-0.16
C21 good student-teacher rapport <-> poor student-teacher rapport	1.54	0.07	-0.03

For Cohort 1, bad language teachers and bad teachers are seen in very similar terms (an 80% match in element ratings). Great language teachers and great teachers are

very highly correlated (an 86% match). As in the case of Cohort 0, the difference between language teachers and non-language teachers is mostly explained by the fact that language issues lie outside the range of convenience of the latter group. Year-one student teachers match with the element “average teacher” at 75% (Figure 23).

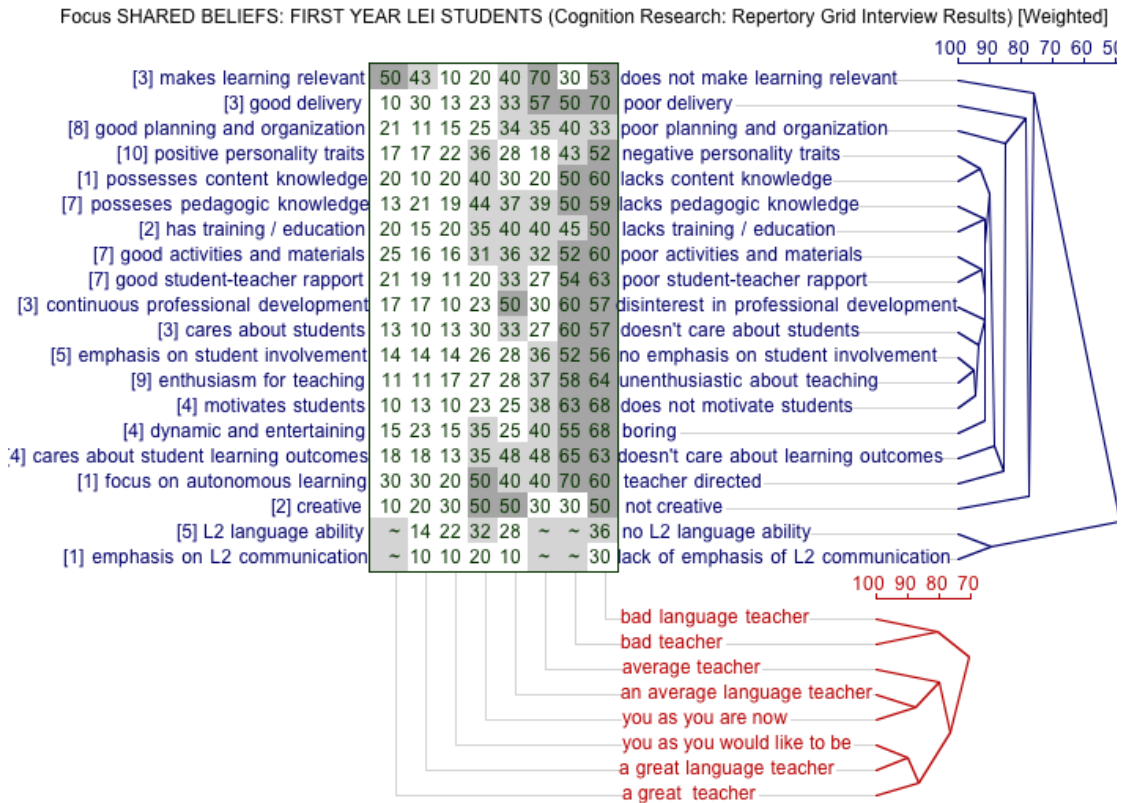


Figure 23. Focus grid: Cohort 1 (1<sup>st</sup> year LEI student teachers).

The influence of the LEI program on first-year students’ thinking is very pronounced (Table 18). The participants in Cohort 1 reported that across 12 collective categories representing major pedagogical concerns, they were most influenced on eight of these by teachers and readings in their SLTE program.

Table 18

*Sources of Beliefs & Their Impact (Cohort 1)*

	quality & variety of activities & materials	the importance of a teacher's personality	caring about students on a personal level	a teacher's rapport with students	importance of continual prof develop	caring about students' learning	the ability to motivate students	a teacher's L2 ability	the importance of autonomous learning	a teacher's planning and organization	content knowledge	pedagogic knowledge
The micro-culture where you work	4.0	3.5	3.2	3.5	4.0	4.3	3.3	3.0	4.0	3.8	3.8	3.5
The national culture	2.2	3.0	4.0	3.5	4.0	3.8	3.5	3.5	3.5	4.7	4.8	4.8
The demands of your institution	4.5	4.7	5.0	5.2	4.8	3.8	4.2	3.8	4.3	4.3	3.8	4.8
Observing fellow teachers	3.8	4.7	4.0	4.7	4.5	3.8	4.2	3.5	3.7	4.5	4.5	3.8
Your own personality	2.3	2.8	2.7	3.0	3.2	<b>1.7</b>	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	3.2	3.2
Your experiences learning an L2	2.8	3.7	3.2	4.0	3.3	2.8	3.5	3.8	3.5	3.2	2.7	2.6
Reflecting on your own teaching	3.0	2.7	3.0	3.5	3.2	3.3	2.7	2.8	2.3	3.2	3.2	3.3
Educ experiences with L2 teachers	4.3	3.7	3.7	4.2	4.2	4.8	3.8	3.8	3.5	4.5	<b>2.3</b>	3.7
Educ exp with non L2 teachers	3.0	3.5	<b>2.1</b>	<b>2.6</b>	2.7	3.5	2.5	2.7	3.2	3.7	3.7	2.7
Reflectng on student feedback	3.7	2.3	2.8	2.8	3.0	1.8	3.3	3.0	3.0	3.8	3.0	4.3
Your peers in the LEI program	2.8	2.7	3.3	2.7	2.7	3.2	2.8	2.3	2.8	3.2	4.0	4.3
Your teachers in the LEI program	2.2	<b>2.0</b>	2.7	2.8	2.7	1.8	<b>2.2</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>1.5</b>	2.6	<b>1.5</b>
Reading you've done in the LEI	<b>1.8</b>	2.6	3.0	3.2	<b>2.6</b>	2.4	2.8	2.2	<b>2.0</b>	1.8	2.6	3.3

The teaching practices of two first-year participants, Berenice and Braulio were observed. Berenice teaches in a *secundaria*, the equivalent of primary school in the United States. Her display grid (Appendix C) and PCA (Figure 24) were compared to her observed teaching practice (Appendix D). In general, Berenice's grid demonstrates a relatively low number of constructs and her PCA demonstrates a relatively low level of cognitive complexity (1<sup>st</sup> component = 81.5%). Many of her constructs are very amorphous, defined by their large range of convenience (*subject knowledge – not knowing the subject, know how to teach – no teaching capacity*), and so her teaching practice is difficult to interpret in terms of her stated pedagogical beliefs. Her most specific constructs have to do with the importance of group work and the value of

explaining in a variety of ways; these are precisely the areas in her teaching practice where improvement is most needed.

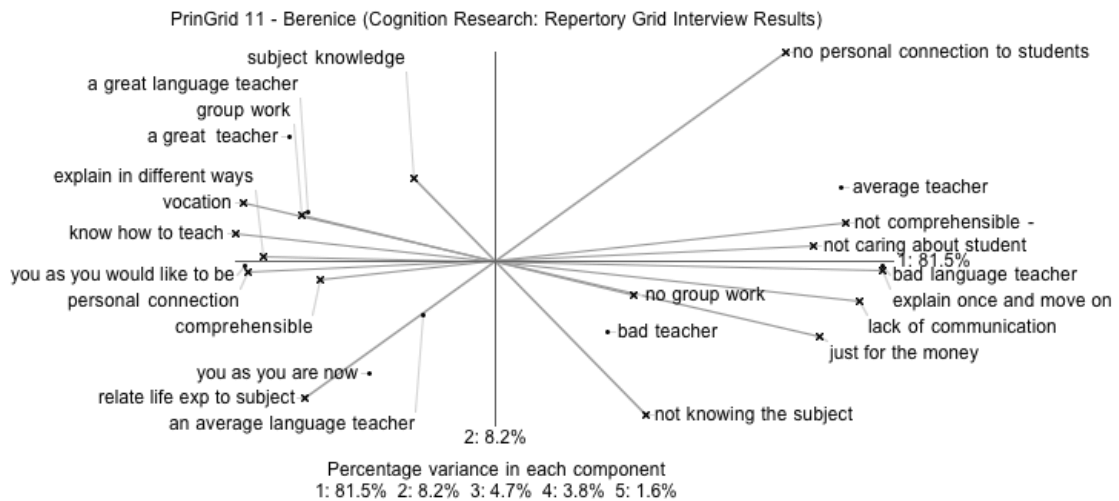


Figure 24. Berenice PCA (participant 11).

Berenice mentions the importance of maintaining a personal connection with her students, and in this she is very aligned with her teaching beliefs: she has a very large class, but knows all her students very well. Overall, however, it can be said that the majority of Berenice’s pedagogical beliefs are inchoate and that in the cases where she does hold definite ideas about teaching, her practice and beliefs lack coherence.

Braulio also teaches in *secundaria*. As with Berenice, his display grid (Appendix C) and PCA (Figure 25) were compared to his observed teaching practice. Also like Berenice, his PCA and repertory grids display a marked lack of sophistication or depth (five constructs; 1<sup>st</sup> component = 95.8%). In terms of two of his constructs (*pays attention to students – just doing the job; cares if students learn – doesn’t care if students learn*), Braulio’s teaching is undoubtedly aligned with his pedagogical convictions. However, in terms of the other three (*active and dynamic - boring; examples – by the book: transcribe, memorize, rote learning; good explainer – just sat there*), Braulio is

clearly very far away from being the teacher he would like to be (a reality that he is clearly aware of, as evidenced by the location of the element “You as you are now” in his biplot).

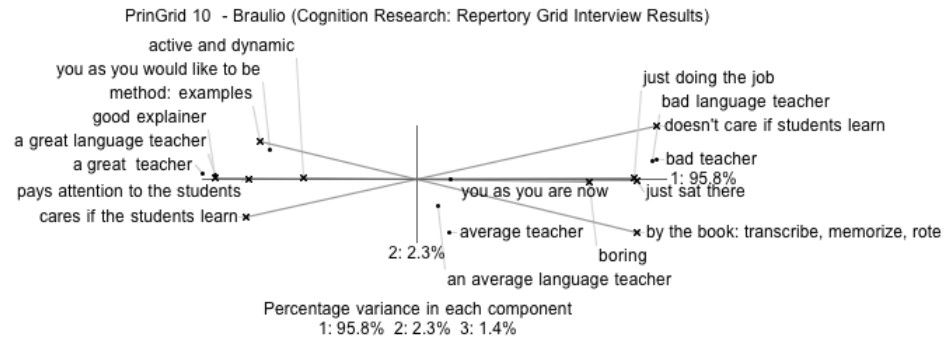


Figure 25. Braulio PCA (participant 10).

### Cohort 2: 2<sup>nd</sup> Year LEI Student Teachers

Cohort 2 is comprised of 10 student teachers from the second year of the LEI program. A personal component analysis was conducted of the data from this group’s collective grid: the first component accounts for 88.3% of the variance; the second component accounts for 3.5% of the variance (Figure 26). The first component is defined most strongly by creativity (C5), enthusiasm (C10), and student-teacher rapport (C21).

Second-year students are marked by their lack of confidence. The element “you as you are now” lies to the right of all the constructs plotted on the x axis but for “good delivery” and “L2 language ability,” and does not correlate highly with any of them. “You as you are now” lies closest to the construct pole *good student-teacher rapport*.

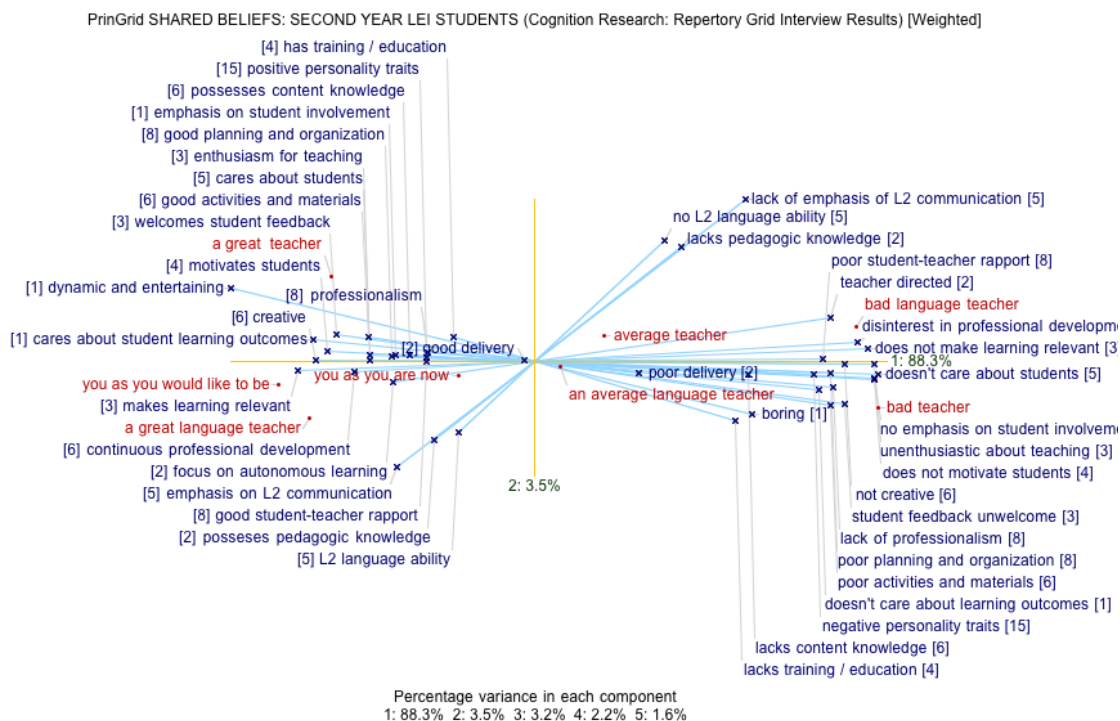


Figure 26: Collective cognitive map: Cohort 2 (2<sup>nd</sup> year LEI student teachers).

The element “a great language teacher” lies to the left of all the construct poles plotted along the x axis but for two: dynamic and entertaining (C7) and makes learning relevant to the lives of students (C14). The element “you as you would like to be” lies to the right of all constructs but one: dynamic and entertaining. The element “bad language teacher” lies closest to the negative poles of the constructs continuous professional development – disinterest in professional development and focus on autonomous learning – teacher directed.

The constructs with the highest loadings have to do with making learning relevant to students (C14), motivating students (C15), creativity (C5), being dynamic and entertaining (C7), caring about students (C1), and welcoming student feedback (C22) (Table 19).



Table 19

*Construct Loading on Three Principal Components: Cohort 2 (2<sup>nd</sup> Year LEI Student Teachers)*

Bipolar constructs		PrinCom 1 (x-axis)	PrinCom 2 (y-axis)	PrinCom 3 (z-axis)
C1	<b>cares about students &lt;-&gt; doesn't care about students</b>	<b>1.69</b>	-0.07	-0.36
C2	cares about ss learning outcomes <-> doesn't care about ss learning	1.68	-0.17	-0.36
C3	possesses content knowledge <-> lacks content knowledge	1.13	-0.07	0.71
C4	continuous professional development <-> disinterest in prof devel	1.67	0.10	-0.11
C5	<b>creative &lt;-&gt; not creative</b>	<b>1.76</b>	-0.02	0.19
C6	good delivery <-> poor delivery	0.39	-0.05	0.38
C7	<b>dynamic and entertaining &lt;-&gt; boring</b>	<b>1.74</b>	-0.42	0.78
C8	emphasis on L2 communication <-> lack of emphasis of L2 comm	1.16	0.89	-0.09
C9	emphasis on student involvement <-> no emphasis on ss involvement	1.60	-0.09	-0.37
C10	enthusiasm for teaching <-> unenthusiastic about teaching	1.68	-0.02	-0.24
C11	focus on autonomous learning <-> teacher directed	1.46	0.22	0.10
C12	has training / education <-> lacks training / education	0.94	-0.28	0.35
C13	L2 language ability <-> no L2 language ability	0.69	0.64	0.02
C14	<b>makes learning relevant &lt;-&gt; does not make learning relevant</b>	<b>1.90</b>	0.08	0.04
C15	<b>motivates students &lt;-&gt; does not motivate students</b>	<b>1.82</b>	-0.09	-0.14
C16	possesses pedagogic knowledge <-> lacks pedagogic knowledge	0.83	0.65	0.71
C17	good planning and organization <-> poor planning and organization	1.46	-0.06	-0.17
C18	positive personality traits <-> negative personality traits	1.29	-0.06	0.00
C19	professionalism <-> lack of professional	1.35	-0.12	-0.07
C20	good activities and materials <-> poor activities and materials	1.54	-0.23	0.09
C21	good student-teacher rapport <-> poor student-teacher rapport	1.32	0.01	-0.04
C22	<b>welcomes student feedback &lt;-&gt; student feedback unwelcome</b>	<b>1.69</b>	-0.23	-0.36

Second-year LEI students view themselves as “average language teachers” (72% match) (Figure 27). Bad language teachers and bad teachers match at 82%. Great language teachers and great teachers match at 83%.



Figure 27. Focus grid: Cohort 2 (2<sup>nd</sup> year LEI student teachers).

In a marked shift from first-year students, who reported the prepotent influence of the LEI program on their pedagogical beliefs, second-year students reported that their own personalities have the greatest impact on how they view second language teaching (Table 20), followed by their experiences as L2 learners. For the participants in Cohort 2, LEI teachers only influenced their views about student-teacher rapport. Required readings influenced how they saw their second language ability.

Table 20

*Sources of Beliefs & Their Impact (Cohort 2)*

	quality & variety of activities & materials	the importance of a teacher's personality	caring about students on a personal level	a teacher's rapport with students	importance of continual prof develop	caring about students' learning	a teacher's L2 ability	the importance of autonomous learning	content knowledge	pedagogic knowledge		
The micro-culture where you work	4.1	4.1	3.0	5.6	4.6	5.3	6.0	6.0	5.4	5.3	4.1	4.6
The national culture	3.0	3.9	4.1	4.7	4.7	4.3	4.0	5.6	4.9	4.6	4.7	4.9
The demands of your institution	4.7	4.0	5.9	6.1	4.9	4.3	5.4	6.0	6.0	5.1	6.1	5.9
Observing fellow teachers	2.7	3.9	2.9	3.7	3.3	4.7	4.7	5.0	5.3	4.6	4.7	5.0
Your own personality	<b>1.9</b>	2.9	<b>2.1</b>	3.3	<b>2.4</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>2.1</b>	2.9	2.3	<b>2.1</b>	2.9	3.3
Your experiences learning an L2	<b>1.9</b>	2.3	3.1	3.4	3.4	4.0	4.3	4.4	<b>2.0</b>	4.3	<b>2.3</b>	3.4
Reflecting on your own teaching	2.6	2.9	3.0	3.1	2.9	2.4	2.7	2.9	2.9	2.4	3.1	3.1
Educ experiences with L2 teachers	3.4	2.2	3.6	4.3	4.3	4.9	4.7	5.4	4.4	4.7	4.3	<b>2.2</b>
Educ exp with non L2 teachers	3.4	<b>1.9</b>	3.1	3.6	3.4	3.9	3.4	3.4	5.3	4.4	3.9	2.6
Reflectng on student feedback	4.1	3.4	3.7	3.6	3.7	3.9	4.4	3.9	4.0	4.7	4.4	3.9
Your peers in the LEI program	3.4	3.4	3.1	4.0	3.9	4.1	4.4	4.4	4.7	3.7	4.4	4.7
Your teachers in the LEI program	2.6	2.3	2.7	<b>2.6</b>	2.7	2.4	2.6	2.5	3.3	2.8	2.7	2.6
Reading you've done in the LEI	2.4	2.3	2.6	3.1	3.7	2.7	2.7	<b>2.4</b>	3.9	2.3	3.7	2.7

As part of the of the analysis of second-year students, the teaching practices of two first-year participants, Celia and Coco, were compared against the self-report data from their rep grid interviews and biplots (Appendices B and D; Figures 28 and 29, respectively).

Celia teaches a class of 17 students in *preparatoria*, the equivalent of high school in the United States. Her pedagogical thinking seems to be both broad and reasonably varied (16 constructs; 1<sup>st</sup> principal component = 75.4%). Most of her constructs concern the social roles of a teacher: good teachers should be professional, confident, patient, friendly, polite, positive, motivating, interesting, and sympathetic. She believes that teachers should try to offer dynamic classes, a variety of activities, and not always follow the same plan. Clearly, Celia teaches in line with her strong beliefs about the importance

of socio-affective issues. In terms of specific pedagogic actions, her practice is fairly-well aligned with her beliefs. She mentioned that punctuality and achieving task goals are important to her, and she achieved both these aims in her class.

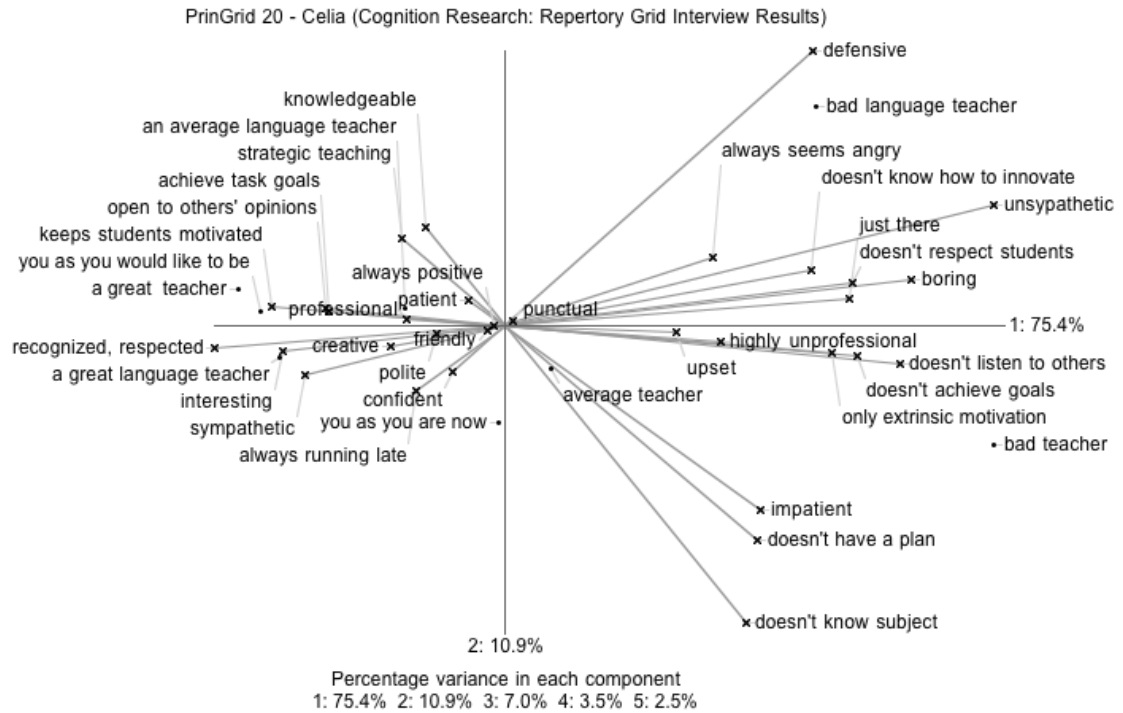


Figure 28. Celia PCA (participant 20).

A number of specific pedagogical actions that Celia exhibited in her classroom were absent in her repertory grid. For instance, she was very careful to use pair work, yet didn't mention this in her list of constructs. Similarly, Celia used only English in her class and encouraged her students to only use English as well. However, this was not mentioned in her list of constructs. The same can be said for the use of error correction. Overall, then, Celia's teaching and pedagogical beliefs are consistent, although her repertoire of constructs underreports many of her actual pedagogical behaviors. This latter finding underscores the degree to which she privileges personal aspects of teacher over strictly pedagogical behaviors.

Coco teaches a class of 15 students at the university level.

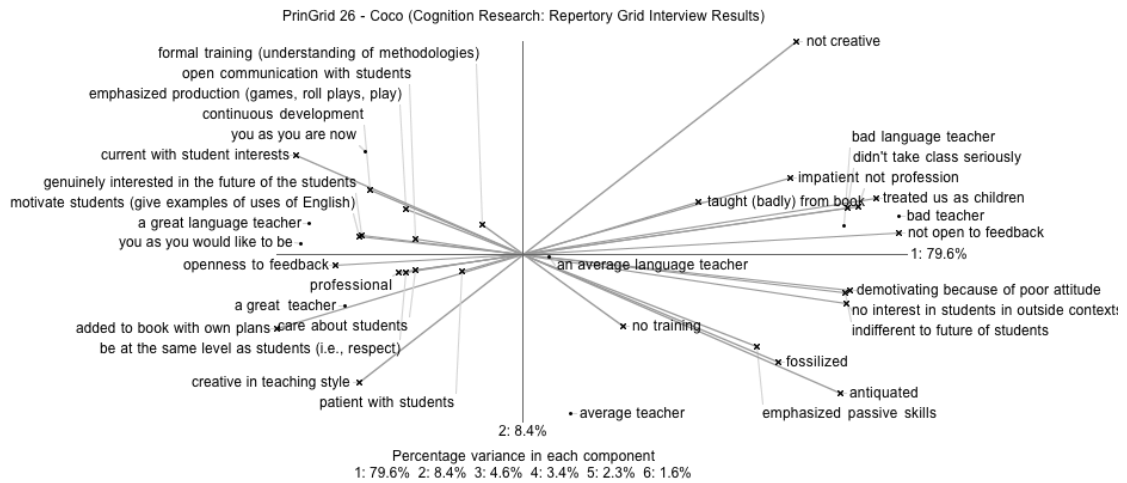


Figure 29. Coco PCA (participant 26).

Coco generated a reasonably large number of constructs (14) and exhibits a relatively high level of variance in her biplot (1<sup>st</sup> component = 79.6%). Like Celia, almost all her constructs concern socio-affective aspects of teaching, with only two having specifically to do with classroom pedagogy: *adds to book with own plans* and *emphasizes production (games, role plays, play)*. In terms of the bulk of her constructs (i.e., those having to do with respect, professionalism, creativity, patience, communication), her teaching practice and pedagogic beliefs are fully aligned. However, as with Celia, much of what she actually does in the classroom is not represented in how she thinks about good teaching.

### Cohort 3: 3<sup>rd</sup> Year LEI Student Teachers

Ten third-year student teachers made up Cohort 3. The first component of this cohort's biplot accounts for 86.4% of the variance in the grid and is defined most strongly by the construct *positive personality traits – negative personality traits* (Figure 30). The second component accounts for 5.3% of the variance and is associated with the construct

*has training / education – lacks training / education.* The element “you as you are now” is not in close proximity to any constructs. On the x axis, Cohort 3 lies to the positive side of L2 language ability (C13), pedagogic knowledge (C16), content knowledge (C3), good delivery (C6), creative (C5), professionalism (C19), cares about students (C1), and cares about student outcomes (C2). This implies that third year LEI students feel confident about their abilities in these areas but see room for growth in terms of all the other constructs represented in the biplot. On the y axis, Cohort 3 lies on the negative side of the training and education dimension, meaning that the participants in this group see themselves as lacking sufficient SLTE.

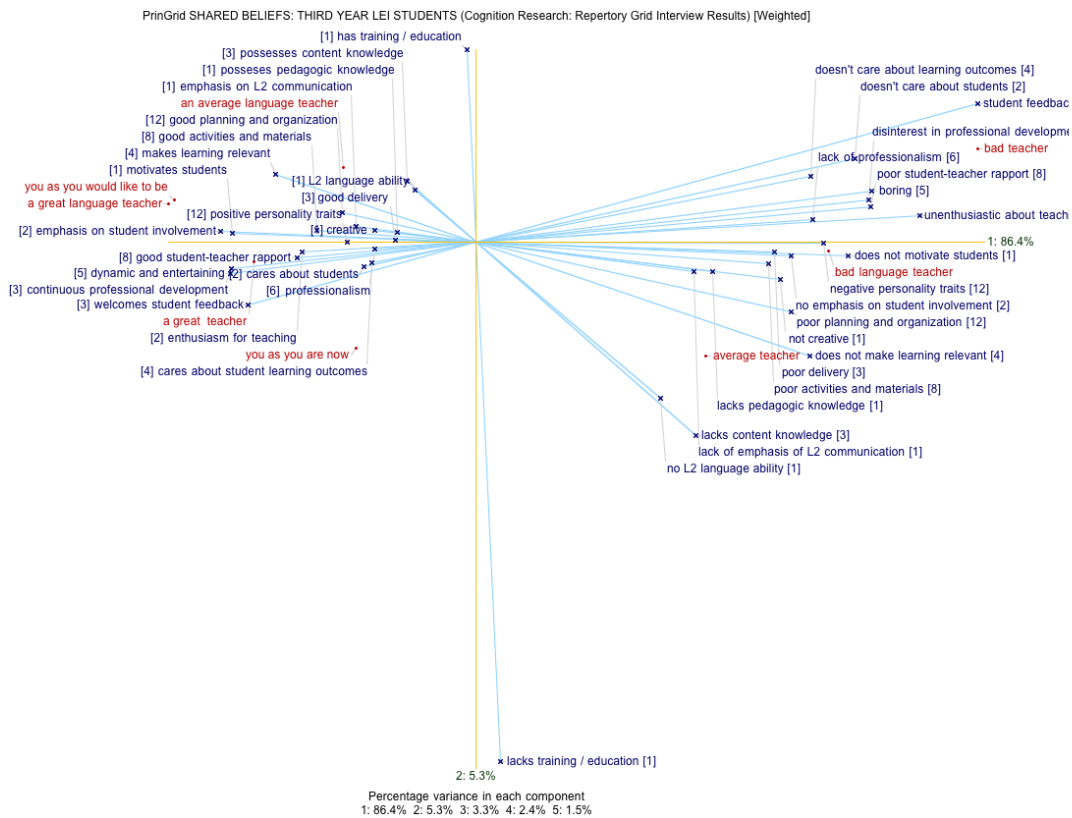


Figure 30. Collective cognitive map: Cohort 3 (3<sup>rd</sup> year LEI student teachers).

Cohort 3 is notable for the strong views of its members about good language teachers. The element “a great language teacher” lies far to the left of the construct field, indicating that third-year students expect an effective language teacher to be an expert in terms of all the collective constructs represented in the biplot. On the other hand, the element “bad language teacher” lies well within the construct field, and is most associated with the construct poles *negative personality traits*, *does not motivate students*, and *poor delivery*. Taken together, the position of elements vis-à-vis the constructs seems to indicate that, for third-year students, being a great teacher entails a host of characteristics and behaviors, while being a bad teacher is primarily defined in terms of personality and socio-affective factors.

The constructs with the highest loadings are concerned with issues of student feedback (C22), teacher dynamism and the ability to entertain (C7), continuous professional development (C4), enthusiasm for teaching (C10), and the ability to motivate students (C15) (Table 21).

Table 21

*Construct Loadings on Three Principal Components: Cohort 3 (3<sup>rd</sup> Year LEI Student Teachers)*

Bipolar constructs		PrinCom 1 (x-axis)	PrinCom 2 (y-axis)	PrinCom 3
C1	cares about students <-> doesn't care about students	-1.30	-0.29	0.02
C2	cares about ss learning outcomes <-> doesn't care about ss learning	-1.17	-0.23	-0.28
C3	possesses content knowledge <-> lacks content knowledge	-0.77	0.68	0.39
C4	<b>continuous professional development &lt;-&gt; disinterest in prof devel</b>	<b>-1.69</b>	-0.18	-0.05
C5	creative <-> not creative	-1.08	0.13	0.02
C6	good delivery <-> poor delivery	-1.01	0.03	-0.01
C7	<b>dynamic and entertaining &lt;-&gt; boring</b>	<b>-1.70</b>	-0.22	-0.10
C8	emphasis on L2 communication <-> lack of emphasis of L2 comm	-0.90	0.12	-0.10
C9	emphasis on student involvement <-> no emphasis on ss involvement	-1.51	0.07	-0.30
C10	<b>enthusiasm for teaching &lt;-&gt; unenthusiastic about teaching</b>	<b>-1.64</b>	-0.10	-0.01
C12	has training / education <-> lacks training / education	-0.09	1.89	-0.90
C13	L2 language ability <-> no L2 language ability	-0.66	0.56	-0.64
C14	makes learning relevant <-> does not make learning relevant	-1.42	0.48	-0.19
C15	<b>motivates students &lt;-&gt; does not motivate students</b>	<b>-1.64</b>	0.06	0.11
C16	possesses pedagogic knowledge <-> lacks pedagogic knowledge	-0.84	0.11	-0.62
C17	good planning and organization <-> poor planning and organization	-1.19	0.26	0.19
C18	positive personality traits <-> negative personality traits	-1.26	0.01	-0.01
C19	professionalism <-> lack of professional	-1.16	-0.08	0.15
C20	good activities and materials <-> poor activities and materials	-1.20	0.09	0.47
C21	good student-teacher rapport <-> poor student-teacher rapport	-1.52	-0.14	-0.23
C22	<b>welcomes student feedback &lt;-&gt; student feedback unwelcome</b>	<b>-1.94</b>	-0.54	-0.14

For Cohort 3, the highest element correlation is between “you as you would like to be” and “a great language teacher.” The ratings on these elements match at 93% (Figure 31). A great language teacher and a great teacher match at 89%.



Focus SHARED BELIEFS: THIRD YEAR LEI STUDENTS (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results) [Interior, Weighted]

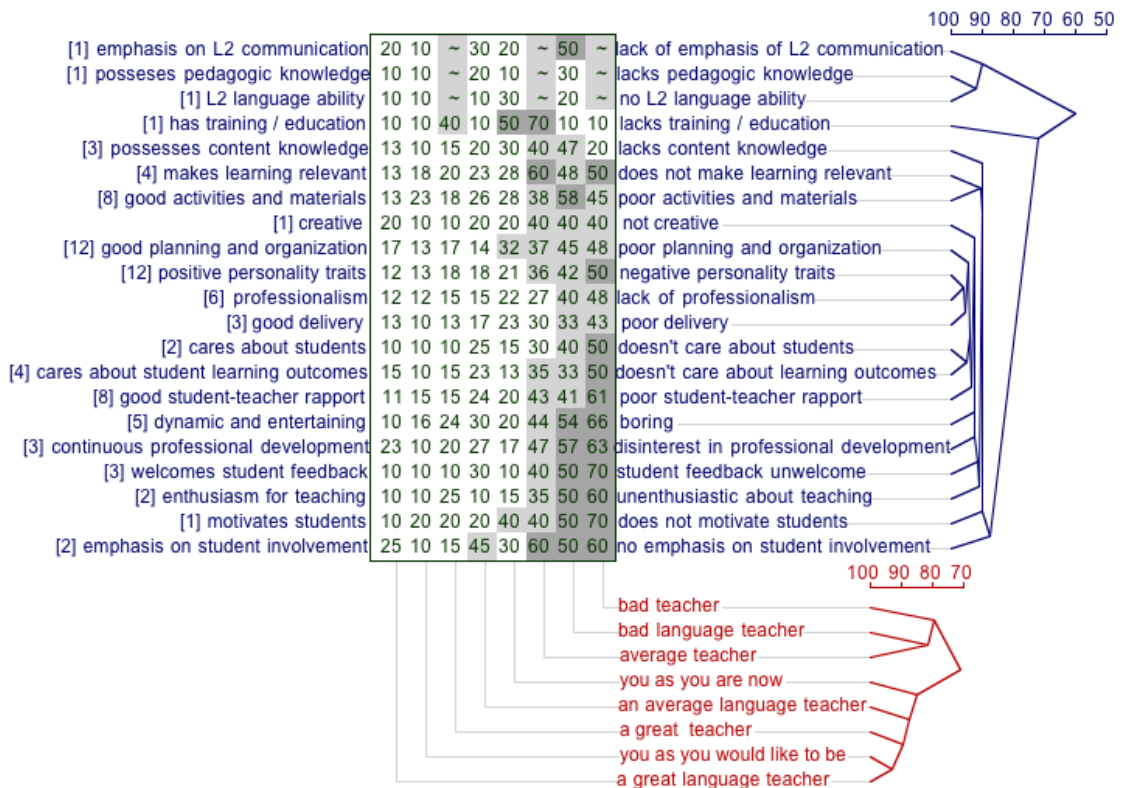


Figure 31. Focus grid: Cohort 3 (3<sup>rd</sup> year LEI student teachers).

Third-year students report being greatly influenced by the LEI program. Table 22 shows that teachers in the LEI program play a major role in the formation of pedagogical beliefs across all 12 collective construct categories. Required readings, however, appear to play little role. Reflecting on practice has an impact on Cohort 3's beliefs about activities and materials, as well as on the ability to motivate students. Personality also influences thinking about activities and materials, and effects how students view student learning outcomes.

Table 22

*Sources of Beliefs & Their Impact (Cohort 3)*

	quality & variety of activities & materials	the importance of a teacher's personality	caring about students on a personal level	a teacher's rapport with students	importance of continual prof develop	caring about students' learning	the ability to motivate students	a teacher's L2 ability	the importance of autonomous learning	content planning and organization	pedagogic knowledge	
The micro-culture where you work	3.7	4.0	3.3	3.2	3.3	2.3	3.6	3.4	4.1	4.1	4.0	4.1
The national culture	2.3	3.0	2.7	3.3	3.4	2.0	2.6	3.4	3.1	3.8	4.7	4.0
The demands of your institution	2.3	4.7	4.0	3.9	4.0	3.0	2.4	3.7	4.2	4.0	4.6	4.0
Observing fellow teachers	3.8	3.4	3.4	4.6	3.9	3.1	3.6	3.6	3.4	5.0	4.6	4.7
Your own personality	<b>1.6</b>	2.8	2.4	2.6	3.0	<b>1.3</b>	2.3	2.2	2.2	3.3	2.6	2.8
Your experiences learning an L2	1.9	2.5	2.9	4.0	3.6	2.1	2.6	2.6	2.3	2.6	<b>2.2</b>	3.6
Reflecting on your own teaching	<b>1.6</b>	2.4	2.3	2.9	2.7	1.6	<b>2.0</b>	2.3	2.0	3.4	2.9	2.4
Educ experiences with L2 teachers	2.6	3.3	3.8	3.8	3.9	3.0	3.4	3.1	2.4	4.1	2.4	2.2
Educ exp with non L2 teachers	2.1	2.8	2.8	3.8	3.3	2.2	2.8	3.7	2.4	4.4	4.6	2.6
Reflectng on student feedback	2.2	3.2	2.3	2.7	2.6	3.4	2.4	3.1	2.0	4.1	4.6	2.8
Your peers in the LEI program	2.4	3.0	3.0	3.8	3.1	2.4	3.4	3.3	2.5	4.0	3.9	4.6
Your teachers in the LEI program	1.9	<b>1.9</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>2.2</b>	1.4	<b>2.0</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>2.1</b>
Reading you've done in the LEI	3.3	2.9	3.4	3.7	3.9	2.3	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.0	2.8	4.6

The teaching practices of two third-year participants, David and Daniel, were compared against information from their rep grid interviews and biplots (Appendices B and D; Figures 32 and 33, respectively).

David teaches at a *tecnológica*, which is essentially the equivalent of a junior college in the United States. David generated quite a substantial number of constructs (22); however his biplot shows a high degree of unidimensionality in his construing. The first component of his biplot accounts for 87.7% of the grid's variance; this lack of variance is explained by a set of constructs that are very similar in meaning: *seeing students as people*, *taking students into account*, *cares about personal problems of students*, and *judges students as whole person*, are, for instance, very related concepts. Similarly, *try to take student opinions into account*, *interested in feedback*, *tolerant of*

*different opinions*, and *sensitive to feedback* are extremely close in meaning. These similar meanings are evinced by the homogeneity of David's ratings: he rates fully half of his constructs exactly the same.

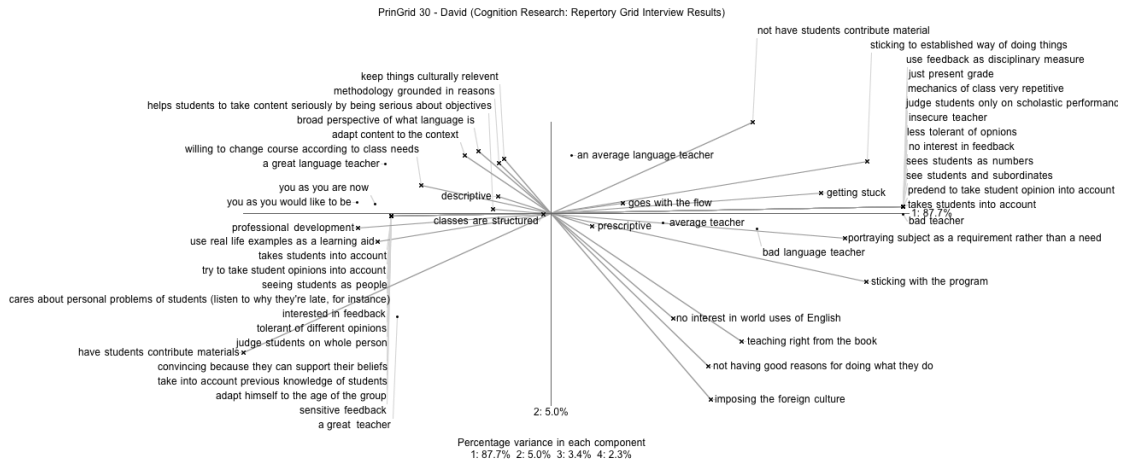


Figure 32. David PCA (Participant 20).

David is an excellent teacher, and his teaching reflects a natural ability with people, enthusiasm for teaching, and knowledge of teaching methodology. However, his construing suffers from a lack of variegation. While it can be said that his teaching is in-line with his beliefs, the beliefs he is able to articulate in no way match the range of his instructional repertoire.

Daniel works at a *primaria*, teaching English to exceptionally large classes (up to 50 students) of young children several times a week.

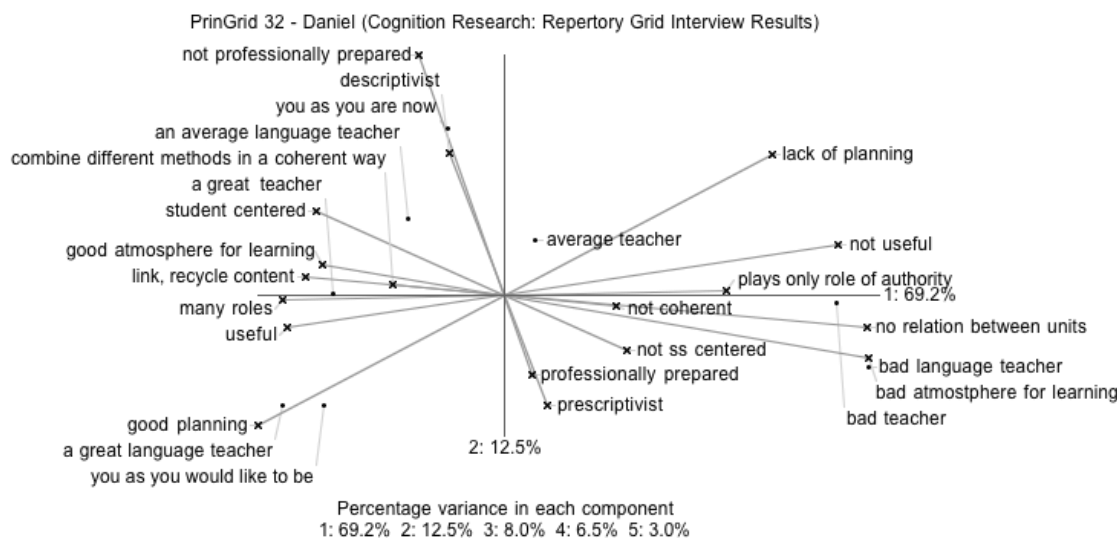


Figure 33. Daniel PCA (Participant 32).

Although Daniel only produced an average number of constructs (nine), his biplot his characterized by a very high level of variation, indicating a cognitively complex perspective on instruction (1<sup>st</sup> component = 69.2%). His constructs are a combination of the general (*many roles; good planning; student-centered; useful; good atmosphere for teaching*) and the pedagogically specific (*link, recycle content; prescriptive; combine different methods in a coherent way*). His practice and his beliefs are very much in-line: his class exhibited each of these characteristics. Daniel also exhibits self-awareness: the element “You as you are now” is located high on the y axis, indicating that the primary direction of growth for him will be towards more professional development. In a short interview after his observation, he commented that he is primarily constrained in his teaching by the national curriculum (*Programa Nacional de Ingles Educación Básica*), which is the standard program in Mexican public schools.

#### **Cohort 4: 4<sup>th</sup> Year LEI Student Teachers**

Cohort 4 is comprised of 10 student teachers in their last year of the University of Guanajuato's LEI program. The first component of Cohort 4's biplot accounts for a full 91.6% of the variance in this group's collective grid, with the second component accounting for a mere 3.1% (see Figure 34). The constructs most tightly clustered around the x axis include those having to do with caring about students (C1), professionalism (C19), being dynamic and entertaining (C7), and having positive personality traits (C18). The fourth-year students' main dimension of thought, then, is mostly defined by socio-effective and personality factors. The element "great language teacher" lies almost outside the field of constructs at the far left of the biplot. On the far right of the biplot, the element "bad language teacher" lies very close to the x axis, implying strongly that such teachers are primarily understood in terms of their poor socio-effective abilities. "Bad language teacher" is also highly associated with poor planning and organization.

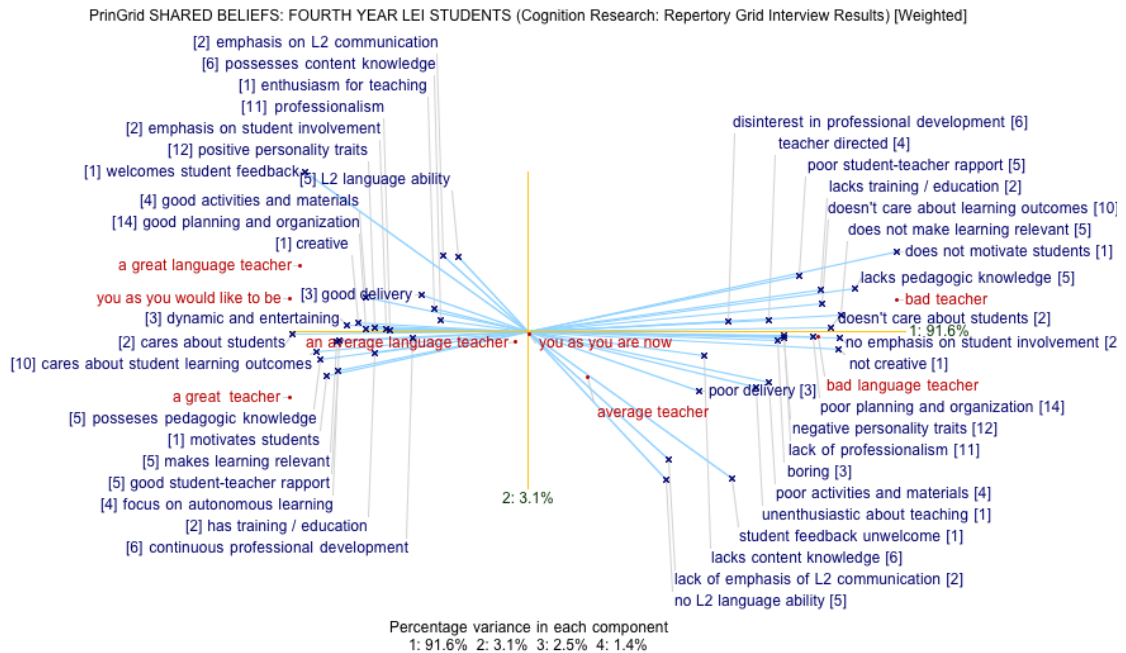


Figure 34. Collective cognitive map: Cohort 4 (4<sup>th</sup> year LEI student teachers).

The element “you as you are now” lies almost exactly at the intersection of the first and second components, implying that students in Cohort 4 view themselves neither as particularly good teachers nor as particularly bad teachers. In fact, the element’s placement slightly to the right of the element “an average language teacher” indicates that they see themselves as average, or slightly worse than average (an 88% construct match; see Figure 35).

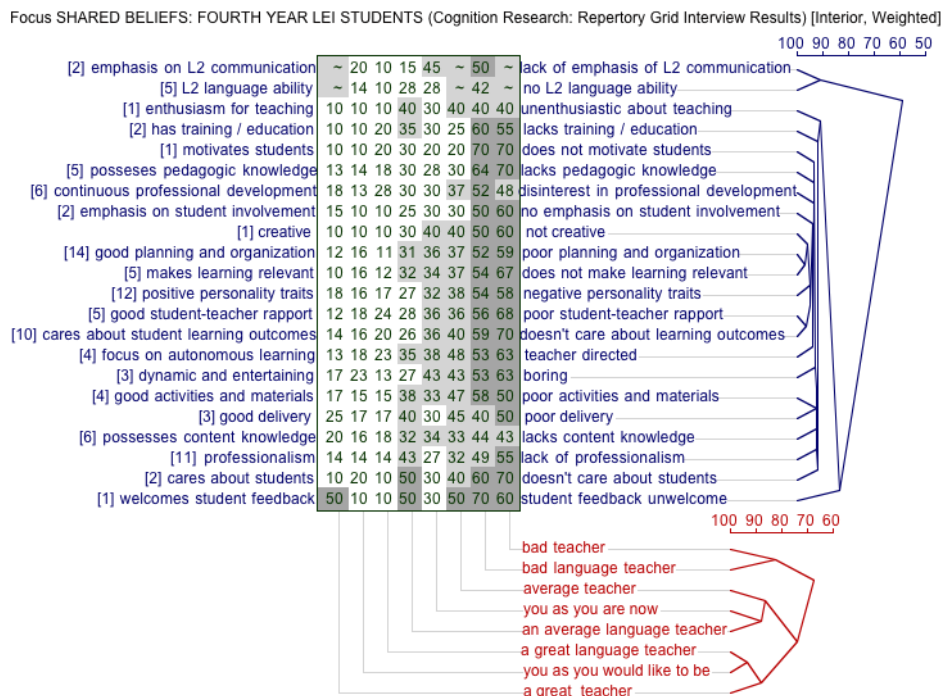


Figure 35. Focus grid: Cohort 4 (4<sup>th</sup> year LEI student teachers).

In order to develop as language teachers, they seem to believe that improvement is necessary in terms of all 22 of the characteristics and behaviors evinced by the collective constructs, and particularly in terms of socio-effective abilities.

The collective constructs with the highest loadings include *motivates students* – *does not motivate students*, *cares about students on a personal level* – *doesn't care about students*, *possesses pedagogic knowledge* – *lacks pedagogic knowledge*, *cares about learning outcomes* – *doesn't care about learning*, and *makes learning relevant to the lives of students* – *does not make learning relevant* (Table 23).

Table 23

*Construct Loading on Three Principal Components: Cohort 4 (4<sup>th</sup> Year LEI Student Teachers)*

	Bipolar constructs	PrinCom 1 (x-axis)	PrinCom 2 (y-axis)	PrinCom 3
C1	<b>cares about students &lt;=&gt; doesn't care about students</b>	<b>-1.90</b>	0.03	0.56
C2	<b>cares about ss learning outcomes &lt;=&gt; doesn't care about ss learning</b>	<b>-1.78</b>	0.17	-0.27
C3	possesses content knowledge <=> lacks content knowledge	-0.93	-0.13	0.05
C4	continuous professional development <=> disinterest in prof devel	-1.11	0.06	-0.01
C5	creative <=> not creative	-1.69	-0.10	-0.07
C6	good delivery <=> poor delivery	-0.98	-0.34	0.25
C7	dynamic and entertaining <=> boring	-1.51	-0.06	-0.31
C8	emphasis on L2 communication <=> lack of emphasis of L2 comm	-0.79	-0.72	-0.73
C9	emphasis on student involvement <=> no emphasis on ss involvement	-1.59	-0.04	-0.12
C10	enthusiasm for teaching <=> unenthusiastic about teaching	-1.13	-0.28	0.43
C11	focus on autonomous learning <=> teacher directed	-1.51	0.08	-0.01
C12	has training / education <=> lacks training / education	-1.57	0.23	0.21
C13	L2 language ability <=> no L2 language ability	-0.74	-0.79	-0.12
C14	<b>makes learning relevant &lt;=&gt; does not make learning relevant</b>	<b>-1.77</b>	0.10	0.01
C15	<b>motivates students &lt;=&gt; does not motivate students</b>	<b>-2.00</b>	0.44	0.11
C16	<b>possesses pedagogic knowledge &lt;=&gt; lacks pedagogic knowledge</b>	<b>-1.88</b>	0.25	-0.02
C17	good planning and organization <=> poor planning and organization	-1.57	-0.03	-0.02
C18	positive personality traits <=> negative personality traits	-1.44	-0.04	-0.15
C19	professionalism <=> lack of professional	-1.39	-0.02	0.46
C20	good activities and materials <=> poor activities and materials	-1.42	-0.30	0.17
C21	good student-teacher rapport <=> poor student-teacher rapport	-1.63	0.34	-0.18
C22	welcomes student feedback <=> student feedback unwelcome	-1.50	-1.08	0.31

Participants in the fourth year of the program report that the strongest influences on their beliefs are reflection on practice, their own personalities, and their own experiences learning a second language (Table 24). In particular, reflection on practice plays a decisive role in how they think about activities and motivation and on the development of their pedagogic knowledge. They also reported that the LEI program has had an influence on their pedagogical beliefs, mostly in terms of continual professional development, autonomous learning, and their L2 ability. As with Cohort's 1 and 2, participants in the fourth-year group reported that previous language learning experiences have played a large part in the development of their content knowledge.



Table 24

*Sources of Beliefs & Their Impact (Cohort 4)*

	quality & variety of activities & materials	the importance of a teacher's personality	caring about students on a personal level	a teacher's rapport with students	importance of continual prof develop	caring about students' learning	the ability to motivate students	a teacher's L2 ability	the importance of autonomous learning	content knowledge	pedagogic knowledge	
The micro-culture where you work	4.8	5.5	6.0	5.2	3.8	5.0	5.3	4.7	4.2	5.0	5.3	5.0
The national culture	3.7	3.7	4.3	4.7	4.2	4.7	3.7	3.8	4.2	5.0	5.2	5.0
The demands of your institution	4.3	3.7	4.0	4.7	3.5	4.2	5.0	5.3	5.0	6.2	6.2	5.3
Observing fellow teachers	2.2	2.2	2.7	2.8	2.3	3.3	3.2	2.5	3.8	2.5	2.5	2.3
Your own personality	1.7	2.0	<b>1.8</b>	2.2	2.2	<b>1.5</b>	2.0	2.5	2.5	3.2	3.2	<b>1.8</b>
Your experiences learning an L2	2.3	2.3	<b>1.8</b>	<b>1.7</b>	2.7	3.2	1.8	2.0	2.7	2.0	2.7	2.0
Reflecting on your own teaching	<b>1.2</b>	<b>1.7</b>	2.0	2.5	2.2	2.0	<b>1.7</b>	<b>1.8</b>	3.3	2.0	2.7	<b>1.8</b>
Educ experiences with L2 teachers	2.2	2.3	3.3	3.0	3.3	2.7	2.2	2.0	<b>2.3</b>	3.0	<b>2.2</b>	3.3
Educ exp with non L2 teachers	2.3	4.8	4.2	4.3	4.5	4.2	4.0	4.2	5.7	5.2	2.5	2.3
Reflectng on student feedback	3.2	1.8	2.8	3.7	3.5	2.7	2.5	2.8	3.7	3.0	3.0	2.8
Your peers in the LEI program	2.3	2.8	2.2	3.3	2.7	3.0	2.5	2.2	3.0	2.5	4.7	3.3
Your teachers in the LEI program	1.8	1.8	2.2	3.0	2.2	1.8	2.8	2.0	3.3	<b>1.7</b>	2.5	3.0
Reading you've done in the LEI	2.5	2.0	2.0	3.2	<b>1.8</b>	3.0	3.2	<b>1.7</b>	2.8	2.3	2.3	4.5

Two fourth-year students, Eberardo and Ernesto, were observed in order to assess the overlap between their pedagogical beliefs and teaching practices (Appendices B and D; Tables 36 and 37, respectively).

Eberardo teaches an upper-intermediate high school class of 17 students.

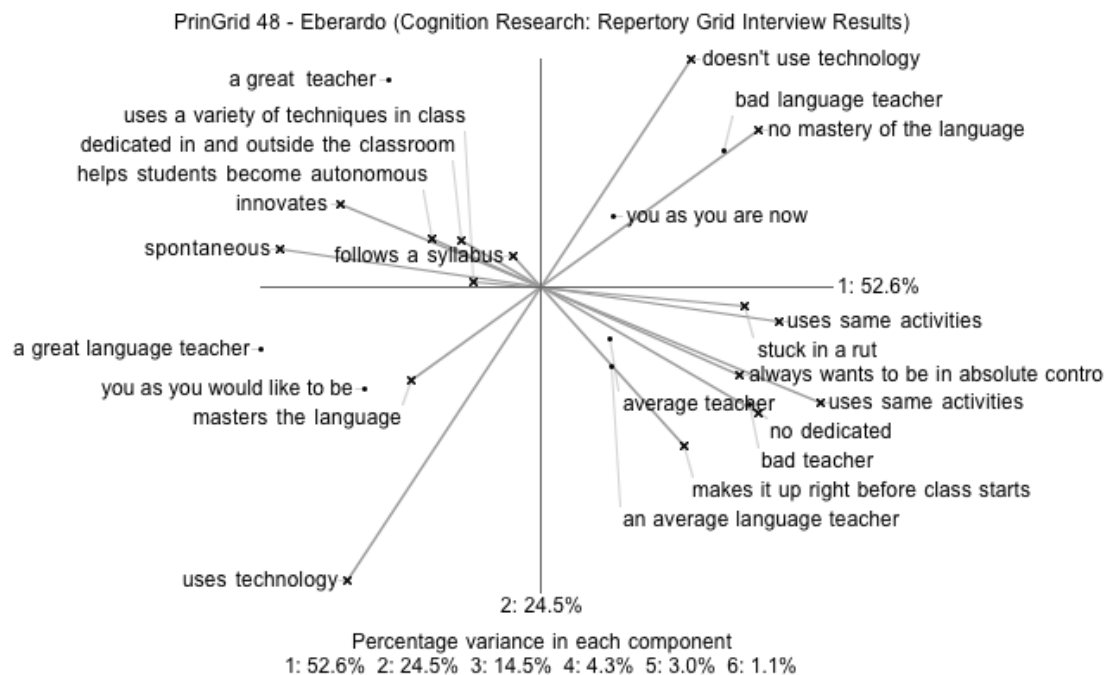


Figure 36. Eberardo (Participant 48).

Eberardo generated an average number of constructs (8), and his PCA demonstrates a highly complex, differentiated cognitive system (1<sup>st</sup> component = 52.6%). His classwork, however, is severely at odds with his beliefs about teaching. For instance, his constructs concern the importance of variety, autonomous learning, innovation, spontaneity, and mastery of the L2. His teaching, however, was marked by its deficiency in all of these areas. (The construct *uses technology-doesn't use technology* has the highest loading in Eberardo's biplot, and yet the use of technology was entirely absent from his lesson. This latter weakness, however, can be blamed on the scarcity of technological resources at his school.) Overall, Eberardo demonstrates strong development in terms of his pedagogic construing, but a clear lack of correspondence between his thinking and his practice.

Ernesto volunteers an hour a week teaching English at a recreational facility for retired senior citizen.

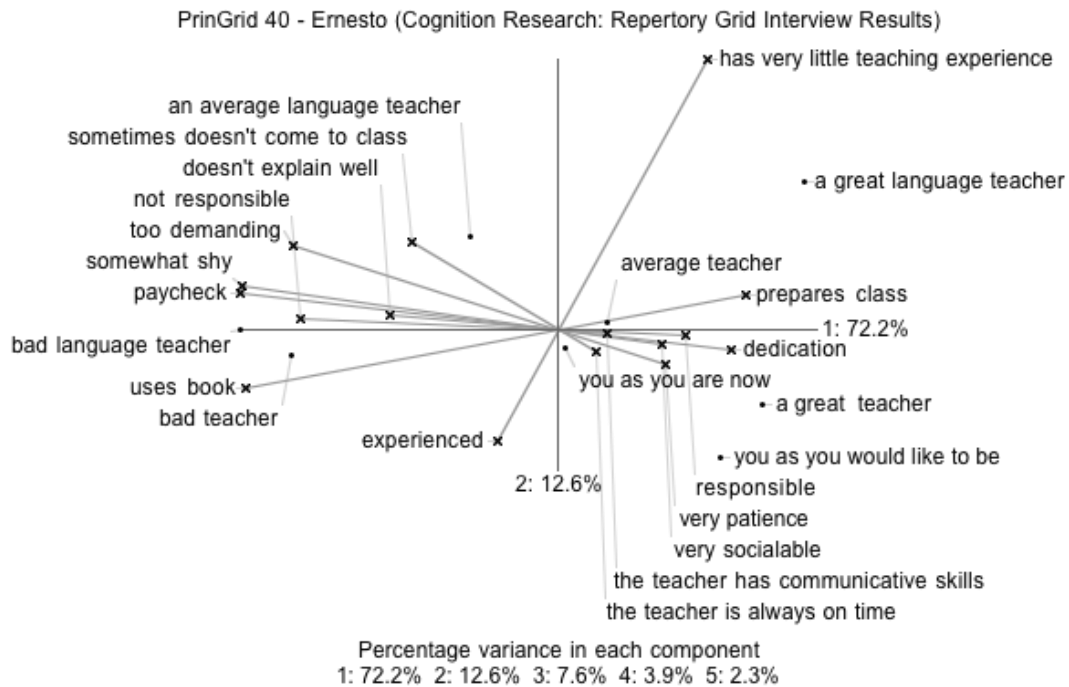


Figure 37. Ernesto (Participant 40).

Ernesto produced an average number of constructs (8) and his PCA is relatively well-disperses (1<sup>st</sup> component = 72.2%). The majority of his constructs, however, are distinguished by their large range of convenience (good teachers *are responsible, experienced, dedicated, good at communicating, sociable, prepared, and patient*). It can be said that Ernesto’s practice aligns exceptionally well with his stated beliefs. However, as was the case with several teachers discussed above, his conceptions of pedagogy are much more limited than his actual practice. In his class, he prioritized student-centered work and demonstrated mastery of a number of ESL techniques, including integrating homework into class work, grouping (table, pair work), having students write out copies

of language structures, using semi-controlled practice with real communicative intent, assigning student presentations, eliciting teacher-directed questions, etc. However, none of his constructs reflected the kind of pedagogy that Ernesto actually practices.

#### **Comparing Cohorts 1 Through 4**

With the “Repsocio” program (part of the suite of programs that comes bundled with Rep 5), it is possible to create a composite grid from any repertory grids that share the same elements and/or constructs. A composite grid was constructed using the grid data from the collective grids belonging to Cohorts 1, 2, 3, and 4 (Figure 38).

Overall, students in the LEI program view themselves as average language teachers with considerable room for improvement in terms of all 22 of the collective constructs discussed in this chapter. In particular, they see a need to develop in the direction of their language ability, their use of the L2 in the classroom, and SLTE in general (even “average language teachers” are more prepared in these areas than they). They would also like to grow in terms of creating student centered classes, possessing more pedagogic and content knowledge, and making learning relevant for their students. The view that students in the LEI program is further evidenced in by an analysis of their FOCUS grid (Figure 39). The elements “You as you are now” and “An average teacher language teacher” are correlated at 91%. “Great language teachers” and “Great teachers” are correlated at 93%, strongly suggesting that students do not perceive a great difference between language pedagogy and pedagogy in other disciplines.

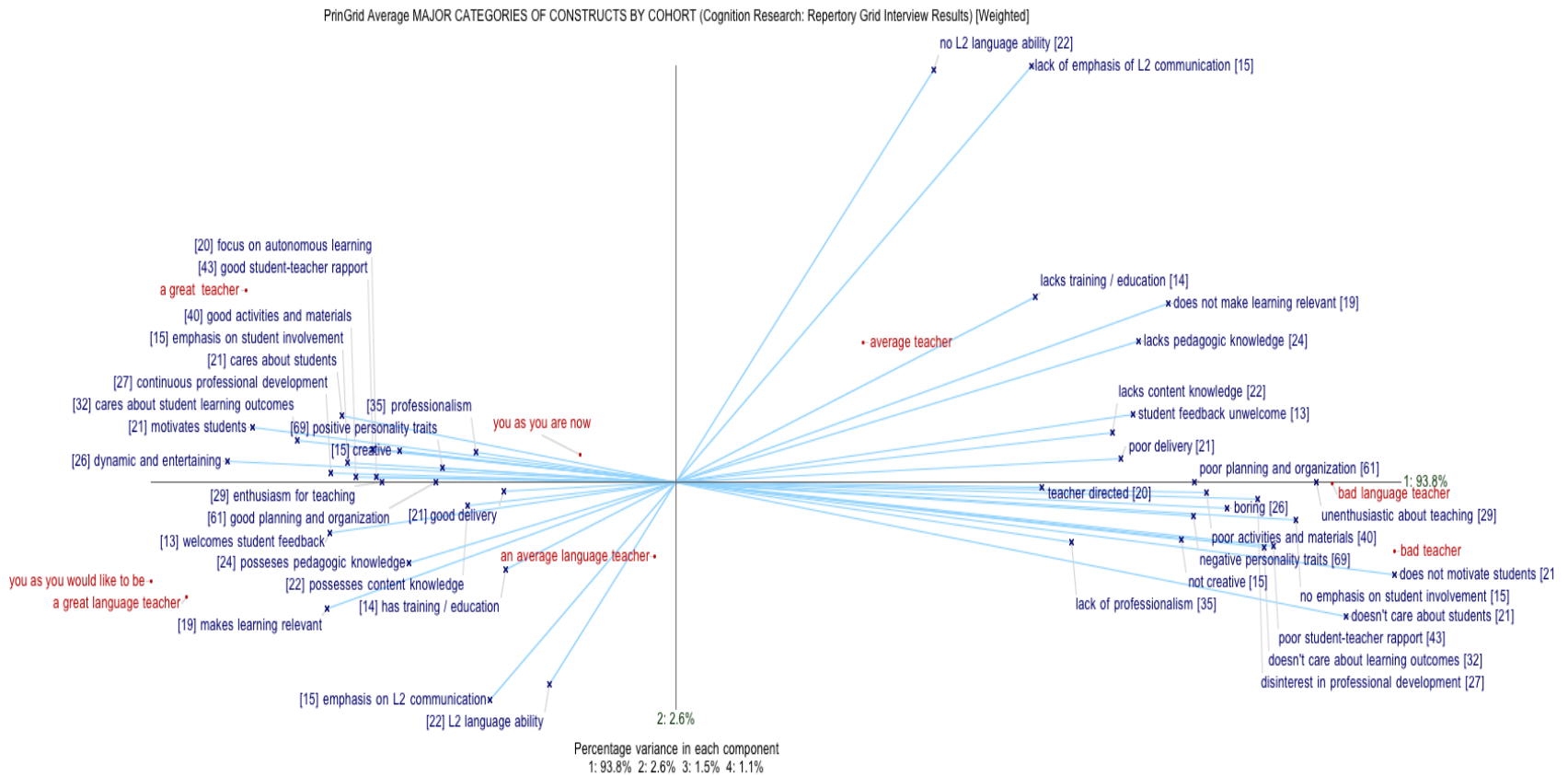


Figure 38. Composite cognitive map: LEI student teachers, years 1-4.

Focus Average MAJOR CATEGORIES OF CONSTRUCTS BY COHORT (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results) [Weighted]

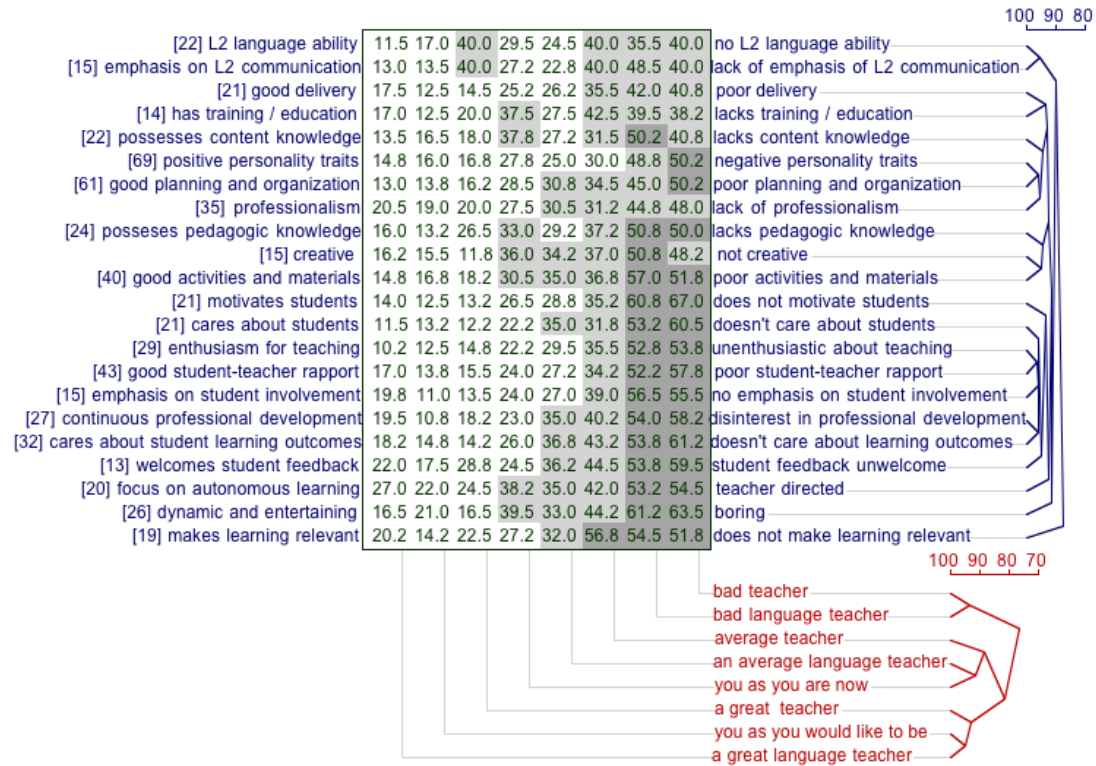


Figure 39. Focus grid: Cohort 4 (LEI student teachers, Years 1-4).

In Table 25, the loadings on the principle components of each of the four groups' biplots are compared. The importance of motivating students (C15) stands out as being critically important to students in each of the four years of the LEI program: the construct *motivates students – does not motivate students* is the only construct to load highly on the principal components of each of the four cohorts and is, overall, the highest loading of all 22 collective constructs. Next, *cares about students – doesn't care about students* (C1) is the second most important collective construct, loading highly on the principal components of three of the four groups. The third highest loading construct on the composite biplot's first component has to do with the importance of a teacher's

dynamism and his or her ability to entertain (C7). *Cares about student learning outcomes – doesn't care about student learning outcomes* (C2) is the fourth highest loading construct. Lastly, the table of loadings reveals the importance LEI students place on student involvement in their practice (C9). Although no group rated student involvement so highly that it appeared as a top loading construct within any of the individual collective grids, it was rated highly enough by all four cohorts that it appears as the fifth highest loading construct overall.

Table 25

*Construct Loadings on Principal Components, Cohorts 1- 4 (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> Year LEI Student Teachers)*

Bipolar constructs		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Years 1-4
C1	<b>cares about students &lt;-&gt; doesn't care about students</b>	<b>1.67</b>	<b>1.69</b>	-1.30	<b>-1.90</b>	<b>-1.63</b>
C2	<b>cares about ss learning outcomes &lt;-&gt; doesn't care about ss learning</b>	<b>1.76</b>	1.68	-1.17	<b>-1.78</b>	<b>-1.57</b>
C3	possesses content knowledge <-> lacks content knowledge	1.36	1.13	-0.77	-0.93	-1.05
C4	continuous professional development <-> disinterest in prof devel	1.61	1.67	<b>-1.69</b>	-1.11	-1.51
C5	creative <-> not creative	0.73	<b>1.76</b>	-1.08	-1.69	-1.27
C6	good delivery <-> poor delivery	<b>1.65</b>	0.39	-1.01	-0.98	-1.00
C7	<b>dynamic and entertaining &lt;-&gt; boring</b>	1.62	<b>1.74</b>	<b>-1.70</b>	-1.51	<b>-1.62</b>
C8	emphasis on L2 communication <-> lack of emphasis of L2 comm	0.57	1.16	-0.90	-0.79	-0.88
C9	<b>emphasis on student involvement &lt;-&gt; no emphasis on ss involvemen</b>	1.48	1.60	-1.51	-1.59	<b>-1.54</b>
C10	enthusiasm for teaching <-> unenthusiastic about teaching	<b>1.76</b>	1.68	<b>-1.64</b>	-1.13	-1.52
C11	focus on autonomous learning <-> teacher directed	1.35	1.46	0.00	-1.51	-1.08
C12	has training / education <-> lacks training / education	1.08	0.94	-0.09	-1.57	-0.86
C13	L2 language ability <-> no L2 language ability	0.47	0.69	-0.66	-0.74	-0.63
C14	makes learning relevant <-> does not make learning relevant	0.44	<b>1.90</b>	-1.42	<b>-1.77</b>	-1.36
C15	<b>motivates students &lt;-&gt; does not motivate students</b>	<b>2.01</b>	<b>1.82</b>	<b>-1.64</b>	<b>-2.00</b>	<b>-1.85</b>
C16	possesses pedagogic knowledge <-> lacks pedagogic knowledge	1.35	0.83	-0.84	<b>-1.88</b>	-1.18
C17	good planning and organization <-> poor planning and organization	0.77	1.46	-1.19	-1.57	-1.23
C18	positive personality traits <-> negative personality traits	1.02	1.29	-1.26	-1.44	-1.22
C19	professionalism <-> lack of professional	0.00	1.35	-1.16	-1.39	-0.97
C20	good activities and materials <-> poor activities and materials	1.36	1.54	-1.20	-1.42	-1.38
C21	good student-teacher rapport <-> poor student-teacher rapport	1.54	1.32	-1.52	-1.63	-1.46
C22	welcomes student feedback <-> student feedback unwelcome	0.00	<b>1.69</b>	<b>-1.94</b>	-1.50	-1.30

A collective grid having to do with sources of pedagogical belief was constructed by averaging questionnaire data from the four cohorts (Table 26). The relevant impact of

different factors on student thinking about twelve key areas of educational concern can be more clearly visualized in Table 27.

Table 26

*Sources of Beliefs & Their Impact (Cohorts 1-4)*

	quality & variety of activities & materials	the importance of a teacher's personality	caring about students on a personal level	importance of continual prof develop	caring about students' learning	a teacher's L2 ability	the importance of autonomous learning	a teacher's planning and organization	content knowledge	pedagogic knowledge		
The micro-culture where you work	4.1	4.3	3.8	4.3	3.9	4.1	4.5	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.3	4.3
The national culture	2.8	3.4	3.7	4.0	4.0	3.5	3.4	4.1	3.9	4.4	4.9	4.7
The demands of your institution	3.8	4.3	4.7	4.9	4.3	3.8	4.1	4.6	4.9	4.8	5.2	5.0
Observing fellow teachers	3.1	3.5	3.2	4.0	3.5	3.7	3.9	3.7	4.0	4.2	4.1	4.0
Your own personality	<b>1.8</b>	2.6	<b>2.3</b>	2.8	2.7	<b>1.7</b>	<b>2.3</b>	2.5	<b>2.4</b>	2.9	3.0	2.8
Your experiences learning an L2	2.2	2.7	2.8	3.3	3.3	3.0	3.1	3.2	2.6	3.0	<b>2.5</b>	2.9
Reflecting on your own teaching	2.0	2.4	2.6	3.0	2.7	2.3	<b>2.3</b>	2.4	2.6	2.8	3.0	2.7
Educ experiences with L2 teachers	3.1	3.1	3.6	3.8	3.9	3.8	3.6	3.6	3.1	4.1	2.8	2.9
Educ exp with non L2 teachers	2.7	3.6	3.1	3.6	3.5	3.3	3.1	3.5	4.0	4.4	3.7	2.6
Reflecting on student feedback	3.2	2.8	2.9	3.1	3.1	3.0	3.1	3.2	3.1	4.0	3.8	3.5
Your peers in the LEI program	2.7	3.0	2.9	3.5	3.1	3.1	3.3	3.1	3.3	3.4	4.3	4.2
Your teachers in the LEI program	1.9	<b>2.0</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>2.4</b>	1.8	2.4	<b>2.0</b>	2.6	<b>2.1</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>2.3</b>
Reading you've done in the LEI	2.6	2.5	2.8	3.3	3.1	2.6	3.0	2.5	3.1	2.4	2.9	3.8

Table 27

*Sources of Beliefs & Their Impact (Cohorts 1-4)*

	quality & variety of activities & materials	the importance of a teacher's personality	caring about students on a personal level	importance of continual prof develop	caring about students' learning	a teacher's L2 ability	the importance of autonomous learning	a teacher's planning and organization	content knowledge	pedagogic knowledge	Total	
The micro-culture where you work											0	
The national culture											0	
The demands of your institution											0	
Observing fellow teachers											0	
Your own personality	2	2	1	4	1		1				12	
Your experiences learning an L2	1	1				1	2				5	
Reflecting on your own teaching	2	1		2					1		6	
Educ experiences with L2 teachers						1	2	1			4	
Educ exp with non L2 teachers		1	1	1							3	
Reflecting on student feedback											0	
Your peers in the LEI program											0	
Your teachers in the LEI program		2	1	2	1	2	2	2	3	1	2	18
Reading you've done in the LEI	1			2		2	1				6	

Note. Not all categories add up to 4 because of ties in the ratings.



Overall, students in all four years of the program report that the LEI program has had a strong effect on their beliefs. Together, they rate the LEI program as having a great impact on their beliefs in terms of 8 of the 12 categories of pedagogic concern presented in the questionnaire. Three of these categories have to do with academic material (organization and planning, content knowledge, and pedagogic knowledge), four have to do with socio-affective factors (teacher personality, caring about students, student-teacher rapport, and motivation), one has to do with L2 ability, and the last has to do with the importance of continuous professional development. Personality was reported as the second biggest factor in how students think about L2 pedagogy: personality greatly influences student opinion about 7 of the 12 categories mentioned in the questionnaire and has a particular impact on beliefs about student learning outcomes. Finally, both reflection on practice and readings were both reported as having significant impacts on student teacher cognition.

#### **Cohort 5: LEI Graduates**

Ten graduates of the LEI program form Cohort 5. Component 1 is most highly associated with the constructs concerned with caring about learning outcomes (C2), focusing on autonomous learning (C11), developing good materials and activities (C20), and promoting student motivation (C15) (Figure 39). Overall, the constructs with the highest loadings concern emphasis on student involvement (C9), a focus on autonomous learning (C11), enthusiasm for teaching (C17), good planning and organization (C17), and an interest in student learning outcomes (C2) (Table 28).

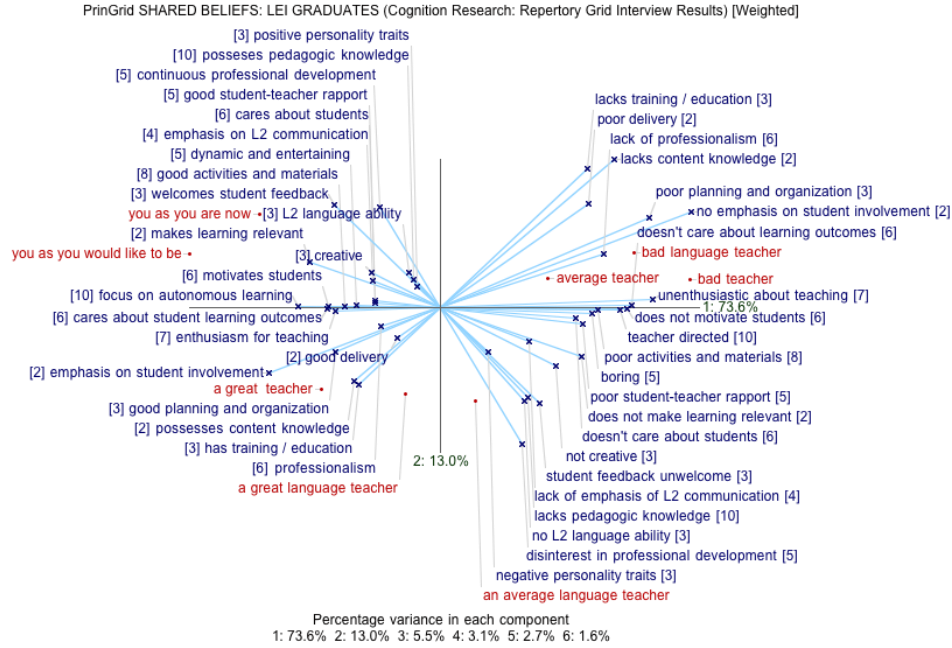


Figure 39. Collective cognitive map: Cohort 5 (LEI graduates).

Table 28

Construct Loading on Three Principal Components: Cohort 5 (LEI Graduates)

Bipolar constructs	PrinCom 1 (x-axis)	PrinCom 2 (y-axis)	PrinCom 3
C1 cares about students <-> doesn't care about students	0.95	-0.08	0.33
C2 <b>cares about ss learning outcomes</b> <-> <b>doesn't care about ss learning</b>	<b>1.43</b>	0.02	0.04
C3 possesses content knowledge <-> lacks content knowledge	1.23	1.05	-0.67
C4 continuous professional development <-> disinterest in prof devel	0.67	-1.12	0.46
C5 creative <-> not creative	0.87	-0.44	0.50
C6 good delivery <-> poor delivery	0.91	0.64	-0.08
C7 dynamic and entertaining <-> boring	1.11	-0.05	0.15
C8 emphasis on L2 communication <-> lack of emphasis of L2 comm	0.74	-0.29	-0.05
C9 <b>emphasis on student involvement</b> <-> <b>no emphasis on ss involvement</b>	<b>1.99</b>	0.76	0.21
C10 <b>enthusiasm for teaching</b> <-> <b>unenthusiastic about teaching</b>	<b>1.50</b>	0.07	0.02
C11 <b>focus on autonomous learning</b> <-> <b>teacher directed</b>	<b>1.51</b>	-0.02	-0.14
C12 has training / education <-> lacks training / education	1.08	1.02	0.44
C13 L2 language ability <-> no L2 language ability	0.55	-0.61	-0.50
C14 makes learning relevant <-> does not make learning relevant	1.28	-0.45	0.18
C15 motivates students <-> does not motivate students	1.41	-0.02	-0.06
C16 possesses pedagogic knowledge <-> lacks pedagogic knowledge	0.54	-0.56	-0.46
C17 <b>good planning and organization</b> <-> <b>poor planning and organization</b>	<b>1.48</b>	0.63	-0.28
C18 positive personality traits <-> negative personality traits	0.34	-0.31	-0.11
C19 professionalism <-> lack of professional	1.05	0.35	-0.15
C20 good activities and materials <-> poor activities and materials	1.20	-0.02	-0.08
C21 good student-teacher rapport <-> poor student-teacher rapport	0.98	-0.12	0.65
C22 welcomes student feedback <-> student feedback unwelcome	0.97	-0.94	-0.36

Second, among graduates of the LEI program, the elements “You as you are now” and “You as you would like to be” match at 92% (Figure 40). Of the six cohorts in the current study, this is the highest match between these elements. (Interestingly, the match between “You as you are now” and “A great L2 language teacher” is relatively low, at 73%.) Moreover, the element “You as you are now” is essentially outside the field of constructs, indicating that graduates of the LEI program are quite confident in their teaching abilities.

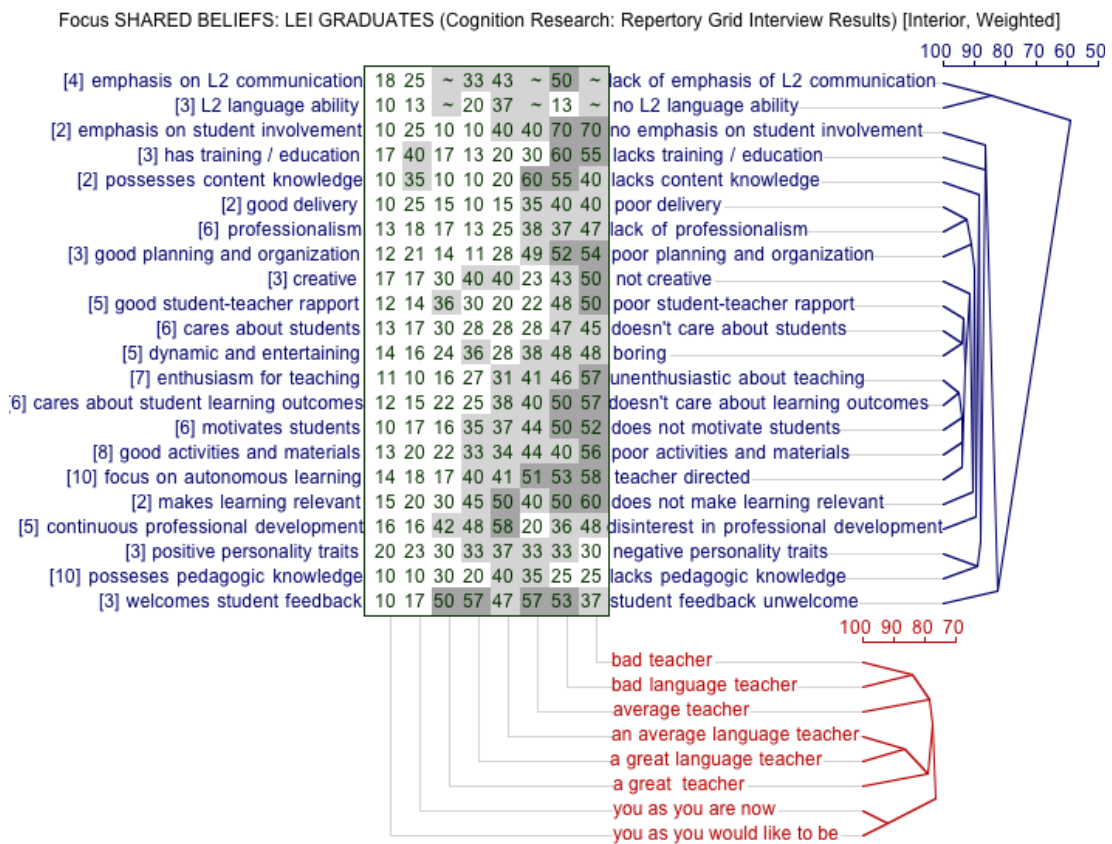


Figure 40. Focus grid: Cohort 5 (LEI graduates).

Sources and influences on Cohort 5's beliefs were also examined (Table 29).

Participants in this group reported that reflecting on practice and their own personalities have the greatest influence on how they think about their teaching work. Learnings from the LEI program seem to have little impact on this groups belief about pedagogy.

Table 29

*Sources of Beliefs & Their Impact (Cohort 5)*

	quality & variety of activities & materials	the importance of a teacher's personality	caring about students on a personal level	a teacher's rapport with students	importance of continual prof develop	caring about students' learning	the ability to motivate students	a teacher's L2 ability	the importance of autonomous learning	content planning and organization	pedagogic knowledge	
The micro-culture where you work	4.5	4.1	4.6	5.0	4.9	3.5	4.4	4.6	3.6	3.8	3.5	5.0
The national culture	5.0	5.5	5.0	4.5	4.6	2.9	3.9	4.3	3.5	3.6	5.5	5.5
The demands of your institution	4.5	4.0	5.0	5.5	5.1	3.4	4.5	5.0	4.9	4.3	5.0	4.5
Observing fellow teachers	3.3	3.4	4.3	4.1	4.0	2.9	3.4	3.9	2.6	3.9	2.9	2.6
Your own personality	<b>1.9</b>	2.3	<b>2.4</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>2.1</b>	2.9	<b>2.1</b>	2.4	3.1	3.6
Your experiences learning an L2	3.0	3.3	3.6	4.3	3.3	3.6	2.9	3.3	2.6	2.9	3.3	4.3
Reflecting on your own teaching	<b>1.9</b>	<b>2.1</b>	2.8	3.6	<b>2.4</b>	2.5	2.4	<b>2.4</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>2.1</b>
Educ experiences with L2 teachers	2.6	3.1	3.6	3.9	3.3	3.8	3.6	3.0	3.5	3.6	3.9	3.6
Educ exp with non L2 teachers	3.1	3.5	3.0	3.5	3.0	2.4	3.1	3.3	4.0	5.0	4.0	3.5
Reflectng on student feedback	2.4	2.4	3.1	3.3	2.5	4.6	3.1	2.9	3.3	4.3	3.3	3.0
Your peers in the LEI program	3.5	4.5	4.0	4.1	3.4	3.1	3.5	2.9	3.6	4.0	4.5	4.8
Your teachers in the LEI program	2.9	4.8	4.4	4.9	3.8	3.3	4.3	3.8	3.6	3.4	3.8	4.9

The teaching work of two LEI graduates, Flor and Fabricio, was observed and their practice was compared to information from their grid interviews and PCAs (Appendix D; Figures 41 and 42, respectively).

Fabricio works at the university level. The class which was observed was made up of 23 students. Fabricio produced an average number of constructs (11). However, the cognitive complexity of his biplot, as measured by the amount of variability accounted

for by the first component, is very low (1<sup>st</sup> component = 90.1%). His constructs tend to be rather vague: *effective in the classroom- doesn't know what to do, goes beyond the requirements-stays on course, creative-follows syllabus too tightly, passionate-just a job, and prepares useful material-uses book as guide to class*. Because he does not define such terms as “effective,” “creative,” or “useful,” it is difficult to assess to what degree his beliefs and practices align. Some beliefs that he obviously holds very strongly, such as the importance of grammar, were not mentioned among his constructs.

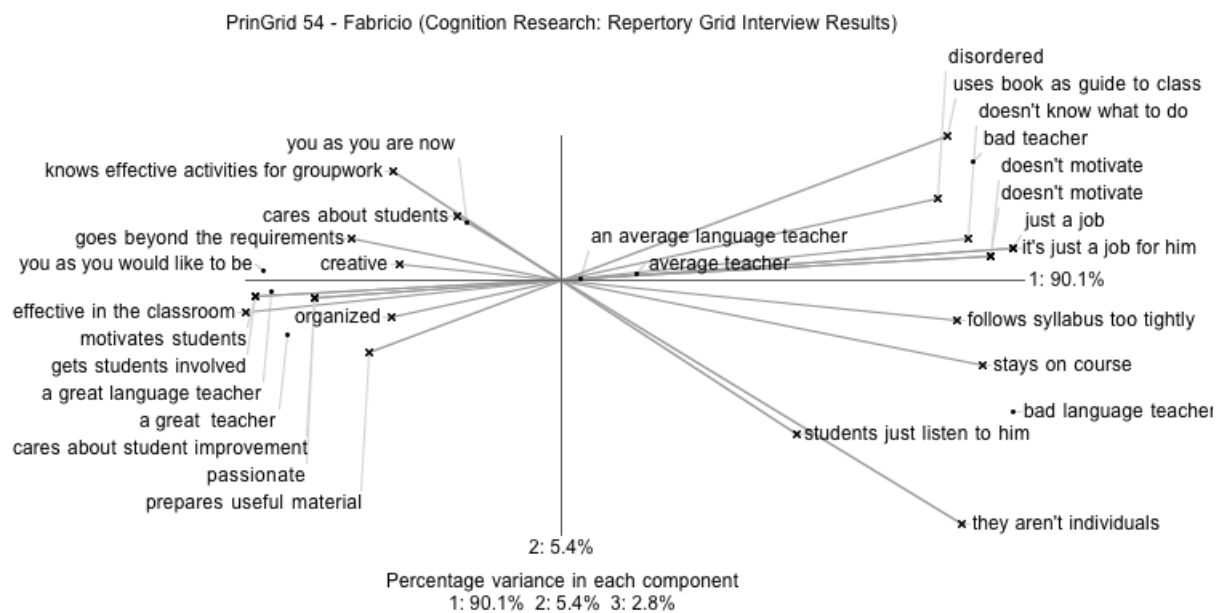


Figure 41. Fabricio PCA (Participant 54).

Overall, however, it is clear that Fabricio need to development further in order to be an effective teacher. Judging him against his elicited constructs, it is clear that Fabricio does not prepare useful material, only involves students to the extent that they (mostly) do the work he assigns them, does not motivate his students, does not know effective activities for group work, and is not particularly effective in the classroom. Interestingly,

he places the element “You as you are now” far closer to the positive poles of these constructs than to the negative. This indicates that he may not have an entirely accurate picture of himself as a teacher and may be unmindful of the many areas in which he requires improvement.

Flor works at the junior college level. She produced 9 constructs; the variance accounted for by the first component in her biplot is 79.9%.

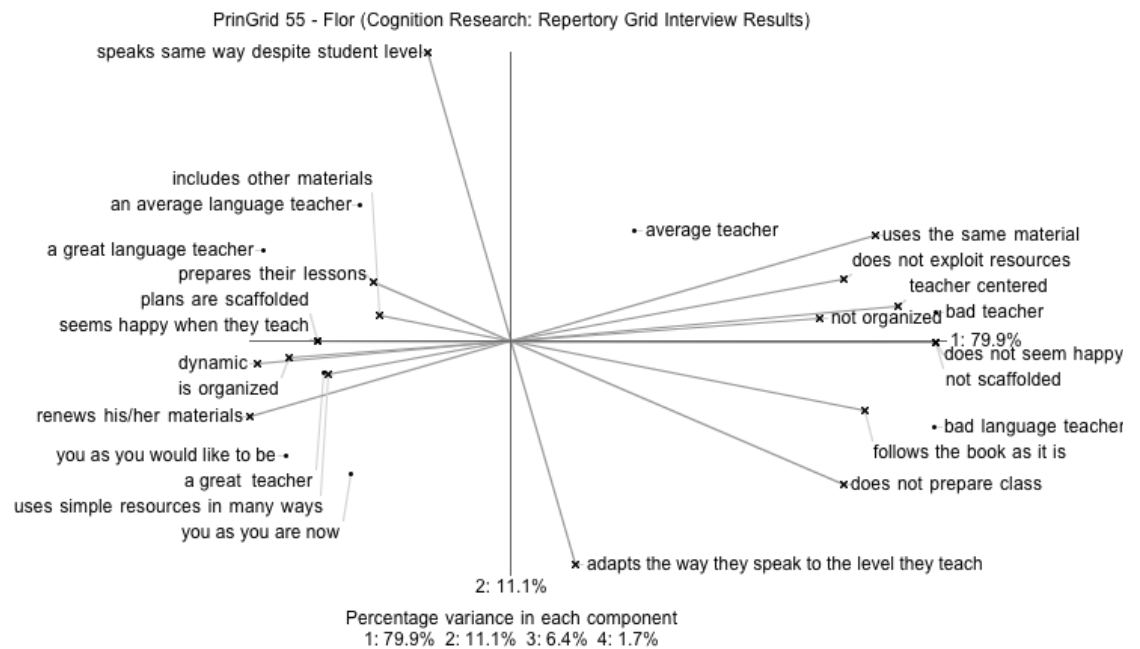


Figure 42. Flor (Participant 55).

Many of Flor’s constructs are pedagogically specific. She underlines the desirability of using simple resources in many ways, scaffolding lessons, adapting the L2 to the level of the students, renewing materials, and using a variety of materials. Less specific constructs concern being organized, prepared, dynamic, and happy. In each of these areas, her practice matches her beliefs. The congruence between who she is now

and who she would like to be in the future (as determined by the proximity of elements) is likewise high, demonstrating a realistic and confident self-concept.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Discussion**

The current research sought to answer four primary questions:

1. What is the content and structure of the research participants' personal beliefs about effective English language teaching?
2. How do conceptions of effective teaching change over the course of a four-year SLTE program?
3. Where do pedagogical beliefs come from? Prior educational experiences, pedagogic training, institutional culture and constraints, other?
4. How do personal beliefs about effective English language teaching correlate with observed classroom practices? Do personal beliefs about effective English teaching and classroom practice converge as students progress through a four-year SLTE program?

While definitive, unqualified answers to these questions are, of course, impossible, a number of tentative conclusions are supported by the results of the investigation. Here, I explicate, interpret, and qualify the results of the current study and assess findings in the light of previous research.

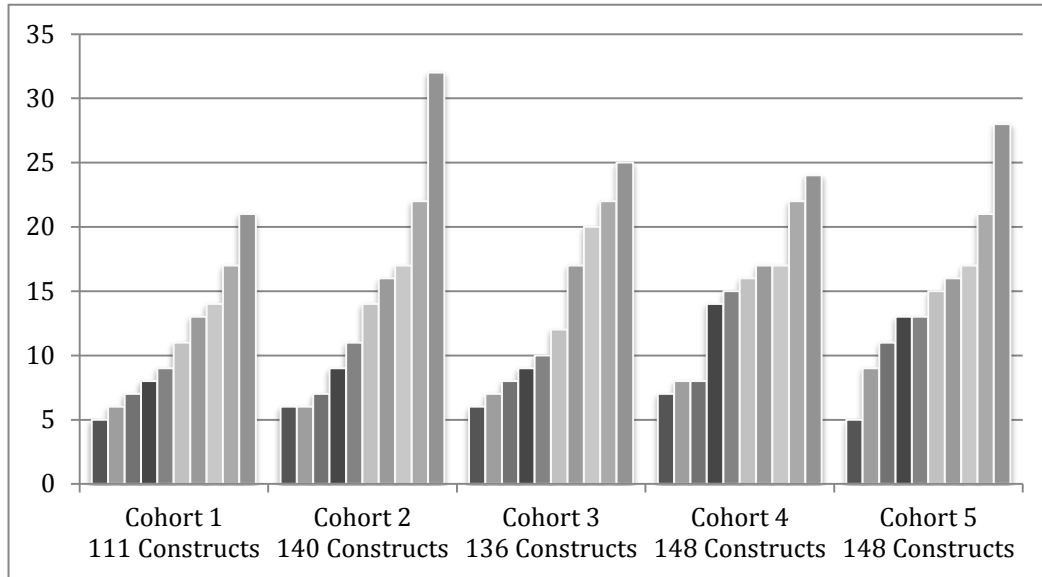


## **Beliefs About SLT: Content, Structure, and Change**

In this section, I discuss both the research participants' personal beliefs about effective English language teaching and the degree to which the LEI program impacts those beliefs.

**Change in pedagogical beliefs among LEI students.** Results of the current study strongly suggest that LEI students do not significantly change their beliefs about second language pedagogy during the course of their SLTE program. This conclusion is corroborated by five pieces of evidence. First, the number of personal constructs that student teachers in the LEI are able to generate about SLT does not rise significantly over the course of the program. Second, the types of constructs generated by the participants in this research remain very consistent over time. Third, attitudes about teaching (as measured by PCA construct loadings) do not vary appreciably over the course of four years. Fourth, the results of FOCUS analyses of cohort grids do not demonstrate any pronounced shifts in self-perception as students move through the program. Fifth, according to one measure of "cognitive complexity," students across the four years of the LEI program demonstrate very little change. I elaborate on each of these points, below.

Looking at Figure 43, some slight, albeit inconsistent, growth can be seen in the number of personal constructs generated by students at different stages of the LEI program.



*Figure 43.* Number of constructs generated by cohort.

It is tempting to see these gains as evidence of cognitive growth. However, an independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare construct generation at the beginning of the LEI program and the end: no statistically significant difference in the scores between Cohort 1 (first-year students) ( $M=11.1$ ,  $SD=5.15$ ) and Cohort 4 (fourth-year students) ( $M=14.8$ ,  $SD=5.79$ ) were discovered [conditions:  $t(18)=1.5$ ,  $p = .15$ ]. These results suggest that after four years of SLTE, students completing the LEI program were unable to produce significantly more personal constructs about L2 pedagogy than in-coming students (Table 30).

Table 30

*Number of Constructs Generated by Year*

Year	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
Cohort 1	11.1	5.15	10
Cohort 4	14.8	5.79	10

$$t(18) = 1.5, p = .15, d = .68$$

Results of the current study also indicate that the kinds of beliefs held by students in the LEI do not change dramatically over time. These findings are consistent with a number of previous studies. For instance, Morine-Dershirner, Saunders, Artiles, Mostert, Tanikersley, Trent, and Nuttycombe (1992) reported that the pedagogic beliefs of students enrolled in a five-year teacher preparation program were not significantly altered over the course of their education: throughout the program, the pre-service teachers continued to believe that positive socio-affective traits were the most important factors in teaching excellence.

Participants in each cohort consistently produced the same two types of construct more than any others: those having to do with personality and socio-affective factors and those having to do with planning and organization. Overall, there is a high degree of overlap between the results of the current study and findings from previous research (Brosh, 1996; Çelik et al., 2013; Chen, 2012; Emmelman & DeCesare, 2007; Faranda & Clarke, 2004; Forston & Brown, 1998; Helterbran, 2008; Hotaman, 2010; Johnson, 2004; Minor et al., 2002; Mullock, 2003; Shishavan & Sadeghi, 2009; Strage, 2008; Thompson,

2008; Tok, 2010; Wichadee, 2010; et al.). For instance, in their literature review of pre-service teacher beliefs, attitudes, and expectations, Chong et al. (2005) found that many pre-service instructors believe that a “teaching personality” is more important than cognitive skills or pedagogical or subject-matter knowledge. Holt-Reynolds (1992) and Weinstein (1989) reported that beginning students in educational programs tend to believe that motivating one’s students and being warm and personable are primary characteristics of good teachers. Findings such as these are very much in line with my research. Results here are particularly comparable with those of Çubukcu (2010), Barnes and Lock (2010, 2013), Korkmaz and Yavuz (2011), and Walls et al. (2002). For instance, the latter authors, in their investigation of 90 teacher education students, novice instructors, and experienced teachers, reported that all three groups perceived affective factors to be highly correlated with good teaching. Caring about students was seen to be particularly important. The participants in their study also viewed organization, preparation, and clarity as highly correlated with teaching skill.

Over the course of the LEI program, there is no discernable increase in constructs specifically related to second language teaching. For instance, student beliefs about the pedagogic importance of using communicative approaches, of the instructor’s L2 language ability, and of appropriate activities and materials are essentially the same between all the cohorts in the study.

The vast majority of constructs produced by participants in all four years of the program do not relate to instructional practices specific to ESL teaching but instead concern aspects of general pedagogy. LEI students perceive a 93% overlap between excellent language teachers and excellent teachers in other disciplines. This strongly

suggests that students in the program do not view SLT as a separate educational discipline (see Borg, 2006b; Brown, 2009; Brosh, 1996; Hammadou & Bernhart, 1987; Lee, 2010; Lenze, 1995). Overall, students tend to see SLT as a soft-applied discipline (see Neumann et al., 2002). In terms of constructs related to general pedagogy, there are no discernable patterns of change as students move through the program (with the exception that the number of constructs related to “enthusiasm for teaching” diminishes year after year).

An “eyeball” analysis of personal constructs can furnish information about the growth and content of a person’s beliefs. Principal component analysis goes further, providing a sense of how a given person’s beliefs relate to each other, as well as how strongly held these beliefs are. Results of PCA indicate that student attitudes about teaching remain fairly consistent over time. Research participants in each of the four years of the program agreed on the most important and least important personal constructs. The highest loading collective construct has to do with the importance of motivating students, followed by constructs related to caring for students, maintaining a dynamic and entertaining classroom, focusing on student learning outcomes, and emphasizing student involvement. These loadings exhibit very little change year over year. The collective construct with the lowest loading has to do with the language level of L2 instructors; second language ability was rated the least important of all the collective constructs by each of the four participant groups (Table 31). This may indicate that LEI students do not necessarily perceive a non-native English level as an impediment to teacher excellence.

Table 31

*Top Five Loadings and Bottom Loading, Cohort 1 - 4*

Bipolar constructs		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Years 1-4
C15	<b>motivates students &lt;-&gt; does not motivate students</b>	<b>2.01</b>	<b>1.82</b>	<b>-1.64</b>	<b>-2.00</b>	<b>-1.85</b>
C1	<b>cares about students &lt;-&gt; doesn't care about students</b>	<b>1.67</b>	<b>1.69</b>	-1.30	<b>-1.90</b>	<b>-1.63</b>
C7	<b>dynamic and entertaining &lt;-&gt; boring</b>	1.62	<b>1.74</b>	<b>-1.70</b>	-1.51	<b>-1.62</b>
C2	<b>cares about ss learning outcomes &lt;-&gt; doesn't care about ss learning</b>	<b>1.76</b>	1.68	-1.17	<b>-1.78</b>	<b>-1.57</b>
C9	<b>emphasis on student involvement &lt;-&gt; no emphasis on ss involvement</b>	1.48	1.60	-1.51	-1.59	<b>-1.54</b>
C13	L2 language ability <-> no L2 language ability	0.47	0.69	-0.66	-0.74	-0.63

Note. Top loadings are marked in **bold**. Bottom loadings are surrounded by a box.

The results of FOCUS analyses of the four cohorts' grid data indicate that students in the current study see themselves as average language teachers, and that this perception does not change over time. Table 32 shows the percentage of congruence between the elements "You as you are now," "You as you would like to be," and "A great language teacher." Ideally, these elements should match at higher and higher levels as students progress through the program. Instead, participants in the fourth-year of their LEI studies actually see themselves further removed from their ideal teaching selves than any other cohort in the study.

Table 32

*Proximity Between the Elements “You as You Are Now” and the Elements “You as You Would Like to Be,” “A Great Second Language Teacher.”*

	<i>ideal you</i>	<i>great L2 teacher</i>
Cohort 0 (you as you are now)	86	86
Cohort 1 (you as you are now)	76	75
Cohort 2 (you as you are now)	78	80
Cohort 3 (you as you are now)	84	82
Cohort 4 (you as you are now)	71	72
Cohort 5 (you as you are now)	92	73

In personal construct psychology, cognitive complexity refers to the capacity of an individual to construe a given subject in a multidimensional way (Beiri et al., 1966, p. 185). That is, cognitively complex individuals are capable of perceiving reality from various perspectives (Castejon, 2001). In the words of Feixas and Cornejo (2002), such a person can “construe events from different points of view and not just from a good/bad, black/white perspective which would be characteristic of a cognitively simple person” (p. 5).

There are number of different ways that data from repertory grids can be used to analyze cognitive complexity (see Caputi et al., 2012; Fransella et al., 2004). Cognitively complex individuals may use many constructs to construe a given domain, while less cognitively complex people may use relatively fewer. In this case, determining cognitive complexity is simply a matter of adding up an individual’s constructs and comparing the total to others who have been interviewed about the same topic (Winter, 2013). It is also

possible that a person with low cognitive complexity may be able to generate a great number of constructs, but that all of them may mean much the same thing. In this case, cognitive complexity can be assessed by analyzing the degree of independence between a person's constructs. This latter approach is referred to as the *Percentage of Variance Accounted for the First Factor* (PVAFF) method. Results indicate the importance of the first principal component in terms of representing an individual's construct system: higher scores indicate greater unidimensionality in a person's construing; lower scores indicate cognitions capable of more nuance, specificity, and scope (Hardison & Neimeyer, 2012). White (2013), citing a study by Ryle and Breen (1972), explains that in a sample of normal subjects, for a grid consisting of 16 elements and 26 constructs, the percentage of variance of the first principal component was found to be 39.4. Smaller grids will produce higher levels of variance. For smaller grids, a variance of 74% has been described as excessively "tight" (White, 2013).

For all four cohorts, the percentage of variance accounted for by the first principal component is quite high in the biplots representing their collective construing. Moreover, scores tend to go up year by year: the first-year students in the study have a variance score of 84.2%, while fourth-year students have a score of 91.6% (Table 33).



Table 33

*Variance Represented by Principal Components in Each Cohort*

	PC 1	PC 2
Cohort 0	89.80%	3.90%
Cohort 1	84.20%	7.10%
Cohort 2	88.30%	3.50%
Cohort 3	86.40%	5.30%
Cohort 4	91.60%	3.10%
Cohort 5	73.60%	13.00%

These high scores indicate that the student teachers in the LEI program tend to view pedagogical issues in a binary manner: either all good or all bad. Asked to rate teachers in terms of their pedagogical abilities, the participants were unable to differentiate elements. That is, they tended to rate teachers they liked all in the same way, teachers they didn't like all in the same way, and teachers they felt were average all in the same way.

**Change in pedagogical beliefs among LEI graduates.** The foregoing review of the data tends to confirm that the University of Guanajuato's LEI program has a negligible impact on the cognitive growth of its students. This conclusion is somewhat complicated, however, by an examination of the data associated with LEI graduates. When graduates of the teacher education program are compared to participants still enrolled in the LEI, the graduates exhibit growth in terms of four of the five measures discussed above: types of superordinate constructs, attitudes towards those constructs, self-perception, and cognitive complexity.

First, although there was no statistically significant difference between the overall number of individual personal constructs generated by the graduate group and any of the student groups, there were some differences in the *types* of constructs that were generated

by each. Both the graduate cohort and the student cohorts generated comparable numbers of constructs having to do with planning and organization; this demonstrates the critical importance of lesson preparation and structure to all groups in the study. However, the graduate cohort and student cohorts were quite different in how they viewed the importance of teacher personality. For students, personality was far and away the most important aspect of teaching. Each student group produced, on average, 12 constructs related to personality traits. The graduate group, in contrast, only produced 3. Instead, the graduates generated a high number of constructs dealing with student autonomy. In fact, in terms of number of constructs, “student autonomy” and “planning and organization” tied as the most important collective constructs for Cohort 5 (refer to Table 10).

Second, there are some interesting differences in terms of how the graduate cohort and the combined student cohort view their collective constructs. These differences come to light through an examination of the first principal component in each group’s biplot (Table 34). Whereas the top loadings for Cohorts 1, 2, 3, and 4 have to do with student motivation, caring about students, and a teachers’ ability to entertain, graduates place the greatest value on student involvement, autonomous learning, and an instructor’s enthusiasm for teaching. This suggests that, for LEI students, the principle responsibility of language teachers is to guide their pupils, and that successful guidance consists of motivating, entertaining, and personally engaging with students. Graduates, on the other hand, seem to place more importance on student-centeredness.

Table 34

*Loadings on Principal Components by Cohort*

Bipolar constructs		Cohort 0	Cohorts 1-4	Cohort 5
C1	cares about students <-> doesn't care about students	<b>1.64</b>	<b>-1.63</b>	0.95
C2	cares about ss learning outcomes <-> doesn't care about ss learning	1.40	<b>-1.57</b>	<b>1.43</b>
C3	possesses content knowledge <-> lacks content knowledge	1.30	-1.05	1.23
C4	continuous professional development <-> disinterest in prof devel	0.93	-1.51	0.67
C5	creative <-> not creative	0.18	-1.27	0.87
C6	good delivery <-> poor delivery	<b>1.73</b>	-1.00	0.91
C7	dynamic and entertaining <-> boring	1.36	<b>-1.62</b>	1.11
C8	emphasis on L2 communication <-> lack of emphasis of L2 comm	0.99	-0.88	0.74
C9	emphasis on student involvement <-> no emphasis on ss involvement	1.42	<b>-1.54</b>	<b>1.99</b>
C10	enthusiasm for teaching <-> unenthusiastic about teaching	1.31	-1.52	<b>1.50</b>
C11	focus on autonomous learning <-> teacher directed	1.57	-1.08	<b>1.51</b>
C12	has training / education <-> lacks training / education	0.01	-0.86	1.08
C13	L2 language ability <-> no L2 language ability	0.84	-0.63	0.55
C14	makes learning relevant <-> does not make learning relevant	1.29	-1.36	1.28
C15	motivates students <-> does not motivate students	<b>1.70</b>	<b>-1.85</b>	1.41
C16	possesses pedagogic knowledge <-> lacks pedagogic knowledge	1.61	-1.18	0.54
C17	good planning and organization <-> poor planning and organization	1.32	-1.23	<b>1.48</b>
C18	positive personality traits <-> negative personality traits	1.44	-1.22	0.34
C19	professionalism <-> lack of professional	<b>1.67</b>	-0.97	1.05
C20	good activities and materials <-> poor activities and materials	1.43	-1.38	1.20
C21	good student-teacher rapport <-> poor student-teacher rapport	1.39	-1.46	0.98
C22	welcomes student feedback <-> student feedback unwelcome	<b>1.80</b>	-1.30	0.97

Third, in terms of professional self-identification, the LEI graduates in the study view their current selves as very closely aligned with their idealized selves (refer to Table 32, above). This is a significant indicator of professional growth, in that the LEI students in the study most closely identify themselves with the element “average teacher.”

Finally, according to PVAFF analyses, there is a marked difference between students and graduates in terms of cognitive complexity. The first components of the biplots representing the collective construing of Cohorts 1, 2, 3, and 4 account for 84.2%, 88.3%, 86.4%, and 91.6% of the variance in these group's respective grids. These percentages can be compared to the variance represented by Components 1 and 2 in the LEI graduates' biplot, which account for 73.6% and 13% of the plot's variance,

respectively (refer to Table 33, above).<sup>7</sup> This variance is the result of more rating complexity on the part of the research participants in Cohort 5. Visually, this complexity is characterized by a wide spread of construct vectors (refer to Figure 39, above).

Findings concerning the growth of pedagogic cognition amongst the graduates of the LEI are consonant with the literature. Various studies corroborate just this kind of post-educational growth. A study by Gatbonton (1999), for instance, examined the categories of pedagogical knowledge held by novice and experienced teachers. Findings suggested that through formal training and classroom work, the novice instructors in the study were quickly able to acquire the major categories of pedagogical knowledge that undergird instructional behaviors. However, these new teachers needed time and experience before they were able to actively apply their knowledge to practice.

Numerous developmental stage models have been proposed to account for the fact that changes in cognition and instructional practices often fail to appear until after students have departed their teacher education programs. Kagan (1992) describes changes in pedagogic knowledge in terms of a progression in attention: new teachers first focus on issues of classroom management and organization; they then refocus their attention on subject matter and pedagogy; finally, they turn their attention to what students learn from the different academic tasks assigned to them. Doyle (1983) also sees novice teachers progressing through three stages of development: rote knowledge of classroom strategy, routine knowledge, and comprehensive knowledge. The first refers to knowledge that teachers can articulate but which they have difficulty turning into pedagogic action. The

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<sup>7</sup> Percent of variance scores are lower for individual grids and increase as constructs are averaged together. Therefore, these measures tend to exaggerate the cognitive unidimensionality of the members in each group. Averaged scores do, however, furnish a method of making relative comparisons between cohorts.

second refers to knowledge that can be articulated and applied, but only with effort and only within certain classroom contexts. The third refers to knowledge that teachers can both articulate and automatically apply across a broad range of contexts. Abdullah and Majid (2013) describe the theoretical, experimental, and developmental stages in the evolution of a typical language teacher. Theoretical ideas are formed during formal teacher training. These are supplanted when new teachers are forced to cope with professional realities of classroom teaching, a transition they characterize as a “survival effort” (p. 814). In the second stage, then, novice teachers are forced to experiment with which pedagogic strategies work and which do not. Finally, in the developmental stage, teachers experience their “real life” training, i.e., they have an opportunity to test their personal pedagogical knowledge, establish their own styles, and grow in confidence. Only after fully coming into their own as language teachers do they feel comfortable enough to allow their personal beliefs to influence pedagogic choices about materials, activities, and other classroom related matters.

Kagan (1992), in her review of studies concerning growth among pre-service and beginning teachers, identifies five components of professional maturation:

1. An increase in metacognition: Novices become more aware of what they know and believe about pupils and classrooms and how their knowledge and beliefs are changing.
2. The acquisition of knowledge about pupils: Idealized and inaccurate images of pupils are reconstructed. Knowledge of pupils is used to modify, adapt, and reconstruct the novice's image of self as teacher.

3. A shift in attention: As the image of self as teacher is resolved, a novice's attention shifts from self to the design of instruction to pupil learning.
4. The development of standard procedures: Novices develop standardized routines that integrate instruction and management and grow increasingly automated.
5. Growth in problem solving skills: Thinking associated with classroom problem solving grows more differentiated, multidimensional, and context specific. Eventually, novices are able to determine which aspects of problem solving repertoires can be generalized across contexts. (p. 156)

A host of variables have been proposed to explain cognitive change in teachers, including previous educational experiences, interaction with students, relationships with mentors, student characteristics, institutional environments, and course content and structure (see Literature Review). Two such variables, experience and the role of reflection, are foregrounded by findings in this current study.<sup>8</sup>

The first variable is teacher experience. Those in the graduate cohort have taught longer than those in any of the student cohorts, and it can be hypothesized that this added time has allowed for the development of their teaching beliefs. Whereas the students who took part in this research have worked as teachers for an average of 3.9 years, the graduates have worked an average of 11.2 years. The impact of professional experiences – and particularly early professional experience -- has been noted in the literature

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<sup>8</sup> Of course, these two variables are so tightly interwoven as to be inseparable, since time is a necessary (although insufficient) condition for reflection. As Ericsson and Smith (1991) have argued, access to “aggregated past experience” is the most important factor in the development of expertise (p. 30).

(Clotfelter et al., 2007; Harris & Sass 2007; Kane et al., 2006; Ladd 2008; Rice, 2010; Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2012).

The second variable is the role of reflection, which can be a catalyst for cognitive change. The concept of reflection is widely accepted and is encouraged for teachers both in training and practice (Boud 2007; Clarke 2006; Conway 2001; Crocco, Faitfull, & Schwarz 2004; Edwards, Gilroy, & Hartley 2002; Korthagen 2004; Singh 2008). It is viewed as a critical element in any understanding of teacher development because it can act as tool to bring usually unarticulated concepts to a level of awareness (Farrell, 2013, p. 1071). As Marcos, Sanchez and Tillema (2011) note, reflection is “rooted in the understanding that teachers recognise teaching as a process that lies open to scrutiny and deliberation which permits change in existing practices” (p. 21).

A major finding of this study is that whereas students currently enrolled in the LEI program report that the major source of their beliefs about SLT pedagogy is the teachers in the program, graduates overwhelming point to the exceptional influence of their own reflection on practice (Table 35). (Both groups report the substantial impact of their own personalities on how they view their work.) This can perhaps be attributed to the fact that many student teachers do not possess a repertoire of teaching experiences sufficiently large as to provide them with the raw material for reflection (Roberts, 1998). Because of this lack of experience among many student teachers, reflection during SLTE has been termed “misguided”:

The teacher education programs that have tried to make use of the notion of reflective practice or to change the practical argument of pre-service teachers may be misguided ... novice teachers may have too little

experience to reflect on.... [Until] extensive classroom experience has been acquired, there may be too little in the minds of pre-service teachers about what actions might be realistic, relevant, appropriate moral, and so forth. (Berliner, 1988, as cited in Kagan, 1992, p. 161)

Table 35

*Self-reported Sources of Beliefs: LEI students & LEI graduates*

	quality & variety of activities & materials	the importance of a teacher's personality	caring about students on a personal level	a teacher's rapport with students	importance of continual prof develop	caring about students' learning	the ability to motivate students	a teacher's L2 ability	the importance of autonomous learning	a teacher's planning and organization	content knowledge	pedagogic knowledge
The micro-culture where you work												
The national culture												
The demands of your institution												
Observing fellow teachers												
Your own personality	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					
Your experiences learning an L2									X			
Reflecting on your own teaching	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Educ experiences with L2 teachers												
Educ exp with non L2 teachers												
Reflecting on student feedback												
Your peers in the LEI program												
Your teachers in the LEI program		X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	
Reading you've done in the LEI												

Note: Graduates =  LEI students =

Indeed, there is growing uncertainty among many educationalists about whether mandatory “invitations” to reflect can actually bring about hoped for cognitive change.

As far back as 1996, Zeichner (as cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2001), an early and influential advocate of reflective teaching, began to question first principles:

Despite the lofty rhetoric surrounding efforts to help teachers become more reflective, in reality reflective teacher education has done very little to foster genuine teacher development and to enhance teachers’ roles in



educational reform. Instead, an illusion of teacher development has often been created that has maintained in more subtle ways the subservient position of the teacher. (p. 201)

McIntyre (1992, as cited in Bramald, Hardman, & Leat, 1995) notes that even after SLTE has concluded, novice teachers find it difficult to reflect critically. Reflection, such as it is, remains at the technical level (defined by an emphasis on the attainment of narrow goals) and later progresses to the practical level (defined by an emphasis on articulating personal criteria and developing individualistic practice). According to McIntyre, few student teachers will demonstrate “critical reflection” (defined by wider ethical, social, and political concerns), a type of reflection which, the author remarks, “is rarely practiced even among experienced teachers” (p. 30).

**Conclusions.** Findings about changes in student beliefs over the course of the University of Guanajuato’s four-year SLTE program are fairly conclusive: the LEI has little impact on shaping the beliefs of its students while they are engaged in their studies. This investigation, then, corroborates the findings of previous studies that indicate the stability of personal beliefs in the face of education intervention: Bailey et al. (1996); Brouwer and Korthagen (2005); Burke (2006); Hall and Loucks (1982); Johnson (1994); Kagan (1992); Korthagen et al., (2006); Kunt and Özdemir (2010); Peacock (2001); Pennington and Urmston (1998); Richardson (1996); Urmston (2003); Von Wright (1997).

However, the present study also found that, once they have left the program, LEI students do tend to develop their pedagogical cognitions over time. This is particularly true in terms of their beliefs about reflection, student autonomy, and student-

centeredness. Findings here would seem to corroborate Black and Ammon's (1992) contention that, as time goes by, teachers generally move from behaviorist notions of teaching towards more constructivist conceptions that are "differentiated and integrated" (p. 325).

Taken together, then, the findings of this study do not foreclose the possibility that learnings from the LEI are "time-released": as graduates of the program gain more experience teaching (e.g., as instructional behaviors become routinized, as problem-solving skills are refined, as issues of management and organization are resolved), internalized knowledge from their SLT education may finally have an opportunity to come to the fore. This knowledge can then be reflected upon and acted on, beginning a virtuous cycle of "ongoing progressive problem solving": problematizing practice, learning from experience, reflecting further, and again problematizing practice (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993; Sternberg & Horvath, 1995; Tsui, 2003).

Another major finding has to do with the degree to which students view personality and socio-affective skills as crucial to their work. As has been noted, LEI student teachers place special emphasis on a number of teacher characteristics, including respect for students, caring about student learning, caring about students on a personal level, energy, and kindness. This is very consistent with the literature: positive teacher characteristics are highly valued by students across disciplines (Broder & Dorfman, 1994; Forston & Brown, 1998; Caplan, Mets, & Cook, n.d.; Murray, Rushton, & Paunonen, 1990), and seem to be particularly important to students and teachers working in ESL contexts (Arikan et al., 2008; Barnes and Lock, 2010, 2013; Brosh, 1996; Chen; 2012,

Chong, Wong, & Quek, 2005; Helterbran, 2008; Lee, 2010; Morine-Dershirner et al., 1992; Mowrey-Reynolds, 2008; Mullock, 2003; Shishavan & Sadeghi, 2009; et al.)

Positive personality traits and socio-affective skills are crucially important components of successful pedagogy and have been shown to correlate highly with teacher effectiveness. Respect for students and caring for student learning are directly related to student achievement (Young & Shaw, 1999). Active involvement with students, both in- and outside the classroom, has been demonstrated to have a positive impact on student motivation, participation, and learning (Farrell, 2013). In one OECD survey of teenage attitudes about education in 32 countries, nearly half of the 15-year-olds questioned said they generally felt bored at school (as cited in Ripley, 2013). In order to keep students engaged, then, dynamism and maintaining a fun, entertaining classroom are critically important.

Positive personality traits and good student relations may be particularly significant to the work of second language instructors. Language is a social skill; it is not surprising that language pedagogy should be seen, first and foremost, as a socially embedded activity. Lee (2010) argues that positive personal characteristics, such as energy and kindness, are more essential in language instruction than in other disciplinary areas because such qualities help maintain motivation, a necessary condition for learning in an educational context as potentially frustrating as the language classroom.

### **Origin of Pedagogical Beliefs**

Two instruments were used in this study to explore the origin of student beliefs: the first was a questionnaire which was sent to all the participants in the in the study (Figure 18); the second was an accompanying open-ended question which asked

participants to detail in writing their current instructional methods and the reasons that they teach as they do. Thirty-eight participants (63% of the total) responded to the questionnaire and the open-ended question. Here, I focus on the responses of students currently enrolled in the LEI program. First, I review information from the questionnaires. I then consider written responses to the open-ended question.

**Questionnaires.** Participants in their first-year of study reported that the LEI program has had a significant impact on their pedagogical thinking. Across 12 collective categories representing major pedagogical concerns, these students were most influenced by the LEI program (i.e., teachers and assigned readings) in 8 cases. Interestingly, the LEI seemed to play a relatively smaller role in their beliefs about content knowledge. The students reported that their beliefs about content knowledge came primarily from their educational experiences as language learners. This is perhaps explained by the fact that the majority of participants define content knowledge as knowledge of English and English grammar; in this case, it makes considerable sense that information about the English language would come primarily from English instructors they've studied with in the past. Participants reported that many of their beliefs about pedagogic knowledge came from the LEI program. This probably reflects the fact that many of the classes in the first year have to do with basic pedagogy.

Participants in the second-year of study reported that their own personalities have the greatest impact on how they view second language teaching. In terms of pedagogic and content knowledge, these students are most influenced by their past educational experiences as language learners. According to questionnaire data, the LEI program influenced their views in two ways: instructors in the program had an effect on how they

view student-teacher rapport, and required readings influenced how they saw their second language ability. This latter finding can perhaps be explained by the fact that the assigned reading load increases in the second year of the program, which may give students an opportunity to appreciate the difficulty of reading scholarly texts in English and reflect on their own level of academic English.

Participants in the third-year also reported being significantly influenced by the LEI. For this cohort, instructors in the LEI play a major role in the formation of pedagogical beliefs across all 12 collective construct categories. Required readings, however, appear to play little role.

Participants in the fourth-year of study likewise reported that the LEI program has had an influence on their pedagogical beliefs, mostly in terms of how they view continual professional development, planning and organization, and a teacher's L2 ability. These students also report that reflection on practice plays a decisive role in how they think about activities and materials, motivation, a teacher's language ability, and pedagogy. These findings may relate to the fact that fourth-year students are required to take classes in reflection and are observed extensively throughout their final semester. Personality also has a significant impact on the thinking of fourth-year students.

**Written feedback.** The plurality of student participants (approximately 42% of the respondents) reported that they teach according to some type of forms-focused approach (responses included the terms “traditional,” “translation,” “PPP,” and “grammar-based”). Thirty-six percent of the respondents indicated that they taught according to an “eclectic” approach (responses included “integrative,” “informed post-method style,” and “eclectic”). Fourteen percent of the respondents wrote that they used a

communicative approach (i.e., CLT). Two participants (5%) reported that they employed “student-centered” instructional approaches. One participant (3%) reported the use of task-based teaching.

The reasons justifying these teaching approaches were varied, but most can be placed within six primary categories (Table 36).

Table 36

*LEI Student Rationales for Their Style of Teaching*

<b>Reasons for choosing teaching approach</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Second language teacher education (mostly LEI)	42%
Experiences learning a second language	23%
School policy	19%
Reflection on teaching practice	10%
Observing and talking to peers	6%

For the most part, students in the study are allowed to teach according to their own lights. Only six students reported that they teach the way they do because of the demands of their institution. The rest teach in accordance with their own pedagogic beliefs. According to the participants, these beliefs primarily spring from four sources: SLTE (primarily but not exclusively the LEI); personal experiences as a language learner; reflection on teaching practice; and observations and discussions with peers. In the following section, I briefly examine each of these. I conclude with a short discussion of sources of belief that do *not* seem to significantly influence the LEI students in this study.

*Second language teacher education.* A plurality (42%) of participants reported that their pedagogical views were heavily influenced by the LEI. This is consonant with their responses to the questionnaire. In the previous section, compelling evidence was examined which strongly indicates that LEI students do not appreciably modify their SLT beliefs as a result of their teacher education. These two sets of findings seem contradictory: participants in the current study show no discernable change in their pedagogic beliefs over the course of the LEI program, and yet they report that the LEI program has had a significant impact on how they view second language teaching.

A simple, tenable explanation is that the LEI, rather than introducing new beliefs or altering old ones, actually reinforces the beliefs that students enter the program with. In this view, a student's sustained emersion in the LEI helps give form and force to existing, perhaps heretofore unarticulated, ideas. If this is true, then the seeming contradiction disappears. The hypothesis in fact explains, in part, why beliefs do not seem to change over the course of the LEI: prior beliefs are actually shored up by what students learn in the program.

The perspective outlined above is supported by the literature: core beliefs are normative and extremely stable (Bangou et al., 2011; Breen et al., 2001; Butler, 2006; Kelly, 1955; Leitner & Thomas, 2003; Phipps & Borg, 2009) and pedagogic intervention seems to have very little effect on the cognitions of student teachers (Burke, 2006; Hunt & Lasley, 2010; Kagan, 1992; Kunt & Özdemir, 2010; Peacock, 2001; Pennington & Urmston, 1998; Richardson, 1996; Urmston, 2003; Von Wright, 1997; Zeichner et al., 1987).

Another interesting finding is that student attention appears not to be primarily focused on topics explicitly articulated in the LEI curriculum. This is evidenced by an examination of questionnaire data. Participants ranked the LEI as the major influence on their beliefs across 10 of 12 categories of pedagogic concern. According to participants, the LEI program is the most significant influencer on their beliefs about the following issues:

The importance of a teacher's personality

Caring about students on a personal level

A teacher's rapport with students

The ability to motivate students

A teacher's L2 ability

Importance of continual professional development

The importance of autonomous learning

Planning and organization

Content knowledge

Pedagogic knowledge

The first four of these issues have to do with personality and socio-affective factors. The second two have to do with students' perceptions of their own language ability and the value of SLT education. The last four concern "formal" educational subjects. It is apparent that the majority of these issues do not involve topics generally addressed in the SLTE classroom but rather ones which lie outside the explicitly articulated parameters of the program. To borrow a term from SLA, students appear to



“notice” features that are incidental to the stated goals of the LEI but that are salient to them and imbued with personal meaning.

Student attention is as drawn to the personal characteristics and behaviors of their teachers as to the formal educational information these instructors provide. One student response underscores this assertion particularly well:

I also teach things I learned in LEI, and I have gotten ideas from the observations I made of teachers there. (For) example, I learned from teacher (W) that it is good to have variety and be fun but with a degree of distance between student (and) teacher. Specially when they are my age. I learned from (teachers X and Y) to show concern for students on the personal level, this motivates students, and helps creating a good relationship with students. I learned from (Z) that even if you are not that dynamic, but you prepare always for class, students respect you and care to do the work you designed for them.

Here, this participant views pedagogical issues from a socio-affective perspective: most of what the student has apprehended from the program has been derived from observations of the personal behaviors of LEI instructors.

*Experiences learning a second language.* According to their written responses, the second major source of students’ pedagogical beliefs is their own experiences as language learners in formal education settings. These experiences have had a continued impact on how participants view motivation, a teacher’s second language ability, planning and preparation, pedagogic knowledge, and student-teacher relations, and a lesser but still significant impact on how students perceive other pedagogical issues.

These findings support previous studies indicating the sustained power of pedagogical ideas formed during the “apprenticeship of observation”: Ariogul (2007); Cochran-Smith (1991); Eisenstein-Ebsworth and Schweers (1997); Freeman (1992); Golombek (1998); Gutierrez Almarza (1996); Hassan (2013); Johnson (1994, 1999); Kennedy (1990); Lortie (1975); Nias (1989); Nurnrich (1996); Phipps (2010); Richards & Pennington 1998); Stigler and Hiebert (1999); Farrell (1999); and Bailey et al. (1996).

*Reflection on teaching practice.* Only three students responded that their teaching beliefs were influenced by their own reflection on practice. This is in-line with the overall number of constructs having to do with the contemplation of teaching work: only three participants out of 60 named reflection as a construct (approximately 3.5% of the total). As noted in the previous section, students may simply not be ready for reflection (Berliner, 1988, as cited in Kagan, 1992; McIntyre, 1992, as cited in Bramald, Hardman & Leat, 1995). That is, they may not have accumulated a sufficient stock of experiences in the classroom upon which to reflect.

Even when student teachers have amassed enough classroom experiences to make reflection possible, they may simply find reflective practice disagreeable. Indeed, negative attitudes about reflection among student teachers may be quite common. Smith and Lev-Ari (2005), for instance, report that more than two-thirds of the 480 student teachers who took part in their study described the reflective teaching journal assignment as an ineffective approach to examining pedagogical experiences.

There are number of possible explanations for these negative reactions. Hobbs (2007), for instance, makes the commonsensical observation that not all individuals are equally capable of engaging in critical reflection. Roberts (1998) writes that student

teachers often adopt a negative attitude towards reflective assignments because they perceive them to be an “imposed course requirements, with no real meaning for themselves” (p. 59). As a consequence, “many new teachers choose not to reflect on their practice constructively and critically, preferring to fall back on pre-conceived understandings of how they and their pupils should conduct themselves in the classroom” (Moore & Ash, 2002).

Another reason for the rejection of reflective practice is that students may be resistant to sharing personal information or negative feelings (Gunn, 2010). Reporting on her study of journal reflection, Hobbs (2007) notes that instead of sharing their real views, many of the student teachers in her study resorted to “strategic deception.” That is, they wrote entries they felt would please or impress their teacher. She concludes that “there is some question as to whether or not (reflective practice) can, in fact, be a required component of a course and still retain validity as genuine reflection” (p. 406). This is in-line with Hargreaves (2004) view that obligatory self-examination can never be a constructive educational tool.

Even students who do not hold negative views of reflection may find the practice challenging. To begin with, students may not understand what reflection is. In a study cited by Gunn (2010), student teachers were unaware of the critical nature of reflection and believed that describing situations and writing minute-by-minute accounts of their classroom experiences was sufficient. This type of shallow reflection probably cannot be improved without significant teacher support: as Randall and Thorton (2001) stress, in order for students to engage fully in the reflective process, they need mentors who can

help them “articulate and refine their views of the teaching process and their own learning” (p. 42).

*Observing and talking to peers.* Only two students mentioned their professional or student peers as sources of new ideas. This is consonant with data from the questionnaires. In the questionnaires, the ratings on “observing fellow teachers” and “your peers in the LEI program” showed that these were of marginal influence on cognition. No cohort foregrounded these as particularly important influences on pedagogical thinking.

As learning from peers is a fundamental tenant of constructivist educational theory, this dearth of collegiality should be examined. There are at least two specific areas in which the LEI could encourage more peer work. First, at present, LEI students take part in relatively few peer observations. Increasing such learning opportunities should be considered. Second, the practices associated with having students present articles and chapters to classmates should be reassessed. At present, many students feel that LEI professors are evading their instructional responsibilities when they ask students to present course content. At the same time, there is a sense among many students that they don’t learn as much when they are taught by peers as when they are taught by professors. Clearly, both student and teacher attitudes about peer learning need to be interrogated.

**No influence.** What students failed to mention as sources of beliefs is as interesting as what they did mention. In written feedback, the following potential sources of beliefs went unremarked upon: the micro-culture of educational institutions; the national culture; reflection on student feedback; educational experiences with non-ESL

teachers; and reading. In the questionnaires, low ratings were given to the micro-culture of educational institutions; the national culture; institutional demands; observing fellow teachers; reflection on student feedback; and student peers. During the process of construct elicitation, a number of pedagogical topics were essentially disregarded, including assessment, resource management, the role of homework, administrative duties, and the importance of keeping up-to-date in the field. Here, I briefly consider these last two.

The amount of time needed to complete administrative work is an important issue in terms of educational effectiveness because it steals away opportunities for learning and teaching. TALIS (2009) studied how teacher time is spent in 23 countries. The survey found that teachers in Brazil, Malaysia and Mexico spend more time on administrative tasks than teachers in any of the other countries in their investigation. Instructors in Mexico, for instance, spend 17% of their time dealing with administrative matters, as compared to an average of 9% in other countries. (While no students in the LEI discussed this issue *per se*, many alluded to the time wasted by both student and teacher tardiness. This observation is particularly Mexican, in that arriving late is more culturally acceptable than in many other nations.)

Of particular interest to this present study is the lack of importance given to reading and its relationship to professional development. Although “professional development” was a major construct, it was an amorphous one: no participant specified how professional development might actually be achieved. “Being well-read” or “keeping up-to-date with SLA studies” or “reading ESL material” was not mentioned by a single participant during construct elicitation or in responses to the questionnaire.

Although undergraduates rated reading relatively highly in the questionnaires, it seems to be quickly abandoned once students leave the program: the graduate cohort did not rate reading as particularly important in relation to any pedagogic dimension.

There are at least two possible explanations for this state of affairs, one being cultural and the other having to do with the disjoint between scholarly research and classroom teaching.

**Cultural issues.** There are few Mexicans who are strong readers in their native language. Although literacy rates are going up, Mexico still lags behind other industrialized nations. It ranks 137 out of the 205 countries listed by the CIA World Fact Book (2012), behind other Latin America countries such as Bolivia, Ecuador, Panama, and Venezuela. Among the literate population, very few Mexicans demonstrate strong reading skills. A 2005 investigation conducted by the National Autonomous University of Mexico, the *Encuesta Nacional de Lectura* (National Survey on Reading), reported that only 35.8% of the Mexican population had read more than two books during the previous year – 33.5% of Mexicans had not read at all. A majority of Mexicans reported that they did not enjoy reading. Given these attitudes, it is not surprising that between 1993 and 2008, 30% of Mexican bookstores closed (*El Universal*, February 27, 2008). Doubtless more have closed since, and there is little hope (as in wealthier nations) that books are being replaced by electronic media.

This situation is complicated still further by the generally poor quality of the Mexican educational system. According to a 2005 RAND report (Santibañez, Vernez, & Razquin), key issues in Mexican education include: lack of adequate teacher preparation; a lack of research and evaluation that can inform school improvement efforts; low

funding; insufficient enrollments and high dropout rates beyond the primary level; an insufficient supply of upper secondary schools (particularly in rural areas); few incentives for improved school performance; teacher absenteeism; poor infrastructure; and high indices of cheating (represented by the ubiquitous “cheat sheet” known as the *acordian*). The educational system is also plagued by corruption. In February of 2013, Elba Esther Gordillo Morales, the leader of the National Education Workers' Union (the largest labor union in Latin America), was arrested by the Mexican authorities on charges of organized crime and the embezzlement \$200 million from the union.

Taken together, the foregoing problems help explain a culture in which reading is not viewed as a primary means of acquiring information and knowledge. To what extent these cultural attitudes negatively influences reading practices among LEI students is impossible to say, but certainly may be a factor.

***Disjoint between research and practice:*** Even if teachers were disposed to read, they would still face several significant hurdles. First, most SLT professionals have very limited time. Long classroom hours and the absence of paid time for preparation, corrections, or grading mean that instructors have few moments left at the end of the day to devote to professional development. In a study by Arakaki & Crookes (1996), one ESL teacher aptly comments:

I don't have time to look at that stuff you know? It's a waste of time.

Because if you have to prioritize what you're going to do, to sit and read a lot of research doesn't help you ... because they don't relate to what you're doing. (as cited in Crooks, 1997, p. 94)

A second hurdle involves the question of *what* teachers should read. On the face of it, SLA research would seem to lead the pack in terms of its potential usefulness to L2 instructors. And yet there is profound skepticism on the parts of both researchers and practitioners that findings from SLA are valuable in the classroom (Freeman, 2002; Lynch, 1997, as cited in Badger et al., 2001; Richards, 2008). Ellis (1992), for instance, calls for an SLA that “seeks to illuminate language pedagogy through studies of what takes place in the name of instruction and how this affects acquisition” (p. 15). However, elsewhere, he is pessimistic about the possibility of such research emerging, arguing that SLA research findings do not provide straightforward guidance for teachers and probably never will (Ellis, 1997).

There are several reasons why SLA research may have little applicability to the language classroom. First, and probably most importantly, there are few definitive studies. Rather, second language acquisition research is a “gradual accretion of knowledge drawn from overlapping studies in many fields of study, conducted over long periods of time, punctuated by occasional breakthroughs” (Atkinson & Jackson, 1992, p. 20).

Indeed, many of the findings from SLA do not hold up to long-term scrutiny. “Breakthroughs” in SLA have had an alarming propensity to wilt under close observation. There are few researchers today who believe, as Krashen famously held, that second language learning is purely an unconscious process. Gardner’s seminal work on multiple intelligences has been persuasively discredited (Sternberg, 1996; Waterhouse, 2006; White, 2004). The oft-related concept of learning styles has similarly been convincingly refuted (Pashler, McDaniel, Rohrer, & Bjork, 2008), even by Howard



Gardner (2013). Ideas such as cognitively embedded “orders of acquisition,” long considered inviolable tenants of SLA, have recently been forcefully challenged (Sampson, 2005). Even ideas as hallowed as L1 interference and interlanguage may slowly be fading away, with an increased acceptance on the part of traditional SLA that outer circle Englishes should be viewed as varieties rather than interlanguages (Jenkins, 2006); there has been a move away from the “deficit view of ELF in which variation is perceived as deviation from (English as a native language) norms and described in terms of errors or fossilization” (Seidlhofer, 2004, p. 213).

It is difficult, then, to confidently base pedagogy on the shifting sands of SLA research. As Ellis (1997) remarks, “... given the relative infancy of the field, there are still few certainties. It might be felt, therefore, that ‘apply with caution’ -- or not at all -- should still be the order of the day” (p. 70).

Second, even were SLA findings reliable, it is difficult to see how many of them could be practically applied in the real world. For instance, Pienamann (1998) stresses the importance of knowing when new language is optimally learnable so that appropriate educational intervention may take place. This is, of course, easier said than done. As Lightbown (1998) notes, the heterogeneity of levels in classes is a well-known reality, making developmentally-targeted instruction all but impossible in practical terms.

Third, in terms of status, the relationship between researchers and teachers is generally viewed as hierarchical, with researchers enjoying a considerable advantage in prestige. However, a compelling argument can be made that SLA research has no more validity than the kind of on-going investigations (observations, experimentation) that happen every day in ESL classrooms:

... “academic research,” especially in human sciences, is unlikely to be more true than a teacher’s own observation, because they are a professional observer, and what they observe counts. For example, if “research” tells them that controlled practice is useless, but their observation tells them different, they should trust what they observe, not trust the research. Evidence is that which one knows to be true from observation. (Lowe, 2003, p. 3)

This argument synchronizes with Kumaravadivelu’s (2001) advice that modern language teachers must rely on their professional and personal knowledge, maintain a critical, reflective stance towards their work, and base pedagogical decisions on the results of classroom experimentation and keen observation.

Finally, scholarly writing can be highly challenging. Crookes (1998) explains that When people do research, they produce oral and written accounts of social practice. These discourses and texts are surrounded by other social practices that support the differences these texts have from less privileged ones, such as the conversations teachers have in the staff room. They may not be easy to understand for those without familiarity with their genres. (p. 7.)

Out of 22 categories, participants in the current study rated “continuous professional development” as the eighth most important pedagogical issue for second language teachers in Mexico. But what does professional development imply? Reading, on the face of it, seems like a commonsensical, if hardly innovative, approach to staying abreast of issues in one’s field. However, there is compelling evidence that reading does

not, in fact, significantly change pedagogical beliefs and thus may have little impact on practice. LEI students report that reading has an impact on their pedagogical thinking. However, for at least the last 30 years, research has strongly suggested that reading and applying the findings of educational research do not significantly affect teacher beliefs (Hall & Loucks, 1982, as cited in Kagan, 1992). The quick abandonment of reading by graduates highlights this point and foregrounds the difficulty of inculcating lasting habits of study. Both cultural issues and issues related to the lack of congruence between research and practice militate against reading's effectiveness as a pedagogical tool. There are, then, a number of important questions that will have to be addressed by the LEI concerning the content, quantity, and role of reading.

### **Correlation Between Beliefs and Practice**

Overall, within the limited number of participants whose teaching was observed for this study, there was a high correlation between beliefs and practice. Of the 10 students and graduates of the LEI who were observed, only three demonstrated a marked degree of incongruence between their beliefs and classroom work. That is, the participants avowed one set of beliefs about ESL teaching, but seemed to teach according to another. This may be attributed to a number of factors. In one case, the participant simply didn't have a very accurate perception of his pedagogic abilities: although he rated himself very highly in terms of his pedagogical skills, his actual classroom performance was quite deficient. In the other cases, core and peripheral beliefs may be at odds. If peripheral beliefs clash with core ideas, they are often set aside. There is considerable evidence that core beliefs are formed early, and that these have a powerful effect on shaping pedagogic behaviors (Ariogul, 2007; Bailey et al., 1996; Bangou et al.,

2011; Breen et al., 2001; Butler, 2006; Cochran-Smith, 1991; Eisenstein-Ebsworth & Schweers, 1997; Farrell, 1999; Freeman, 1992; Golombek, 1998; Gutierrez Almarza, 1996; Hassan, 2013; Johnson, 1994, 1999; Kelly, 1955; Kennedy, 1990; Leitner & Thomas, 2003; Lortie, 1975; Nias, 1989; Nurnrich, 1996; Phipps, 2010; Phipps & Borg, 2009; Richards & Pennington 1998; Stigler & Hiebert, 1999). As Phipps and Borg (2009) note, while novice teachers may have encountered theoretical support for a range of pedagogical concepts, a belief in these concepts may not be psychologically ingrained until they have witnessed first-hand proof of their effectiveness. They thus remain “unimplemented ideals.”

We can hypothesize here ... that a characteristic of core beliefs is that they are experientially ingrained, while peripheral beliefs, though theoretically embraced, will not be held with the same level of conviction. Where core and peripheral beliefs can be implemented harmoniously, teachers’ practices will be characterized by fewer tensions; where, though, the actions implied by core and peripheral beliefs are at odds ... peripheral beliefs will not necessarily be reflected in practice. (p. 338)

In one final case, a student whose observed classroom behaviors were congruent with his beliefs still complained that institutional constraints hindered him from teaching as he would like. This is a common occurrence and has been highlighted in the literature (Benson, 2010; Gorsuch, 2000; Lee, 2009, as cited in Min, 2013; Lerner & Tetlock, 1999, cited in Brown et al., 2012). For instance, Lee (2009), in his study of practice and belief, found that institutional constraints were factors in 10 mismatched beliefs and practices among EFL writing teachers in Hong Kong.

Even when teachers are not explicitly required to teach in a certain way, they may perceive the social, psychological, and environmental factors which exist in schools and classrooms as external forces beyond their control (Borg, 2006, p. 40). Melketo (2012) argues that the ability to teach in accordance with one's beliefs is impacted primarily by contextual factors such as class time, students' expectations, teaching to the test, and dealing with classroom management issues. Such contextual factors may encourage a "safe strategy of sticking to conventional teaching methods and materials" (Phipps, 2010, p. 27). This may be especially true for new teachers who may have to struggle with new instructional and social realities before they are capable of experimenting with new pedagogies (Borg, 2006, p. 275). Chen et al. (2012), citing Ajzen (2005), note that the freedom to teach in accord with one's core beliefs derives from a complex admixture of influences:

What people believe, the amount of control they have or perceive they have, societal norms, and people's intentions interact to shape the behaviors and practices people carry out. Generally speaking, the more favorable the attitudes and subjective norms with respect to a behavior, and the greater the perceived behavioral control, the more likely it is that people will perform the behavior in accordance with their intentions. (p. 938)

The majority of the students whose practice was observed taught in accordance with their stated beliefs. A relatively small number of studies have shown a strong relationship between teacher beliefs and pedagogic practices (Cundale, 2001; Inceçay,

2011; Johnson, 1992; Min, 2013), and the current study tends to lend qualified support to this previous research.

Teaching in accord with one's beliefs may be viewed in either a positive or negative light. The alignment of convictions and practice may be an indication of pedagogic maturity. Indeed, bringing about well-considered, principled alignment must surely be one of the goals of the LEI program. On the other hand, a high correlation between beliefs and practice may be a sign of unreflective and rote instruction. In such cases, teachers whose instruction is out of step with their beliefs may actually be at an advantage in terms of their opportunities for development. Phipps and Borg (2007) point out that "it is important that teacher educators do not view differences between what students say and do as 'inconsistencies' or even as something to be rectified, but rather as a developmental opportunity to be explored" (p. 18).

## **Chapter 6**

### **Conclusion**

My dissertation investigated the effects of second language teacher education on pre-service instructors' cognitions and pedagogy. Specifically, it examined the origins, contents, and evolution of beliefs held by LEI students about the personal characteristics and classroom behaviors of "good" and "bad" second language teachers as well as the congruence between their stated beliefs and their actual instruction.

As with any qualitative research, conclusions are necessarily tentative and must be heavily caveated. However, a number of findings seem sufficiently robust to be worthy of mention. These include the following:

- LEI students do not significantly change their beliefs about second language pedagogy as a result of second language teacher education.
- The most important beliefs held by LEI students have to do with socio-affective aspects of teaching, particularly teacher personality.
- Other important beliefs concern the role of planning and organization, motivation, maintaining a dynamic and entertaining classroom, focusing on student learning outcomes, and emphasizing student involvement.
- Although students report that they are heavily influenced by their teachers in the LEI program, the lack of cognitive change they exhibit over the course of the BA suggests that they are selectively attuned to learnings that coincide with previously held convictions.

- LEI student attention is drawn as much to the personal characteristics and behaviors of their teachers as it is to the formal educational information these instructors provide.
- Most institutions give their teachers the freedom to teach as they wish. Given this freedom, there is some evidence that students teach in accord with their beliefs.
- A plurality of respondents teach according to some type of forms-focused approach. Almost all these students feel that grammar is central to L2 pedagogy. “Eclectic” approaches are the second most popular pedagogic approach.
- LEI students tend to view pedagogy rather unidimensionally: their construing is characterized by depth of sentiment rather than by nuance.
- LEI students tend not reflect on practice. Relative to other issues, they do not consider reflection an important aspect of teaching.
- LEI students tend not see their peers as credible sources of information.
- For LEI students, general aspects of teaching are viewed as more important than pedagogy specific to ESL. LEI students appear to be more concerned with macro-level issues (e.g., personality, motivation, dynamism) rather than micro-level concerns (e.g., classroom teaching techniques).
- Graduates are more concerned with student autonomy, student involvement, and the instructor’s enthusiasm than are LEI students.



- Graduates feel more confident in their teaching ability than do LEI students.
- Graduates exhibit more cognitive complexity than do LEI students and attribute most of their beliefs to reflection on action.
- Among graduates, reading is not considered a priority.

### **Implications**

One of the main motivations for carrying out this research is that it may be useful to the work of the LEI's curriculum committee. At present, this committee is focused on the assessment and revision of the University of Guanajuato's second language teacher education program. It is hoped that the findings outlined in this dissertation will encourage discussion about a number of important issues of importance to the LEI.

### **Limitations of the Study**

There are a number of significant limitations that should be mentioned. First, the study's small sample size, as well as its cultural and institutional specificity, means that findings cannot be extrapolated to populations beyond the University of Guanajuato's LEI program.

Second, the current study suffers from the same problems that bedevil all qualitative research. Concepts are definitionally imprecise, which in turn affects the precision of measurements. The clarity of findings is clouded by the enormous number of interacting variables implicated in any study of human belief. Internal validity is affected by the fallibility, inconsistency, and subjectivity of both participants and researcher.

Third, group studies such as this must necessarily conceal important characteristics and idiosyncrasies at the level of the individual.

Fourth, the study investigated six separate cohorts at different points in their development as teachers. Thus, while the findings of this study are compelling, considerable caution is required in interpreting those results having to do with the stability of beliefs over time.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

In order to better understand change in pedagogic beliefs, diachronic research on a single cohort of LEI students is needed. That is, instead of investigating six different groups at essentially the same time, it would be preferable to follow a single group of students as they pass through the entire LEI program, inquiring into their beliefs at different moments. This will be the design of my future research.

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## Appendix A

### Informed Consent

#### Informed Consent Form

English Department  
University of Memphis  
467 Patterson Hall, Memphis, TN, 38152-3510

#### The Development of Pre-Service Language Teacher Beliefs

Researcher: Kenneth G. Richter

Contact Information of Researcher:

52 473 105 3332 / Ken.Richter@gmail.com

Name and Phone Number of Committee members:

Dr. Emily Thrush: 1-901-678-4215

Dr. Teresa Dalle: 1-901-678-3542

Dr. Charles Hall: 1-901-678-4496

**Purpose and Background:** Under the supervision of Dr. Emily Thrush, Professor of Linguistics/English as a Second Language at the University of Memphis, Kenneth Richter, a graduate student in Applied Linguistics, is conducting research on the development of language teacher beliefs and their relationship with classroom instruction. Through interviews, classroom observations, and follow-up questions, Mr. Richter will explore the following questions: (1) What are my personal beliefs about effective English language teaching? (2) How do my teaching beliefs relate to my work?

**Procedures:** If I agree to participate in this research study, I understand the following will occur:

- a. I will take part in a structured interview.
- b. I will be observed teaching.
- c. I may be asked take part in two short follow-up interviews.
- d. Participation in this study will take approximately 4 hours (one or two hours for the initial interview; one hour of classroom teaching observation; and one hour for follow-up questions).
- e. I will never be asked for sensitive data in the interview and my identity and data will remain confidential within the limits allowed by law. I understand that my participation in this research is completely voluntary and that I may leave the research at any time.

**Risks:** There are no known risks associated with this research. I understand that I may leave the research at any time.

**Confidentiality:** The information gathered from this study will be kept as confidential as possible within the limits of the law. No identifying information will be collected. My real name will not be used in the report. All files, transcripts and data will be stored on USB and external hard drive in the researcher's home, and no one except the researcher will have access to them.

**Direct Benefits:** There are no guaranteed benefits to me. However, the research may enhance the field of second language teacher training and may contribute to improvements of the teacher-training program at the Universidad de Guanajuato.

**Costs:** There will be no costs to me as a result of taking part in this research study.

**Miscellaneous:** The University of Memphis does not have any funds budgeted for compensation for injury, damages, or other expenses.

**Questions:** I have spoken with Kenneth Richter about this study and have had my questions answered. If I have any further questions about the specific study, I can contact the researcher, Kenneth Richter, at 473 105 3332 or ken.richter@gmail.com. For specific questions about subjects' rights, I can contact Beverly Jacobik, Administrator for the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, at 901 678-2533.

**Consent:** I have been given a copy of this consent form to keep. PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY IS VOLUNTARY. I am free to decline to participate in this research study, or I may withdraw my participation at any point.

Name and Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Research Participant (18 or older)

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Interviewer/Researcher

## Appendix B

### Repertory Grids

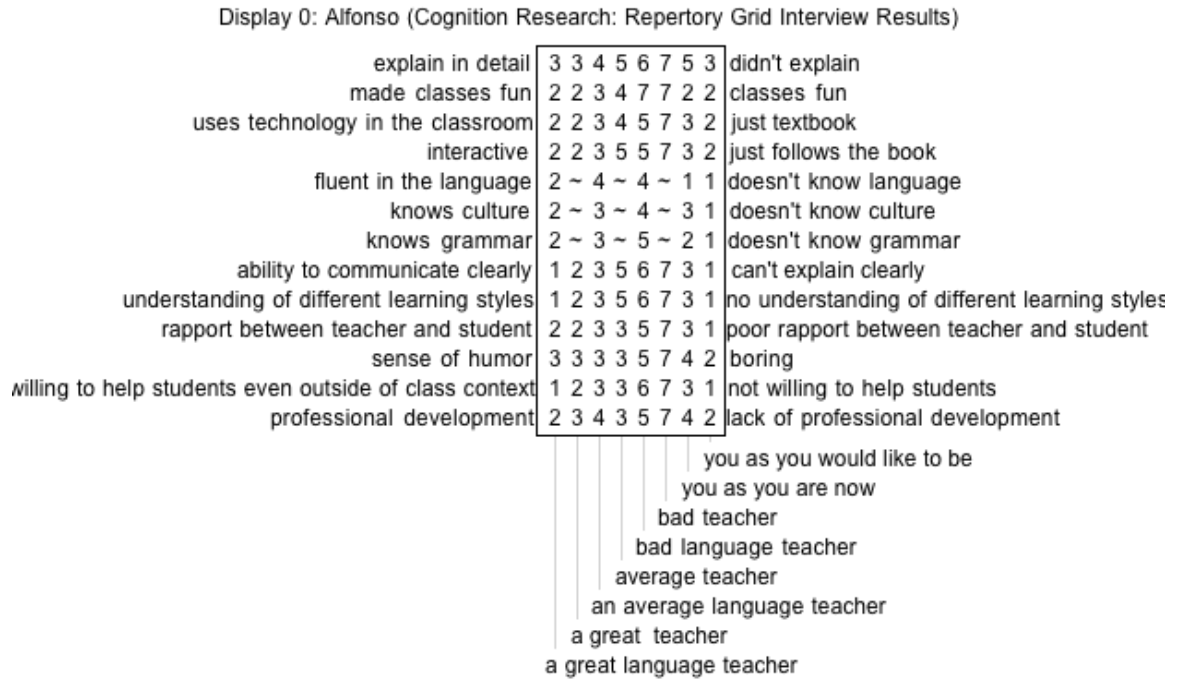


Figure B1. Cohort 0, Participant 0 (Alfonso)

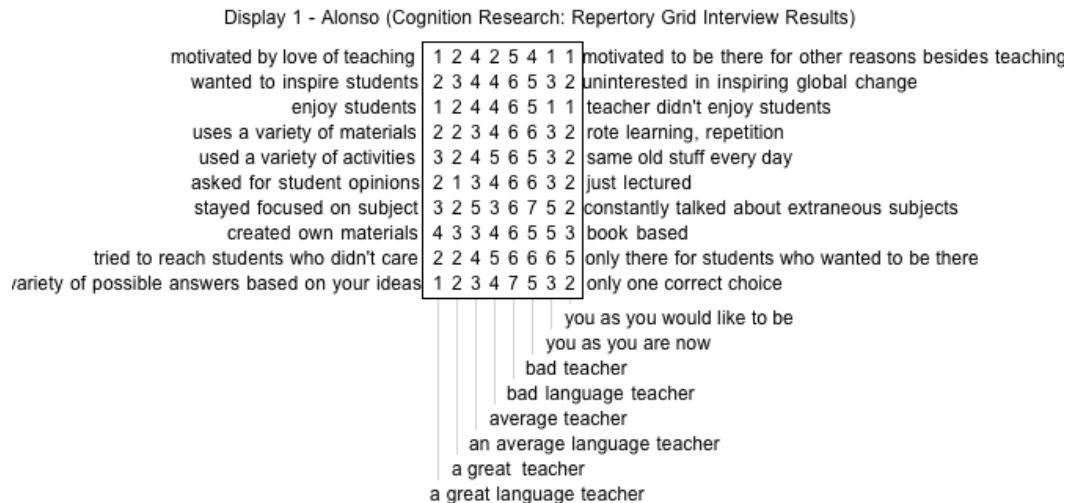


Figure B2. Cohort 0, Participant 1 (Alonso)

Display 2 - Aurora (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

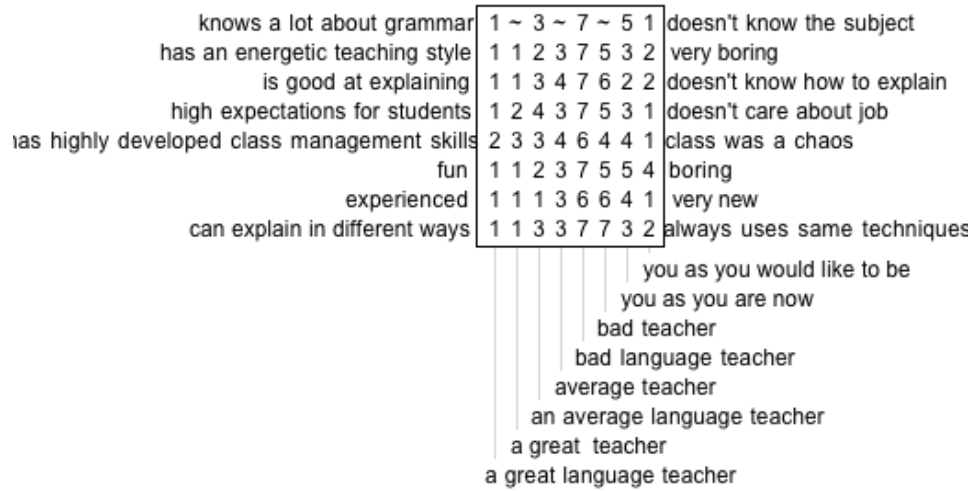


Figure B3. Cohort 0, Participant 2 (Aurora)

Display 3- Alejandro (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

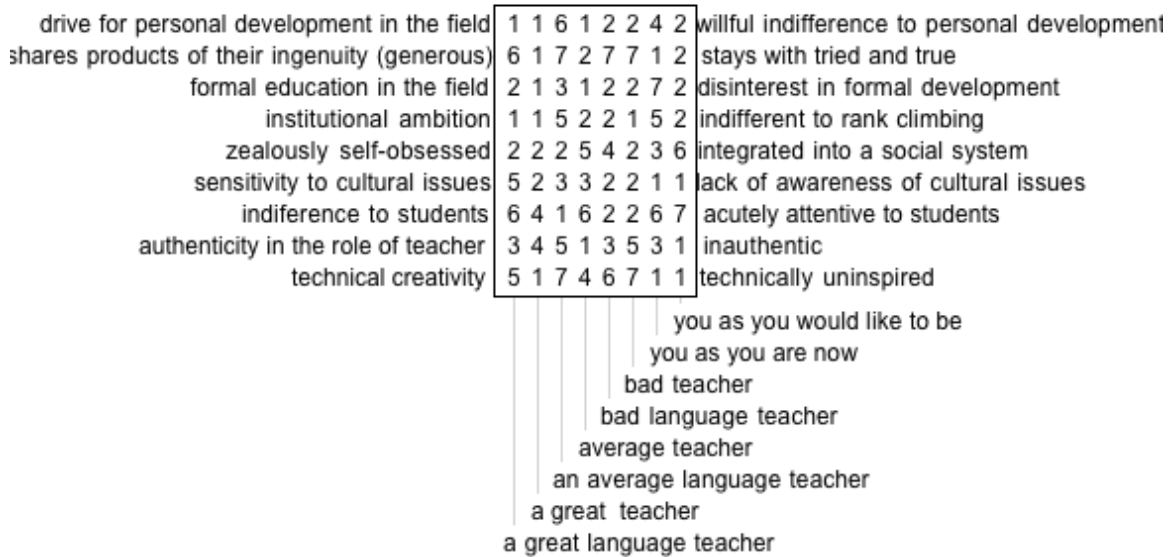


Figure B4. Cohort 0, Participant 3 (Alejandro)

Display 4 - Antonio (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

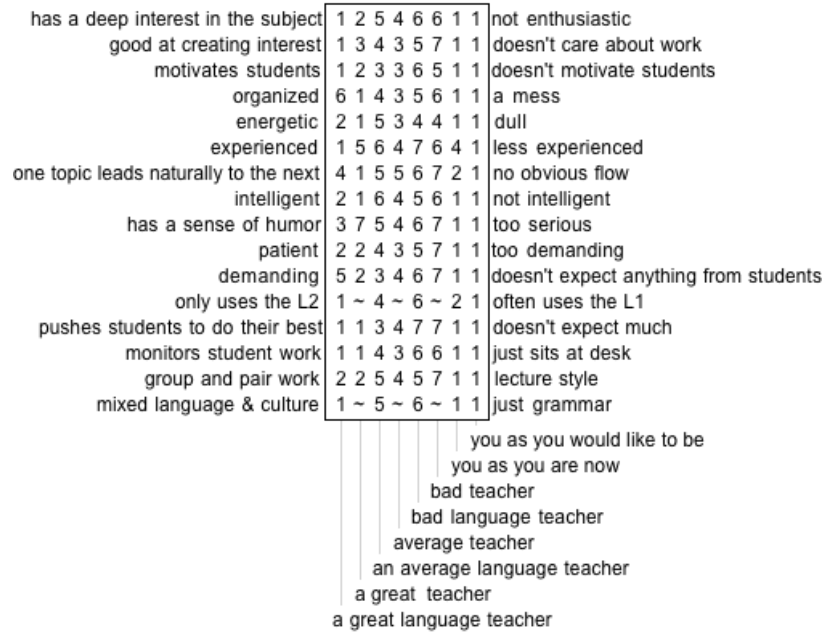


Figure B5. Cohort 0, Participant 4 (Antonio)

Display 5 - Alicia (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

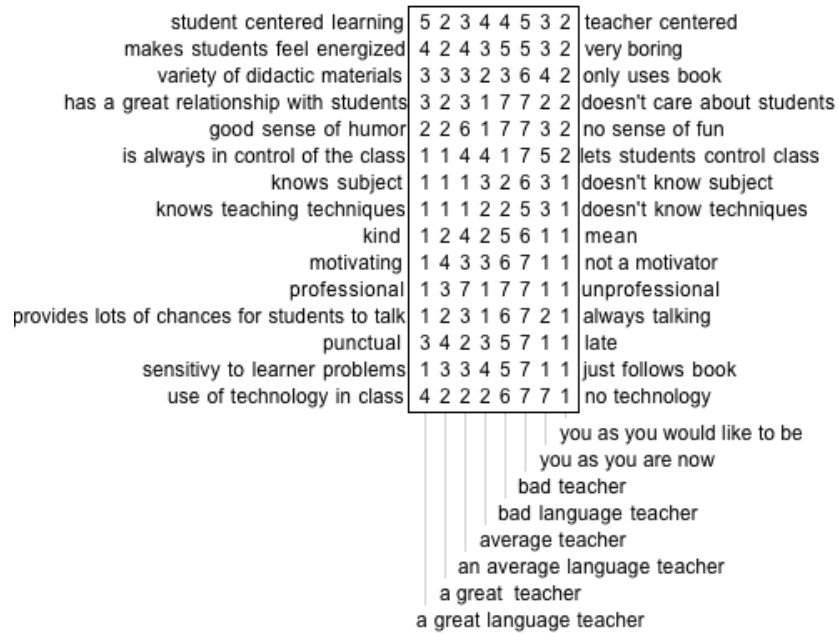


Figure B6. Cohort 0, Participant 5 (Alicia)

Display 6 - Alberto (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

correct balance of TTT and STT	2 ~ 6 ~ 6 ~ 3 1	Not enough TTT
speaks clearly	1 1 1 2 6 7 2 1	Not speaking clearly
capture interest (interesting stories, anecdotes)	6 2 2 4 5 7 2 1	boring
mixed language & culture	2 ~ 2 ~ 3 ~ 2 1	strictly language
native speakers	1 ~ 1 ~ 1 ~ 1 1	non-native speakers
good explainer	3 1 3 4 6 7 3 1	not good explainer
good presenter	2 2 3 2 7 7 4 1	difficult to understand
writing oriented	3 4 7 4 7 4 6 4	not-writing oriented
appropriate learning styles for particular group	3 5 5 6 7 7 3 1	rigid, traditional teaching
professional demeanor	2 1 2 3 6 6 2 1	does not inspire respect
high expectations for students	3 1 4 2 6 6 4 3	indifferent
teaches at appropriate level	1 1 2 2 3 7 2 1	not appropriate level
logical organization	1 1 2 1 6 7 3 1	illogical organization
projects authority	3 1 3 4 6 6 4 4	not authoritative
friendliness	4 3 3 6 6 7 3 2	unfriendly
responding to student needs	3 3 3 3 6 7 3 1	inability to understand student context
respect for the students (time, existing knowledge, life experience, work, etc)	2 4 2 4 6 7 1 1	lack of respect
knowledge of pedagogy	3 4 2 4 6 7 4 1	just knowing the language
dialogue between t and s	2 4 3 5 4 7 3 1	one way transmission
high quality materials	1 4 3 4 6 7 3 1	low quality of materials
appropriate pacing	2 3 2 3 5 7 3 1	poor pacing
continual review	1 4 2 5 6 7 4 1	one time and done
		you as you would like to be
		you as you are now
		bad teacher
		bad language teacher
		average teacher
		an average language teacher
		a great teacher
		a great language teacher

Figure B7. Cohort 0, Participant 6 (Alberto)

Display 7 - Arturo (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

loves subject	1 1 4 4 2 3 4 4	hates subject
good story teller	3 1 4 3 3 7 3 2	inability to tell stories
captivate students	2 1 4 3 6 7 2 2	boring
organized	1 2 2 2 6 2 2 2	go off on tangents
energetic	1 1 4 3 4 7 4 3	not energetic
experienced	1 1 3 3 7 4 3 2	not experienced
keep class moving / pace	1 3 3 3 5 6 3 2	can't keep momentum
intelligent	1 1 2 2 2 1 2 2	not intelligent
has a sense that the subject matters	2 1 2 2 3 7 1 1	doesn't care about the teaching
patience	1 3 3 3 6 7 2 1	projects a sense of not caring
explain in many different ways	2 3 3 3 4 7 3 2	doesn't explain in many different ways
only uses the L2	1 ~ 3 ~ 5 ~ 3 2	uses L2
forced students to try	1 1 2 2 5 7 2 1	doesn't push students
monitoring	1 3 3 4 3 7 4 3	doesn't monitor
group and pair work	1 ~ 4 ~ 5 ~ 4 2	no group and pair work
brings own personality/ life into teaching	2 1 4 3 3 7 2 2	dry environment
try something different	2 3 4 4 6 7 3 2	never tries new things
good lesson planning	1 1 3 3 6 3 5 3	poor lesson plannign
able to teach off the cuff	2 1 4 4 6 6 2 1	can only follow a plan
able to predict possible problems	1 2 4 4 7 7 2 1	not able to foresee problems
good sense of humor	2 1 5 5 5 7 1 1	not a good sense of humor
rapport with students	1 1 3 4 6 7 3 2	teaching and just leave
treat students with respect	1 1 3 3 6 7 2 1	patronize
dynamic activities	2 4 3 3 6 7 4 2	dry / lame activities
motivate students	2 1 4 4 7 7 4 2	doesn't motivate
class management skills	1 1 3 3 6 6 2 2	poor management skills
expect student responsibility	1 1 5 4 3 1 2 2	pander to students
be prepared	1 1 3 3 5 4 4 2	not prepared
clear rules	1 1 2 2 4 3 3 1	lack of clarity about rules
making learning relevant to the lives of students	3 3 4 4 5 7 4 3	doesn't making learning relevant
individualize lessons	2 4 4 4 6 7 4 3	doesn't indivualize
give control to students	4 4 4 4 6 7 4 2	doesn't give control to students
command of subject matter	1 1 4 3 5 1 2 1	lack of command of subject material
keep mood light, "light and fluffy"	2 1 3 4 6 7 2 1	bitter
		you as you would like to be
		you as you are now
		bad teacher
		bad language teacher
		average teacher
		an average language teacher
		a great teacher
		a great language teacher

Figure B8. Cohort 0, Participant 7 (Arturo)

Display 8 - Augusto (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

command of the room	1 2 4 2 5 7 1 1	timid
authority	1 2 5 2 5 7 1 1	lack of authority
dynamic	1 5 4 2 5 7 1 1	by the book
kind	1 4 5 2 4 5 2 2	not kind
rapport with students, even outside of class	1 7 6 2 5 4 4 4	no rapport with students
good personality	1 2 5 4 4 5 2 2	poor personality
raconteur	2 1 5 4 4 6 1 1	not a raconteur
can create contexts for language use	2 ~ 5 ~ 4 ~ 2 1	doesn't create contexts
use of technology	2 4 5 3 5 5 4 4	no use of technology
pronunciation work	3 1 4 4 6 6 2 2	lack of pronunciation work
insisted on participation	2 2 3 3 5 7 1 1	doesn't care about participation
focus on conjugations	3 ~ 2 ~ 4 ~ 5 4	no focus on conjugations
confident	2 2 3 3 3 5 1 1	felt fear
organic	1 3 4 5 4 4 1 1	robotic
experienced	1 2 7 5 5 6 5 1	novice
exudes knowledge	1 2 5 4 4 3 2 2	doesn't exude knowledge
school trips	1 7 6 5 5 2 7 1	no school trips
sense of humor	1 2 3 6 6 3 1 1	poor sense of humor
depth of knowledge	1 1 4 5 7 6 1 1	lack of knoweldge
strong grammar focus	1 ~ 3 ~ 4 ~ 2 2	lack of grammar focus
many activities	1 1 3 7 5 4 1 1	few activities
prepared	1 1 3 1 4 5 1 1	lack of preparation
variety of activities	1 1 3 2 5 4 1 1	lack of variety in activities
love their job	1 1 4 1 5 5 4 4	not giving a shit
set time aside for individual student attention	2 1 5 3 5 6 1 1	doesn't set aside time for individual student attentior
use of corrective feedback	3 ~ 3 ~ 4 ~ 1 1	lack of corrective feedback
immediate feedback	2 2 4 3 3 7 1 1	lack of immediate feedback
genuinely cares about students	1 1 4 4 4 5 1 1	doesn't care about students
makes students feel successful	1 1 4 3 5 6 1 1	doesn't make students feel special
student talking time / "not my soapbox"	2 2 4 4 4 5 1 1	too much teacher talking time
elicits responses	3 2 3 2 5 4 1 1	doesn't elicit
reserve judgement	2 1 3 2 3 7 1 1	judge groups too quickly
constant innovation	1 1 3 4 3 6 1 1	stays with tried and true
continuous professional development	1 1 6 5 3 3 2 2	lack of continuous development
training in pedagogical techniques	1 1 3 5 3 4 4 3	lack of pedagogical techniques
		you as you would like to be
		you as you are now
		bad teacher
		bad language teacher
		average teacher
		an average language teacher
		a great teacher
		a great language teacher

Figure B9. Cohort 0, Participant 8 (Augusto)



Display 9 - Alejandra (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

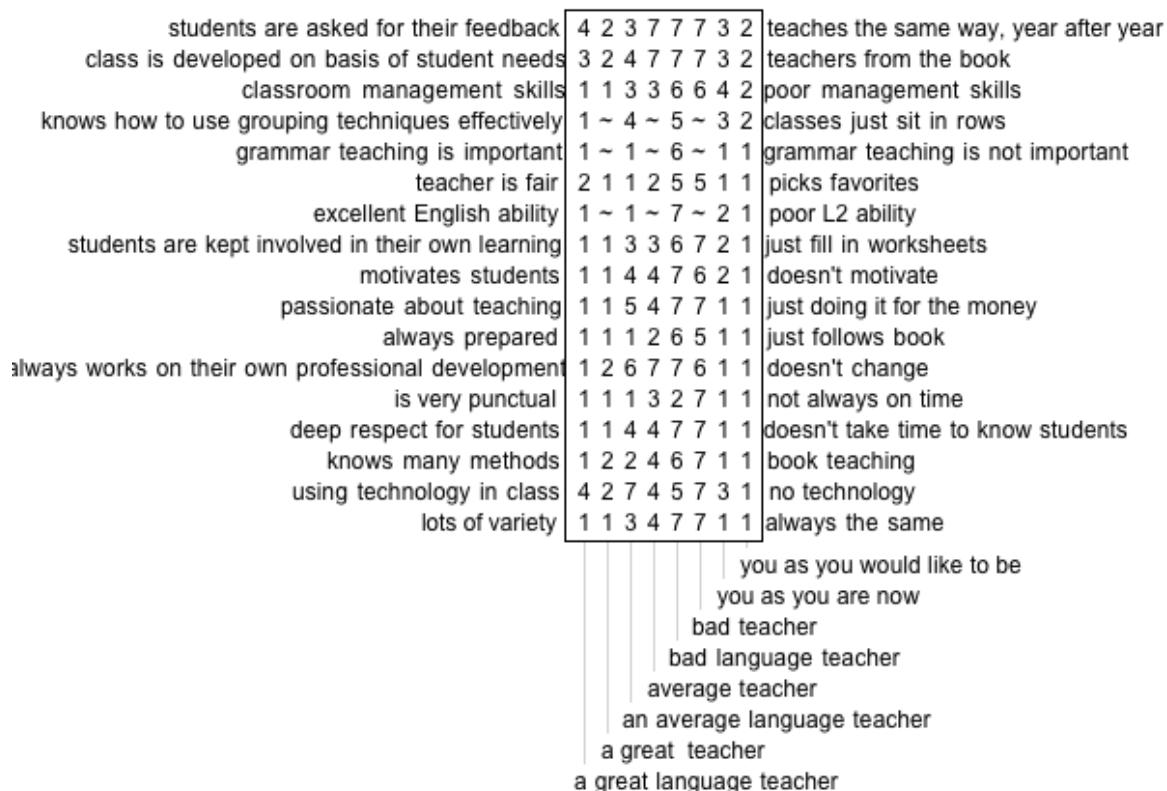


Figure B10. Cohort 0, Participant 9 (Alejandra)

Display 10 - Braulio (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

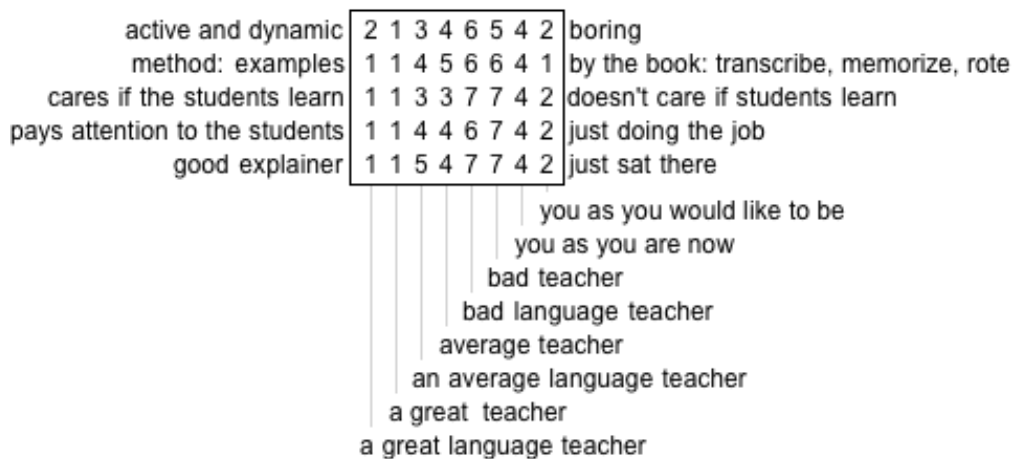


Figure B11. Cohort 1, Participant 10 (Araulio)

Display 11 - Berenice (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

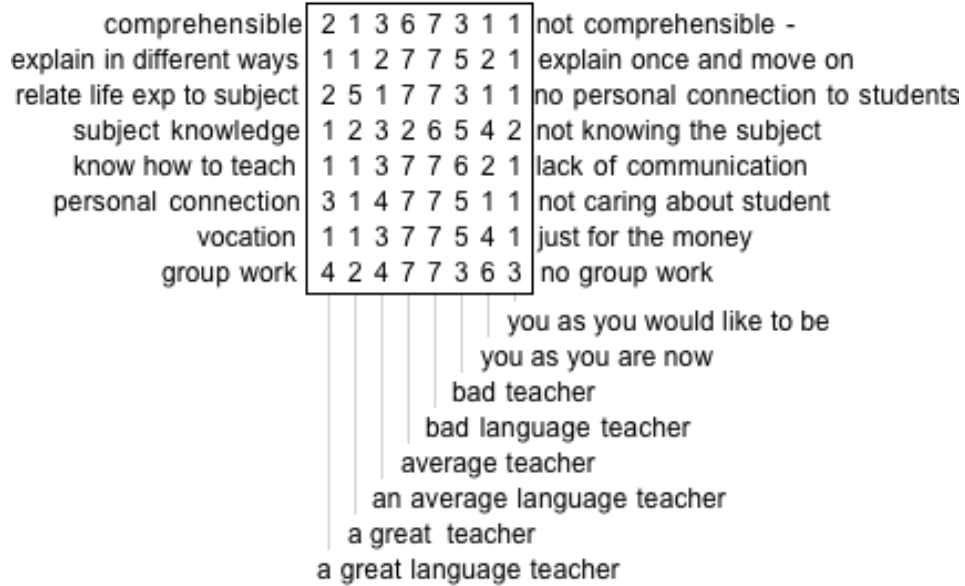


Figure B12. Cohort 1, Participant 11 (Berenice)

Display 12 - Benjamin (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

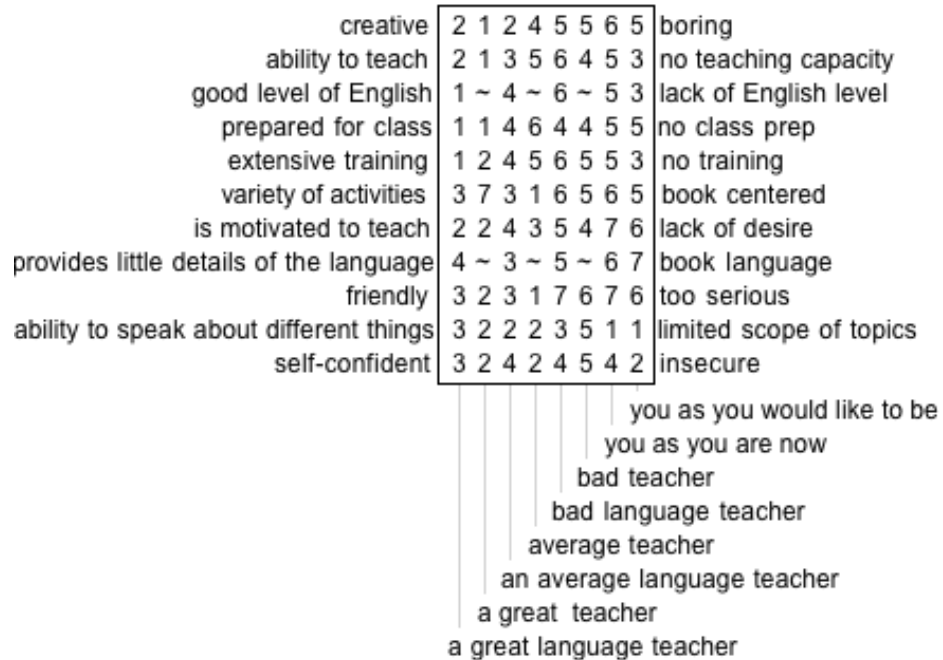


Figure B13. Cohort 1, Participant 12 (Benjamin)

Display 13 - Brenda (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

only spoke in English	1 ~ 6 ~ 7 ~ 4 2	used Spanish
dominated language	1 ~ 1 ~ 2 ~ 4 5	didn't know the language
many practice opportunities	1 3 7 3 7 7 3 1	few practice opportunities
grammar in real contexts (daily language)	2 ~ 6 ~ 4 ~ 3 1	artificial language
uninhibited	2 3 5 4 3 4 3 1	inhibited
prepared	1 2 2 3 2 1 2 1	no preparation
involment with students	2 1 3 3 5 7 3 2	not knowing students
		you as you would like to be
		you as you are now
		bad teacher
		bad language teacher
		average teacher
		an average language teacher
		a great teacher
		a great language teacher

Figure B14. Cohort 1, Participant 13 (Brenda)

Display 14 - Blanca (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

Engaged in the work	1 1 4 5 7 7 3 1	Disinterested
Encourage students	1 1 4 4 7 7 2 1	Don't encourage students
Patience	2 1 4 2 7 7 3 1	Impatient
Respect	1 1 4 1 7 6 1 1	Not respectful
Fairness	1 1 3 5 7 7 1 1	Unfair
Charismatic	4 1 3 2 7 7 3 1	Not charismatic
Interest in students	4 1 3 5 7 7 2 1	No interest in students
challenge students	1 2 4 6 7 7 2 1	indifferent to student progress
classroom management skills	1 1 3 6 7 7 4 1	acks classroom management skills
be entertaining	4 1 3 6 7 7 3 1	boring
have a structure for class	1 2 5 6 5 7 3 1	no structure
motivate students	2 1 3 6 7 7 3 1	don't motivate students
make students participate	1 1 3 6 7 7 2 1	doesn't have ss participate
connect language with real life	3 ~ 5 ~ 7 ~ 2 1	doesn't connect language to real meaning
confidence	1 1 2 2 7 6 3 1	stage fright
balance use of L1 & L2	6 ~ 5 ~ 7 ~ 2 1	not balanced use of L1 & L2
have vocation for teaching	1 1 3 5 7 7 2 1	don't have vocation
establish a routine	1 2 6 3 4 3 3 1	have no routine
challenge yourself as teacher	3 2 6 5 7 7 4 1	status quo
help the ones who need most help	3 2 7 7 7 7 2 1	ignore the ones having difficulty
appropriate techniques	1 1 7 7 7 7 3 1	no knowledge of techniques
		you as you would like to be
		you as you are now
		bad teacher
		bad language teacher
		average teacher
		an average language teacher
		a great teacher
		a great language teacher

Figure B15. Cohort 1, Participant 14 (Blanca)

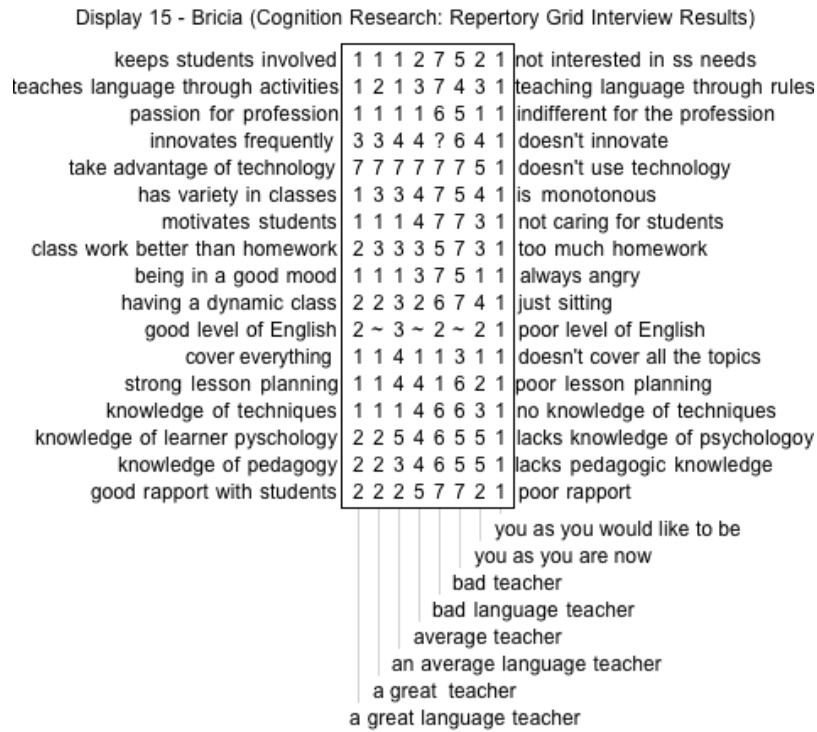


Figure B16. Cohort 1, Participant 15 (Bricia)

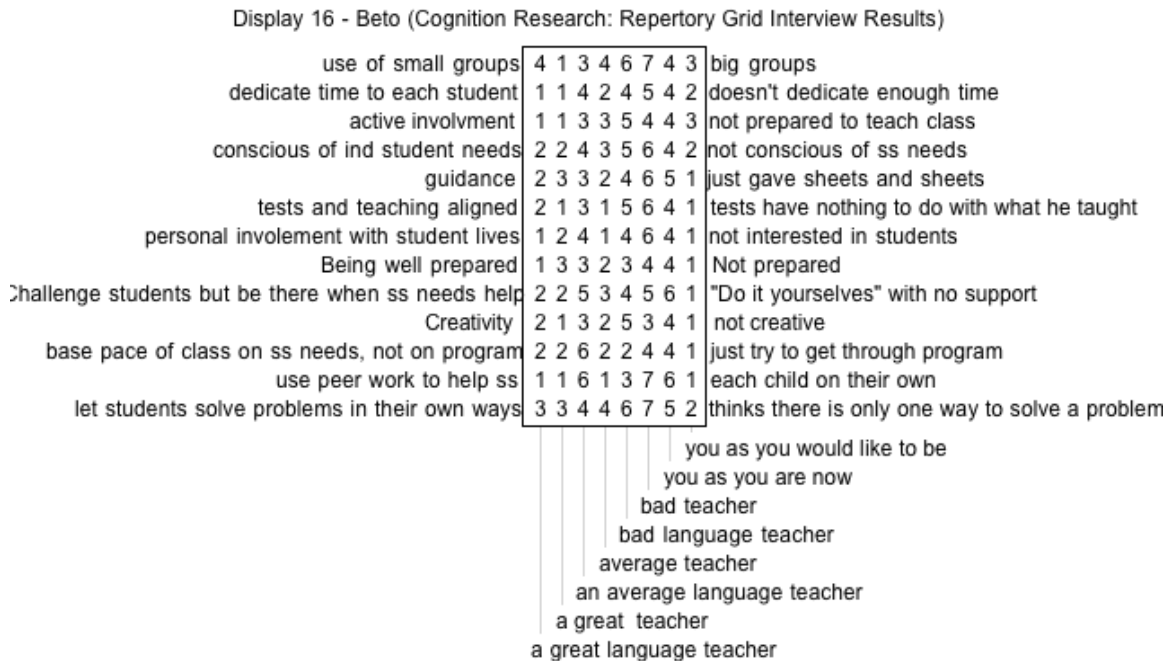


Figure B17. Cohort 1, Participant 16 (Beto)

Display 17 - Blanca (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

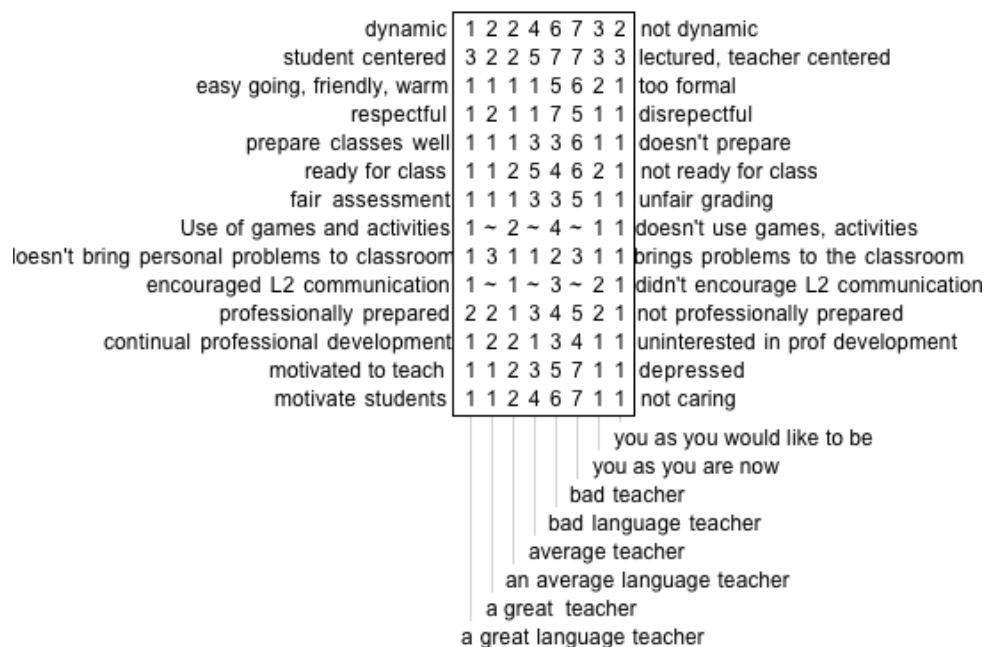


Figure B18. Cohort 1, Participant 17 (Blanca)

Display 18 - Brisa (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

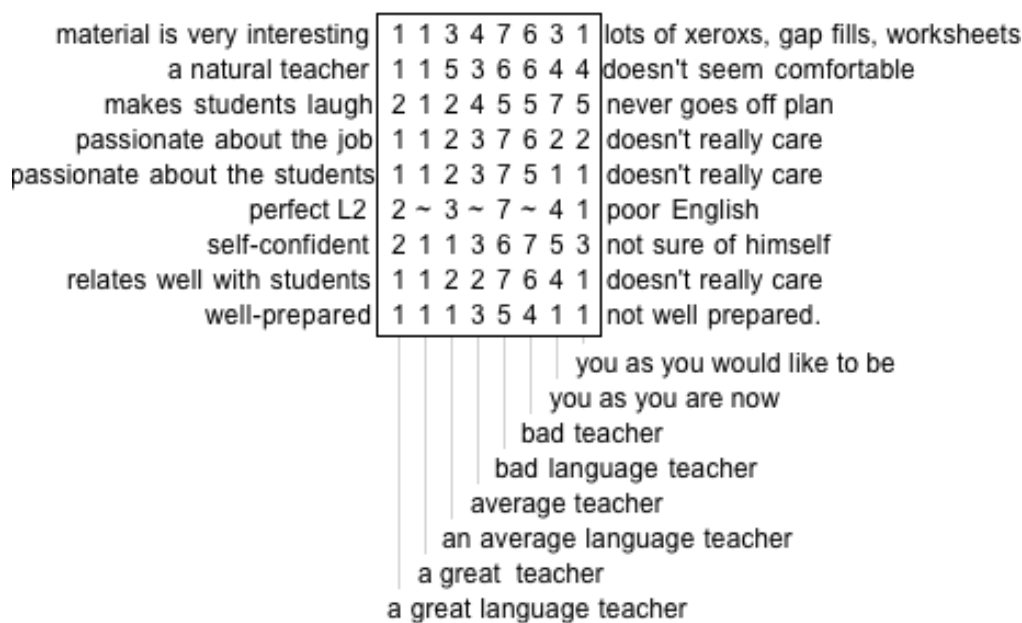


Figure B19. Cohort 1, Participant 18 (Brisa)

Display 19 - Bonifacio (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

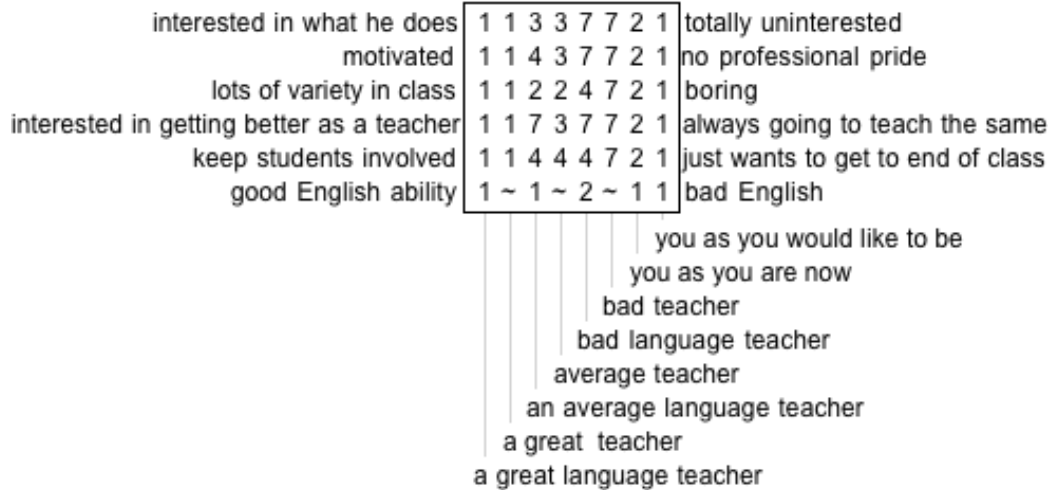


Figure B20. Cohort 1, Participant 19 (Bonifacio)

Display 20 - Celia (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

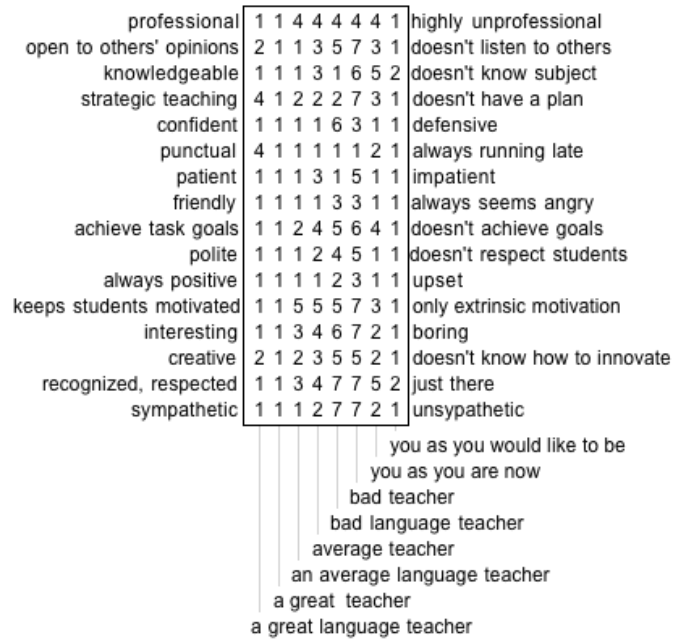


Figure B21. Cohort 2, Participant 20 (Celia)

Display 21 - Catalina (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

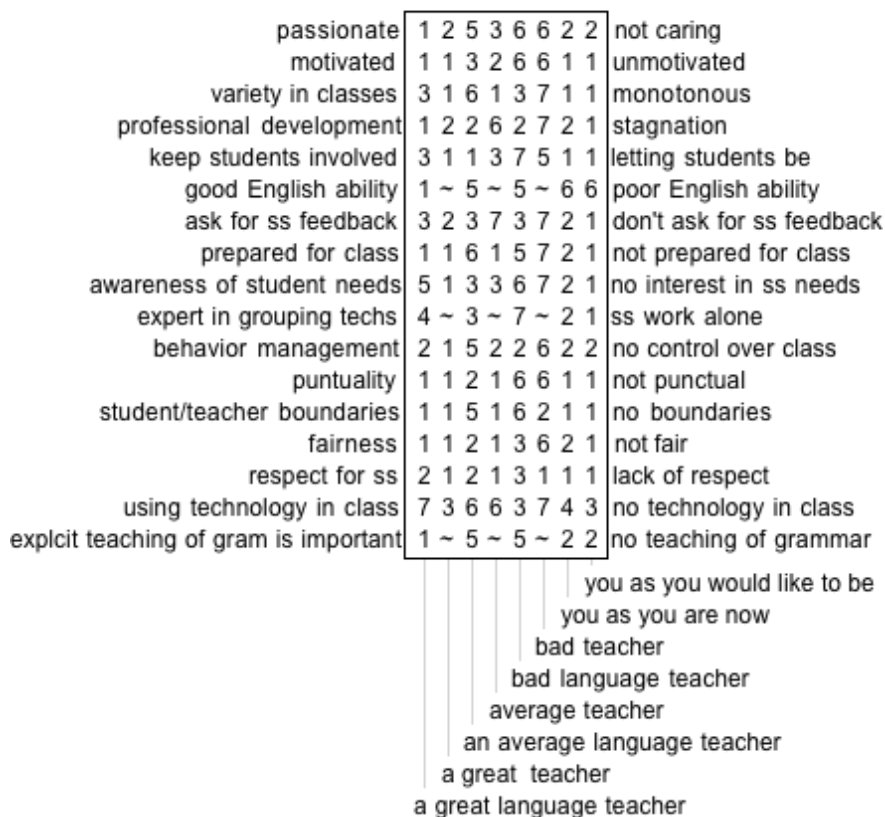


Figure B22. Cohort 2, Participant 21 (Catalina)

Display 22 - Carlos (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

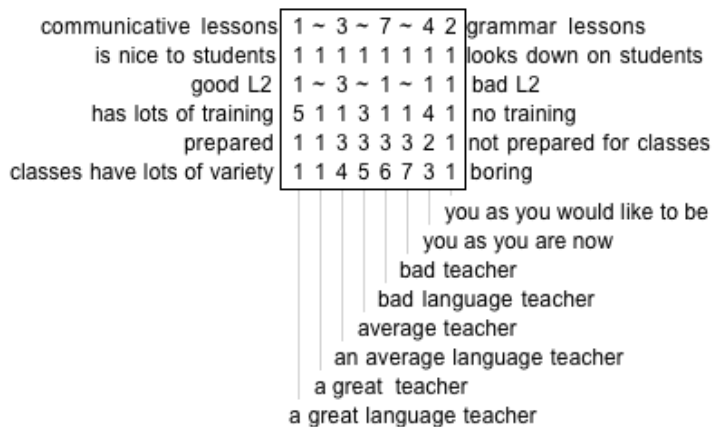


Figure B23. Cohort 2, Participant 22 (Carlos)



Display 23 - Cyntia (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

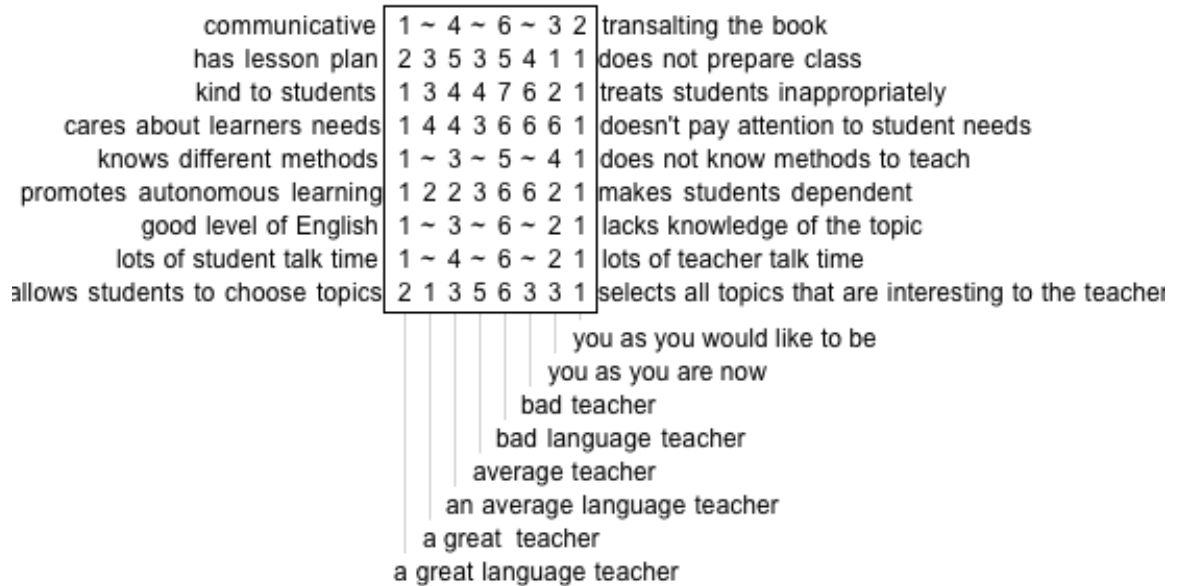


Figure B24. Cohort 2, Participant 23 (Cyntia)

Display 24 - Claudia (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

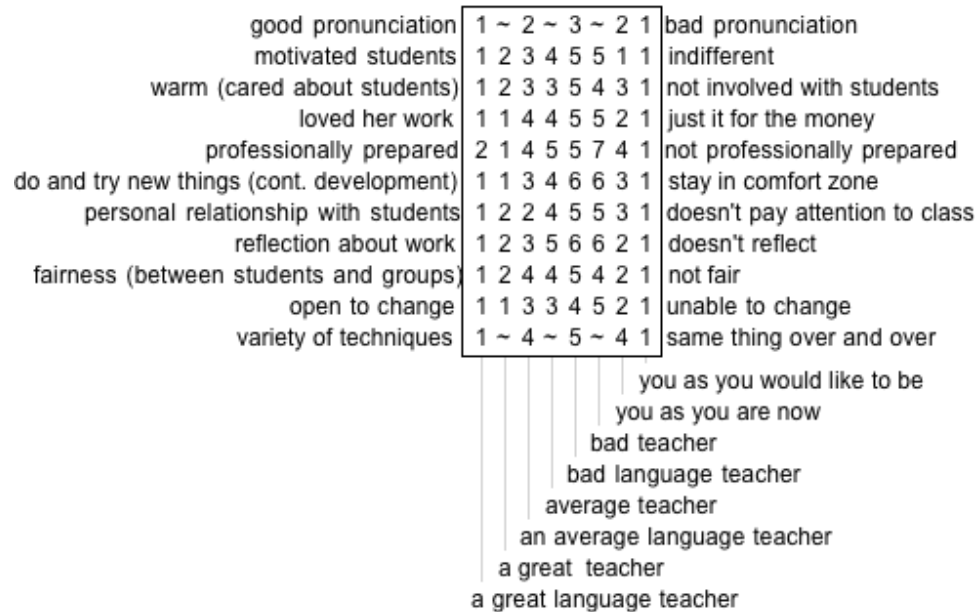


Figure B25. Cohort 2, Participant 24 (Claudia)

Display 25 - Carla (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

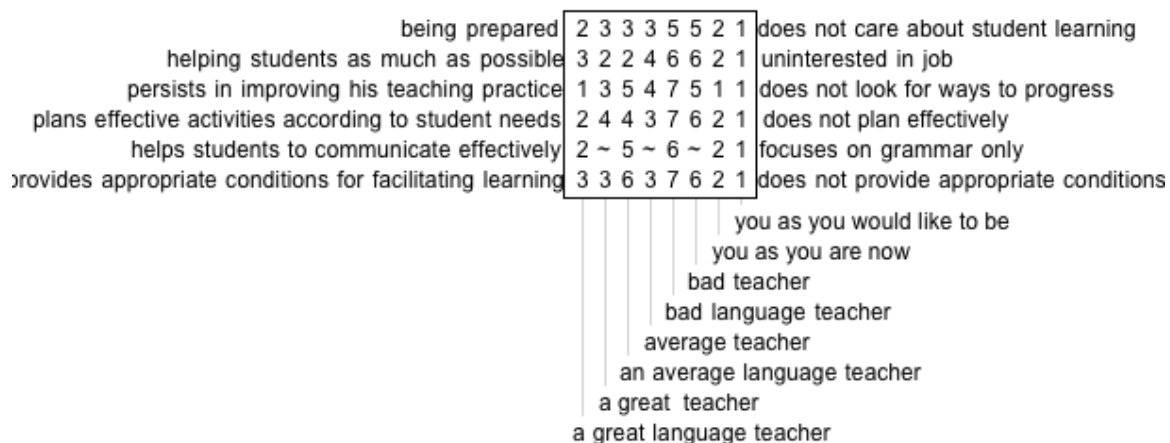


Figure B26. Cohort 2, Participant 25 (Carla)

Display 26 - Coco (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

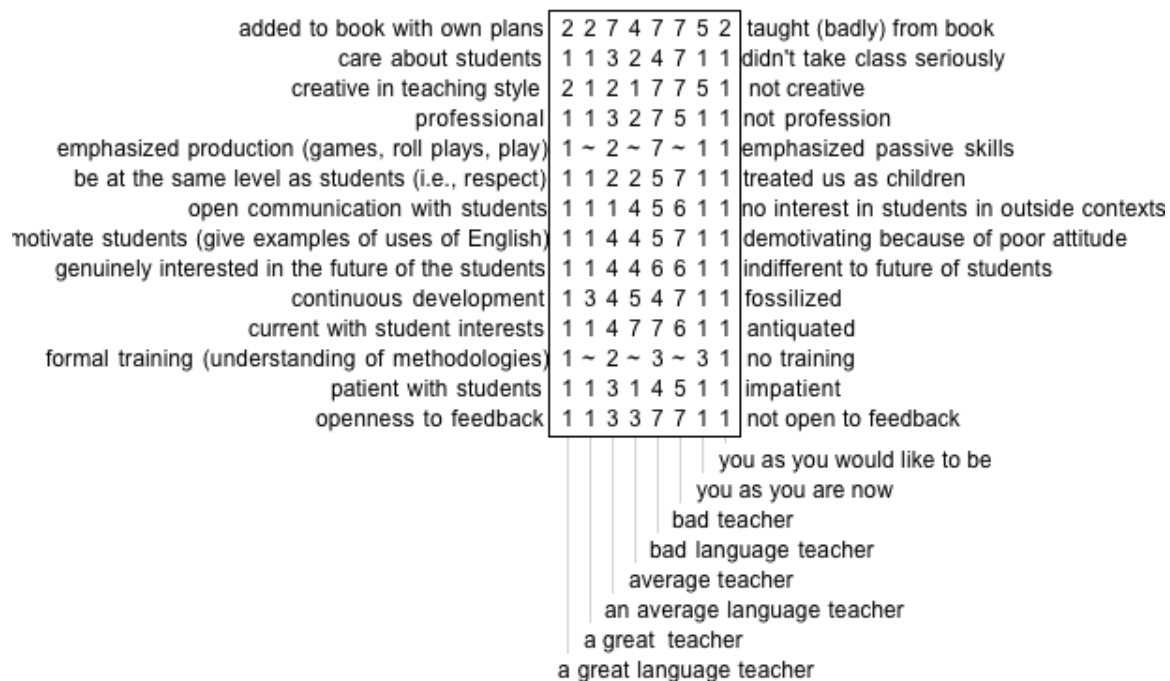


Figure B27. Cohort 2, Participant 26 (Coco)

Display 27 - Cristian (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

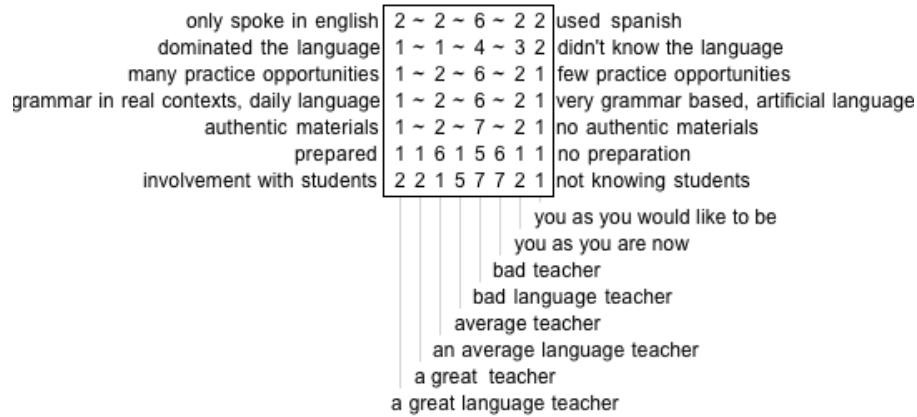


Figure B28. Cohort 2, Participant 27 (Cristian)

Display 28 - Cristobal (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)



Figure B29. Cohort 2, Participant 28 (Cristobal)

Display 29 - Carmela (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

prepared with materials	1 1 4 4 6 6 3 2	unprepared materially
prepared with a plan	1 1 5 5 5 5 3 1	unprepared with a plan
excellent subject knowledge	2 2 3 3 5 4 3 2	no subject knowledge
good at grammar teaching	1 ~ 3 ~ 5 ~ 4 2	not good at grammar teaching
always available	2 2 2 3 6 6 2 2	not available
classes are fun	1 1 4 4 7 7 4 1	boring
good personality	3 1 3 2 6 7 6 1	serious personality
really cares about students	2 2 3 3 6 6 2 1	doesn't care about student
experienced	1 1 2 2 6 5 6 1	lack of experience
emotionally mature	2 2 2 2 4 4 2 1	not emotionally stable
treat students with respect	1 1 2 2 2 3 2 1	lack of respect
appropriate activities	1 1 3 3 3 3 3 1	no activities
teach inductively	2 2 4 4 5 4 3 1	teach deductively
creativity	1 3 3 2 5 5 ? ?	lack of creativity
clear instructions	1 1 1 1 2 2 3 1	lack of clear instructions
create a comfortable environment	1 1 3 3 6 6 2 1	not a comfortable environment
care about doing a good job	1 1 3 3 5 5 1 1	just there to get a check
make an impact on students life	1 1 3 3 6 6 2 1	doesn't make an impact
trustworthy	2 1 2 2 6 6 1 1	doesn't inspire trust
wants students to be happy	3 3 3 3 6 6 1 1	disinterested in student happiness.
awareness of student learning styles	3 3 4 4 7 7 5 2	not interested in student learning styles
needs to challenge students	2 1 5 5 6 6 2 2	doesn't challenge students

you as you would like to be
you as you are now
bad teacher
bad language teacher
average teacher
an average language teacher
a great teacher
a great language teacher

Figure B30. Cohort 2, Participant 29 (Carmela)

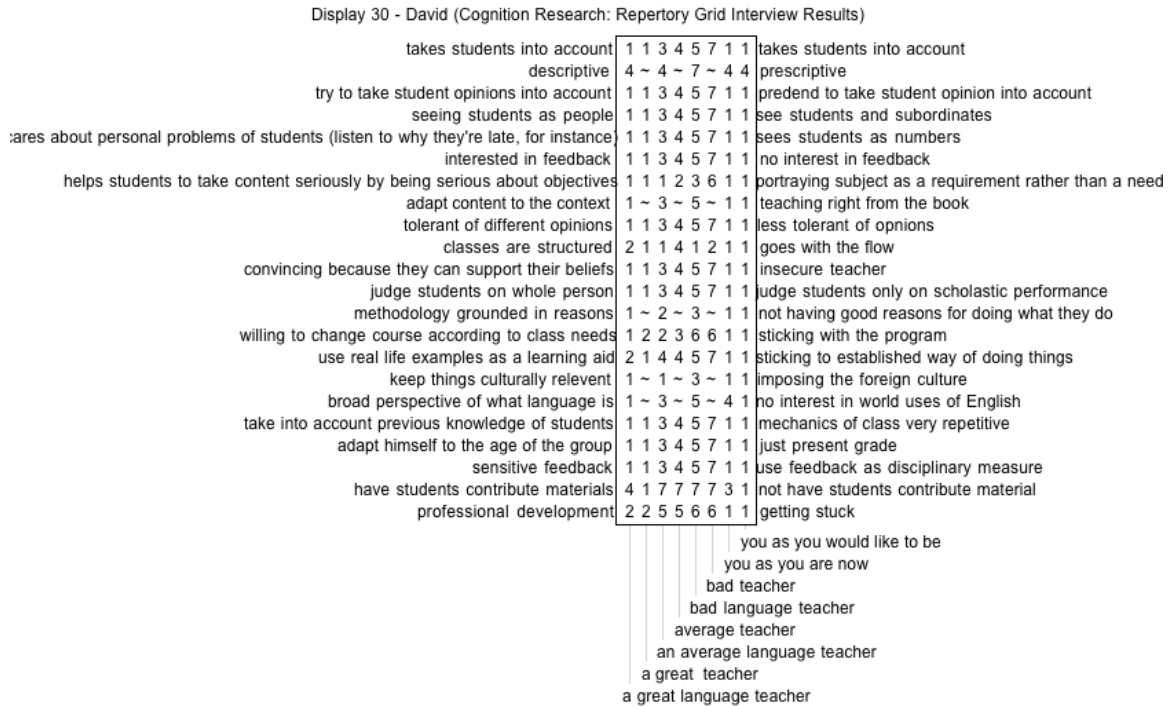


Figure B31. Cohort 3, Participant 30 (David)

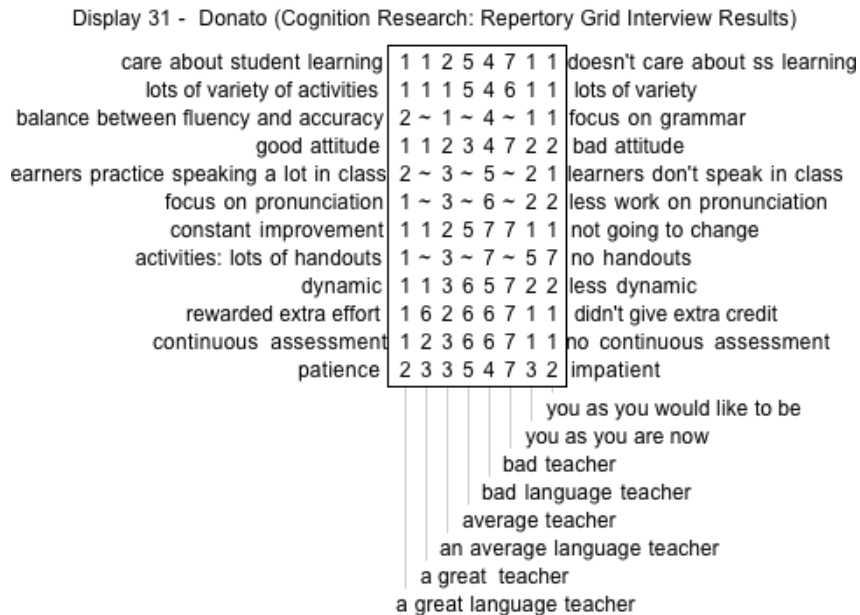


Figure B32. Cohort 3, Participant 31 (Donato)

Display 32 - Daniel (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

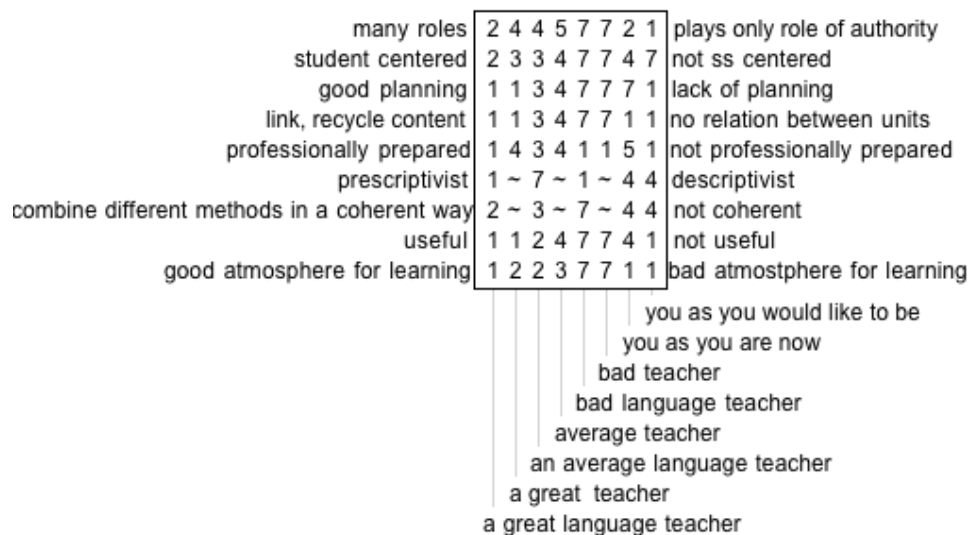


Figure B33. Cohort 3, Participant 32 (Daniel)

Display 33 - Domingo (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

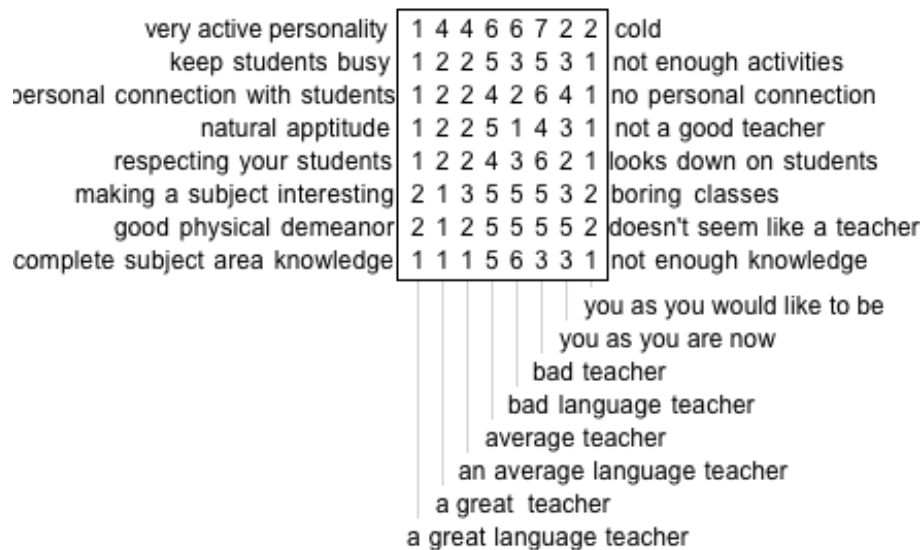


Figure B34. Cohort 3, Participant 33 (Domingo)

Display 34 - Dante (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

uses target language	1 ~ 2 ~ 2 ~ 1 1	uses the L1
reaches objectives	2 2 5 4 6 6 3 1	not sure what objectives were
dynamic	1 1 2 2 4 7 2 2	boring
one who is prepared	1 1 2 3 3 3 4 1	not prepared
one who teaches with clarity	1 1 2 3 3 4 3 1	instructions not clear
one who goes the extra mile	1 1 2 2 4 7 2 1	only does what she needed to do
one who understands student needs	1 1 4 2 5 7 2 1	teaches from the textbook
		you as you would like to be
		you as you are now
		bad teacher
		bad language teacher
		average teacher
		an average language teacher
		a great teacher
		a great language teacher

Figure B35. Cohort 3, Participant 34 (Dante)

Display 35 - Dominic (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

enthusiastic	1 3 4 3 6 5 2 1	not interested
sense of humor	1 2 3 3 5 4 1 1	serious
teach inductively	2 3 2 3 4 4 1 1	teach deductively
teach in context related to real life	1 ~ 1 ~ 4 ~ 2 1	doesn't connect content to real life
expressiveness	1 3 1 3 6 4 1 1	not expressive
happiness	1 2 1 2 4 4 1 1	not happy
patient	1 2 3 3 4 4 1 1	impatient
clear explanations	2 2 2 3 3 4 2 1	not clear explanations
help students with doubts, questions	1 1 2 3 3 4 1 1	doesn't help students
serious about teaching	1 2 2 2 3 4 1 1	not serious about teaching
knowledgeable about topic	2 2 2 3 3 1 2 1	not knowledgeable
well prepared	2 3 2 3 4 3 2 1	not prepared
high expectations for ss	1 1 1 1 2 3 1 1	no expectations
use variety of activities/materials	2 2 1 2 3 3 2 1	no variety of activities/materials
able to create original material	2 1 2 4 4 4 2 1	can't create original material
empathetic	1 2 1 2 3 3 1 1	not empathetic
committed to job	2 2 1 3 3 3 1 1	wasting time
involved with personal lives of students	1 1 2 2 3 3 2 1	no interest in students
responsible	1 1 1 2 3 3 1 1	irresponsible
mentorship	1 2 2 2 5 5 1 1	just a teacher
confidence	1 1 1 2 1 3 2 1	not confident
go little by little	2 1 2 2 3 2 2 1	too much information all at once
teaching as process	1 2 1 2 3 3 1 1	teaching as product
help ss find opportunities for L2 use outside the classroom	1 2 2 3 3 3 2 1	don't help students find opportunities outside
well organized	2 2 1 2 3 3 2 1	not organized
		you as you would like to be
		you as you are now
		bad teacher
		bad language teacher
		average teacher
		an average language teacher
		a great teacher
		a great language teacher

Figure B36. Cohort 3, Participant 35 (Dominic)

Display 36 - Dulice (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

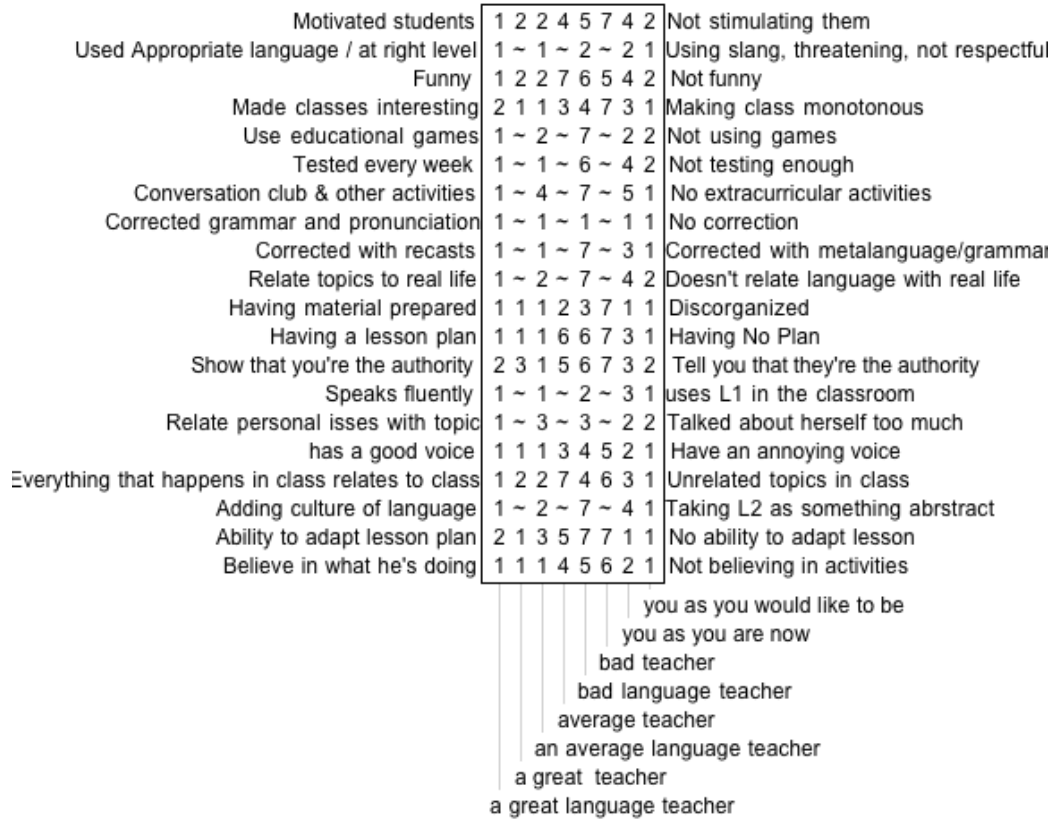


Figure B37. Cohort 3, Participant 36 (Dulce)

Display 37 - Dionisio (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

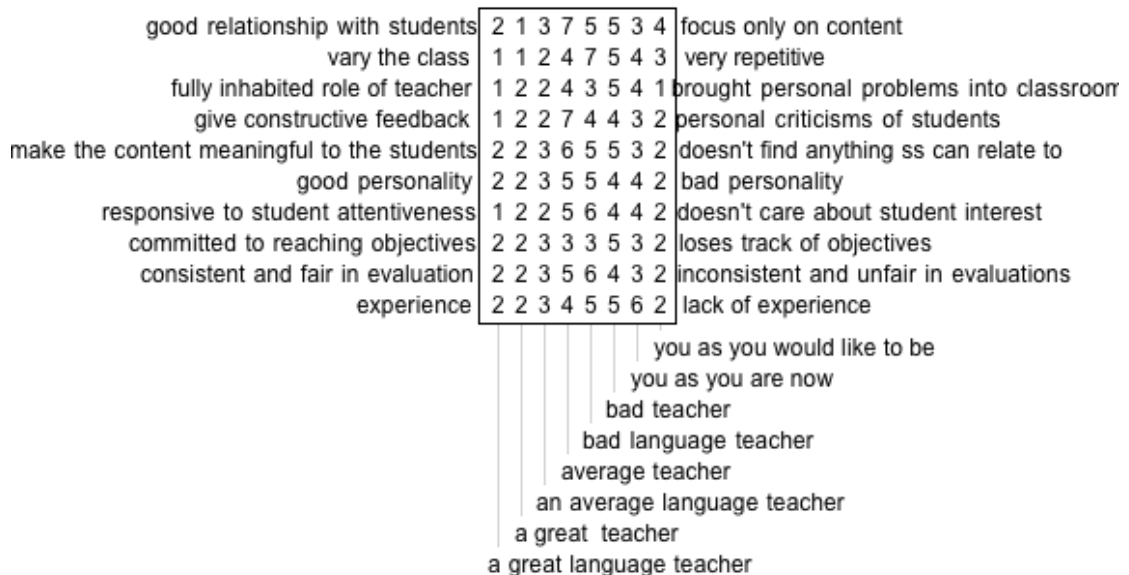


Figure B38. Cohort 3, Participant 37 (Dionisio)



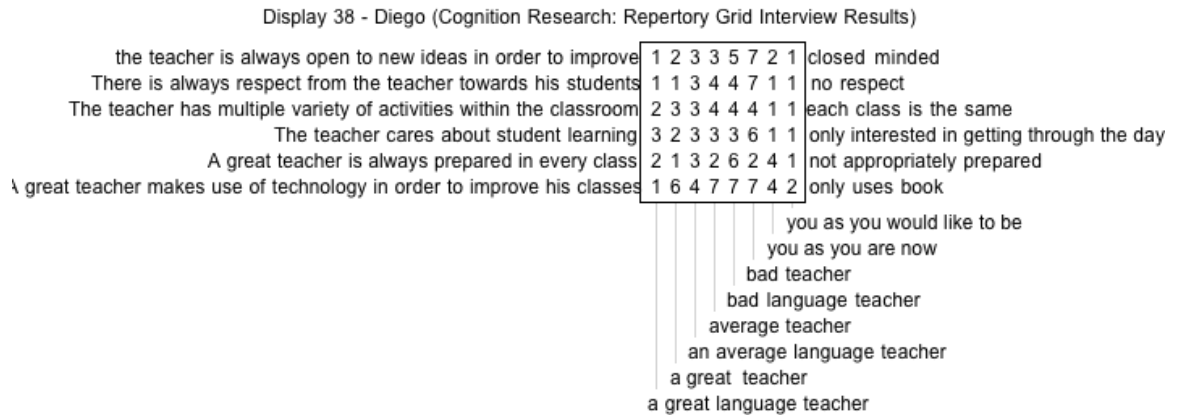


Figure B39. Cohort 3, Participant 38 (Diego)

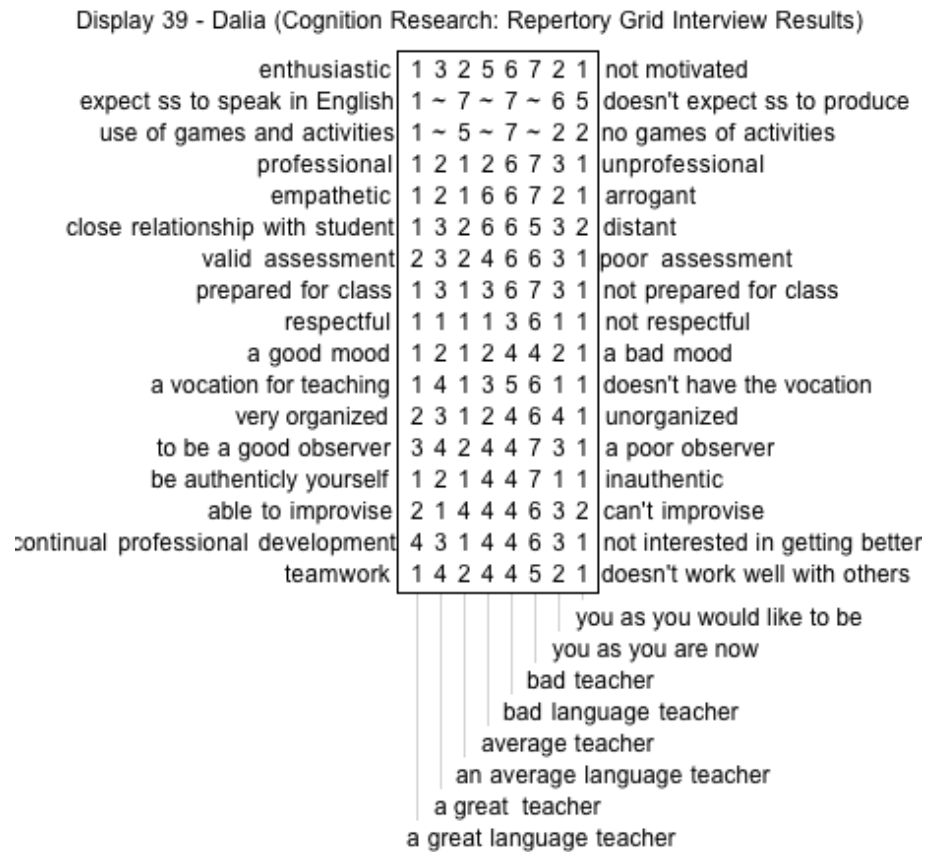


Figure B40. Cohort 3, Participant 39 (Dalia)

Display 40 - Ernesto (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

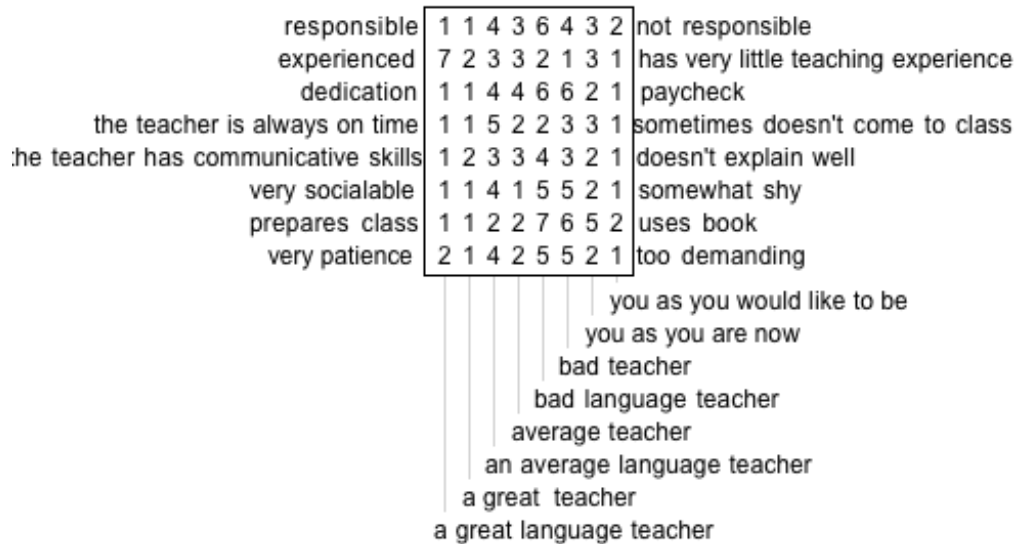


Figure B41. Cohort 4, Participant 40 (Ernesto)

Display 41 - Erica (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

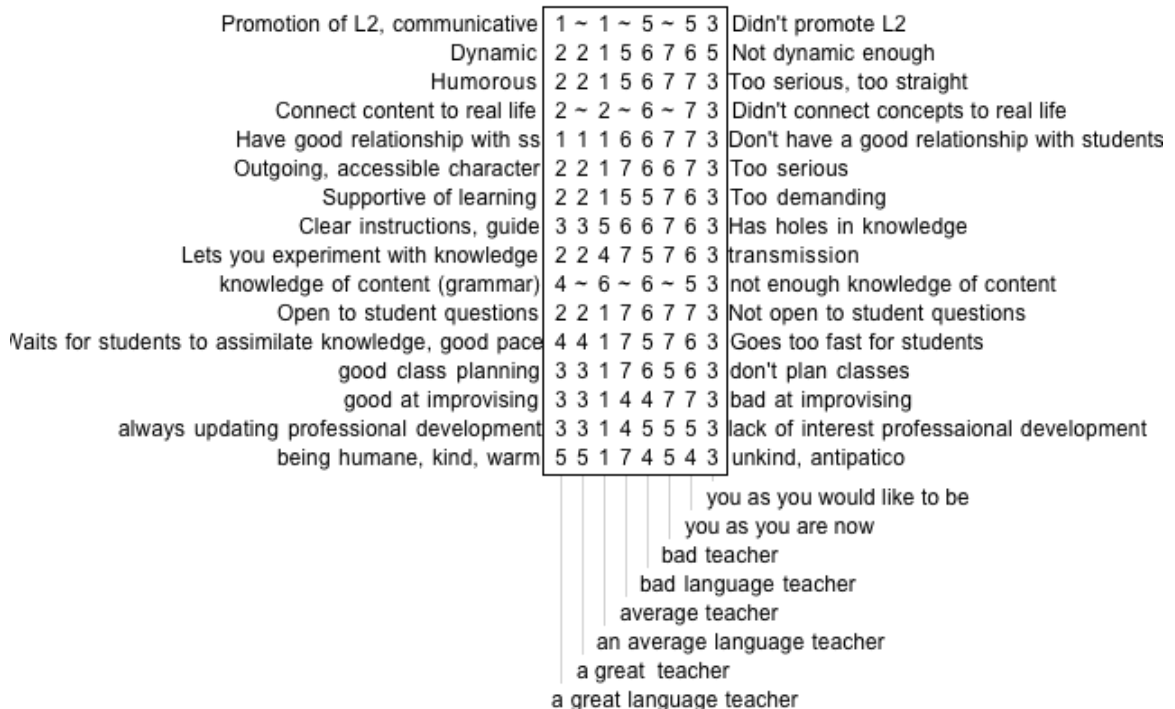


Figure B42. Cohort 4, Participant 41 (Erica)

Display 42 - Erendira (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

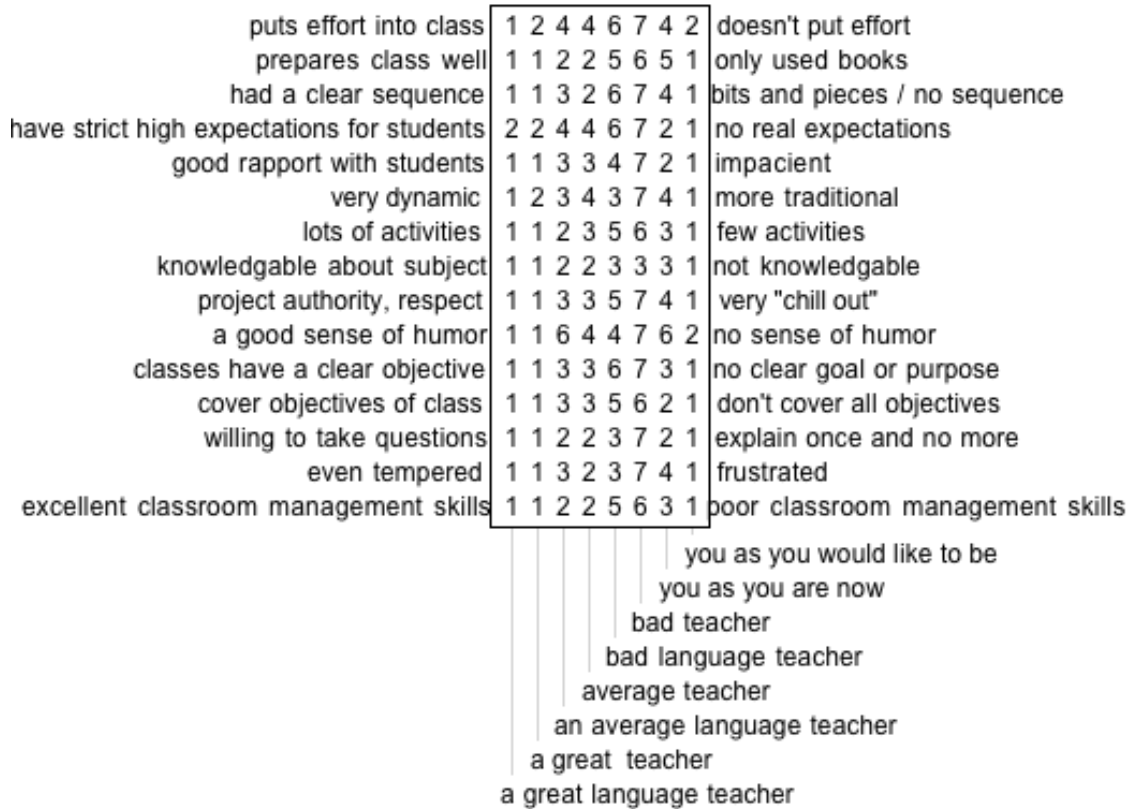


Figure B43. Cohort 4, Participant 42 (Erendira)

Display 43 - Elia (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

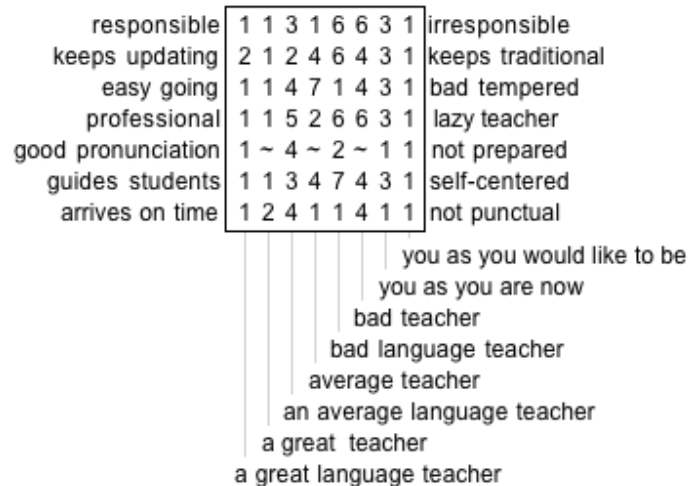


Figure B44. Cohort 4, Participant 43 (Elia)

Display 44 - Enrique (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

organized	1 1 3 4 7 6 3 2	unorganized
empathize with student learning problems	1 2 2 4 7 6 2 1	no ability to empathize with student learning difficulties
trained	3 1 4 2 6 5 2 1	not trained
excellent use of didactic materials, games, activities	3 ~ 3 ~ 7 ~ 4 2	poor use of materials
knows best way to help students	2 2 2 2 6 7 3 2	didn't help students
good English level	1 ~ 3 ~ 5 ~ 3 2	poor English level
good knowledge of methodologies	3 ~ 3 ~ 7 ~ 3 2	lack of knowledge of methodologies
be a mentor	2 1 3 6 7 5 3 1	just a teacher
prepare ss for future academic challenges	3 1 2 3 7 7 3 1	don't prepare students
teach responsibility	4 1 4 2 5 5 3 1	doesn't teach responsibility
teach respect (ss & teachers, society)	3 2 3 3 6 6 3 1	disrespectful of students
friendly	2 2 1 3 4 7 2 1	unfriendly
authoritative	3 3 3 5 7 7 3 3	lax
motivate interest in the subject	2 1 3 2 7 7 2 1	imposes English
create a good rapport w/ ss	2 1 3 2 7 7 3 2	poor rapport w/ students
teaches beyond the immediate subject	3 2 5 5 7 7 2 1	only teaches the subject
shares strategies and learning techniques	3 1 3 3 6 6 3 1	doesn't teach strategies and learning techniques
continual professional development	5 1 5 3 5 5 2 1	stopped developing
encourage student potential	3 1 2 3 7 7 3 1	indifferent to student potential
detect potential of students	3 1 2 3 7 7 3 1	don't detect different potentials
good classroom management skills	3 1 3 3 3 3 4 2	poor classroom management skills
challenge oneself as a teacher	3 1 3 5 7 7 2 1	don't challenge oneself
		you as you would like to be
		you as you are now
		bad teacher
		bad language teacher
		average teacher
		an average language teacher
		a great teacher
		a great language teacher

Figure B45. Cohort 4, Participant 44 (Enrique)

Display 45 - Enedina (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

variety of activities	1 3 6 6 7 7 4 2	uses only book
consider student needs	2 2 5 7 6 7 3 1	just performs job
enjoy work	1 1 4 4 4 4 3 1	doing it just for the pay
successful pedagogy	1 1 5 4 6 7 3 1	unsuccessful at reaching goals
considered student effort in grading	2 1 6 6 6 7 2 2	only paid attention to exam results
flexible	4 1 4 6 6 7 2 2	not flexible
Experience	2 1 3 2 3 2 6 1	lack of experience
Find balance between empathy and authority	3 3 6 5 5 7 4 1	Lack of balance between empathy & authority
go beyond requirements of job	3 3 5 6 6 6 4 1	just does what is required
concerned with student learning	1 2 5 5 6 7 3 1	believes that students and teachers should maintain their roles
innovative	2 4 5 7 7 7 5 2	just keeps doing the same thing
student centered	2 3 4 5 6 6 4 2	teacher centered
knowledgable about the language	2 4 3 4 3 4 3 2	not knowledgable about L2
Skill in the L2	1 ~ 3 ~ 3 ~ 3 2	doesn't speak L2
constant reflection	4 4 4 4 4 4 3 1	not reflective
continual improvement	4 4 4 4 4 4 3 1	satisfied with regular teaching
fairness -- treat equally & be fair to what they're actually doing	2 2 3 6 6 7 2 1	not fair
		you as you would like to be
		you as you are now
		bad teacher
		bad language teacher
		average teacher
		an average language teacher
		a great teacher
		a great language teacher

Figure B46. Cohort 4, Participant 45 (Enedina)

Display 46 - Eduardo (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

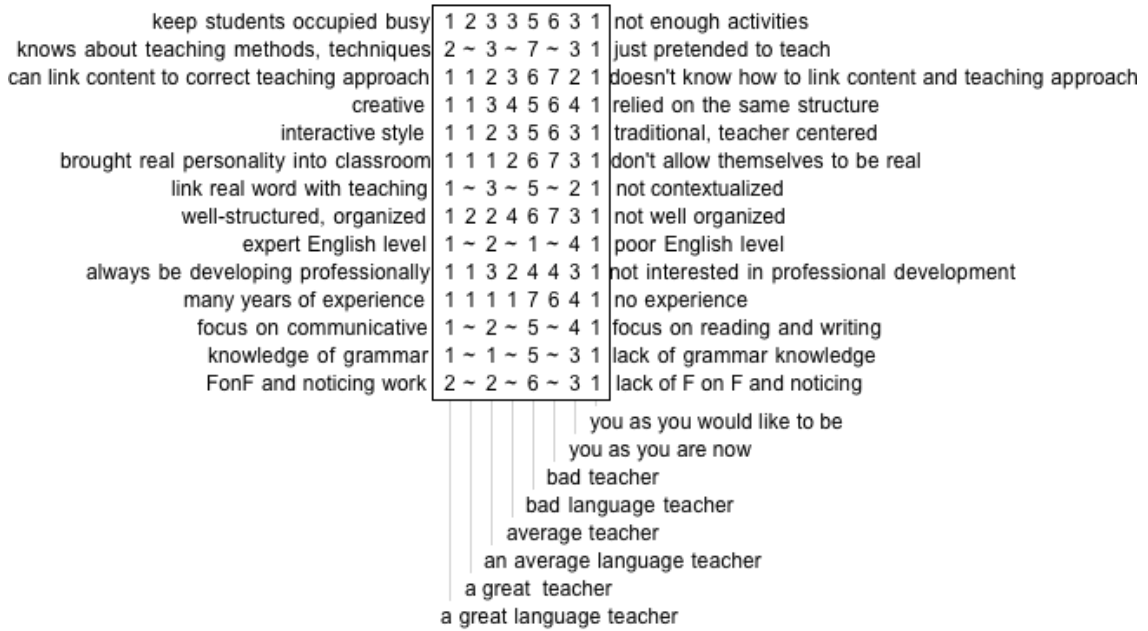


Figure B47. Cohort 4, Participant 46 (Eduardo)

Display 47 - Ezequial (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

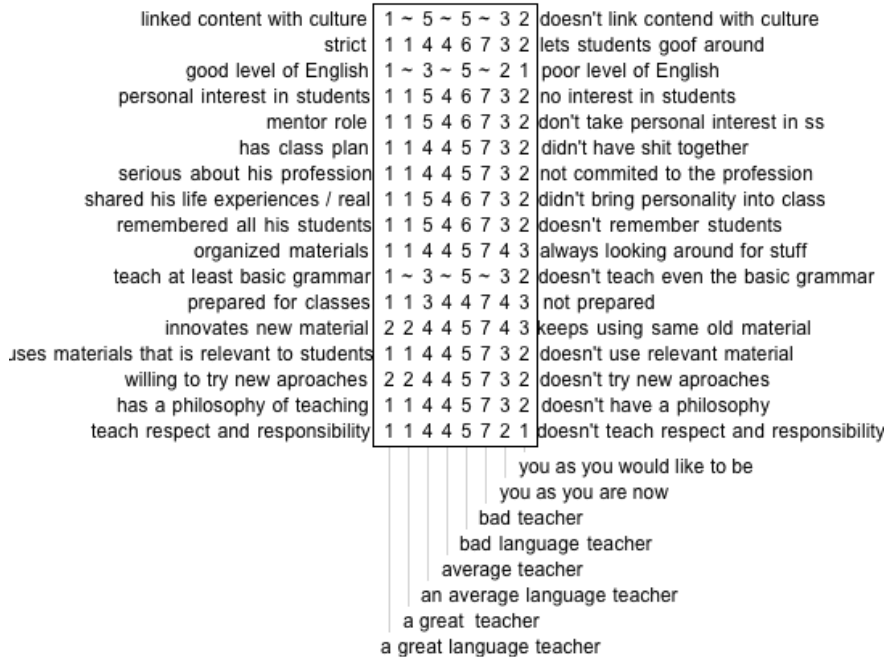


Figure B48. Cohort 4, Participant 47 (Ezequial)

Display 48 - Eberardo (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

uses a variety of techniques in class	1 1 4 5 4 2 2 1	stuck in a rut
helps students become autonomous	2 1 3 5 4 5 3 2	always wants to be in absolute control
follows a syllabus	1 1 4 4 1 3 1 1	makes it up right before class starts
innovates	1 1 5 4 4 7 4 2	uses same activities
spontaneous	1 1 4 3 6 7 7 4	uses same activities
dedicated in and outside the classroom	1 1 4 3 3 5 2 2	no dedicated
masters the language	1 ~ 3 ~ 7 ~ 2 1	no mastery of the language
uses technology	1 7 4 4 7 4 7 1	doesn't use technology
		you as you would like to be
		you as you are now
		bad teacher
		bad language teacher
		average teacher
		an average language teacher
		a great teacher
		a great language teacher

Figure B49. Cohort 4, Participant 48 (Eberardo)

Display 49 - Esteban (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

has professional training	1 1 3 3 6 6 4 1	lack of professional training
connects real life with topic	1 1 4 4 6 7 2 1	makes things confusing
know the subject	1 1 4 4 5 6 3 1	doesn't know subject
activities clearly related to subject	1 1 4 4 4 4 2 1	activities not clearly related to subject
respectful distance from students	5 1 4 4 5 7 3 2	tried to hard to make ss like him/her
make classes fun	1 1 5 5 7 7 3 1	doesn't make classes fun
expect students to achieve independently	2 1 4 4 6 7 3 1	running after students trying to get them to perform
well-prepared	1 1 4 4 6 5 3 1	not well-prepared
treat students equally	1 1 5 5 2 6 2 1	play favorites with students
clear about expectations	1 1 3 3 6 7 2 1	not clear about expectations
separates emotions / personal problems from classroom	1 1 2 2 7 7 1 1	inconsistent emotionally
sense of humor	1 1 3 3 5 6 1 1	no sense of humor
conducting class in L2	1 ~ 4 ~ 3 ~ 4 1	no conducting class in L1
has a back up plan	1 1 4 4 5 6 4 1	no back up plan
energy	1 1 4 4 7 5 3 1	lack of energy
adapt activities so they relate to everyday life	1 1 3 3 5 6 3 1	poor activity
patient	1 2 4 4 5 3 2 1	impatient
good classroom atmosphere	1 2 4 4 7 7 3 1	poor classroom atmosphere
has experience	1 1 3 3 1 7 5 1	lacks experience
routinize teaching procedures	1 1 4 4 6 6 5 1	has to rely too much on plan
group work	1 ~ 4 ~ 5 ~ 3 1	no group work
allows student input into class	1 5 5 5 7 6 3 1	doesn't allow student input
make students comfortable	1 2 4 4 6 6 3 1	doesn't make students comfortable
good attitude towards the work	1 1 3 3 7 5 2 1	doesn't want to be there
		you as you would like to be
		you as you are now
		bad teacher
		bad language teacher
		average teacher
		an average language teacher
		a great teacher
		a great language teacher

Figure B50. Cohort 4, Participant 49 (Esteban)

Display 50 - Fausto (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

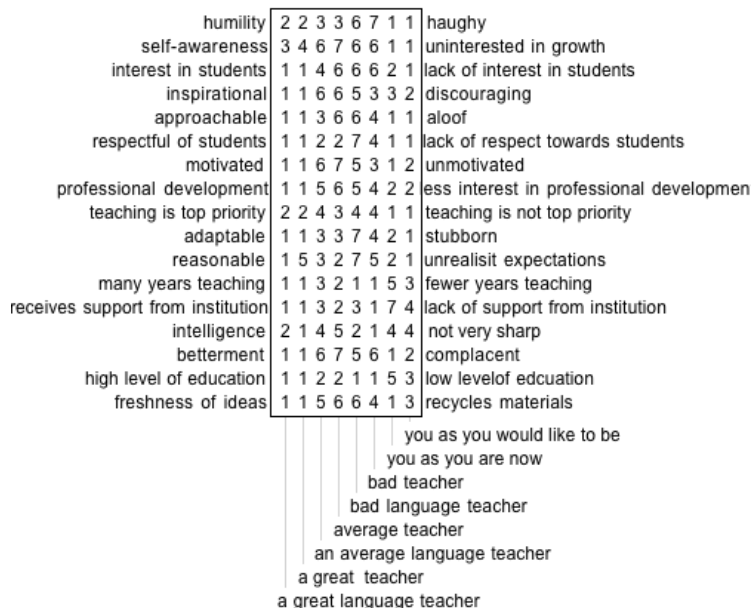


Figure B51. Cohort 5, Participant 50 (Fausto)

Display 51 - Francisco (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)



Figure B52. Cohort 5, Participant 51 (Francisco)

Display 52 - Fernanda (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

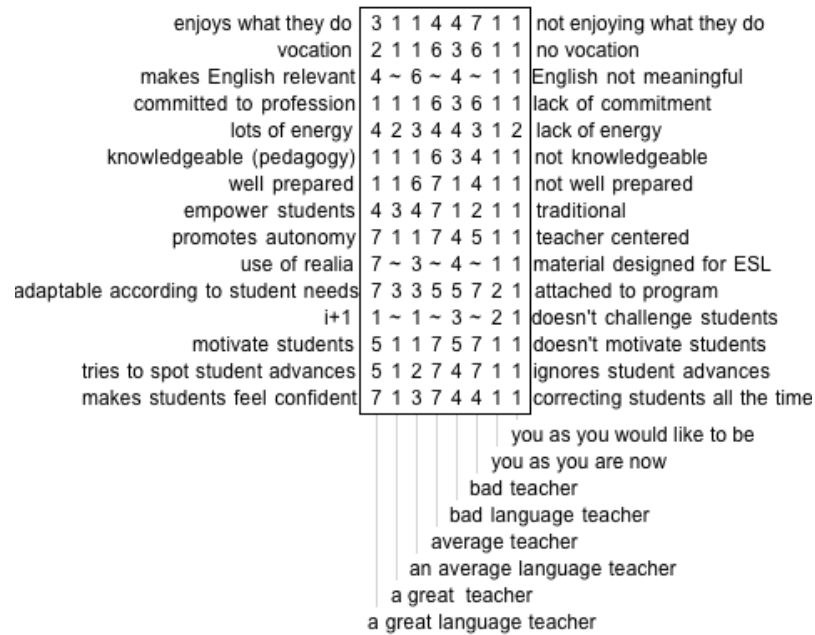


Figure B53. Cohort 5, Participant 52 (Fernanda)

Display 53 - Fernando (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

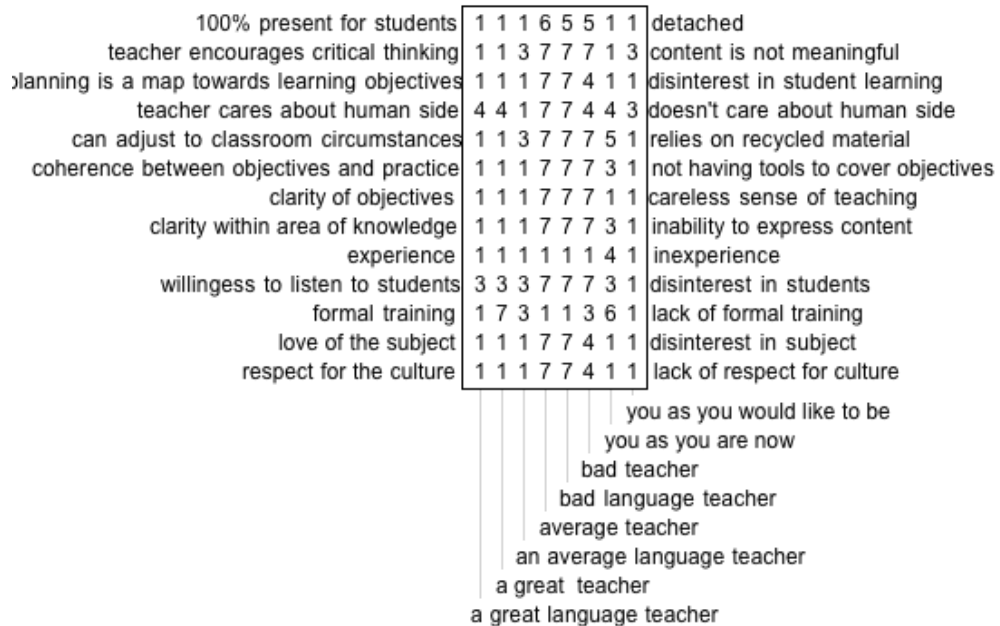


Figure B54. Cohort 5, Participant 53 (Fernando)



Display w (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

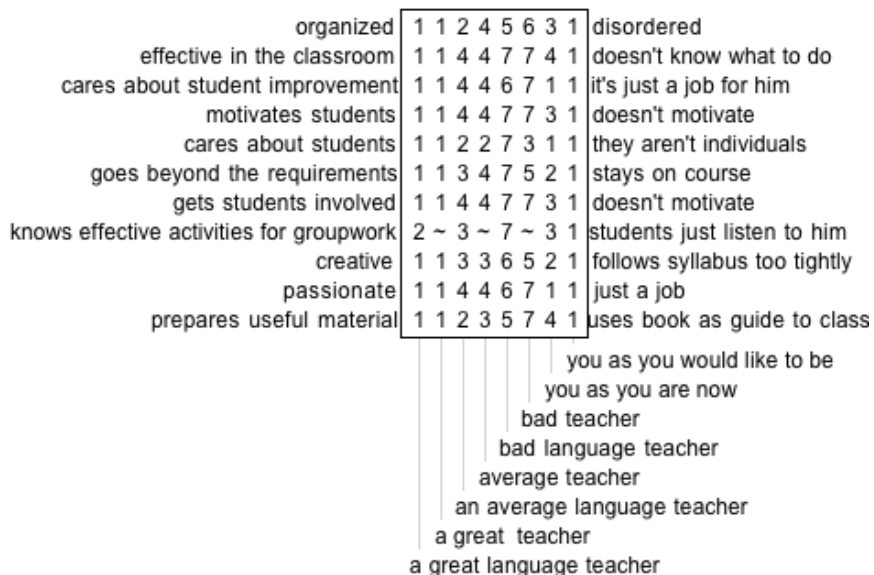


Figure B55. Cohort 5, Participant 54 (Fabricio)

Display 55 - Flor (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

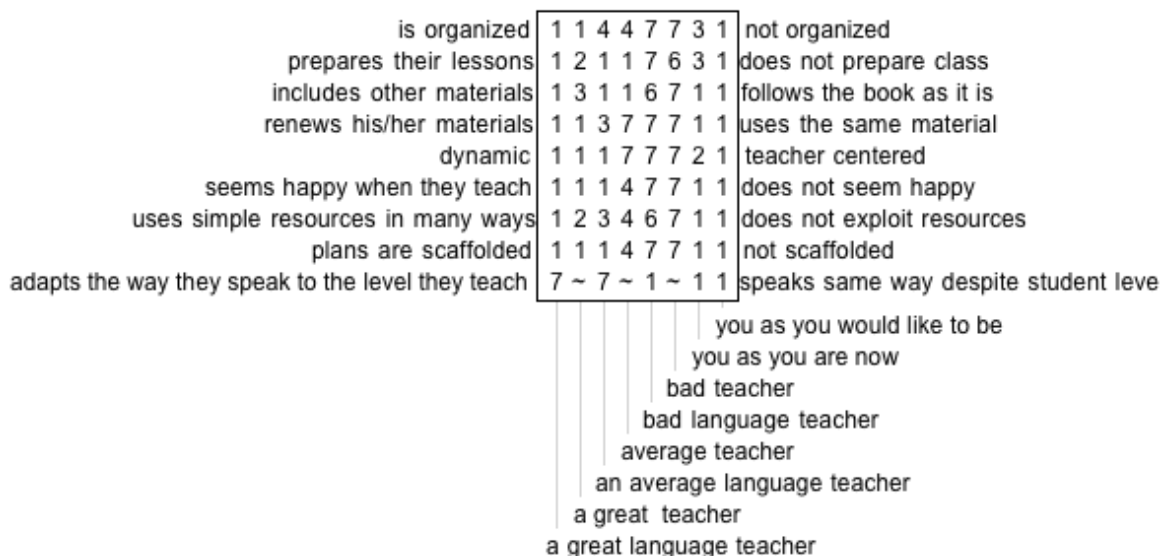


Figure B56. Cohort 5, Participant 55 (Flor)

Display 56 - Federico (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

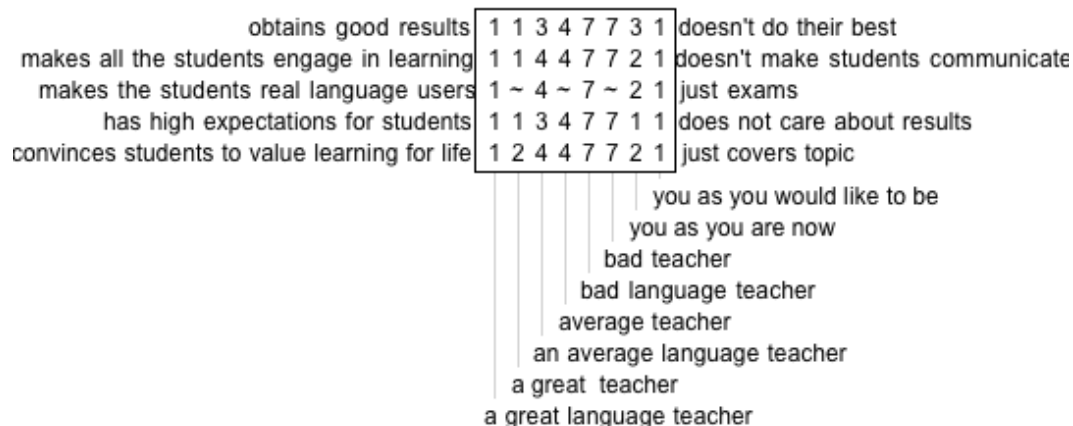


Figure B57. Cohort 5, Participant 56 (Federico)

Display 57 - Fidel (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

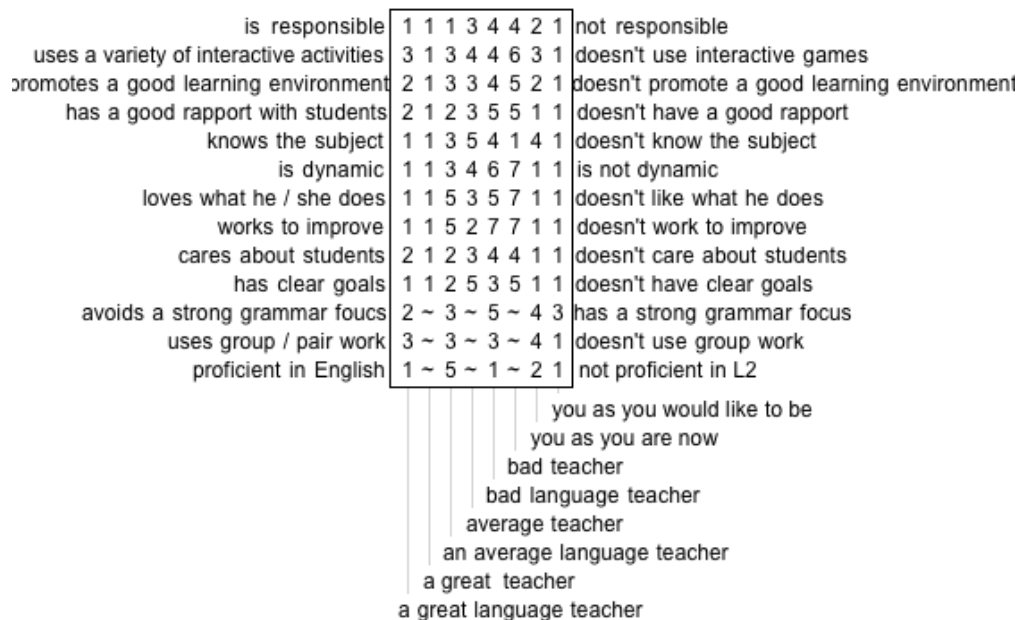


Figure B58. Cohort 5, Participant 57 (Fidel)

Display 58 - Felix (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

motivating	4 1 3 3 7 7 3 1	boring
enthusiastic	5 2 4 3 6 6 1 1	authoritarian
creative	5 2 4 3 6 6 2 1	monotonous
prepared	2 1 3 4 7 6 2 1	unprepared
respectful	2 2 2 3 7 7 1 1	rude
adaptable to teaching context	6 1 4 3 7 6 2 2	not adaptable
experiments	6 4 5 5 6 6 3 1	doesn't experiment
continual professional striving	3 3 6 5 7 6 3 2	in a rut
passionate	4 1 4 4 6 6 1 1	just doing job
tudents solve problems for themselves connecting knowledge	3 2 5 4 6 7 2 1	just reproduction
treat ss equally	1 1 3 3 7 7 1 1	picking on students
shows interest in ss learning	1 2 3 4 7 7 1 1	didn't show interest in ss learning
structure fleshed out by students	6 1 4 3 5 6 4 2	mechanical, predictable teaching
strict (hold students responsible)	1 1 3 4 4 5 4 2	too much ss freedom
teacher not only source of knowledge	6 1 3 4 7 6 3 2	teacher only source of knowledge
connect language with real life and ss interest	5 3 4 4 6 6 3 2	just memorization
less threatening exam	4 5 5 5 6 6 3 2	overwhelming exams
have rapport with students	2 3 3 3 7 7 2 1	no interest in students
care about students	1 1 2 3 7 7 1 1	don't care about students
co-ownership of class with students	6 4 6 5 6 6 2 1	grammar translation
balance own desires with institutional demands	4 3 5 4 5 6 2 2	just follows institutional demands
focus on student goals	4 2 4 4 6 7 2 1	no focus on ss goals
focus on student learning styles	4 3 3 4 6 7 3 1	no focus on learning styles
100% innovative	3 2 3 3 7 7 3 1	not innovative
fairness	1 1 4 5 7 7 1 1	unfair
encourage student autonomy	3 1 4 5 5 6 1 1	doesn't encourage autonomy
leaves zone of comfort	4 2 5 4 6 7 3 1	always comfortable
open to L2 knowledge	3 ~ 5 ~ 6 ~ 2 2	no interest L1 knowledge
		you as you would like to be
		you as you are now
		bad teacher
		bad language teacher
		average teacher
		an average language teacher
		a great teacher
		a great language teacher

Figure B59. Cohort 5, Participant 58 (Felix)

Display 59 - Felipe (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results)

care about students	2 3 3 1 6 5 1 1	didn't care about ss.
many different materials	1 1 6 7 5 7 2 2	uses few materials
harnessed our imagination	2 1 3 1 4 4 1 1	boring
give lots of feedback	1 2 3 1 5 7 2 1	lack of feedback
asking ss for feedback	2 2 7 7 4 5 1 1	don't ask ss for feedback
force ss to use L2 in class	1 ~ 1 ~ 1 ~ 1 1	doesn't challenge ss to use L2
explain as many times as needed	2 2 4 1 4 4 3 1	didn't like to explain twice
good attitude w/ students	2 1 4 4 6 6 2 1	bad attitudes towards students
personal attention	2 1 3 4 5 5 1 1	no personal attention
clear explanations	1 1 3 1 4 4 2 1	no explanations
communicative emphasis	1 ~ 3 ~ 3 ~ 2 1	grammar emphasis (-)
recycling materials	2 ~ 3 ~ 5 ~ 1 1	not recycling
develop 4 skills	3 ~ 3 ~ 3 ~ 2 1	overemphasis on grammar
lots of experience teaching	1 1 4 7 1 1 3 1	lack of experience
should have ESL training	1 ~ 1 ~ 1 ~ 1 1	no training
able to speak the L2	1 ~ 1 ~ 1 ~ 1 1	not able to speak well
		you as you would like to be
		you as you are now
		bad teacher
		bad language teacher
		average teacher
		an average language teacher
		a great teacher
		a great language teacher

Figure B60. Cohort 5, Participant 59 (Felipe)

## Appendix C

### Collective Grids by Cohort

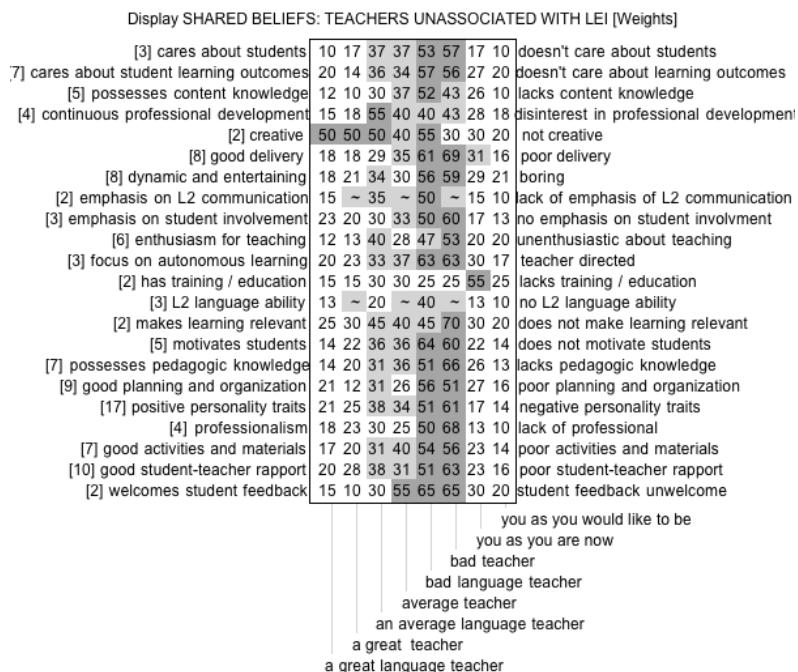


Figure C1. Collective grid: Cohort 0 - Teachers unassociated with LEI

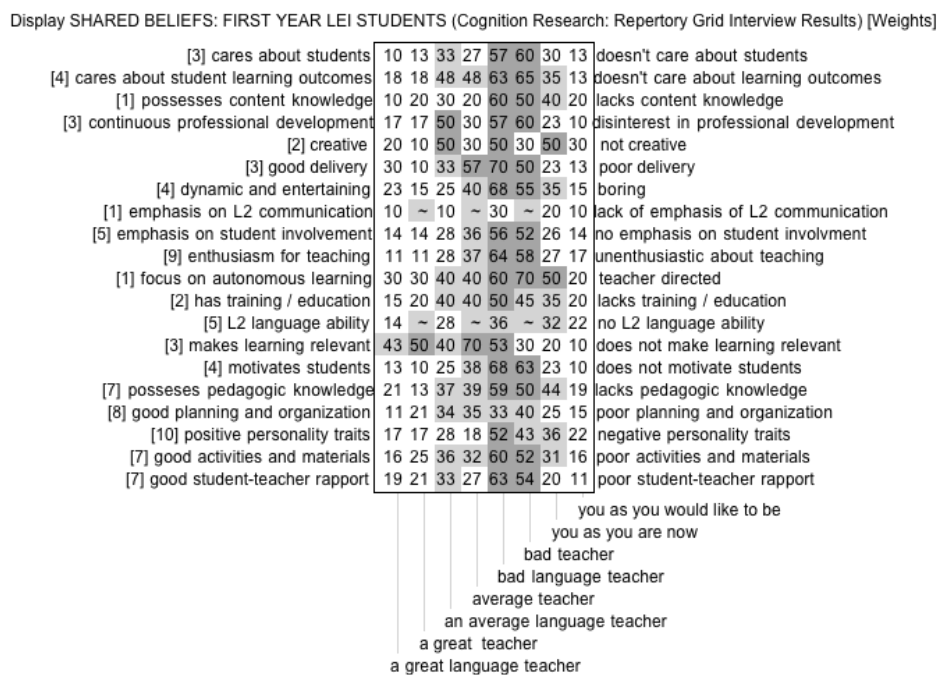


Figure C2. Collective grid: Cohort 1 / First-year students

Display SHARED BELIEFS: SECOND YEAR LEI STUDENTS (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results) [Weights]



Figure C3. Collective grid: Cohort 2 / Second-year students

Display SHARED BELIEFS: THIRD YEAR LEI STUDENTS (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results) [Weights]

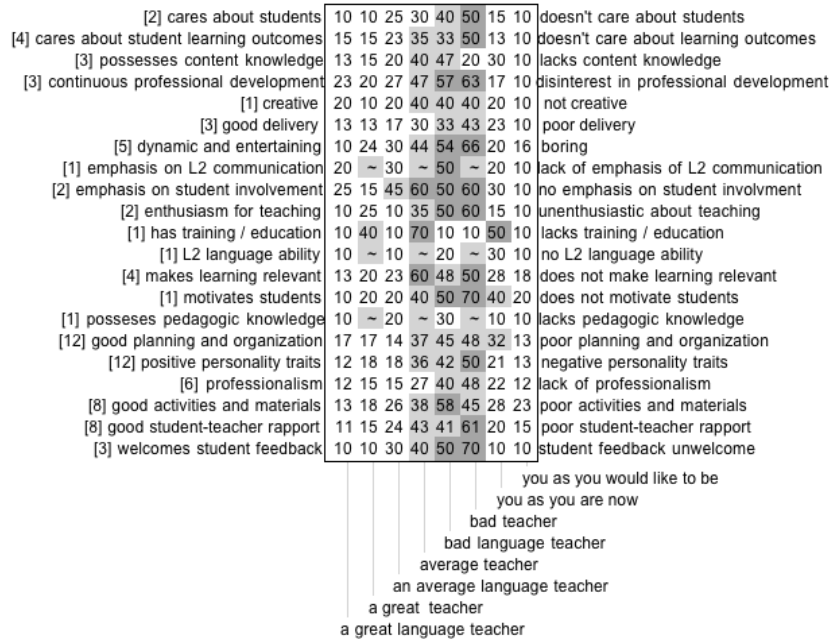


Figure C4. Collective grid: Cohort 3 / Third year students

Display SHARED BELIEFS: FOURTH YEAR LEI STUDENTS (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results) [Weights]

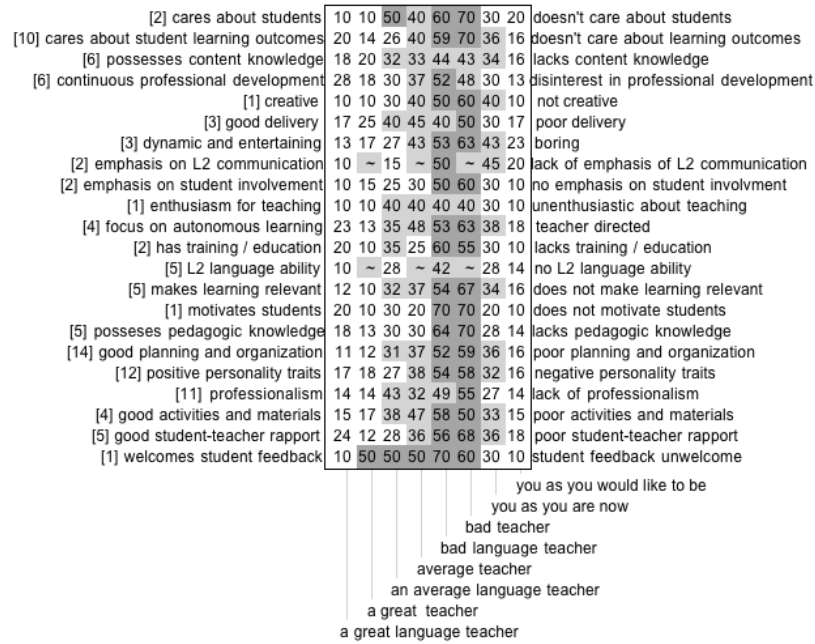


Figure C5. Collective grid: Cohort 4 / Fourth year students

Display SHARED BELIEFS: LEI GRADUATES (Cognition Research: Repertory Grid Interview Results) [Weights]

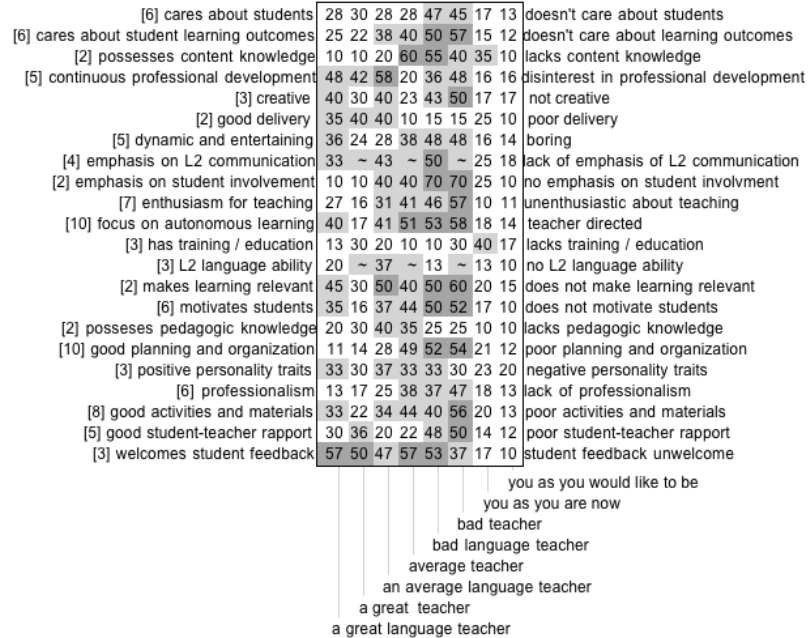


Figure C6. Collective grid: Cohort 5 / LEI graduates

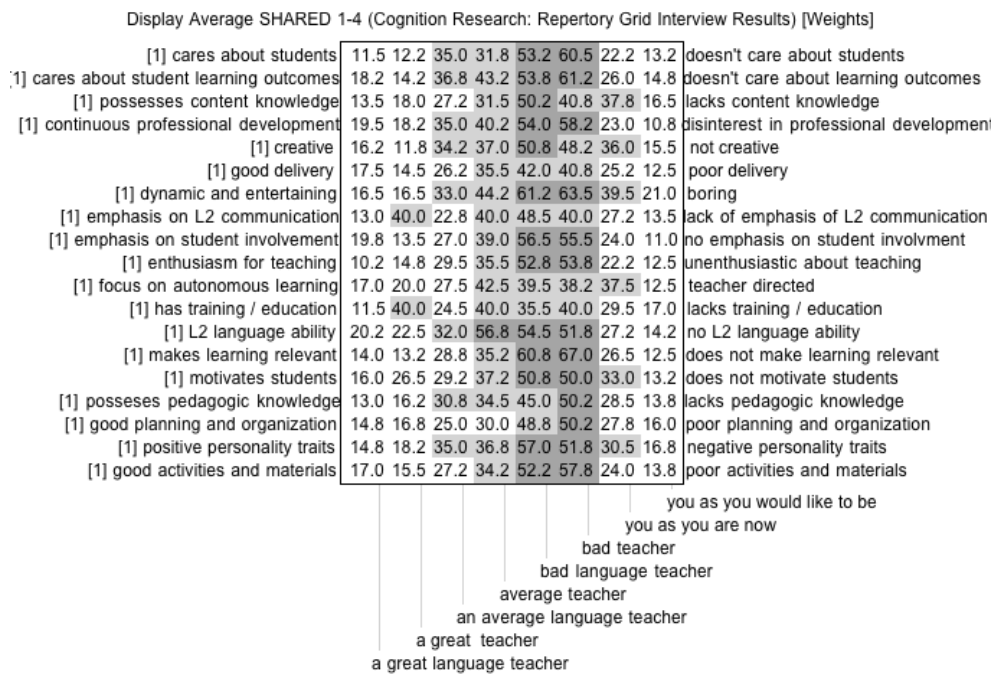


Figure C7: Collective grid: Cohorts 1 - 4 / Years 1 – 4

## **Appendix D**

### **Observations**

#### **Student Teacher: Berenice (First-Year, Participant 11)**

##### **Teacher And Learning Environment**

I'm very impressed with your classroom skills. You are definitely in charge at all times (very impressive considering the size of your class!). You have so many students – and you know each of them personally. That's fantastic. You are dynamic, energetic. (It was clear that my presence was making everyone a bit nervous, but you handled the students beautifully.) You keep up a great pace, plenty of energy.

I like that you do the comprehension check in Spanish, but everything else in English.

Your language is very natural, but perhaps a bit too fast? (Maybe this resulted from nervousness, maybe from time pressure, or maybe this is just your normal speed.)

##### **Lesson Planning**

Excellent plan. Clear, well thought out. Each objective lead logically to the next. A great range of activities.

You cover reading, listening, a LITTLE speaking, and some writing (hw). Very nice. All of you materials are very professional looking. You obviously put a lot of work into them.

##### **Execution Of Lesson Plan**

Ss post times on board. Is there any way you could have done this with handouts in group work first? Ss seemed rather confused about what they were supposed to do.



Although ss were supposed to be working in “teams,” this activity didn’t really involve all the ss in the way real group work would have. However, AFTER some group work, this would have been an EXCELLENT comprehension check. Unfortunately, “five and a half” is not English. Also, “fifty past two” is not something a native speaker would probably say (perhaps two fifty). Also, there WAS NO “fifty past two” clock – only one that read “fifty past one” (i.e., 1:50). This made completing this exercise correctly impossible.

Great flash cards. Ss did much better with this, calling out the activities depicted on the cards. You lead them through adverbs very effectively. This is a good lead-in to the next activity. You check answers – the ss seemed to do very well.

A student (Adan) was repeating “I never get up at 9” – you kept correcting him, trying to get him to say something else. But I think he was expressing what he wanted to say. Never correct a student if they are involved in meaningful communication.

(Side note: I’m not familiar with this textbook, but it seems pretty good. I didn’t have time to analyze it, of course, but it seemed like a good approach to grammar presentation, i.e., mostly inductive, lots of input/examples. Do you like the book?)

The last text book activity: Ss seemed lost again. Energy sort of dissipated at the end. Is there any way you could MODEL activities instead of explaining them? I think modeling would be clearer and SAVE TIME.

### **Overall**

No group work. I certainly understand the difficulty of group work in a class this size. BUT, at the same time, exactly because the class IS so big, group work is absolutely necessary. As it is, most ss get VERY LITTLE chance to produce/interact.

Some students spoke more Spanish in class than English. Students need the opportunity to speak in English every day!!

Specifically, then, the areas I see that could use some improvement are more group work and more modeling of activities (instead of explicit explanations). On the whole, however, I am impressed by your ability and hard work. Great job!

## **Student Teacher: Braulio (First-Year, Participant 10)**

### **Teacher And Learning Environment**

Fairly good classroom management skills, although these were increasingly put to the test as students began to lose interest towards the end of the class.

Very good rapport with students: friendly, engaged, at ease. Definitely a friendly atmosphere. You are sensitive to the students ... always there to give help to the students who ask for it. It is clear that he is well-liked by his students.

### **Lesson Planning**

The lesson plan seems a bit ad-hoc. Rather loose, with no evidence that you really thought through the timing, or how one section would segue into the next. Poor connections.

### **Execution Of Lesson Plan**

1:10 ... No warm-up. Warm ups are a good way to help students change mental gears and transition them from the outside “Spanish world” to the inside, classroom “English world.” Writes goals for the day on board: use of “ing” and “present continuous”. Good.

1:12 ... Ian asks what is “action in progress.” These kinds of questions aren’t very useful, especially with young learners. Would probably be better to give examples. You should avoid using too much “meta language,” i.e., language about language. The focus should be on exposing students to and getting them to use *real* language. Grammar review of “be” conjugations. Students seemed to do fine with this.

- 1:15 ... This lesson is very traditional, teacher-centred, and grammar oriented. I'm surprised that the students are as engaged as they are – they have a lot of enthusiasm and are working hard to get the answers correct. I'm impressed with the energy and participation! But are they learning to communicate, or they learning to fill in grammar grids? Can they maintain this enthusiasm throughout the entire lesson?
- 1:20 ... You then introduce the use of present continuous to talk about future. This can be a very difficult concept for Spanish speakers since this use of the continuous doesn't exist in the language. Less grammar presentation and more discovery learning might be a better way to tackle this. In any case, this important point is passed over MUCH too quickly. An entire lesson could be designed around this one point. *Many* entire lessons. Students should be encouraged to note the difference between the use of the present continuous in English and its use in Spanish.
- 1:22 ... You asks students to use question forms using the present continuous. I think you are throwing a LOT of different concepts and grammar at the students at once without any clear organizational scheme. (1) This is reflected by the fact that the students are speaking a LOT more in Spanish than in English. In fact, no real English communication is taking place. Only one or two students speaks in English at any given time, meaning the rest of them are just passive recipients of grammar rules. (Although they are getting some small amount of exposure to English, I suppose.) (2) If you are going to cover grammar, you should limit

yourself to ONE structure (two at the very most) used in a single, clear context each lesson.

1:30 ... Students seem to be losing energy. It is difficult to concentrate on a grammar presentation for so long. Students copy work from the board. So far, they haven't been asked to think on their own, produce, or engage with the language in a meaningful way. Students continue to speak to each other and to the teacher in Spanish. The amount of English practice taking place is minimal.

Your class would be *much* improved if there were *activities* for the students, chances for the students to speak to each other in English, more examples of the language in real contexts (instead of disembodied examples of language solely for the purpose of highlighting grammar points.)

1:35 ... You keep asking students to speak in English, but there clearly are no real incentives for the students to do so. They continue to speak in Spanish. At this point, they seem fairly disengaged from the material.

1:36 ... You set up your computer and projector. Having the computer in the classroom presents fantastic opportunities for interesting and engaging activities ... but is used only to present more grammar drills. Students are clearly losing interest in the task. There is no reason that learning English needs to be “work” – in fact, this kind of drudgery is likely to turn students off of learning a language. (In fact, you threaten students with staying after school and working on copying English verbs if they don't do the work – by doing so, you run the risk of making the students equate language learning with punishment!) Learning English should be fun, especially at this level, in this environment.

- 1:50 ... Only after 15 minutes do you actually explain the grammar activity. The activity involves adding “ing” to different verbs, some ending in a consonant, others ending in a vowel, others ending in “p” or “t”. You have the students working on this activity for quite a long time before you explain the spelling conventions (which is the whole point of the exercise). You should have modelled this, asked for feedback, done some comprehension checks. You could easily have made a game out of this, or at the very least pair work.
- 1:51 ... You continue with another grammar exercise. You read the example, but don’t model or ask for student opinions. The teacher is doing all the work. OK, now you ask the students for feedback ... good. But this could have been done as pair work instead of asking individual students – while one student answers the question, the other 15 are disengaged.
- 1:54 ... The students’ natural energy is now starting to get a bit out of control. A lot of whining. Their attention spans are at the limit. Classroom management is starting to become an issue. You keep threatening students with staying after class. “Quit talking” becomes a mantra. A LOT of copying of grammar ... still no activities, no games, no student interaction, no authentic language use, very very little English being used.
- 2:00 ... More language exercises. The students are really starting to lose it!!
- 2:06 ... students still working away in their notebooks. Not enough comprehension checks.

## **Overall**

As a teacher, you have a lot of natural ability. You are kind, personable, motivated, full of energy. You have a very good rapport with the students. You are actively engaged in your teaching – very good at monitoring, answering questions, giving students the attention they need. You clearly care about your students, and care about being a good teacher.

However, you run a strictly grammar-based class and are evidently unaware of any other pedagogical techniques. The four skills are speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The students only engaged in listening – and all the listening they do concerns dry explanations of grammar points. Instead of working on the four skills, the students spend all their time looking at grammar. There is no authentic language use whatsoever.

Quite a few errors concerning grammar and spelling. (“began is the past participle”; spelling of “soccor,” etc.)

Knowing you personally, I know that you are an incredibly creative person with myriad interests. You need to bring some of your outside passions into the classroom. You are keenly interested in movies, games, the Internet, computers, art – all these things could and should be used in the classroom! You should consider adding games, movie and TV clips, songs, pair work, group work, physical dynamics (TPR), creative writing, discovery activities, class projects and tasks, etc., etc. Considering your great personality and your good relationship with your students, there is no reason that English class shouldn't be the class they look forward to the most. You simply need to bring more fun into your classroom.

**Student Teacher: Celia (Second-Year, Participant 25)**

**Teacher And Learning Environment**

Great rapport with students, They obviously like you a lot!

**Lesson Planning**

You write on the board “passive and active” vocabulary, explains these concepts. But I’m not clear how this was a class about “active” and “passive” vocabulary ... it seemed to be a standard vocabulary lesson. Nothing wrong with that, but not what you wrote in your lesson plan.

**Execution Of Lesson Plan**

3:30 - 3:39 Starts right on time

So far, lots of TTT. A difficult discussion for level 3 students! The teacher explains how students will move into rows so that students are face to face. She explains that she’ll give students copies for a crossword. Explains what a crossword is. She talks about copies A and B, and explains which students get which copies. So many instructions! At this point, I’m utterly lost as to what students are expected to do. Now, finally, the students arrange their chairs and are given the handouts. In all, this take almost ten minutes of a fifty minute class to set up!

Very good rapport with the students. This is a very long, one-sided, and difficult set of instructions, but the students seem to be hanging in there, trying to respond correctly to her prompts.

There is one odd-man out ... the 17<sup>th</sup> student can’t form a pair for the activity. Celia has him help her monitor English use. This is a very nice idea. She also takes time



to work with him one-on-one on the activity. She goes around the class, helping students, giving instructions.

3:39 - 4:03 Students work in pairs on the vocabulary activity.

Celia is very engaging, kind, helpful, supportive. She continues to walk around, giving personalized attention to anyone who needs it. The students seem interested in the activity and work hard to complete it. In fact, when the activity ended, some of the student protested and wanted to keep working.

4:03 - 4:15 Students give feedback and the work is checked as a class.

Students take turns answering the questions, and Celia writes the answers on the white board. This correction session took quite a while ... this time might have been better used for communicative work of some kind? (When you do this type of feedback, only one student gets practice at talking at a time, and he or she only reads English ... no opportunity to produce anything original or push their active skills.)

4:15 Celia discusses some learning strategy information with students and encourages students to use English when defining words. However, this message would be stronger if she actually created an activity in which students had to force themselves to use more English.

She asks if students like the activity. Very nice to check with students about their interests!! She gives a short homework assignment: Write a sentence using each of the words they saw in the crossword activity. Good! She wants them to include a translation. She tells them to use short sentences, such as "The table is big." Why? Vocab would be more deeply learned and real if they had to write meaningful sentences.

## **Overall**

You are a lovely person, and that really comes out in your teaching practice. Your positive energy and kindness clearly help motivate and maintain the interest of your students. It's clear that you have a really nice relationship with them.

Perhaps too many handouts? Very controlled activities. No free speaking or communicative activities. What could you do to improve these issues?

## **Student Teacher: Coco (Second-Year, Participant 26)**

### **Teacher And Learning Environment**

A difficult work environment. A university campus, but the classroom is the usual small, airless space one expects in public schools. A cool day, but hot and stuffy in the room, with only two sad ceiling fans. Despite student complaints of hunger and heat, Coco does a great job keeping students engaged and focused.

### **Lesson Planning**

Outstanding, organized, fully articulated class plan.

### **Execution Of Lesson Plan**

1. Coco starts with feedback on the last HW assignment, pointing out that ss did the summary wrong. She gives clarification and information about what she expects for this kind of assignment. Asks students to remember what they read and to summarize the point of the article. The subject is trade and protectionism (I think). The level of the students is quite high, allowing her to run this portion of the class as a class in business/writing, not as an English class per se. Which is great. Very much a task-based/ESP approach here at the beginning. She walks around and elicits opinions from different students, trying to include everyone. Great. (But why no model of what she expects?) Explains to students that they need to stay on topic in their writing.

2. Moves to explicit vocabulary work. The students are at a high enough level that there's no barrier to using meta-language. She asks them to define phrasal verbs. The students then go to board and she asks them to write as many phrasal verbs as they can remember from the day before (30 seconds). Reviews the words with whole class.

3. Students take out their books and stand up. It's really good how she keeps them active. Very good classroom management skills. She lines them up using by asking them to guess her height – very good use of a line-formation task. I get the sense that she has a million similar tasks. Very fun. Now that they're in a line, she puts them into pairs for the next task.

4. Everyone looks at book and she has a student read. She explains task. Pairs work together to complete the task. She walks around and checks on student work, answering any questions. Great involvement. Students then check answers as a whole class activity.

5. Students continue with bookwork.

### **Overall**

Excellent, natural stage presence. Clearly in charge, very confident, very clear about student expectations. But also friendly and open, lots of energy. Good rapport with students. Great (limited, targeted, appropriate) use of L1 to resolve questions. Makes it clear that students can contact her if they have questions. Her teaching *seems* improvised in the sense that everything is very organic and flows very naturally from point to point, but is obviously the product of much thought and planning.

## **Student Teacher: David (Second-Year, Participant 36)**

### **Teacher And Learning Environment**

You have such a nice, personal, friendly style. It's immediately obvious that you have a wonderful rapport with your students. Students are energized, cooperative, eager to work. You've really created a wonderful learning environment. You do a masterful job of balancing full class work, group work, attention to the whole, attention to individual student needs.

### **Lesson Planning**

Your class is very well organized ... one objective flows naturally and logically into the next. Your lesson planning is flawless – you clearly know where you want to take your students and how to take them there. Your materials are excellent and professional. They are clear and serve your plan.

I think your aims (as explicated in your plan) are too ambitious! If the students just improve a little bit (or just gain some awareness) on some of these topics you present, that would certainly be enough for one class!

### **Execution Of Lesson Plan**

9:45 Students do review work, filling out flow charts. I wasn't sure what the relationship was between the countries ... were the students just to write the names of countries? In any case, students worked well in groups and clearly understood the aims of the activity. This was a good warm-up/introduction to next activity. Students fed back answers vocally – it might have been worth it to pause, put the words on the board, and go over them more carefully with entire class since the students made a lot of pronunciation/word form errors that went by uncorrected.

9:50 ACTIVITY 2: You present vocabulary words. Students define the terms using their own words – this was a very nice exercise. Then students matched vocab with definitions – a good reading/comprehension exercise. I like your consistent focus on group work. Students come to board and write out their answers – great to keep students moving. You do a great job of keeping a high energy level, a high level of student interest. You are constantly in movement, checking answers, giving encouragement, and maintaining class flow: excellent monitoring. Students check answers on board as whole class. Good feedback. Then you go back to having students give definitions in their own words -- this reformulation of vocabulary is a REALLY strong, effective method: nicely done. (Your students did a really nice job with this.)

10:10 ACTIVITY 3: You clearly put a lot of work into investigating all these countries and pasting them up for this activity. This is a very interesting activity: combines authentic learning, memorization, global knowledge skills, reading comprehension, vocabulary, sharing, production of new language, building on previous knowledge. Very nice.

ACTIVITY 4: This work is a perfect close to the class – you work on listening comprehension, task-based student interaction, critical thinking skills, opinion sharing. You really have managed to cover a lot of ground in this class!

### **Overall**

Throughout the class, you keep students on task and engaged with material. Your natural ability with people, enthusiasm for teaching, and knowledge of teaching methodology all work to create a dynamic learning environment. Your students are very lucky to have you.

## **Student Teacher: Eberardo (Fourth-Year, Participant 48)**

### **Teacher And Learning Environment**

You seem to have an excellent rapport with your students. The class seems relaxed; everyone seems to be in good spirits. You maintain the students' attention and lead the class with an easy authority. You are a poised and confident teacher. I imagine you are very well-liked by your students!

### **Lesson Planning**

The class plan is fine: well-organized and clear. It is an accurate description of what takes place in the classroom. However, I think there are some essential problems with the methodology: Please see comments, below.

### **Execution Of Lesson Plan**

You dialogue with the students and lead them to the structure "I'm going to + phrase": You do a very good job here of eliciting responses. There is a problem, however. Two of the structures you elicit are "be going to + simple verb": I'm going to buy food; I'm going to see New Moon. But your second example is "be going to + noun": I'm going to Shakila's concert. Since the point of this work is to illustrate the use of "be going to + verb", you need to make sure that ALL your examples are consistent.

Now you use the photos to illustrate the modal future "I will be + simple verb": I will be late. It will rain. (I'm not sure why you're mixing in reported speech here, i.e., "The forecast says it will rain" ... better to stick to just the structure at hand and not confuse things further with extraneous information.") I will eat tacos. I will eat Chinese food.

I'm unclear at this point in the lesson what you're trying to accomplish. Is this simply review of the two present forms? What you seem to be suggesting with this activity is that "am going to" and "will" are completely interchangeable, which of course is sometimes true, but not always. Also, "will" is almost always contracted, "I'll," but you don't practice this more natural, authentic form with your students.

You ask students "Are there any questions?" In all the time you've taught, have you ever had a student who actually asked you a question? I would guess not. In general, language students don't like asking questions. If they're confused, they may not even know what question to ask. Or they may feel intimidated, or shy. It's very important to check comprehension, but you should think about other ways of doing so.

Now you're reading from a handout that stresses the "going to" and "will" forms. Students read along. The students then read the text themselves. This is fine: the ss are getting oral and written input. A student here asks you for vocabulary item. You answer in Spanish, and then describe the word in English. I think it's perfectly fine to simply translate a word into Spanish when there is one-to-one correspondence: the English explanation was a little forced.

You then have students do some grammar exercises related to the text. How often do you do this kind of grammar work? My personal feeling about this is that most teachers do far too much of it. There is little evidence that this kind of explicit grammar work really serves to help learners acquire language. It may serve some kind of "noticing" function, but it is probably better to devote more time to communicative activities and less time to this kind of fill-in-the-gap work.



Again, you ask “Do you have any questions” and no-one responds. Now students read a text aloud. The text is seeded with more examples of “be going to” and “will”. I think it’s probably better to have students read on their own – when students are reading aloud, there’s no way to know if the other students are actually reading along or paying attention or if they’re simply “zoning out.” Have you ever worked with dictation? One student reads part of a text and their partner writes down what is being said. Then students can switch roles. Dictation forces a student to pay attention to the input, and if done in pair work, everyone gets a chance to read and listen.

You then ask students questions about the text. The form of the questions forces students to use the structure you’re looking at. This may not be a very useful technique: it’s possible for students to manipulate grammar / mimic forms and yet not really understand what they’re saying.

Now students are given a new text, supposedly “your diary” of what they do. This is essentially the same exercise, now for a third time. This is more grammar practice done in a vacuum: there isn’t any authentic language being used, no interaction, no language choice.

We’re more than half an hour into the lesson, and the students haven’t done any pair or group work. They haven’t produced any real language – just manipulated grammar forms. All the exercises have essentially been the same (there is some listening practice, some reading practice, some writing – that’s good! – but the exercises are the same in that in every one they are simply manipulating the same grammar point.) It can be pretty boring for students if this is the kind of thing they do day after day. Boredom is

a real issue, because if a student is bored, they'll pay less attention to input. And paying attention to input IS a major component in acquiring a language.

You are doing a LOT more speaking than your students, who have to only minimally produce the language. Some would say this is too much TTT. I'm not a strict opponent of teacher talking time – I think it can provide valuable input. But most of your talking time simply deals with grammar in essentially artificial contexts. It is therefore not natural or authentic or meaningful (in the technical sense of the word). This particular type of teacher talk doesn't do a lot to help students absorb the language. Here's a short passage from one of a well known researcher, VanPatten:

“... the definition of input in second language acquisition does not include instructors' explanations about how the second language works. The definition of input is limited to meaning-bearing input, language that the learner hears or sees that is used to communicate a message. Thus, in traditional instruction, learners practice a form or structure, but they are not getting the input that is needed to construct the mental representation of the structure itself.”

Now the students are working on a grammar sheet. See comments, above. You again ask if students have questions. No-one does.

You end with a song activity. Great ... students really respond to music, and it's an excellent way to provide comprehensible, authentic input. Students put lyrics in order – this seems like a good activity: it forces students to pay attention to what they're hearing.

## **Overall**

This was a fine grammar-based class, although it was very traditional and a little redundant. You didn't use any games or dynamic activities, which would have made this more fun for your students (there's no reason not to have fun in a language class!). A grammar class once in a while may not be a terrible thing – it may, as I say, help students notice patterns in the input. But I'd really like to see you stretch a bit beyond your comfort zone. I'd like to see more authentic input and more student interaction (which would give students opportunities to learn from recasts and to negotiate meaning). Get rid of the grammar and repetition and try for something communicative. Have you ever tried task-based teaching? Give your students something to DO that they can only accomplish by communicating with each other in English. Take yourself out of the spotlight, and let the students produce as much language as possible on their own. Given your excellent student-teacher rapport and natural ability, I'm sure you can produce a more interesting, more challenging, and more useful class.

**Student Teacher: Daniel (Third-Year, Participant 32)**

**Teacher And Learning Environment**

A 45 minute class with 44 young children. Very challenging.

**Lesson Planning**

No lesson plan.

**Execution Of Lesson Plan**

10:19 - 10:23ish Reviews meaning of classified advertisement. Elicits ideas about what a classified ad is: pictures, cell phones, price, address, Facebook, E-mail. Switches between English and Spanish ... which seems entirely appropriate in this context. Daniel asks students to take out their notebooks. Students scramble. He counts down so that students stay on task. He asks ss to write a description of their “magical object”, presumably so that they can use the description for a classified ad.

10:23ish – 10:38 Students work on writing descriptions of their “magic items”. Daniel walks around giving students support. Hard to give sufficient support with so many children in the class, and the regular teacher and assistant teacher clearly can’t help with this. This is a real problem. The students need a lot of personalized attention and – being only one person – Daniel simply can’t provide it. You can’t be everywhere all at once.

The students have lots of questions about “How do you say X, Y, or Z.” Daniel gives the students information and gives corrective feedback through recasts. The students seem engaged with the activity, although of course I can’t check to see how much they’ve written or the quality of the writing.

10:38 – 10:47 Students now use the information they've written down and turn their descriptions into a classified ad.

10: 48 - 11:00 Students present their advertisements. They go to the front of the room and read from their notebooks. "It's white and black. It's big. It's for xxxx. The price is 17,000 pesos." Class applauds. I'm impressed that Daniel got all the students to pay attention to the presentations. I have trouble with that in my own classes! Another student comes to the front of class. "Is a black xxxxx, xxxxx? Red contains rabbit. Contains all xxxxx? Contains xxxxx. It is big. 1,500." A girl volunteers. "It's crystal xxxx, to see xxxx and past. It's present. It's brown. It's small. Beautiful and magical. The price is 1,500." "It's black, xxxx, it's large, has a hole (???) "Brown, xxxxx, white ... "(the teacher had to take over entirely on this one.)

So ... the students didn't produce very much, and what they produced was often unintelligible or incorrect. That's not really a criticism ... I don't know where they're supposed to be in their English at this point, what the expectations are.

Students who didn't have time to present will do it next class.

### **Overall**

This was a lot of fun! Daniel did a great job of encouraging the students, adding in useful vocabulary. He has a great "teacher presence". He's very kind, funny, personable. The kids obviously enjoyed sharing their "magic" items. Daniel did a good job introducing vocabulary as students need it. But I wonder if there's a way to introduce foundational vocabulary in a more systematic way? They're obviously missing a lot of basic stuff, like numbers and colors.

**Student Teacher: Ernesto (Fourth-Year, Participant 40)**

**Teacher And Learning Environment**

Senior citizens recreational facility.

**Lesson Planning**

No plan.

**Execution Of Lesson Plan**

4:09 Class starts late (it being Mexico)

4:10 – 4:20 Seven students around a table. All the students are retired who study English once a week for an hour as a hobby and as a social activity. Each week, students have to give presentations about various topics. Today, the students take turns presenting their autobiographies, which they have written out the week before as homework. While the students present, Ernesto divides his attention between correcting their work and listening to the presentations. I would think this would be difficult, but he seems to be able to juggle both tasks at the same time. This is a VERY good activity for a group like this. The students feel confident since they can read from their homework, but they clearly worked hard to produce their scripts. Presenting themselves fits in well with the social function of the class.

4:20 – 4:30 Now another student presents a “special assignment”. She gives a presentation on the “wh” questions. This is really great ... very student centered. Ernesto is guiding and supporting the class, but so far the students are doing all the work. The presentation consisted of simply reading down a list of questions, but was very carefully put together and entirely appropriate for this kind of class.

4:30 – 4:48 Students now write down the WH questions that were presented. The students then practice asking these questions in pairs (semi-controlled practice: this is very nice ... the questions are fixed, but the answers are completely open). Students work together to answer the questions, and Ernesto goes around the table supporting their work. The students do a great job of supporting each other. Ernesto tries to keep everything in English, but of course this is difficult, especially since the students are checking vocab and grammar with each other in Spanish ... but there's nothing wrong with that.

4:48 - 4:55 Now Ernesto reviews the classes with the whole class. He switches back and forth between Spanish and English ... entirely appropriate in this context. He goes around the table and asks individual students to answer the questions.

4:55 Ernesto assigns homework for next week.

### **Overall**

Ernesto has a great “teacher presence” ... very kind, respectful, but also authoritative, and very helpful and supportive. The venue is not great – a lot of noise! But not much one can do about that.

**Student Teacher: Fabricio (LEI Graduate, Participant 54)**

**Teacher And Learning Environment**

**Lesson Planning**

No plan.

**Execution Of Lesson Plan**

4:07 Begins class in Spanish by introducing me. Very charismatic, very open and funny and engaging. Immediately switches into English and begins a review.

4:08 – 4:20 Review. Free talk on the topic of “suggestions”. He asks for some feedback on suggestions and review three ways to make them. “Why don’t we ...” “How about ...” “What about ...” “Let’s ...” So a grammatical-lexical focus here. Took a bit long to set the activity up ... but this was apparently the first time doing this. But this is a very good way to warm up, help the students shift gears into the L2. Fabricio is careful to make sure that students are using only the L2 and not drifting back into Spanish. The students seem to enjoy this activity ... many don’t want to stop! They’re looking at notes, obviously self-motivated and working to dominate the English under consideration.

4:20 Roll

4:23 – 4:38 More review. Comparatives. So, this section is very grammar focused. Fabricio asks for examples of comparatives and writes them on the board. Talks about how the number of syllables effects the comparative form. Cheap, cheaper. Sweet, sweeter. But: beautiful, MORE beautiful.

Fabricio puts students into groups of four. So good attention to group work. Students work to describe different school subjects using comparatives. Fabricio models the activity on the board. So a very PPP style here, with a focus on a particular form.



Fabricio often switches into Spanish to underline or clarify points, or to encourage the students. Probably too much L2 ... he insists that the students must speak English, but consistently breaks this rule himself. Fabricio walks around, helping different groups. Very attentive to the students.

4:38 - Fabricio then has a feedback session with the students, partly in English and partly in Spanish. Throughout the activity, both he and the students refer to statistics as “estadísticas” ... clearly, this word should be used in English.

4:39 – 4:50 The same activity continues with comparative phrases about food. After five minutes, the activity continues with a new set of comparatives. Students were trying to do the work in English, but lapses into Spanish, often. Also, it seemed at first that Fabricio wanted this to be a spoken activity, but the students seemed to turn it into a written activity. They made lists of phrases using the comparatives. He does not take control of the situation, but allows them to do it their own way. Thus, no speaking, even though this was supposed to be communicative practice.

4:50 - 5:15 Fabricio now puts a large banner up on the wall: “Who, what, where, when, why.” He says that the class is NOW going to do a written exercise (although the last activity was completely a written exercise). Fabricio discusses how every sentence must answer at least one (probably most) of the questions on the banner. He gives some examples of how to make sentences in English. “Who is going to make an action?” So: using all the questions, a possible sentence is “Jose eats hamburgers in McDonalds today at 4:00 p.m.” This is a VERY poor / limited discussion of how sentences are formed in English.

**Overall**

Overall, this was very muddled. It wasn't clear how each segment of the lesson related to the other segments. Fabricio lost control of the purported purpose of several of the activities. Far too much L1 in the classroom, and many L2 mistakes by both the professor and the students. Extremely poor explanation of the grammar points.

**Student Teacher: Flor (LEI Graduate, Participant 55)**

**Teacher And Learning Environment**

You have a terrific “stage presence” and a wonderful way with your students: positive, energized, supportive.

**Lesson Planning**

No written plan.

**Execution Of Lesson Plan**

ACTIVITY 1: Warm up. Card game with past and past participles. Good use of game dynamics to create interest – students seemed to enjoy competing against each other and demonstrating their knowledge. You begin the activity at a very easy level, and then ramp up the difficulty as soon as you see that the students understand: this is VERY good modeling. I was a bit concerned that the students were not more automatic in their responses – if they’re already practicing conditional sentences, it’s obviously critical that they can manipulate verbs: as you know, conditionals are hard because you have to manipulate structure AND deal with weird verb tense at the same time (and indeed, as seen in Activity 2, there did seem to be a lot of confusion about both structure and tense, i.e., “If iron rusts it gets wet,” “If you don’t eat you died”). How do you hold students responsible for vocabulary learning?

ACTIVITY 2: Students complete 0 conditional sentences from prompts. I like these kinds of activities very much: students really have to analyze/manipulate English, and I think it helps students notice patterns in the language. You do a good job of modeling (although I usually like to do one example with the whole class, mainly to help students whose listening comprehension isn’t good). As always, you are active in

monitoring and clarifying. (You must be very tired after a full day of classes: you are in constant motion!) You check answers on the board, analyzing each sentence.

ACTIVITY 3: More conditionals. Great use of technology in the classroom. Saves time, it's clear, creates student interest. Do all the teachers in your school avail themselves of the Internet, projector, etc? It's such a great tool! You're moving through a lot of material! "If he was/were an animal, he would be a sheep" – students didn't seem aware that both forms of be are correct in this case. Difficult stuff! You have great students ... they're really engaged and motivated.

ACTIVITY 4: First conditional. More analysis and manipulation of language. Another useful exercise. More board work – good (much better, say, than reading the answers or having students read the answers: gets students moving, focuses whole class attention, incorporates reading, writing, speaking, and analysis skills).

ACTIVITY 5. Sentence completion. Great modeling. "... the plants can grow / the plants will grow / the plants grow." Boy, I'm happy I'm not learning English ... so difficult!

### **Overall**

Class planning: Organized, logical, scaffolded. Activities are connected in a logical way. The materials you presented were uniformly professional and clear. My only criticism is that conditionals are so difficult, in my own teaching I don't like to mix them up. I recognize this was review, but it's probably worth the time to spend one full day of review for each of the conditional types. On the other hand, you're in a much better position than me to judge the capabilities/readiness of your students! And, regardless of how these are taught, there can't be any expectation that students will be able to

successful manipulate these structures for a long long time – about the best we can expect as teachers is to get them to be aware of the differences between 0, 1, 2, and 3.