Title of Dissertation: **PRACTITIONER-RESEACH AS DISSERTATION: EXPLORING THE CONTINUITIES BETWEEN PRACTICE AND RESEARCH IN A COMMUNITY COLLEGE ESL CLASSROOM**

Rashi Jain, Doctor of Philosophy, 2013

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Traditional notions around *research* and *teaching* tend to project the two as separate, often conflicting, activities. My dissertation challenges this perceived dichotomy and explores points of connections, or continuities, between teaching and research through my own practice as an adjunct community-college English as a Second Language (ESL) instructor as well as a doctoral candidate at a research-intensive university. I use Wenger's (1998) framework of communities of practice to locate my practitioner research at the intersections of the academic community and the teaching community. I also employ Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (2009) ideas around the dialectic of practice and research to conceptualize the integration of research and practice in my dissertation project.

I employ a pluralistic approach to the dissertation design and procedures by drawing upon and adapting elements from different research traditions and approaches in ways that best fitted my integrated practitioner research. Keeping doability and ethicality as my guiding principles, I provide authenticity to the thesis report by writing with deep reflexivity. With inquiry as my ongoing stance, I identify ways in which I integrated teaching and research: by primarily harnessing teaching tools to do research, and research tools to teach. I then propose that practitioner inquiry is an ongoing process, wherein the practitioner researcher analyzes in-depth a specific aspect of her pedagogy post-instruction to make research non-parasitic on teaching. I provide an example of such an ongoing inquiry by analyzing deeply a specific aspect of my own instruction—global Englishes and translinguistic identities in my ESL classroom.

I thus make a case for engaging in practitioner inquiry that integrates teaching and research, and discuss the implications of my dissertation work for teacher preparation and professional development, doctoral education, TESOL and community college practice, as well as practitioner research at large. I finally conclude my doctoral thesis by reimagining myself as a *pracademic*: a coherent unified and hybrid identity that allows me to be both a practitioner and an academic at the same time without privileging either role; and invite my readers to push the boundaries of their own thinking about the roles of teachers and researchers in the academy.

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EXPLORING THE CONTINUITIES
BETWEEN PRACTICE AND RESEARCH
IN A COMMUNITY COLLEGE ESL CLASSROOM**

By

Rashi Jain

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
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Dedication

To my parents,

I carry your love, and your faith in me, deep and safe inside me.

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन।
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि।
~ Bhagwad Gita

You have the right to perform your duty.
But the rewards are not your right.
Let not the rewards direct your actions.
Let not yourself be attached to inaction.
~ Bhagwad Gita

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My deepest gratitude goes to each and every person who stood by me, and supported

and encouraged me in ways both seen and unseen.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

"The discovery is never made; it is always in making."
(John Dewey, 1929)

There has persisted for a long time, in the field of education, a perception that research and teaching are separate undertakings. While research has conventionally been linked closely to the generation of theory, teaching has generally been seen as the context for application of the theory. The processes of 'thinking' theory and those of 'doing' theory have thus traditionally been viewed as mutually exclusive, and as a result 'theory-thinkers' and 'theory-doers' are sometimes perceived as belonging to two distinct communities of practice (Wenger, 1998), popularly called in academic discourse as—the research community and the teaching community.

As an extension of that perception, academic researchers working in research universities and laboratories are often seen as producers of research who ultimately create theory. On the other hand, teachers and educators working in K-12 and post-secondary settings have primarily been seen as consumers and technicians who apply the research and theory as best as they can to their instructional contexts.
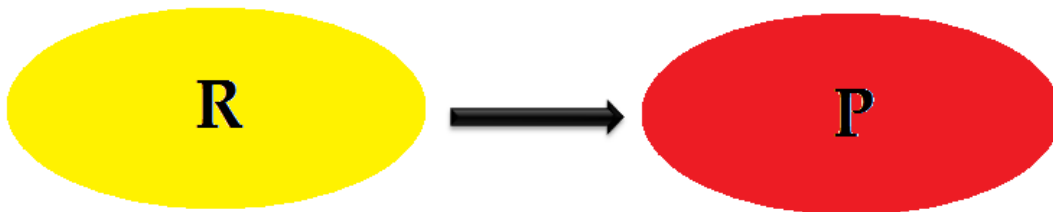
Figure 1. Researchers (R) producing research and theory for practitioners (P)

This binary between knowledge producers and consumers has been critiqued by many (see Anderson & Herr, 1999; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999a; Cochran-Smith &

Lytle, 1999b, 2009a; Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2009; Hammer & Schifter, 2001;

Jackson, 1986; Montoya-Vargas, Castellanos-Galindo, & Fonseca-Duque, 2011).

Academic research and theory produced under the traditional model is no doubt valuable, and informs researchers, educators, and policy-makers alike. However, the perceived distance of academic research and theory from teaching can also lead to a two-pronged criticism. On the one hand, abstract theory produced in academia that does not stem directly from real teaching contexts can have limited classroom application. For instance, traditional laboratory-based academic research may not provide answers to all teacher questions (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009d); theoretical analysis may not always apply to pedagogical realities (Cobb & Steffe, 1983); and grand theories may fail to comprehensively capture all the complexities of classroom life (Canagarajah, 1993; Jacobson, 1998). In addition, academic research has been critiqued for often failing to directly and comprehensively capture the voices and viewpoints of the teachers themselves (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990; Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2009; Erickson, 1986; L. Valli, 1997). At the same time, the perceived distance between research and teaching lends itself to skepticism about teachers' ability to produce valid theory, and "contributes to unfortunate differences in social and intellectual status between teachers and researchers" (Hammer & Schifter, 2001, p. 444).

It is generally believed that theory is produced through systematic and intentional inquiry; in other words, through research. As a result, teachers who do not engage in empirical research or are unable to establish the systematic and intentional nature of their pedagogical inquiries are not viewed as capable of producing

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knowledge that could contribute to the field of education at large (see Cochran-Smith, 2005). Further, teachers may hesitate to problematize their classroom experiences and observations in an academic climate that emphasizes teachers' roles as technicians who put into practice knowledge produced by outside 'experts', because to do so "may mean an admittance of failure to implement curriculum as directed" (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2009, p. 3). In instances where teachers do engage in research (Borg, 2010) and make their work public, it is often met with skepticism and the traditional distinctions drawn between research and 'mere inquiry' result in such work being relegated to "second-class citizenship" (Anderson, 2002, p. 23).

If it is assumed by many that teachers in professional settings and researchers in higher education settings constitute two distinct communities of practice (Drake & Heath, 2011; Scott, Brown, Lunt, & Thorne, 2004; Smith, 2009), then numerous instances of research can be seen in light of members' attempts to bridge these two communities by challenging traditional paradigms and responding to criticisms of relevance, applicability, and robustness. Many university-based researchers, for instance, acknowledge that teachers have unique insights to offer to research, and teachers' contributions in large qualitative and interpretative research projects as participants (e.g., Callahan & Chumney, 2009; Hammer & Schifter, 2001; Martin-Beltran & Peercy, 2012; Peercy, 2011).

Figure 2. Researchers (R) conducting research where practitioners (P) are participants and embedded within the research

Although such an approach may provide insights into the connections between theory and practice, it still limits teachers' roles in the research process to that of merely participants and now knowledge co-creators (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2009). To make teacher participation in the research process more balanced, some researchers invite teachers to collaborate as co-investigators (e.g., Bickel & Hattrup, 1995) and in inquiry communities (e.g., Simon, 2009), thus validating teachers' roles as researchers, theorizers, and knowledge producers.

Figure 3. Researchers (R) collaborating with practitioners (P)

Yet others may traverse the two communities by temporarily donning the role of teacher in order to understand their research site more closely as 'insiders', and to make deeper connections between theory and practice in the instructional setting (e.g., Peercy, 2013; Russell, 1993; Vansledright, 2002). Conversely, and despite the

skepticism about their ability to conduct robust research, teachers may don researcher roles in order to conduct systematic and intentional investigations stemming from their instructional contexts (e.g., Gunn, 2005).

Figure 4. Researchers (R) temporarily becoming practitioners (P), and vice versa

There are also those whose institutional contexts require them to both research and teach as part of their professional responsibilities. Such practitioners may, through their multimembership (Wenger, 1998) of the research and teaching communities, bridge their roles by systematically investigating their own instructional contexts. For instance, there are academic researchers who teach in post-secondary settings and apply the researcher lens to their own work as educators in different ways—individually (e.g., Turner, 2007; L. Valli, 2000); in collaboration with colleagues (e.g., F. Bailey et al., 1998; Price & Valli, 2005), including teaching assistants or apprentice co-instructors (e.g., Oxford & Jain, 2010); and sometimes by inviting their students to collaborate with them as co-investigators and colleagues (e.g., Adawu & Martin-Beltran, 2012; Motha, Jain, & Tecle, 2012; Oxford, Meng, Yalun, Sung, & Jain, 2007; Radencich, Eckhardt, Rasch, Uhr, & Pisaneschi, 1998). Some university-based professors may also teach in K-12 settings as part of their diverse professional practice, and carry out research inquiries there (e.g., Ball & Wilson, 1996; Lampert, 1985).

In-service teachers and educators enrolled in graduate programs at universities may also engage in research and inquiry into their own instructional contexts. For instance, K-12 teachers as well as post-secondary educators enrolled in masters' programs may research their instructional sites (e.g., Bourassa, 2011; Heads, 2006). In addition, doctoral students in education may pursue practitioner dissertations (see Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009d) or professional doctorates (see Drake & Heath, 2011; Scott, et al., 2004; Smith, 2009) in a diversity of instructional contexts. Some doctoral students may be fulltime practitioners in K-16 contexts (e.g., Cabrero, 2011; Morgan, 2000; Walstein, 2010). Others may teach undergraduate and graduate courses as part-time assignments at the institution where they are pursuing their doctoral studies, and engage in research and inquiry as course instructors (e.g., Barnatt, 2009; Boozer, 2007; Jain, 2009)[1]. Yet other doctoral students may take up short-term teaching assignments in other instructional settings (including virtual environments) in order to conduct research and collect data (e.g., Adawu, 2012; Chen, 2012; Li, 2007; Lim, 2010).

Those who engage in both teaching and researching (their professional contexts) thus combine the dual roles of practitioner and researcher, and are identified as practitioner researchers, while their body of work is described as 'practitioner research' (see Anderson, Herr, & Nihlen, 1994; Borko, Whitcomb, & Byrnes, 2008; Cochran-Smith & Donnell, 2006; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009d; Radencich, et al., 1998; Zeichner & Noffke, 2001). The literature around practitioner studies has grown steadily in the past few decades as increasing numbers of teachers and educators

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[1] On the other hand, some doctoral students may investigate their university programs as broader contexts of practice, but not necessarily focus on their own practice as teacher educators within that context (e.g., Daniel, 2012; Selvi, 2012).

engage in research in their professional contexts, and share the work through publications, workshops, and presentations in a wide range of venues and settings.

Writing about the field of education, Richardson (2006) comments that "Postmodernism raises questions that jar the very foundations of our research understandings. These questions concern the nature of knowledge, who owns it, who produces it, and how it may be used" (p. 259). From this postmodern perspective, practitioner research work can thus be seen as an emerging genre and part of a continuing paradigm shift (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009b; Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2009) that is challenging the modernistic academy-centric knowledge production and utilization (Hargreaves, 1996), and broadening greatly the definition of what counts as research, data, and analysis in the field of education at large (Cochran-Smith & Donnell, 2006). Indicative of this is the reality that within the field of practitioner research and inquiry, there exists a great deal of diversity stemming from different research traditions and social movements (Cochran-Smith & Donnell, 2006). In fact, over the past two decades many distinct forms of inquiries have emerged that can be identified as practitioner research (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009d; Zeichner & Noffke, 2001). These include action research (Burns, 2005), self-study (Samaras & Freese, 2009), exploratory practice (Allwright, 2005), and the scholarship of teaching and learning (McKinney, 2007).

Given that many forms of practitioner research essentially require the investigator to be both researcher and teacher, one would expect that as a result of this multimembership (Wenger, 1998), adequate attention has already been devoted to the resulting intersections between the practice of teaching and that of research. As

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Wenger (1998) writes, "Whether or not we are actively trying to sustain connections among the practices involved, our experience of multimembership always has the potential of creating various forms of continuity among them" (p. 105). However, surprisingly little has been published by practitioner-researchers and scholars about 'creating continuities' between teaching and research, with a few notable exceptions where scholars have *theorized* about the potential of such continuities.

Figure 5. Blurring of the boundaries between practice (P) and research (R)

Hargreaves (1996), Hammer and Shrifter (2001), and Cochran-Smith and Donnell (2006) have written about conceptually 'blurring the boundaries' between research and practice. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009a) have also explored the idea of 'working the dialectic' of inquiry and practice through practitioner research. Similarly, Duckworth (1986) has written about 'teaching as research', Hawkins (1973) on 'teachers as researchers', and Cobb and Steff (1983) about 'researchers as teachers'. Allwright (2005) also talks about incorporating a 'research perspective' into pedagogy to make practitioner research sustainable. All of these conceptualizations explore, to some degree, the potential overlaps between teaching and research, and practitioner and researcher (see Chapter 2).

Writing about practitioner research in general, Cochran-Smith and Donnell (2006) emphasize that such research "raises many questions about whether it is possible…to do research that privileges the role of neither practitioner nor researcher, but instead forges a new role out of their intersections" (p. 514). An extensive search, however, has failed to reveal empirical studies (including dissertations) that explore specifically how the two roles of teacher and researcher are merged in practitioner research, or how such a study may generate 'radical realignment and redefinition'(Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009a). This is the 'gap' in educational research that I wish to address through my exploratory practitioner dissertation.

My Practitioner Dissertation

One of the key elements of a practitioner dissertation, according to Drake and Heath (2011), is reflexivity. The authors define 'reflexivity' as "recognizing the part one plays in the research process" (p. 60) and "the awareness of the theorist of their unique part in the construction of new knowledge" (p.75). The authors stress the need to be reflexive, in research as well as in the writing of the thesis, to provide the project with "a degree of integrity and authenticity" (p. 36). Smith (2009) also emphasizes reflexivity in dissertation writing in order to "conceptualize, analyse and make transparent to others the researcher's relationship with the research…to make the research authentic and credible to follow" (p. 42).

Heeding this advice, I make myself as visible as possible in my doctoral thesis. This is especially significant as I have engaged in a very personal dissertation[2], and it is this overt personal involvement that makes my study a project "in

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[2] As pointed out by my dissertation chair, Dr. Valli, in her e-mail correspondence with me on September 11, 2011.

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representation, in authenticity, in authorial and researcher voice" (Drake & Heath, 2011, p. 6). I thus explain explicitly the part I played throughout the research process, including the way I position myself (Creswell, 2007) in my multidisciplinary inquiry, the choices I made in terms of data generation and analyses, and the manner in which I make meaning of the entire process. My reflective and reflexive writing is, therefore, a significant strand in this thesis. This self-reflexivity also brings my dissertation into the realm of critical work (Canagarajah, 2006b; Pennycook, 2001). As Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009a) write, those who engage in the work of practitioner dissertations have the potential to "destabilize the fixed boundaries of research and practice and create spaces for radical realignment and redefinition" (p. 107).

As I question the 'given' categories of *researcher* and *practitioner*, I attempt to articulate my awareness of the limits of my own knowing in the writing of this thesis. Although my primary area of interest is TESOL, my graduate experiences have been multidisciplinary. I have taken coursework and engaged in inquiries that go beyond TESOL, to the broader field of teacher education. This multidisciplinarity is also reflected in the composition of my dissertation committee which comprises members from three different programs in the College of Education.

Further, as part of my dissertation research, I have drawn upon different disciplinary communities, which is reflected in the writing of this thesis. Hence, when I discuss in this thesis the literature that has been created by scholars in the field of teacher preparation and doctoral education in the context of practitioner research, I also incorporate voices from TESOL.

I am a doctoral candidate in the Second Language Education and Culture (SLEC) program in the College of Education at the University of Maryland College Park. Since I started my graduate studies in 2004 as an international student at the University, I have been looking for opportunities to observe and teach in English as Second Language (ESL) settings. In the past, I volunteered on campus in ESOL conversation and speaking partner programs and have also taught undergraduate and graduate courses embedded within the SLEC/TESOL program. In the process, I have reflected, written, and presented on TESOL-pertinent issues individually (e.g., Jain, 2008, 2009, 2012, 2013a, 2013b) as well as in collaboration with professors and fellow graduate students (e.g., Adawu, Bai, Chen, & Jain, 2010; Bai & Jain, 2011; Jain & Kataregga, 2008; Jain, Kim, Park, Shao, & Suarez, 2005; Motha, et al., 2012; Oxford & Jain, 2010; Oxford, et al., 2007).

As I progressed through my graduate studies, I wanted to do more 'authentic' classroom teaching to complement these experiences, to connect theory to actual ESL teaching through research, and to deepen my understanding of practitioner-researcher. In the summer of 2009, I taught an ESL class as an adjunct at a community college in one of the neighboring counties. I used this opportunity to reflect on my teaching and the following year, I spoke with my supervisor at the community college to see if I could teach there again.

Initially, I had planned to teach only one section, while fulfilling my responsibilities as a half-time graduate assistant in my own department. However, with the possibility of limited future funding by my department looming large on my (international) graduate student horizon, I requested a larger teaching load at the

community college. Fortunately, I was given the opportunity to teach two sections of ESL184 Intermediate Writing in Spring 2010 at two different campuses of the community college, and I was able to teach an additional section over the summer. I chose to make this experience the focus of my doctoral dissertation starting with the firm faith that practitioner research would help me teach better in a comparatively new context and that, in turn, with deeper understanding of teaching, I would learn to do better practitioner research.

The Research Question

As part of the conceptual and theoretical inquiry that precedes and then accompanies the empirical inquiry in a dissertation, I reviewed educational literature to see what has been published on the connections between teaching and research when engaging in practitioner inquiry. As the inquiry took place, I expanded my search parameters to include doctoral dissertations as well. I found, as stated in the preceding section, that while there has been some theorizing by educational scholars on this topic, little attention has been paid in literature to empirically examining and documenting the overlaps between teaching and research in a practitioner research study at the doctoral level. Having identified this 'gap', I proceeded to conduct my dissertation research and was guided by the following broad question that emerged reiteratively from the initial inquiry:

What might a practitioner research study look like when it focuses on the continuities between research and teaching, conducted as doctoral dissertation in an 'English as a Second Language' (ESL) classroom in a community college?

Significance of the Study

The conventions of thesis-writing require that the writer specify ways in which her dissertation work is professionally significant (Glatthorn & Joyner, 2005). As I built the background to my research question in the previous sections, I referred indirectly to the need for exploring the overlaps between research and teaching through practitioner dissertation. I now address this point specifically in terms of my dissertation study, and will revisit the key ideas presented here in more detail in later chapters.

My dissertation study is significant in three interrelated ways. Through my practitioner research, I hope to have carried out a study that is *original*, *unique*, and contributes to the conceptual, empirical, and theoretical discussions around practitioner research within the larger field of education.

Originality refers to first-of-a-kind. While my dissertation is certainly not the first practitioner inquiry carried out by a doctoral student, my review of literature failed to bring to light practitioner dissertations (or other practitioner research studies) that focus primarily on the intersections between teaching and research. In that sense, my practitioner inquiry seems to be the first of its kind. I must add here, however, that a review of literature is limited to the studies that have been formally published and are available for viewing. It is possible that there may be other doctoral dissertations with a similar focus, but not included in the digital repositories and databases.

Uniqueness refers to one-of-a-kind. Conceptually linked to the idea of originality, 'uniqueness' also ensures that a dissertation adds to the diversity of existing research literature. In that sense, each practitioner inquiry is unique as it

creates 'new knowledge' by virtue of being located at the intersections of "professional practice, higher education practice, and the researcher's individual reflexive project" (Drake & Heath, 2011, p. 2). In my practitioner dissertation, as I explore the continuities created by my engaging in practitioner research, I locate my work at the point where my position as a novice researcher intersects with my position as a novice teacher. Also, I see myself as a practitioner who wishes to be a 'life-long learner' with its implications of "tentativeness and practice that is sensitive to particular and local histories, cultures, and communities" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009b, p. 46). It is from this unique and reflexive self-positioning (Creswell, 2007) that I explore the continuities between teaching and research, addressed in detail throughout the rest of my thesis.

Finally, I attempt to contribute to the demystification of the practitioner research process by providing a detailed account of my own practitioner dissertation as a case study to those who wish to undertake similar work. I also hope that my empirical study and the 'new knowledge' created therefrom will add important insights to the theoretical and conceptual discourse on practitioner inquiry. In addition, I believe my dissertation study has significant implications for teacher education, doctoral education and research (including practitioner dissertations), community college practices, and TESOL, as explored in the last chapter of this thesis. I thus hope that my dissertation will serve to illustrate that 'newcomers', no matter how peripheral, have the potential to further the practices of communities through learning (Wenger, 1998).

The Thesis

Writing about practitioner dissertations, Drake and Heath (2011) propose that "a practitioner researcher [engages] with new knowledge at all stages of the project, from conceptualization, through methodology, methods and empirical work, to the thesis" (p. 2). I found this to be true in my case, and see this thesis as a key component and one of the final products of the sometimes messy and non-linear meaning-making process called dissertation[3]. The challenge, of course, as I write this thesis, is to look back on that complex meaning-making process with the new knowledge generated 'at all stages of the project' and to present the process and the knowledge coherently in a written format here.

I also realize that the manner in which a practitioner research study is reported determines to a large extent whether it is received as research or not. It is necessary for the student researcher to acquire the university discourse in order to articulate and share the work in ways that would enable the members of the larger field to validate it as research. Writing one's doctoral thesis, and writing *from* it, can therefore be seen as acts of enacting one's proficiency in that discourse. In reporting one's work by following the basic conventions of reporting, practitioner-researchers (whether beginning or veteran) also make their work available to the community for review and critique, thereby rendering it more useful to other practitioners in the process (Borko, Liston, & Whitcomb, 2007). I, therefore, realize the importance of adopting and adapting the university discourse to my practitioner research reports. In the remaining chapters of this thesis, I try to do that.

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[3] The terms 'thesis' and 'dissertations' are generally used interchangeably in literature. I use these terms interchangeably later in this thesis, but in this section I stress on 'thesis' as the written product, and 'dissertation' as the encompassing process.

Underlying Conceptualizations

In order to explain the structure of this thesis, I must first share the broad conceptualizations that helped me make sense of the process of my practitioner research as dissertation. Conventionally, a doctoral thesis has the following structure: the introductory chapter, a review of the literature, the methodology chapter, presentation of the results, and finally the summary and the discussion of the results along with suggestions for further study (Glatthorn & Joyner, 2005).

As I progressed through my dissertation work and began the task of writing this thesis, I struggled to fit my work in this conventional framework. The underlying logic of the conventional framework did not match completely with that of my dissertation. While many theses writers, and academic writers in general, use the literature review section to create a theoretical and conceptual framework for their methodology, progressing neatly from one to the other (at least in writing), the 'methodology' for my practitioner dissertation emerged during the empirical work and was made sense of in the later stages of the dissertation. This is reflected in my thesis, where I interweave theories and ideas throughout in my writing, and describe the methodological pluralism underlying my practitioner research design and procedures.

I realized early into my dissertation work that practitioner research was going to be somewhat different from the genres of research I had been introduced to in my masters' and doctoral coursework, and further, that doing practitioner research *as dissertation* may bring along new and unexpected realizations. Looking back, I agree with Anderson (2002) when he says that:

Standards of dissertations have broadened over the years…a generally

positive development, but it can leave practitioner researchers who depend on

research methods courses premised on studying [instructional contexts] from

the outside in, without much guidance[4]. (p. 24)

Further, traditional academic research in education functions on the premise that

conceptual research, based on theory and logic, is separate from empirical research

which is in turn based on evidence and data (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009c).

Practitioner research, as Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009c) point out, "does not fit

neatly into the categories of either solely empirical or solely conceptual research;

instead it is best understood as a hybrid based on the dialectic of the two" (p. 95).

Practitioner research thus challenges and intentionally muddies this traditional

distinction. The authors provide two tentative labels for practitioner research resulting

from the dialectic of the practice and research: conceptual-empirical inquiry (with a

heavier leaning towards conceptual research) and empirical-conceptual inquiry (with

a heavier leaning towards empirical research). They further write,

[B]y definition, practitioner research is grounded in the identification and

empirical documentation of the daily dilemmas and contradictions of practice,

which then become grist for development of new frameworks and theories. In

turn, these new distinctions and concepts guide new understandings and

improvements in practice in the local site, as well as more broadly. (p. 95)

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[4] Despite taking a range of graduate courses over a period of more than five years, I did not have the opportunity to take coursework that explored research methods on studying instructional settings from the 'inside' as a practitioner-researcher. As the authors indicate, there is need to bridge this disconnect between the realities of practitioner dissertation work and university coursework that continues to adhere to teaching the more popular kinds of academic research. (See Chapter 7)

Given that my practitioner research as dissertation has emerged from the dialectic of practice and research, it can be seen as an "epistemological hybrid" (p. 95) as well.

However, my practitioner dissertation as a whole does not lean more heavily towards either conceptual research or empirical research. Instead, my dissertation encompasses a continuous conceptual-empirical-conceptual framework. In looking back, I can see that I conducted my practitioner study in three overlapping stages— from initial conceptual inquiry to empirical inquiry to further conceptual inquiry. I discuss this in more detail in the next section. Briefly, it is true that my practitioner research is grounded in the 'empirical documentation' of my teaching. However, my teaching is not the starting point of my practitioner research[5]. My first steps towards doing practitioner research were embedded in the act of conceptualizing and writing my dissertation proposal. In searching for and reviewing relevant literature as well as questions to guide the literature-based inquiry, I embarked upon an initial inquiry that was an "active yet subtle form of [practitioner] research" (Mehta, 2009, p. 306), and was aimed towards setting the stage for the subsequent empirical inquiry.

My empirical inquiry, in turn, continued within the conceptual inquiry and became the "grist for the development of new frameworks and theories" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009c, p. 95). There were no clear demarcations between where the conceptual inquiry ended and the empirical inquiry began, or where it merged into the next level of conceptual inquiry. It was instead a continuous conceptual analysis

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[5] The proposal is inspired by my previous practitioner research, including the experience of teaching ESL184 Intermediate Writing in a previous semester at Port Community College. However, my proposed research is not based on past research. Each classroom setting is unique and I cannot make prior assumptions about what the next teaching context will be like based on my empirical documentation of one previous class.

incorporating empirical data generation and collection, and continuing beyond as further analysis and interpretation.

In other words, I did not have a neat blueprint to follow, either for the dissertation work or for the thesis writing. The structure for my practitioner dissertation emerged organically. It is in reflection and analysis of the data that I am able to identify this structure and articulate it in my writing. In that sense, the methods I used for data generation and collection themselves were part of my broad conceptual inquiry.

Seen from an inquiry stance perspective, the literature review in my dissertation was a result of the literature-based inquiry that I engaged in to understand the field of practitioner research, as well as the setting of community college ESL. This occurred prior to engaging in the empirical inquiry. Later, in my dissertation, I identified a gap in my own literature review—I was focusing on my practitioner research as dissertations, but it had not occurred to me to review fellow practitioner dissertations. I addressed that gap by engaging in a further literature-based inquiry on practitioner research work by doctoral students. Chronologically, this occurred after I had finished teaching and technically completed the 'data collection'. Thematically, however, the review of practitioner dissertations belonged with the rest of the literature-based inquiry while framed with the ongoing conceptual inquiry.

The thesis structure itself, therefore does not indicate a strict linearity of time or process. It is in looking back that I identify components of my dissertation work, and (re)arrange them in this thesis thematically, thus hopefully creating a coherent structure familiar to my audience.

The Thesis Structure

As mentioned, while formulating the structure of this thesis, I had a choice in terms of presenting the dissertation content as thematic inquiries or as chronological events. I have chosen an overall thematic presentation more in keeping with the traditional outline of doctoral theses, and have embedded chronological details in the content to help my readers understand how the process unfolded prior to and while writing this thesis. Hence, the second chapter of this thesis is the literature review, followed by the conceptual framework, and then the methodology section.

In Chapter 3, I describe in detail my conceptual framework in terms of my self-positioning as well as conceptualizations around reframing practitioner inquiry. In Chapter 4, I lay out my methodology, and in Chapter 5, I describe and interpret the part of my dissertation where I carried out an integrated practitioner research project while teaching at Port Community College. Chapter 6 is also an evidence-based inquiry, but on another aspect of my teaching that emerged from the data and from my ongoing theorizing on a different aspect of my work as a T/ESOL practitioner. The final chapter is a written inquiry into the implications of my dissertation work and my concluding conceptualizations around reimagining a unified practitioner researcher identity. Each thematic inquiry is, therefore, presented in this thesis as individual written chapter, and all the inquiries collectively comprise the practitioner dissertation inquiry.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

And I still haven't found what I'm looking for.
~ U2

One of the challenges of engaging in a practitioner dissertation contextualized in a community college ESL setting was that prior to embarking on this investigation, I had limited formal academic and professional experiences in conducting research as well as teaching adults in a community college setting. My masters' program was geared primarily towards preparing teachers to teach English language learners (ELLs) in K-12 contexts[6], while my doctoral courses focused mainly on traditional research methodologies and offered a limited understanding of research conducted by teachers and other practitioners on their own practice.

Despite the systemic constraints, I am fortunate that my professors and course instructors at the university have allowed me to pursue my own independent lines of inquiry as best suited to my professional and academic goals. With their encouragement and support, I used the time after completing my basic graduate coursework to create an independent inquiry for formulating my understanding of practitioner research (both through the comprehensive examinations leading to candidacy and my research proposal defense). In conducting these inquiries, I positioned myself as an apprentice of both research and teaching.

The following set of questions guided this part of my conceptual and literature-based inquiry with regards to practitioner research:

- *What is practitioner research, and why is it significant?*

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[6] This is not unusual. MATESOL programs in the U.S. are generally not structured to prepare teachers specifically for adult ESL settings, and the requirements by institutions for teachers to teach adult ESL also vary greatly (see Crandall, Ingersoll, & Lopez, 2008; Selvi, 2012).

- *What are the different types of practitioner research? How are they similar and how are they different?*

- *What are the merits, critiques, and challenges of practitioner research?*

While reviewing 'practitioner research' literature and as part of my self-positioned 'apprenticeship', I also began a literature-based inquiry into my 'other' professional practice: Community College ESL. Not having an extensive history of teaching in a U.S.-specific community college context, I positioned myself as an apprentice of teaching adult ESL as well. Again, given the paucity of doctoral coursework in the field of adult ESL, especially for community college contexts, I created my own independent study to engage in a literature-based conceptual inquiry guided by the following set of questions:

- *What is community college ESL?*

- *Where is community college ESL located within the larger field of adult ESL (and post-secondary TESOL)?*

- *What are the defining characteristics of community college ESL?*

- *What practitioner research currently exists about adult ESL in general, and about community college ESL specifically?*

Given that the primary site of my work as a teacher was a community college setting, I begin this section by sharing an overview of community college ESL. This is the first, shorter, section. In the second section, I present an overview of different aspects of practitioner research in general. Finally, in Section III, I proceed to provide a comprehensive review of practitioner dissertations in post-secondary TESOL settings.

Section I: Community College ESL

In this section, I provide an overview of community college ESL. I first explain the terms 'community college' and 'adult ESL' as a synthesis of my inquiry into what constitutes community college ESL in the U.S. Next, I locate community college ESL within the larger context of adult ESL. Then, I delineate the primary characteristics of community college ESL in a U.S. context. Finally, I review existing research about adult ESL in international settings as well as in the U.S.

Definitions and terms

Community colleges.

Community colleges are two- or four-year public, independent, or tribal colleges (Community College Fast Facts, 2013) that act as a bridge to four-year universities as well as provide alternatives to university education to the community within which they are located. In the U.S., community colleges were established in the early 20th century "to ensure open access to higher education for individuals of all ages, preparation levels, and incomes" (Eckel & King, 2004, p. iii).

The growth of community colleges was paralleled and fueled by the rise in secondary school enrollments in the beginning of the 20th century (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). Today, almost half of all undergraduate students in the U.S. are enrolled in the more than a thousand community colleges spread across the country (Eckel & King, 2004; Mellow & Heelan, 2008b). Ranging from small rural colleges to large, multi-campus colleges located in urban communities, these colleges provide a wide range of services in response to the changing dynamics of community life in the U.S.

including serving a majority of students from racial or ethnic minorities (Mellow &
Heelan, 2008b) as well as non-U.S. citizens (Community College Fast Facts, 2013).

Adult English as a second language (ESL).

Across the globe, as English becomes the common language for
communication in professional spheres, increasing numbers of adults are enrolling in
English classes (Selvi & Yazan, 2013). This is a trend in the U.S. as well where, for
instance, in the program year 2006-2007 about 46% of participants in state-
administered adult education programs were taking ESL classes (Schaetzel & Young,
2010).

The term 'English as a Second Language' implies that those who enroll in
adult ESL programs are learning English as a second language. This, however, may
not be the most accurate descriptor, as many adults who migrate to the U.S. may
speak English as a third or fourth language (Mellow & Heelan, 2008a). However,
ESL is often used as an umbrella term for all learners who have limited target English
proficiency in the target English context. Also, given that English has become a
global language (Canagarajah, 2013a; Pennycook, 2007), many adults in ESL
classrooms in the U.S. may already be using a variety of English other than the target
standard American variety they are expected to use the target language proficiently in
academic and professional contexts in the U.S. (Jenkins, 2006; Nero, 2000).

Locating community college ESL within adult ESL in the U.S.

The ESL programs in community colleges are among the largest and fastest
growing programs in the U.S. (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). However, existing programs
are far from adequate in terms of meeting diverse and ever-increasing student needs.

To bridge this gap between need and supply (Sheppard & Crandall, 2006), a number of local education agencies, community-based organizations, and national volunteer literacy organizations offer ESL programs (National Center for ESL Literacy Education, 2002). These programs include survival English, workplace ESL, pre-academic ESL, English for specific purposes (ESP), ESL civics and citizenship, family literacy, and vocational ESL. The classes are offered in settings varying from postsecondary institutions and public schools to libraries, churches, and workplaces, and are taught by practitioners ranging from volunteers with limited prior training to instructors with advanced degrees in education and TESOL (Maum, 2003).
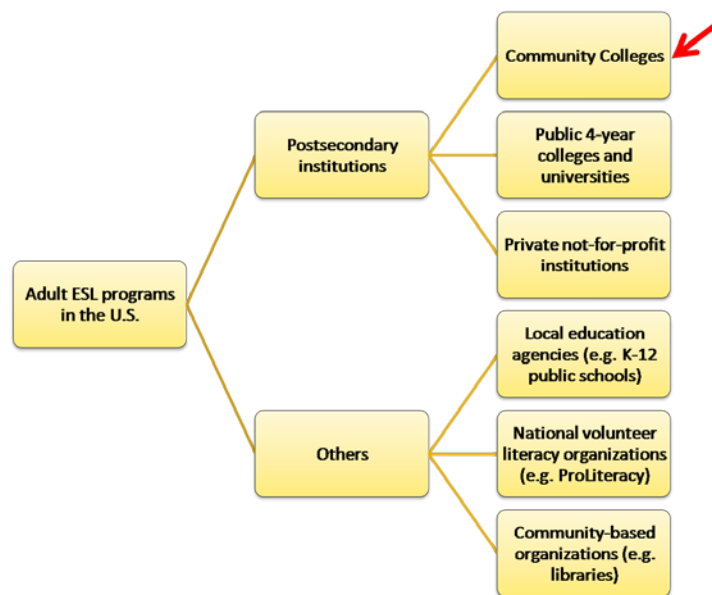
Figure 6 Locating Community College ESL within Adult ESL in the U.S.

As Figure 1 illustrates, community college ESL programs are embedded within this broad range of ESL programs, and act as an important bridge to other higher education sites with their access to resources less easily available to local groups, greater support to faculty than other sites, and expertise in obtaining funding from various sources. Often designed to be more flexible than universities (Mellow &

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Heelan, 2008a), community colleges provide courses ranging from basic conversational skills to advanced ESL programs where students can earn institutional and/or academic credit (Crandall & Sheppard, 2004).

Over the past few decades, there has been a steady increase in the number of community colleges offering ESL programs, from 40 percent in the early 1990s and 55 percent in the mid-1990s (Schuyler, 1999) to an incredible 90 percent in the early 2000s (Mellow & Heelan, 2008b). The increase parallels the immigration trends in the country (Kuo, 1999), and the immigration trends in turn are reflected in the increasingly diverse student body that enrolls in these programs.

Defining characteristics

Student population.

The student body in ESL programs in community colleges comprises immigrants, refugees, asylees, and undocumented immigrants. These students seek ESL instruction for a number of reasons: acquiring basic or functional literacy, advancing to degree programs, and improving employment prospects and wages (Schaetzel & Young, 2010). The students could be resident U.S. English Language Learners (ELLs), sometimes identified as '1.5 generation' (Matsuda, Canagarajah, Harklau, Hyland, & Warschauer, 2003) or foreign-born who migrated from other countries to the U.S. as adults.

As mentioned in the previous section, the latter may come from contexts where a standard or non-standard variety of English other than the mainstream U.S. English is in use, as well as include ESL literacy students with limited prior literacy in their home languages. In addition, there has been a steady increase in the number

of international students (Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Kuo, 1999; Mellow & Heelan, 2008a) who may choose community colleges as a less expensive alternative to commercial English language schools and large universities (Crandall & Sheppard, 2004).

Types of programs and coursework.

Community colleges ESL programs are usually geared towards preparing students to enhance their job marketability or to help them eventually transfer to four-year institutions (Kuo, 1999). A variety of programs and courses are offered to meet the diverse needs of ESL students. These range from programs focusing on conversational English, workplace English, basic English, citizenship classes, to academic English; and are offered through distance courses, transferable and non-transferable courses, credit and noncredit courses, as well as nonacademic and preacademic courses (Kuo, 1999).

The academic ESL courses are run with the assumption that ELLs will advance to the level of proficiency in English that will enable them to be successful in U.S. college classrooms where English is the medium of instruction (Mellow & Heelan, 2008a). Similarly, ESL courses aimed towards preparing ELLs for the workplace are run on the assumption that the ELLs will find themselves in p where English will be the primary means of communication.

Existing research

Like their counterparts in other instructional settings, second language (L2) teachers also need to be validated as "users and creators of knowledge and theorizers in their own right" (Johnson, 2006, p. 241). The more L2 practitioners conduct

research and the more L2 practitioner research becomes accessible, the greater the hope for their legitimacy. However, there seems to exist a need in general for published accounts of teacher-directed research in the field of English Language Teaching (Borg, 2009), as well as college-level English as a second language courses (Crandall & Sheppard, 2004; Matsuda, et al., 2003). Unfortunately, we have a long way to go, especially in the case of U.S.-based practitioner research in ESL community college settings.

Adult ESL research in international settings.

Despite limited funding for major research efforts in adult education in the U.S. (Schaetzel & Young, 2010), there are several instances of published research conducted in adult ESL college settings in non-U.S. contexts. These include teacher research in Canada (e.g., Cumming & Riazi, 2000; Derwing, 2003; Dudley, 2007; Esmaeili, 2002; Nassaji, 2007; Springer & Collins, 2008; L. R. Wang, 2003), collaborative teacher action research (e.g., Murray & McPherson, 2006) and practitioner research on classroom-based collaborative student writing (e.g., Storch, 2005) in Australia, research on migrant ESL learners in New Zealand (e.g., Bitchener, Young, & Cameron, 2005), and research in ESL colleges settings in Hong Kong (e.g., Biggs, Lai, Tang, & Lavelle, 1999) and Sri Lanka (e.g., Canagarajah, 1993).

Mathews-Aydinli (2008) compiled a literature review of research on adult ELLs in North American, British, and Australian (NABA) settings. However, she focused primarily on non-academic contexts and, therefore, excluded preacademic and academic-track ESL college settings, even as she included some teacher-based research. Interestingly, the U.S.-based studies reviewed in Mathews-Aydinli's article

that included 'nonacademic' settings showed some overlap with community college ESL settings. For instance, Kim's (2005) practitioner research focused on adult ESL learners in her community-based advanced ESL classroom, some of whom were enrolled in GED programs or degree programs in community colleges (p. 23). Similarly, Maum (2003) in her doctoral dissertation surveyed and interviewed teachers of adult ELLs in the U.S. including those in non-credit ESL community college settings. However, 41 studies that Mathews-Aydinli reviewed and in the subset of eleven 'teacher-related' studies, apart from Kim's (2005) study there were only two other instances of studies conducted by the teachers themselves on their teaching context, and both were teachers in non-U.S. contexts.

(Community) College ESL research in the U.S.

My repeated searches on online databases[7] and library catalogues brought to light some research on ESL learners in college settings in the U.S. A few studies, however, were not conducted in authentic classrooms but in settings such as laboratories (e.g., Sheen, 2007) and conference rooms (e.g., Woodall, 2002), or with the researcher as an observer from outside the classroom setting who viewed recorded video clips (e.g., Reigel, 2008); with adult ESL learners enrolled in undergraduate and graduate degree programs in four-year colleges and universities (e.g., Bordonaro, 2006), in intensive English programs (IEPs) (e.g., Y. J. Kim, 2008; Weissberg, 2000), and English language institutes (e.g., M. Wang, Koda, & Perfetti, 2003); or it was unclear as to what kind of adult ESL programs the participants were enrolled in (e.g., Skilton-Sylvester, 2002).

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[7] Web of Science, ERIC, Google Scholars, Digital Dissertations, and so forth.

There are other instances of research conducted in adult ESL settings in the U.S. such as non-academic track classes (e.g., Gordon, 2004), or in liberal arts college and university settings (e.g., De Guerrero & Villamil, 2000; Fishman & McCarthy, 2001; Stewart & Santiago, 2006). Of these, some are instances of collaborative action research (e.g., Fishman & McCarthy, 2001), collaborative case study by the practitioners (e.g., Stewart & Santiago, 2006), collaborative research between the instructor and a university-based researcher (e.g., Warschauer, 1998), and other of data generated naturally through routine classroom works (e.g., De Guerrero & Villamil, 2000). There also exist instances of instructors of college writing researching and publishing about their own teaching contexts (e.g., Canagarajah, 2006a; Lu, 1994). Yet, none of these research reporters actually talk about how they balanced research and teaching in their pedagogy, as I understand it, perhaps because that was not the purpose of the research report or not the most appropriate approach given their research questions.

There could be an additional reason for the handful of published practitioner research studies in community college ESL settings. It is likely that there are many practitioners who conduct research on their own teaching. However, it is equally likely that these practitioner-researchers choose to use available time and space to share their unique insights through deep and descriptive reports with their audience over providing details of study design and methodology in a way that could be replicated by others (Grossman, 2005). As a result, the work is shared primarily through other avenues such as local conferences, professional development workshops, and so forth (Horwitz, Bresslau, Dryden, McLendon, & Yu, 1997), while

the barriers and norms imposed by mainstream academic publishing (Zeichner &

Noffke, 2001) on what qualifies as publishable research keeps the work of such

practitioner-researchers out of the kind of mainstream publishing that is more easily

accessible to doctoral students such as myself.

There are, however, three notable exceptions. In 2006, TESOL, Inc. published

the first two volumes of a three-volume series titled 'Perspectives on Community

College ESL'. The volumes are titled 'Pedagogy, Programs, Curricula, and

Assessment' and 'Students, Mission, and Advocacy' respectively. A third volume,

titled 'Faculty, Administration, and the Working Environment', was published later in

2008. As the volume titles suggest, each volume focuses on different aspects of

community college ESL. The chapters within these volumes span not only

community college settings in the U.S., but similar settings in other parts of the world

as well, such as Canada (Ayala & Curtis, 2006) and Japan (Lieske, 2006). Although

not research reports in the traditional sense, the chapters represent many forms of

evidence-based practices in community college settings. For instance, many of the

narratives in each volume are accounts of practitioner-based initiatives and their

outcomes, while some of the narratives are based on research studies that the

practitioners conducted and the understandings that emerged from their research.

Besides the two volumes, Park (2011) has published her research about teaching in

multiple sections of an intermediate level reading-and-writing community college

ESL classroom in the U.S. As detailed in her article, Park drew upon her own and her

students' cultural and language learning histories, written as narratives in a classroom

writing project in different course sections over a period of five years, to understand

the participants' identity constructions. However, the author did not provide details of whether she analyzed the data after the instructional periods were over, or whether it was an ongoing process integrated into her instruction.

Given my interest in practitioner research that dynamically integrates practice and research, one chapter that stood out amongst all others was by a U.S.-based community college ESL instructor, J. A. Ramìrez (2006). In his practitioner research, Ramìrez used what he calls a 'nontraditional pedagogical approach' (p. 27) where he "applied critical pedagogy principles to the traditional language and function objectives of an advanced ESL listening and speaking class…and reflected upon it using action research principles…" (p. 27). From a reading of the chapter, I could deduce that Ramìrez first creatively realigned his pedagogy by applying critical pedagogy to a 'traditional' ESL classroom, and *then* applied action research to document the resulting analysis and change. The practitioner research by Ramìrez thus seemed to adhere to Cochran-Smith and Lytle's idea of blurred boundaries between the practitioner and the researcher, yet Ramìrez did not address the point of how he specifically integrated research *into* practice, perhaps because that was not the focus or the purpose of his writing[8].

In the same year as the publication of the initial volumes of the 'Perspectives…' series, a group of ESL community college practitioners collaborated on a panel presentation at the annual TESOL convention about research on the teaching and learning in U.S. community college ESL contexts, and followed it up with a book compilation of their research which was finally published in 2009. Titled

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[8] I later came across detailed descriptions of practitioner research inquiries in doctoral dissertations (e.g., Markos, 2011).

simply 'Research on ESL in U.S. Community Colleges', the book (K. Bailey & Santos, 2009) is a collection of thirteen studies, most of which were carried out by community college ESL instructors and administrators on their instructional contexts, although not necessarily on their own teaching in each case. For this reason, perhaps, and reflecting the overall trend literature, the editors do not identify any of the studies in the book as practitioner research despite identifying some of the contributing authors as "experienced ESL researcher-practitioners" (p. 9). The studies, however, do include instances of teachers engaging in active and reflective approaches to collect data and conduct research (Skillen & Vorholt-Alcorn, 2009), of teachers creating learner portraits from data collected from students through interviews and observations (Galda, 2009), and of the instructor collaborating with 'outsiders' to analyze online postings by students (Nguyen, Noji, & Kellogg, 2009). These volumes are collectively a testament to the wide range of tools and methods employed by ESL community college practitioners conducting research in their specific instructional contexts.

Section II: Practitioner Research

An interesting thread in the current literature around practitioner research is the multitude of names that are given to this body of research. While all educational practitioners researching their own teaching may not necessarily use a specific label in reporting their studies, many scholars have consciously used a whole range of different terms.

Definitions and terms

Different people in the field use different terms to describe research conducted by educational practitioners and define these terms in different ways. These terms include 'teacher research', 'practitioner inquiry', and 'practitioner research'.

Marilyn Cochran-Smith and Susan Lytle were among the first scholars to write about research by teachers as an emerging and legitimate genre in the U.S. In their seminal book, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1990) used the term 'teacher research' and provided a working definition by calling it "systematic and intentional inquiry by teachers" (p.3). The authors defined 'systematic' as "ways of gathering and recording information, documenting experiences inside and outside of classrooms, and making some kind of written record"; 'intentional' as "an activity that is planned rather than spontaneous" (p.3); and 'inquiry' as research that "stems from or generates questions and reflects teachers' desires to make sense of their experiences—to adopt a learning stance or openness toward classroom life" (p.3).

Nine years later, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999b) again used the term 'teacher research' but this time broadened the definition "to encompass all forms of practitioner inquiry that involve systematic, intentional, and self-critical inquiry about one's work…" The authors further specified that the definition included inquiries that "others may refer to as action research, practitioner inquiry, teacher inquiry, teacher and teacher educator self-study, and so on" (p. 22, endnote 1).

However, with later publications the authors showed an increasing preference for the term 'practitioner inquiry' over 'teacher research' themselves. Cochran-Smith

(2005) expanded upon the initial definition of 'teacher research' to describe 'practitioner inquiry' as the process of

> taking our own professional work as educators as a research site and learning
>
> by systematically investigating our own practice and interpretive frameworks
>
> in ways that are critical, rigorous, and intended to generate both local
>
> knowledge and knowledge that is useful in more public spheres. (p. 220)

In their most recent volume, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009d) have shifted completely to 'practitioner inquiry' and 'practitioner research', using the latter as "conceptual and linguistic umbrellas to refer to a wide array of educational research modes, forms, genres, and purposes" (p. 38). They provide the following explanation for this shift:

> We very intentionally use *practitioner research* here instead of *teacher research*, as we did in *Inside/Outside*. We realized many years ago, as we worked with differently positioned educators after the publication of our first book, that the term *teacher* unnecessarily and inaccurately narrowed the scope of the work. Thus in our new book, we use *practitioner* as an expansive and inclusive way to mean a wide array of education practitioners… (p. ix)

The authors now identify 'teacher research' as a 'genre or a version' and locate it firmly under 'practitioner inquiry' along with other 'genres and versions' such as action research, self-study, the scholarship of teaching, and using practice as a site for research.

Other authors have also adopted a similar approach. For instance, Borko, Whitcomb, & Byrnes (2008) used 'practitioner research' as an umbrella term for

'action research, participatory research, self-study, and teacher research' (p. 5). On the other hand, Craig (2009) treated teacher research as the umbrella term within which to locate other terms such as practitioner inquiry and action research, describing teacher research as research conducted by "university researchers and/or teachers themselves [as] a form on inquiry approached from the teacher perspective" (p. 61).

A decade ago, Zeichner (1999) identified the work of teachers (specifically teacher education practitioners) researching their own teaching practices as 'new scholarship' and placed it under 'self-study' research in teacher education and preparation. Two years later, along with co-author Noffke, Zeichner employed the terms 'practitioner research' and 'practitioner inquiry' as umbrella terms (Zeichner & Noffke, 2001). However, in a more recent article Zeichner (2007), while identifying 'self-study research' as a form of 'practitioner inquiry', preferred to use 'self-study research' again as an umbrella term for "several of the practitioner research traditions… including action research, participatory research, and scholarship of teaching" (p. 44, Endnotes 2 and 6). In his more recent work, Zeichner (2009) shows a preference for 'action research' as an umbrella term and uses it "in a very broad sense as a systematic inquiry by practitioners about their own practices" (p. 69). In a later section of the book, Zeichner elaborates:

> I use the term action research in a broad way to include forms of practitioner
> inquiry that do not necessarily follow the classic action research spiral. In
> recent years, a variety of different approaches to practitioner inquiry,
> including action research, participatory action research, critical practitioner

inquiry, critical participatory action research, lesson study, the scholarship of

teaching, teacher research, and self-study…have been used in teacher

education programs. My focus is on all of these forms of practitioner inquiry.

(p. 86).

The above excerpt from his most recent work suggests that Zeichner is aware of his

own decision to use 'action research' as an umbrella term for different kinds of

practitioner inquiry in teacher education programs. However, the author does not

provide any detailed explanation for the shift from 'self-study' to 'action research' in

his different books.

Other researchers also sometimes show a preference for one term over the

other or among a pool of available terms. In reporting the joint meta-action research

conducted with her students in a semester-long university course (Radencich, et al.,

1998, p. 81), the university instructor and first author Radencich expressed a personal

"lack of comfort" with the term 'teacher researcher' because "it seemed to imply a

dichotomy between teachers who research and those who do not" (p. 81) and chose to

use 'practitioner research' instead for her four students and co-authors to distinguish

their research from academic or "Big R" research.

In other instances, practitioner-researchers may locate themselves within one

of its genres, while at the same time drawing clear distinctions between their research

and other forms of practitioner research. For instance, Price and Valli (2005)

'consciously' identified their collaborative research as teacher educators as 'action

research' and separated their work from teacher research and classroom research by

using the term 'action research' to forefront their "interest in social and political change derived from critical traditions as well as in individual change" (p. 57)

Writing in the mid-1990s, Anderson, Herr, & Nihlen (1994) stated their preference for using the term 'practitioner research' in place of 'action research' for "pragmatic and philosophical reasons", to avoid cluttering the field further with "new and confusing terms," and because the term practitioner research seemed to be the "emerging term of choice in North America" (p. 2). The authors located practitioners in the heart of practitioner research and provided a "working definition" of practitioner research by describing it as "insider research done by practitioners…using their own site…as the focus of their study…a reflective process…deliberately and systematically undertaken" (p. 2). In doing so, the authors appeared to have assumed that practitioner research was synonymous with action research and could not refer to other forms of research done by practitioners. Predictably, in a later publication, Anderson and Herr (1999) used the term practitioner research and action research interchangeably. Puzzlingly, however, in another volume, the authors identify practitioner research as a tradition of action research (Herr & Anderson, 2005), raising the question whether the authors see 'action research' or 'practitioner research' as the umbrella term. Perhaps it is a sign of the growing maturity of scholars in the field that, in the second edition of their 1994 book, Anderson and Herr (2007) specifically use the term 'action research' instead of the more general 'practitioner research' as an "evidence of a change in the context of research in education" while identifying action research as a form of practitioner research (pp. ix-x).

While on one hand scholars in the field show preference for one term over another, other scholars have sometimes used these terms interchangeably with no clear distinctions drawn (as seen in some of the writings of Anderson and Herr above). Borg (2009) recently defined teacher research as "systematic, rigorous enquiry by teachers into their own professional contexts, which is made public" (p. 377) and proceeded to use it interchangeably with practitioner research. Similarly, in their book titled *A Guide to Practitioner Research in Education*, Ian Menter, Dely Elliot, Moira Hulme, Jon Lewin, and Kevin Lowden (2011) define practitioner research as "systematic enquiry in an educational setting carried out by someone working in that setting, the outcomes of which are shared with other practitioners" (p.3). Menter et al subsequently mention and describe reflective practice, action research, enquiry as stance, and so forth, but do not go into further detail.

Burns (2005) used the term 'practitioner research' only twice in her chapter on 'action research' and both times appeared to use it interchangeably with action research. Dana and Yendol-Hoppey (2009) also use the terms 'teacher research' and 'action research' interchangeably, although they prefer the term 'inquiry' over 'research' as a general practice. Jacobson (1998) likewise described practitioner research as "the implementation of action research in educational settings" (p. 125). This seems to be a common occurrence in many similar research reports, with practitioner-researchers using the terms interchangeably or with the underlying assumption that the two are synonymous. Ironically, while the confusion continues over what label to use, some practitioners in their research reports may not even use the terminology or locate their work within a specific tradition even though their

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research could be identified as practitioner research and inquiry (e.g., Kamhi-Stein, 2000; Storch, 2005; Wilhelm, 1997).

The constant shifting and evolving of scholars' positionality vis-à-vis the terminology to use when describing research by educational practitioners provides additional food for thought for budding teacher researchers such as myself, even as it perplexes and bewilders (and often frustrates) us, presenting us with dilemmas of how to best identify and describe the work we do. Should we, as educators conducting research in our own instructional contexts, consciously identify our work within the tradition of such research? Should we call it practitioner research or practitioner inquiry? Should we use the terms interchangeably? Is all practitioner research and inquiry action research or self-study, or are action research and self-study two of the many traditions of practitioner research and inquiry? Similarly, is it best to describe the types of research as 'traditions', or are they versions, variations, genres, and so forth. Fortunately, there is greater consensus in the field about the different kinds of research done by practitioners on their own teaching as well as common characteristics that cut across these different traditions.

In the following sections, simply for the sake of convenience and to follow what I suspect to be an emerging trend, I use the terms *practitioner research* and *practitioner inquiry* primarily, although I also identify elements of different kinds of practitioner research that overlap with my work (see Chapter 4). I thus align myself for the time being with authors who use these terms as umbrella terms and locate various forms of such research, such as action research, self-study, and so forth, under this large umbrella. In reporting the authors' writing, I use the vocabulary that each

uses to identify the different forms: traditions, versions, genres, approach, and so forth. Again, for the sake of convenience, in response to the existing literature, and solely for the purposes of this paper, I draw upon my own first language and use a Hindi word to label these 'forms': I call them *avatars*. In Hindu (and Jain) mythology, an *avatar* is a new embodiment of a familiar idea. Within the broad field of practitioner research and inquiry, I see the many new, old, and emerging forms of research conducted by practitioners as different embodiments, or the many *avatars* of practitioner research.

Research by practitioners in its many avatars

Different scholars have found different ways to classify the many *avatars* of research by educational practitioners. Writing at the turn of the century, Zeichner and Noffke (2001) used chronology and geographical locations to identify five major 'traditions' of practitioner research: starting with the action research in the U.S. in the 1950s, the teacher-as-researcher movement that emerged in the U.K. in the 1960s and the 1970s, the 'contemporary' teacher researcher movement in North America, the 'recent' growth of self-study research by college and university educators, and finally participatory research that emerged in Asia, Africa, and Latin America and was later adapted to North American contexts.

As mentioned in the previous sub-section, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009d) describe action research, teacher research, self-study, the scholarship of teaching and learning, and the use of practice as a site for research as "the major genres and versions of practitioner research" (p. 39). The authors identify certain qualitative methodologies, such as narrative inquiry employed by teachers and teacher educators

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to understand their own practices, as "traditional modes of research" (p. 44) and state that practitioner-researchers are different from traditional qualitative researchers since "in addition to documenting classroom practice and students' learning, they also systematically document from the inside perspective their own questions, interpretive frameworks, changes in views over time, dilemmas, and recurring themes" (p. 44).

Interestingly, the authors do not make any mention of some forms of practitioner research and inquiry, such as exploratory practice and reflective inquiry, in their otherwise comprehensive work. Perhaps the authors are adhering to their earlier policy of not including "reflection or other terms that refer to being thoughtful about one's educational work in ways that are not necessarily systematic or intentional" (see, Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999b, p. 22 Endnote 1). However, it can be argued that in many instances reflective work by practitioners is systematic and intentional enough to be included under the umbrella of practitioner research and inquiry. I describe now briefly each of these *avatars* of practitioner research.

Action research.

As seen above, action research has sometimes been used as an umbrella term for all forms of research by educational practitioners, and at other times interchangeably with 'practitioner research' and 'practitioner inquiry'. Perhaps this confusion can be explained by the historical context of first instances of research by teachers being called 'action research.' Anderson, Herr, and Nihlen (2007) used the term action research in their recent book to "denote insiders doing research in their own settings" (p. 4). Action research has also been defined as research by teachers that essentially results in change or transformation (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2009;

Price & Valli, 2005). Valli and Price (2000) see action research as a form of praxis in which knowledge is used for purposeful action. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009c) describe action researchers' efforts being centered "on altering curriculum, challenging common school practices, and working for social change by engaging in a continuous process of problem posing, data gathering, analysis, and action" (p. 40). Action research where the participants are active co-researchers instead of being "merely involved" (McIntyre, 2008, p. 15) is often specifically termed 'participatory action research' (e.g., Draper, 2008). The American Educational Research Association (AERA) has a special interest group (SIG) devoted to action research, which the group broadly defines as 'practice-based' research.

Teacher research.

As seen in the previous sub-sections, different scholars look at 'teacher research' differently, some giving the term broad definitions (e.g., Borg 2009; Craig 2009) and others providing more narrow or specific descriptions. Borg (2009), for instance, describes teacher research broadly as "systematic, rigorous enquiry by teachers into their own professional contexts, which is made public" (p. 377). Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009c), on the other hand, describe teacher research as "the inquiries of K-12 teachers and prospective teachers, often in collaboration with university-based colleagues and other educators" (p. 40), and see it as a "theoretical hybrid in that, although it has been influenced by several major theories and intellectual movements, it is grounded fundamentally in the dialectic on inquiry and practice rather than one particular theoretical tradition or framework" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009b, p. 42). The general perception in the U.S. education community is

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that teacher research is usually carried out by school teachers and practitioners. AERA, for instance, has a 'Teacher as Researcher' special interest group (TAR-SIG) that has been designed to support PreK-212 teachers primarily.

Self-study.

Practitioner-researchers who examine their own practices and base their research on the "postmodernist assumption that it is never possible to divorce the 'self' either from the research process of from educational practice" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009c, p. 40) often use the term 'self-study' for their research (see, Loughran, 2004a). 'Self-study' practitioner research has usually been located in teacher education programs and the practices of teacher educators (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009b; Zeichner, 2007). Unlike action research, where the emphasis is on action or transformation, in self-study research, the 'self' (in other words, the practitioner) is the focus of the study (Samaras & Freese, 2009, p. 5). AERA has a special interest group dedicated to self-study practices called the 'Self Study of Teacher Education Practices' (S-STEP).

The scholarship of teaching and learning.

The term 'Scholarship of Teaching and Learning' (SoTL) was introduced by Ernest Boyer in 1990. According to McKinney (2007), it has since been defined in many diverse ways by the prominent scholars in the field with different disciplinary emphases and institutional contexts (e.g., Shulman, 2000). McKinney herself describes SoTL simply as "systematic reflection or study of teaching and learning made public" (p. 12). According to Cochran-Smith and Donnell (2006), two key

characteristics of SoTL are opening one's practice to critique and evaluation and enabling others to build upon our learning (p. 507).

Using teaching as site for research.

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009c) describe this genre as research "carried out by university-based researchers who take on the role of teacher in K-12 settings for a specific period of time in order to conduct research on the intricate complexities involved in theorizing and working out problems of practice" (p. 40). There are many instances of university-based instructors and researchers choosing to use K-12 teaching as a site of research (e.g., Peercy, 2013; Russell, 1993; Vansledright, 2002).

Exploratory practice.

Allwright (2005) defined 'exploratory practice' as an approach to practitioner research "devoted to understanding the quality of language classroom life" (p. 353) and described it as "an indefinitely doable way for classroom language teachers and learners, while getting on with their learning and teaching, to develop their own understandings of life in the language classroom" (p. 361). One of the key principles of exploratory practice is to make students co-investigators in a way that is meaningful to both the teacher and students with the result that research becomes part of the teaching and learning (e.g., Chu, 2007).

Reflective practice.

The term 'reflective practitioner' was introduced in 1983 by Donald Schön in his book by the same title. Schön (1983) wrote primarily for the medical profession, but his ideas have since been taken up by practitioners from many fields. In education, reflective practitioners find ways to study their own instructional contexts

with the aim to improve their understanding and being able to theorize their own practices (Drennon, 1994).

Narrative inquiry.

Narrative inquiry has been described as a methodology used by teachers and teacher educators to study and improve their own practices (Clandinin, Pushor, & Orr, 2007) and is defined by the authors as a "deliberative research process founded on a set of ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions that are at play from the first narrative imaginings of a research puzzle through to the presentation of the narrative inquiry in research text" (p. 33). As mentioned earlier, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009a) view narrative inquiry as a traditional mode of research and draw distinctions between narrative inquiry and practitioner inquiry.

As a cautionary note, the classifications provided by the authors (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009c) should not be taken as an all-encompassing view of practitioner research and inquiry. There are instances where the reporters simply identify themselves as practitioner-researchers and employ traditional qualitative or quantitative procedures to carry out systematic and intentional research that informs their own practice and also serves to inform the practitioner community at large (e.g., Turner, 2007).

Likewise, by Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (2009a) definition of teacher research, the study by Radencich et al. (1998) could be identified as teacher research as well. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009a) define teacher research as "the inquiries of K-12 teachers and prospective teachers, often in collaboration with university-based colleagues and other educators" (p. 40), a description that fits perfectly with the

study by Radencich et al (1998) where the university-based teacher educator and instructor Radencich collaborated with four of her masters' students—Eckhardt, Rasch, Uhr, and Pisaneschi—all of whom were also teaching in K-12 settings at the time as either interns or as full-time teachers. However, the authors made the choice to use the term 'practitioner research' instead, even as they located themselves within the genre of action research by identifying their research as meta-action research and described their research as a "narrative of the practitioner research process of four students and one instructor" (p. 81).

Key characteristics

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) have suggested that teacher research be seen as "its own genre, not entirely different from other types of systematic inquiry into teaching yet with some distinctive features" (p.10). In their most recent work on practitioner research and inquiry, the authors (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009d) list eight salient characteristics that most forms of practitioner-researcher can be seen as sharing.

1. Practitioner as researcher: In practitioner research, the researcher is the practitioner, and the practitioner is the researcher. These two roles are combined into one person, who is also the insider in the research and instructional context.

2. Community and collaboration: In most forms of practitioner research, participants collaborate within and across the communities of practice and inquiry. The communities, in turn, become contexts for initial sharing of research knowledge and critical feedback.

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3. Knowledge, knowers, and knowing: Practitioner research works on the assumptions that practitioners are legitimate 'knowers' who generate knowledge that is directly applicable to their local contexts, and can also "function as public knowledge by informing practice and policy beyond the immediate context" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009d, p. 42).

4. Professional context as inquiry site and/or professional practice as focus of study: As the authors point out, when teachers conduct research on their own teaching and/or in their own instructional contexts, they create knowledge that is distinct from knowledge created by outsiders studying the same contexts. The questions that practitioner-researchers explore emerge from "from neither theory nor practice alone but from critical reflection on the intersections of the two" (p. 42).

5. Blurred boundaries between inquiry and practice: Practitioner-researchers often find the boundaries between practice and research getting blurred by the nature of their work. The authors indicate that the blurring of the two roles of 'practitioner' and 'researcher' is often accompanied by tensions, dilemma, and problems. I explore this aspect of practitioner research in more detail in Section III of this chapter.

6. Validity and generalizability: An interesting feature across many forms of practitioner research is that the researchers often look at validity and generalizability in ways that are different from traditional and academic research (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009c). Some replace validity with trustworthiness and generalizability with transferability. Others present alternatives to assessing quality of research that are more responsive to their unique research contexts.

Self-study proponents, for instance, present significance, quality, grounding, and authority as determiners of the excellence of research, while Anderson et al. (2007) provide a new set of 'validities' to evaluate action research. (I discuss this in more detail as it applies to my practitioner dissertation in Chapter 4.)

7. Systematicity and intentionality: The authors emphasize heavily on the need for practitioner research to be systematic and intentional, and use this criteria to separate practitioner research from other kinds of practitioner inquiries. The authors also indicate that the frameworks of analysis and forms of data that result from systematic and intentional practitioner research are often different from those found in traditional research.

8. Publicity, public knowledge, and critique: Practitioner research, while being local, is often also aimed at being made public and accessible to populations beyond the immediate. Many scholars, in fact, place a lot of importance on the need for practitioner-researchers to make their knowledge public in ways that are accessible to the larger community of academia.

An additional characteristic of practitioner research is that the personal and the professional often intermingle in its many forms. By placing themselves at the center/core of their research, many teachers bring in their personal perspectives and experiences into their professional practice. Further, such practitioner-researchers who consciously strive to connect theory with practice, cannot help but bring in the personal to the professional to conduct practitioner research (e.g., Russell, 1993).

Practitioner-researchers are often also innovators and pioneers, given the comparative youth of the field (Grossman, 2005) and the occasional country-cousin

treatment meted out to their research by the more 'sophisticated' academic researchers. Since there exists no blueprint for doing such research, practitioner-researchers adopt and adapt traditional modes of inquiry, both qualitative and quantitative, to best inform their own research practices (Goswami & Rutherford, 2009). As Drennon (1994) writes,

> [P]ractitioner inquiry is not field-testing the ideas of others, nor is it simply implementing a new strategy that one is already convinced with work. Instead, it is a process of generating ideas through reflection and examination of practice, and exploring the implications of those ideas within the practitioner's setting. (p. 3)

Practitioner-researchers contend with many challenges that arise from their roles as practitioner-researchers. They often aim to change and transform, and in turn find their work transformative for themselves (see e.g., Ramìrez, 2006, p. 33). In doing so, practitioner-researchers often push the boundaries of traditional perceptions about researchers and participants. Further, there are many players in the field of education who could come under the umbrella of practitioners. These include teachers, teacher educators, student teachers, school principals, teacher educators, community college instructors, university faculty members, adult literacy program tutors, fieldwork supervisors, school district superintendents, and so forth. Additionally, in exploratory practice (Allwright, 2005), learners are also seen as fellow researchers and practitioners. Similarly, in other versions of practitioner inquiry, such as participatory action research, 'researchers' may include participants "who are not practitioners in the professional sense but rather are significant

stakeholders in the educational process, such as parents, community members, and families" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009c, p. 41).

It is important to note that despite traditional notions of the divide between the 'researcher' and the 'researched', the roles of practitioner and researcher are not always mutually exclusive. For instance, Zeichner and Noffke (2001) in acknowledging themselves as practitioner-researchers identified their roles as "teachers, teacher educators, and facilitators of the practitioner research of others" (p.300). Likewise, Cochran-Smith (2005) identified herself and her 'long-term colleague and co-author' Susan Lytle as teacher educators who function simultaneously as both researcher and practitioner, and indeed sees the role of teacher educators as 'working the dialectic' of inquiry and practice (p. 219). In some cases, the researchers were both teachers and teacher educators (e.g., Russell, 1993) for specific reasons, such as the desire to practice what they preached.

Practitioner research has thus emerged as a 'theoretical hybrid' (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009c, p. 93) from a very long 'ideological, multinational, and sociocultural history of efforts by educators to document, understand, and alter practice' (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2004, p. 605) that have resulted in many variations both within and across traditions of practitioner-led research and inquiry. Even as these variations create new tensions and dilemmas, the resulting dynamism and theoretical hybridism (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009c) is taking educational research in new directions in terms of the theories, epistemologies, and methodologies embedded in the research conducted by practitioners in and on their own instructional contexts. The initial and current scholars publishing about practitioner research have

often been university-based academic researchers (Reis-Jorge, 2007). However, hopefully as practitioner research gains currency among practitioners, an increasing number of teachers and other practitioners theorize and publicize their work, and thus bring additional momentum and energy into this already dynamic field.

Critiques

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009c) list a number of critiques offered in literature about practitioner research in terms of knowledge generated, methods employed, questions about ethics, the political and ideological purposes, and the blurring of the personal and the professional.

Broadly, there exists skepticism about whether practitioner research is 'research' at all (the 'methods critique'). Also, small scale and short-term individual practitioner studies have been criticized for not being able to offer cross-cutting solutions and generalizations, and those reviewing the studies have expressed frustration with the difficulty in gathering a cumulative meaning from these studies (the 'knowledge critique'). It is debatable, however, whether practitioner research should be seen as lacking in generalizability if tools and techniques for doing meta-analyses do not currently exist. In other words, the limited generalizability of such research can be seen as a limitation on the part of the synthesizers and meta-analyzers, rather than a weakness in the bodies of research they look at.

Concerns have also been raised about how teachers may struggle with donning the mantle of researchers (the 'ethics critique'). Zeichner & Noffke (2001), for instance, mention "concerns that the demands of teachers' jobs make it difficult for them to find time to do research and that, when they do so, their attention is drawn

away from their main task of educating students" (p. 299). They also cite criticisms about teachers not being "properly trained to conduct research and…the research they have conducted has not been up to an acceptable standard" (p. 238).

Further, there are often concerns about studies becoming narcissistic exercises in justifying current practices by practitioners (the 'personal and the professional' critique). However, such concerns can be addressed by instances of practitioner research where practitioners use their research to refine their teaching, explore problems and complexities that might have been left unexplored otherwise, and deepen their understanding of their craft and student learning as well as make their work available for public review.

Many of these critiques are based in a positivist view of reality (Zeichner & Noffke, 2001, p. 299) and fail to acknowledge the complexities of actual teaching processes that interpretative or situated research captures, explores, and illustrates (Johnson, 2006). Indeed, applied scientific conceptions of practice may not be able to adequately capture these very complexities in the first place (Wood & Geddis, 1999). Additionally, narrow views of the legitimacy and competency of practitioner-researchers do a disservice to practitioners' intelligence and aptitude. Such views basically question teachers' competence with research. Teachers could make a similar argument about researchers not really understanding or knowing teaching sufficiently to research it. If researchers genuinely believe that they can do valid research on teaching without actually teaching, then they cannot practice double standards and say teachers are incapable of conducting valid research on teaching. Just as researchers are expected to educate themselves about relevant information on

teaching, teachers are expected to educate themselves about relevant information on research. The latter cannot be viewed as impossible, when the first is seen as perfectly legitimate.

Also, many practitioner-researchers face double biases of having limited funding and conducting studies on their own with little outside help and support on one hand, and having to defend the legitimacy and quality of their work at the same time. Some practitioner-researchers find creative solutions, such as by forming communities of inquiry and joining forces with like-minded individuals to collaborate and generate knowledge. Others, in reporting their studies, may choose not to provide detailed and explicit descriptions of their methods of data collection and analysis (Grossman, 2005) since they are more focused on their own learning and sharing this learning in a local setting. Unfortunately, sometimes the lack of detail in practitioner research reports is inferred as lack of depth and rigor in the research itself, and the different purposes in reporting are not always taken into account.

Significance

Given the many critiques and challenges that practitioner-researchers face, one might wonder why they do such research at all. Perhaps an answer lies in the many merits of practitioners researching their own instructional contexts.

Practitioner research challenges the idea that practitioners are the subordinate element in the scholar/practitioner dichotomy (L. Valli, 1992). The knowledge produced by practitioners through research and inquiry helps address the practice and theory gap. Also, practitioner research helps bring focus on the practitioner as researcher in the research, thereby making the usually invisible researcher visible.

This visibility complements and balances the emphasis that is often placed on participants and methodology in research, a characteristic that is sometimes absent in traditional academic research.

Practitioners who study their own practice under the umbrella of practitioner research tend to do so metacognitively, with a heightened awareness of who they are and the rationale for their research. They are invested in this type of research for dual reasons and "take their work seriously, self-consciously posing questions and then investigating those questions by gathering and analyzing the data of practice" (Hollins & Guzman, 2005, p. 510). Their research provides them with an opportunity to examine the influence of their own beliefs and assumptions on their teaching practice, and to subsequently improve instruction (Yogev & Yogev, 2006). Further, practitioners often bring insider and expert knowledge to their research that outsider researchers can strive for but not necessarily attain (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2009).

Practitioner research also offers a practical solution to many practitioners who do not have access to resources or funding for travel and research (Grossman, 2005). Engaging in practitioner research allows the practitioner-researchers to be "unapologetically pragmatic" (Boozer, 2007, p. 28), and this pragmatism can lead to the generation of new knowledge, and present "a potential for greater personal, professional, and organizational learning…an approach to authentic staff development, professional renewal, and school reform…and…a new way of thinking about knowledge creation, dissemination, and utilization in schools" (Anderson, 2002, p. 22).

Further, practitioner inquiry offers teachers the opportunity to engage in self-directed professional development to balance the traditional models of professional growth, where an outsider comes into the instructional setting and shares information. This traditional model may not be as effective in leading to meaningful change in the classroom as compared to teachers engaging in inquiries as by doing so:

> [T]he teacher develops a sense of ownership in the knowledge constructed, and this sense of ownership heavily contributes to the possibilities of real change to take place in the classroom. (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2009, p. 7)

There are contexts, especially research universities, where the perception is that research is generally favored over teaching and where there has been an overall move towards research (Menges & Austin, 2001). For academicians who value research and teaching equally, combining the two in ways where one directly informs the other could be an effective, practical, and meaningful activity. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993), for instance, point out to the potential of teacher research for 'transforming' the university-generated knowledge base. They write,

> Just as critical scholarship has challenged many of the norms of interpretive social science, teacher research makes problematic in a different way the relationships of researcher and researched, theory and practice, knower and knowledge, process and product. When teachers do research, the gap between researchers and researched is narrowed. Notions of research subjectivity and objectivity are redefined: Subjective and local knowing rather than objectified and distanced "truth" is the goal. (p. 58)

In essence, practitioner research is about good teaching. As Goswami and Rutherford (2009) state, "In becoming teachers who carefully and systematically document our practice, simply put, we do better" (p. 4).

Section III: Practitioner Dissertations (in Post-Secondary TESOL)

As a subset of practitioner research, practitioner dissertations have received limited attention in the academic literature so far. This could partly be because such dissertations are still "the new kid on the block" (Herr & Anderson, 2005, p. 1). However, like practitioner inquiry in general, there has been some theorizing around the continuities that are potentially created in practitioner dissertations as well.

A handful of publications about practitioner dissertations have been authored by academics in recent years. These include how-to books for completing practitioner dissertations successfully, and include such titles as *Completing a Professional Practice Dissertation: A Guide for Doctoral Students and Faculty* (Willis, Inman, & Valenti, 2010), *The Education Dissertation: A Guide for Practitioner Scholars* (Butin, 2010), *Achieving your Professional Doctorate* (Smith, 2009), *The Action Research Dissertation; A Guide for Students and Faculty* (Herr & Anderson, 2005). Some journal articles and books have also been published where the authors have theorized about practitioner dissertations. The book titles include *Practitioner Research at Doctoral Level: Developing Coherent Research Methodologies* (Drake & Heath, 2011) and *Professional Doctorates: Integrating Professional and Academic Knowledge* (Scott, et al., 2004). I cite these works throughout my thesis in order to draw upon the existing theorizations about the connections between practice and research in practitioner dissertations.

While reviewing literature to include in my proposal, I primarily focused on the work of established scholars in the field in terms of journal articles and books, and I made few attempts to find out what fellow dissertators had done by way of practitioner research in higher education, ESL, and community college settings. I had made some effort at the beginning of my dissertation work but, frustrated by the ambiguity around the term 'practitioner research', I had gone back to traditional journal and book literature for clearer and deeper definitions. Having probed this literature enough to have a sense of not only how the term has been defined, but also how I was beginning to conceptualize the term, I was able to return to the dissertations and read them in the light of my deeper understandings.

For this part of my literature-based conceptual inquiry, I reviewed doctoral dissertations published by candidates graduating from U.S. universities from the year 1996 onwards[9]. I accessed the ProQuest database of digitally submitted and published doctoral theses, and included in my review dissertations that had been published by students graduating from non-U.S. universities as well. I used several combinations of such keywords as 'practitioner research', 'teacher research', 'practitioner inquiry', 'English as a Second Language', 'ESL', 'TESOL', 'English Language Learner', and 'community college' to narrow down the search to the ones most relevant to my own dissertation topic. Since the resulting number of 'hits' was limited, I also searched for dissertations that had the terms 'practitioner research', 'teacher research', 'practitioner inquiry' in their titles, as well as ran independent Google searches.

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[9] As I delved deeper into the database, however, I had to restrict myself to dissertations published after 1995, as those published in 1995 (e.g., Schear, 1995) and before were available individually at a premium price (a minimum of $44), which was beyond my means in my unfunded doctoral dissertation.

The searches brought up some instances of practitioner research conducted as dissertation in 'English as a second language' and/or 'community college' contexts. Of these, some dissertations included brief discussions about the blurring of the teacher practitioner roles, although trying to identify such dissertations (and such sections within the dissertation) often felt like looking for a needle in a haystack. As a result, I had to infer practitioner-researcher intentions and understandings from the limited space devoted to the blurring of the practitioner-researcher divide. However, after many hours of exhausting online searches, I was able to identify fifteen relevant published practitioner research dissertations. In the following subsection, I review this body of literature.

Existing Research at Doctoral Level

In the preceding section, I mentioned Li's dissertation (2007). Published in the ProQuest database a year after her article in *Language Teaching Research*, the dissertation report repeats much of what Li wrote in her article. Li was pursuing a doctoral program at a university in U.K. and decided to return to China to teach a course and collect data from the context to find answers to her research questions. On site, the practitioner-researcher writes about struggling between the two perceived roles of teacher and researcher, and the ethical dilemmas of having her research agenda conflict with her teaching goals. Li subsequently makes a plea for using a 'balanced research' approach based on Allwright's exploratory practice principles (2005) that helped Li "manage the tension between working as a teacher and as a researcher" (Li, 2007, p. 296). In the context of her dissertation, this approach translated into "integrating all of [her] research activities…into [her] lesson at

appropriate points in a natural way" (p. 296) and taking the somewhat questionable

stance of not disclosing to her students that the class activities were also intended to

produce data for her doctoral research. Li mentions that conducting her doctoral

dissertation made her realize that "a good teacher should at the same time be a

researcher" (p. 301) but at the same time sees teacher research as additional "time and

effort invested" (p. 301). Taken collectively, both the journal article (Li, 2006) and

the doctoral dissertation (Li, 2007) show that Li continued to perceive the roles of

teacher and researcher as separate, albeit coexisting.

Markos' dissertation (2011) was also a teacher educator inquiry wherein she

focused on preparing preservice teachers for ELLs. Although the practitioner-

researcher did not work directly with an ESL population, her study is deeply

contextualized and provides a window to the ground realities of preparing L2 teachers

in the U.S. for content classes where teachers wish to employ skills that

simultaneously promote content and language learning, but where the contextual

realities are often counter-supportive to such goals[10]. In her study, Markos used

Guided Critical Reflection (GCR) to understand her participants' common sense

notions on teaching and learning related to ELLs, and to transform these

understandings while simultaneously examining her own role in creating

opportunities for GCR in her instruction. The practitioner-researcher found that the

process of GCR resulted in students' gaining a "renewed sense" (p. 28) about ELLs

and that she played a key role in this by creating a comfortable learning environment

for her students and by continually reflecting on her own practices. Having taught

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[10] Markos' study was conducted in Arizona, a state that has historically witnessed restrictive language policies and has recently seen a number of anti-immigrant and English only measures promoted at the administrative and legislative level.

preservice teacher preparation courses as well, I could relate with Markos' work and I hope to transfer and adapt ideas from her study onto similar instructional contexts in future. However, in terms of my dissertation research specifically, there was another reason why Markos' dissertation work was relevant. In the previous section I mentioned the dearth of detailed descriptions in published articles and book chapters on how practitioner-researchers 'blur' the boundaries between research and teaching. Markos' dissertation addressed this gap[11], albeit indirectly and, from my perspective, insufficiently. Conceptually, Markos espouses the "merging roles of practitioner and researcher [to] allow for the generation of new kinds of knowledge and original research" (p. 38). She cites incorporating self-study methods because she believed that "it is impossible to separate [herself] from the research or [her] practice as a teacher" (p. 42). However, Markos does not explicitly address *how* the two roles 'merged' in her study, besides referring to the practical pedagogical practices that minimized the perceived teacher researcher conflict in the 'Methods and Design' section of the dissertation. For instance, in her methodology chapter, the practitioner-researcher writes about: "utilizing data collection methods that fit [her] classroom routines and supported [her] research questions" (p.53); "selectively transcribing" (p. 56) audio recordings from the class; recording ideas about her teaching and researching by dictating into her digital audio recorder "each week on [her] drive home from class" (p. 56); and collecting artifacts that were not an additional burden for students and were "generated from the learning activities and assignments [Markos] designed and used in the course" (p. 57).

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[11] The dissertation was published in 2011, a year after I had conducted my literature review prior to the dissertation proposal defense.

Similarly, Markos mentions "obstacles in her role as teacher researcher" (p. 45) but does not analyze in more detail what those obstacles were beyond listing such difficulties as trying to "teach *and* simultaneously document everything said or done" (emphasis in original, p. 53) Perhaps the perceived conflict between the researcher and teacher roles was not the primary focus of her teacher research, nor emerged as a primary concern during her dissertation writing or in her thesis report. Likewise, Markos only briefly mentions the advantages of blurring the teacher and researcher roles where: [her] time reading and responding to student work "doubled as opportunities for data analysis" (p. 62); the time spent on lesson planning "gave [her] another opportunity to organize and analyze data" (p. 62); and conducting the study as a practitioner inquiry allowed her to live the data wherein "ongoing data collection and analysis afforded [her] a sense of the data as a whole" (p. 63).

Tantalizing as these snapshots were into the life of a teacher researcher, it is however disappointing that Markos did not present any further analysis of the 'blurring of teacher and researcher roles' in the methodology section or later chapters of her dissertation. Markos did devote some space to analyzing the blurring of the "theory/practice boundaries" as a contribution to the field. However the blurring of teaching theory and teaching practice is conceptually different from the blurring of the teacher and researcher roles; perhaps the former can facilitate theorizing of the latter. Further, it became clear in the reading of the thesis that even though Markos saw the role of teacher researcher as blurred, they were still two separate roles in her study. She wrote,

As the teacher researcher in this context, I had two jobs, to *teach* the course

and *research* the phenomenon of preparing all teachers for ELs. (Emphasis

mine, p. 52)

Like Markos, another practitioner-researcher who discussed briefly the

blurring of the divide between theory and practice was Armstrong (1996). She wrote

in her dissertation,

Through teacher research, practice is not divorced from theory. Instead, a

particular teacher's practice and reflection upon that practice inform, extend,

and even create theory…teacher research challenges the division between

theory and practice and gives voice to individual teachers working within

classrooms. Teacher researchers assume that theory and practice are

interrelated aspects of knowledge making in education. (pp. 27-28)

Armstrong also writes about the value of conducting practitioner research and

mentions that examining the literature related to teacher research "helped…situate

[herself] as both teacher and researcher within the classroom" and enabled her to

understand "how [she] could function as both the teacher of the class and at the same

time as a researcher" (p.12). However, after making these statements, Armstrong does

not provide details on how this was achieved. For instance, there are details on using

surveys and journals as data sources, but the practitioner-researcher does not clarify if

these practices were part of her regular pedagogical practices, or occurred specifically

for the purpose of research.

Markos' dissertation (2011) was an "action research study emphasizing

components of self-study" (p. 39). Walstein (2010) took a similar "practitioner action

research self-study" (p. 5) approach to her dissertation research. Like Markos, Walstein had a positive disposition towards language diversity and understood the critical role that a teacher can play in a classroom where ELLs must simultaneously learn academic content and academic English language. Whereas Markos was a teacher educator aiming to prepare preservice teachers to teach ELLs in such contexts; Walstein was one such ESL teacher teaching ELLs in a science classroom. When faced with the challenge of teaching a class full of ELLs students in a high school freshman ESOL science content class and helping them acquire both the content and the target language, Walstein designed a new curriculum for her students comprising an "adjunct ESOL science content course" (p. 6) and made that the focus of her dissertation study. Walstein defines the adjunct instructional model that she used as "an instructional model that combines features of several instructional models or programs" and her research specifically as a "sheltered content model with native language support" (p. 9). As indicated in this definition, Walstein valued her students' first language resources and attempted to harness these to help her students learn both academic English as well as academic science content.

In her dissertation, Walstein (like Markos) described herself as "playing the dual roles of teacher/researcher" (p. 55), indicating that she saw the two roles as separate and mutually distinct as well. Another telling indication of this dichotomized perception was Walstein's use of '/' to separate teacher from researcher throughout her dissertation report. This separation of the teacher and the researcher with varying degrees of intensity was beginning to emerge as a recurrent theme in the doctoral dissertations I reviewed.

Boozer (2007) conducted a teacher research study on a college-level freshman writing course for his doctoral dissertation. This study is a rare instance of the practitioner-researcher showing a high degree of self-awareness through his writing of the contribution of such studies to the genre of teacher research. Boozer (2007) wrote in the introductory chapter,

> I have found that by reading well-documented studies from practicing teacher researchers, my own appreciation and understanding of teacher research has grown. This [dissertation] study represents my efforts to provide one such study to the canon of teacher research for the benefit of peers who would like to learn more about a college writing teacher's attempts to utilize [teacher research] methodology in the context of his classroom. (Boozer, 2007, p. 6)

In his dissertation research, Boozer adopted a student-centered pedagogy, creating a symbiosis of research and teaching and using only such data collection tools that promoted student learning which he calls "pedagogical methodology" (p. 170). However, Boozer made a distinction between research goals and pedagogical goals, stating that in his research the latter always superceded the former (p. 7). This implies that even as Boozer sought to harmonize research and practice, for instance by 'doubling' (p. 60) pedagogical tools and data collection methods, he still essentially saw the two as different entities.

Boozer's dissertation study report is a little unusual in that, unlike many other practitioner research dissertations, his report included and acknowledged the contribution of another doctoral dissertation practitioner research to his own dissertation: Haridopolos (1997) conducted his doctoral dissertation in a community

college setting in a freshman composition class that spanned four months of a spring semester. According to Haridopolos, the community college attracted a diverse student body, with a greater concentration of minorities and ESL students in the evening courses (p. 30). The teacher researcher taught one such writing class using a student-centered pedagogy. However like Walstein (2010), Haridopolos also separates the teacher from the researcher with a '/'. He further writes,

> …this study was enriched by my role as a teacher who was, at the time of research, actively involved with students in reflecting on their life situations through language…an important part of this research is to describe the conflicts and contradictions inherent in the role of a teacher/researcher…
> (Haridopolos, 1997, p. 10)

In addition, as Haridopolos states, his dissertation does not study his pedagogy, and as a result some of the pedagogical techniques and guidelines are excluded from the report (p. 32). However, the teacher researcher does discuss how his pedagogy and research complemented each other in his dissertation in a couple of ways. He writes,

> writing as inquiry and collaboration—are the very activities which would enable me 'to get at' students' interpretive constructs. In this way my teaching and research were one. The second way critical pedagogy and research complement each other is in terms of outcomes…for a teacher/researcher employing a critical methodology, research outcomes are as difficult to predict as they are in any traditional research investigation. (p. 33)

Haridopolos goes on to describe in more detail how his research methodology evolved from his teaching experiences, and thereby complemented his instruction in his dissertation:

> The problems I set for students involved defining the role of the writer and describing the writing process…Students were also given the opportunity to choose their own writing projects. Such methodological and pedagogical strategies merged to fulfill my intention to do research… (p. 34)

Missing again, however, is a specific focus on the blurring of the teacher researcher role or a more detailed discussion of the complementary roles of teaching and research in the teacher research study.

Another instance of teacher research dissertation study where ESL students were given more autonomy over their class projects is the study carried out by Bearse (2003). Bearse worked with a cooperating teacher to study students' collaborative reading, writing, and researching individualized projects in an eighth grade research class. Bearse's research can be called exploratory research (Allwright, 2005) although the practitioner-researcher herself does not use this term. In the study, the student participants were provided broad guidelines within which they chose a topic for research and then devoted the rest of the academic year exploring available resources and gathering, synthesizing, and writing up information on that topic.

Designing her research as an ethnography, Bearse took on the role of a participant observer while working with the cooperating teacher to design the lessons and the rubrics for the class as well as teach some of the lessons. Bearse collected data through classroom observations, questionnaires, focus group interviews, field

notes, and student assignments and written reflections. From her writing, it is clear that Bearse, like other practitioner-researchers, also makes a distinction between herself as a researcher and as a teacher. She writes in the 'methodology' section of her dissertation,

> My stance, then, *as a researcher* is one based on inductive theory where I have made few explicit assumptions, though *as a classroom teacher*, I do, of course, live with my own growing set of assumptions…about how my students learn. (emphasis mine, p. 74)

Perhaps in Bearse's case, it was easier to maintain that distinction between the teacher and the researcher because Bearse was not the primary instructor in the instructional context. It was possible for her to be an 'observer participant' at times when the cooperating teacher would be in charge of the teaching. Similarly, at times when Bearse herself taught the class, the cooperating teacher took on the observer/note-taker role.

Like Bearse (2003), Wurr (2001) taught writing, albeit in a first-year composition course at a university, and also espoused the belief that "students produce better writing when they are personally engaged in the writing topic" (p. 23). Wurr therefore provided a certain degree of autonomy to his students in terms of choosing their project topics which led to positive results in terms of student writing providing the inspiration for his dissertation study. Unlike many other practitioner research studies, however, Wurr's dissertation study was structured along the lines of more traditional research, with an initial (qualitative) pilot case study followed by a (mixed-methods) main study comprising treatment and comparison group.

Interestingly, in the pilot study, Wurr was the 'teacher-researcher' (p. 92) conducting the study by himself. In the main study, however, it seems from the descriptions provided that Wurr was the researcher[12] who 'observed' while other instructors taught the relevant course sections. However, Wurr identified his overall dissertation study as "action and teacher research" (p. 26). It would have been interesting and informative if Wurr had addressed in more detail what the action research and teacher research components of his dissertation study were.

Unlike Bearse and Wurr's dissertations, many practitioner research studies entail the practitioner-researcher working by her/himself in the instructional context. An instance of this is the dissertation work carried out by Mogge (2001) who like Bearse and Armstrong incorporated elements of ethnographic research in his teacher inquiry to find answers to his research questions. Mogge cites conducting research alongside teaching in a community-based adult ESL literacy program from October 1995 to June 1997. For his dissertation, the teacher researcher focused mainly on a group of students he worked with from September through December 1996 and the students he continued to tutor individually until June 1997. The theme of being a teacher researcher is strong throughout the dissertation. In fact, in the eleven-chapter strong thesis, Mogge dedicates an entire chapter to his teacher research methodology and methods. In this chapter, Mogge echoes Boozer's words shared earlier in this section about the value of teacher research. Mogge writes,

> My hope is that as a teacher researcher I will not only "learn to be a better
>
> teacher"…My hope is also to share my story and some insights regarding my

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[12] Wurr (2001) mentions 'independent researchers' (p. 137) conducting follow up interviews, but does not provide any further information.

effort to construct a critical, response-centered pedagogy with my students…

(p. 109)

Mogge then proceeds to explain in detail the methods he used to collect data, including creating an archive of his lesson plans and student-generated data, maintaining field notes, and audiotaping followed by hand-written notes and transcribing. In fact, reading through the detail that the teacher researcher provided left me somewhat breathless:

> From 31 class meetings and tutoring sessions, I generated 76 pages of typed, single-spaced field notes. From 31 meetings, I collected and listened to 75 hours of audiotape. From the 75 hours, I generated 385 pages of handwritten audio notes. From the 75 hours of tape and 385 pages, I produced 135 pages of typed, single-spaced pages of transcript. (p. 119)

I hoped to read more about how Mogge managed to do all this while teaching, but unfortunately the teacher researcher did not provide any further details about data collection and transcription processes, and instead focused on data analysis, writing, organization, and presentation. Perhaps, Mogge finished the bulk of his teaching before beginning with the bulk of data transcription and analysis, thereby experiencing little 'conflict' between the teaching and the researching. In any case, this is a question that is left unaddressed in Mogge's otherwise exhaustingly detailed dissertation. The practitioner-researcher, however, makes a pertinent point in this dissertation regarding teacher research methodology; he writes:

> My teacher research is ethnographic though that does not mean that all teacher research is ethnographic or even qualitative. The qualitative paradigm holds

no dominion over the conduct of teacher research. It is just as feasible for

teacher researchers to employ interventionist, experimental or correlation

research in their classrooms and school sites. (p. 109)

A good example of this diversity of approaches, methodologies, *and* settings

within adult ESL practitioner research are the dissertation studies by Kim (2006) and

by Bain Butler (2010). Kim used a constructivist qualitative research paradigm as an

'umbrella' (p. 54) for a sequential mixed methods' study, and divided her research

into two phases: survey research and teacher research. In the dissertation, Kim makes

an interesting case for the difficulty of mixing "research paradigms within the same

study although researchers can mix methods" (p. 55). The overall purpose of Kim's

dissertation was to explore the link between students' perspectives and their actual

reading and writing behaviors. In the first phase, Kim conducted a survey ($n = 990$) to

access the range of L2 learners' perspectives, and in the second phase the teacher

researcher analyzed connections between these perspectives and the reading-writing

behaviors of students enrolled in two ESL college composition courses at a

university. Kim describes her role in the survey phase as that of an observer, and in

the teacher research phase as that of being close to a 'complete participant' (p. 80). In

the latter phase of her study, Kim gathered data from two sections of the course she

taught ($n = 20$) in the form of additional in-class surveys, semi-structured

retrospective interviews, student essays, audiotaped reading discussions and peer

revisions, and classroom observations over the 16-week semester.

Kim writes that "data were collected under the natural settings since

classroom practices were part of the regular class and were not manipulated for the

purposes of data collection" (p. 75), indicating that like many other practitioner-researchers the research agenda was not allowed to supersede classroom teaching and learning. For classroom observations, Kim wrote field notes *after* the reading discussion classes where she was the primary instructor and had to focus on teaching and leading the class; and *during* the peer review classes where she was simply a facilitator of the students' discussions. It also seems that Kim did not ask students to produce written assignments beyond the course requirements. Kim also met each student five times during the semester to conduct the interviews, but it is not clear if the five interviews were the same as the mandatory five individual conferences per student, or were conducted over and beyond those one-on-one guidance sessions. Although Kim does not address in detail the overlap between the teacher and researcher roles in her study, she does elaborate upon her 'complete participant role' in the teacher research phase of her dissertation study as comprising 'multiple roles' (p. 81), that of a teacher and of a researcher, thereby echoing many other of her colleagues in creating a distinction between the teacher and researcher roles.

Bain Butler (2010) also conducted a mixed-methods study. Her dissertation was longitudinal, descriptive, and classroom-based and focused on L2 learners in the context of legal writing at the level of graduate studies. Bain Butler focused on six students enrolled in her advanced English for legal research writers' course during two different semesters, and collected data through four different instruments that she meticulously developed or compiled for the purpose of her dissertation research. It is not clear, however, if Bain Butler would have designed these instruments for purely instructional purposes had she not been pursuing her dissertation research topic.

Despite this gap, however, it is clear that Bain Butler assumes the role of practitioner-researcher in her study: in her thesis she identifies herself frequently as a 'teacher-researcher' (e.g., pp. 31, 49, 73, 113, 122), and a few times as a 'researcher-teacher' (pp. 47, 106) and 'teacher (researcher)' (pp. 205, 209). However, perhaps because it was not the focus of her research, Bain Butler does not theorize about the teacher researcher role or the reasons for her phrasing teacher researcher differently in different parts of her thesis.

Like Kim and Bain Butler, Reynolds (2004) provides another instance of a one-teacher practitioner research dissertation. However, unlike Kim and Bain Butler, Reynolds (2004) chose to focus on only one other participant, an Ethiopian woman she tutored one-on-one over a span of five years. Desta, as Reynolds called her participant in her dissertation, was an ESL student with limited literacy in her first language. Reynolds had many years of experience teaching adult ESL literacy classes in a local ESL program and was familiar with working with adults who had little literacy in their first language in addition to being English Language Learners.

The practitioner-researcher initially planned to conduct her teacher research on the class that she was teaching. However, Reynolds decided to narrow her focus and change the context to make her dissertation research 'more manageable' (p. 42) and ended up doing a case study with Desta, examining specifically the teaching and learning in the tutoring relationship between her and Desta, as she helped Desta prepare for U.S. citizenship-related examination and interview. Although Reynolds does not mention it explicitly, she frequently chose to make her teacher research non-invasive on her teaching and Desta's learning. For instance, she reports waiting many

months and trying in many different ways to explain to Desta the purpose of her dissertation research and not pressing for consent or beginning data collection until the consent was freely given. Reynolds also let go of certain 'data' that would have otherwise interfered with Desta's education. For instance, Reynolds reports about being able to "copy some artifacts from [the] lessons, but not often, because doing so would have meant borrowing papers [Desta] needed to study" (p. 50). Although Reynolds was the sole instructor in this study, there were on the other hand distinct advantages to tutoring only one student in a relaxed and comfortable setting (the student's home). Reynolds mentions the resulting flexibility in her work as a teacher researcher, and uses the metaphor of 'bifocal glasses' (p.213) to show how conducting the dissertation study was helping transform her 'teacher glasses' to 'teacher/researcher glasses'(p. 213). Still later, she writes,

> I wore my teacher researcher bifocals. As [Desta's] teacher, attempting to see the form as Desta saw it initially, and deciphering how to help her perceive it as CASAS intended. As a researcher, attempting to see what went on and creating thick description. Then analyzing and interpreting the descriptions in order to understand the meanings Desta made, I made, and that we made together. (p. 270)

However, Reynolds' use of '/' to separate the teacher and researcher role, as well as her use of the bifocal analogy shows that this practitioner-researcher also perceived the two roles as separate.

Just as Reynolds dissertation research (2004) centered around preparation for citizenship, Morgan's practitioner research thesis (2000) also includes discussions

around citizenship classes in adult ESL settings, albeit in a Canadian context. Morgan echoes Reynolds' frustration about programs that are shaped by arbitrary government policies and require those applying for citizenship to go through "rote learning of 'facts' and the simulation of the question-and-answer format used at citizenship hearings" (Morgan, 2000, p. 9). However, unlike Reynolds who focused on one student, Morgan chose to make the 15 Chinese students he was teaching in a community-based ESL program the focus of his dissertation research. Like some of the other practitioner research studies discussed in this section, Morgan also identified his "research approach as combining elements of both action research and classroom ethnography" (p.??) but does not provide any further information on how he incorporated this approach into his teaching practices.

Like Morgan and Li, Wu (2008) also conducted her study in a non-U.S. location: Taiwan. Wu's dissertation study was closer to Li's in the sense that they were both enrolled in doctoral programs in universities in the U.S. but chose to carry out their dissertation research in their home countries. Reflecting upon the time she spent in the U.S. both pursuing first a master's degree, then returning to Taiwan to teach, and then coming back to join doctoral studies in the U.S., Wu writes about her journey,

> Assuming that the most valuable knowledge is supposed to be produced by
> university scholars, then by teacher, and least by students, I believed it was
> my responsibility to pass on the knowledge [for practice]…I was confident
> that I was the only one who knew what was best for my students because I had
> the access to professional knowledge, namely, university-based research and

educational programs…Considering it was my full responsibility to improve

my students' English proficiency, I went back to the United States once again

to pursue advanced studies at a privileged university in the intent to absorb the

"knowledge for practice"…which I supposed was reserved for doctoral

students. (p. 2)

The doctoral program in the U.S., however, challenged Wu to think differently, to

look and look again, until I stopped looking for definite answers and beg[an]

to see my business as a matter of inquiry into the information available to me

as an EFL teacher in Taiwan that had long been taken for granted. (p. 3)

Armed with these new insights, Wu decided to return to Taiwan and implement an

alternative writing curriculum in her teaching context that would provide her students

the "experience of an integrated life that connected the word with the world" (p. 4).

Wu studied her resulting "practice of critical literacy" (p. 3) towards her dissertation.

Once on site, Wu had to deal with realities of deeply contextualized teaching (large

classes, different teaching sites, etc.) and made a note of the time constraints,

…my tight teaching schedule and other obligations in life at times got in the

way of my research plans (e.g., reading works about other critical literacy

classrooms; keeping practitioner journals on a regular basis; transcribing taped

interviews and classroom practices in a timely fashion, etc.)… (p. 38)

Wu's separation of teaching from research plans indicates that she saw the two as

separate albeit 'overlapping' (p. 45), with one sometimes causing obstruction to the

other. It is interesting that Wu does not seem to consider some of her 'research plans'

as standard teaching activities as well, for instance keeping a regular journal or

reading literature about other instructional contexts. Yet, the practitioner-researcher identifies her study as "methodologically grounded in the framework of practitioner inquiry because of [her] role as the developer and practitioner of a critical literacy curriculum in the writing classroom" (p. 42). It is unclear therefore, as to where Wu draws the line between her role as a researcher and as a teacher. The practitioner-researcher later writes about being aware of the "ethical tensions" where a "teacher researcher may allow her research needs to preceded the teaching needs, or vice versa" (p. 45), and yet making the choice to go with practitioner inquiry as it was "suitable for both [her] teaching approach and research method because [she] may not be capable of achieving the type of understanding of [her] students otherwise" (p. 45).

Wu systematically collected naturalistic data throughout her year-long instruction, but given her tight teaching schedule made the choice to do only initial analyses of the data, including 'occasionally' transcribing the video and audio tapes of her class when she "felt a need to refresh [her] memory about a previous class in order to make certain pedagogical decisions" (p. 47). It is significant that Wu separates the analysis of selective transcripts for the purposes of making 'pedagogical decisions' from more "systematic transcribing or deeper analyses of the data" (p. 47) for research. This is a strong indication that Wu made a distinction between her pedagogy and her research practices, despite the data being a connecting point between the two. Similarly, Wu writes about modifying the syllabus and course content "based on an ongoing analysis of student needs and on topics that emerged from class discussions" (p. 49) but sees that flexibility as part of her researcher role rather than being part of her original 'teacher's agenda' (p. 49). Later, Wu writes,

…as a teacher-researcher, it was very likely that I would be frequently too

caught up in the classroom immediacy of teaching to play the role of the

researcher… (p. 53-54)

This distinction between her teacher role and researcher role is a continuing theme

throughout Wu's dissertation, as it was indeed in many of the other practitioner

dissertation reports.

Need for further research (and more research reports)

As I mentioned in the preceding space, reviewing practitioner research

doctoral dissertations was illuminating in many ways. However, the search also

confirmed the gap in existing and available literature in terms of deep theorizing

about the 'blurring' of research and pedagogy in practitioner research studies. In

addition, the dissertations' review reaffirmed the need for practitioner research and

inquiry to create a base in adult ESL research and for more research on adult ESL

programs in community college settings specifically (Crandall & Sheppard, 2004).

Such research will add to knowledge base of adult ESL settings, balancing the

existing substantial body of research on K-12 ESL contexts. Also, the increasing

number of ESL students in community colleges makes it necessary to understand

better teachers' practices in this setting.

Additionally, practitioner research can become an avenue of professional

development for ESL instructors in higher education settings. ESL teachers in

community college settings usually hold advanced degrees in fields such as TESOL

and applied linguistics and may have prior research experience, and are more likely to

have faculty status as well greater opportunities for professional development as

compared with their counterparts in non-college settings. However, even community college ESL instructors may face challenges such as having limited access to administrative decision-making and holding part-time faculty positions with limited salaries and minimum or no benefits (National Center for ESL Literacy Education, 2002). Further, heavy teaching loads and sometimes a less-than-supportive institutional climate may also discourage community college ESL instructors from conducting research (K. Bailey & Santos, 2009). Despite these challenges, dedicated teachers often strive to combine formal education with ongoing professional experience to improve their instruction. There is no doubt a need for adult literacy practitioners to participate in ongoing professional development, for instance through "some kind of action research, reflective practice, or inquiry-based professional development...In these approaches, teachers are active researchers, engaged in reading, sharing, observing, critically analyzing, and reflecting upon their own practice with the goal of improving it" (Crandall, 1993, pp. 509-510).

Doing doable practitioner research where teaching and research are dynamically integrated in practical and meaningful ways may become particularly relevant in such circumstances. Such practitioner research can provide second language teachers with the opportunity to "recognize their own beliefs, values, and knowledge about language learning and language teaching and become aware of their classroom practices" (Johnson, 2006, p. 249). Besides informing their own practice, the research done by second language teachers has value for the broader field when shared with other practitioners by being made accessible and open to review. As Lytle, Belzer, and Reumann (1993) point out,

[T]he field of adult literacy education urgently needs practitioners who position themselves as generators as well as consumers of knowledge and who regard their own professional development as inextricably linked to programmatic and systemic change. (p. 10)

Finally, there are limited published accounts of practitioner research as dissertation. Of these accounts, a few address the question of making teaching and research coherent, but stop short of integrating the two. Others show awareness on the part of the practitioner-researcher about the overlap between pedagogy and research, but fail to analyze this overlap in greater depth.

In the previous section, I reviewed dissertations by other practitioner-researchers. One such fellow practitioner-researcher, Markos (2011) mentioned in her dissertation how she does not "solely rely on an existing theoretical concept for [her] dissertation, but [has] developed [her] own conceptual understanding…" (p. 27). Like Markos, I have also conceptualized my practitioner research as dissertation not by directly reflecting others' theories, but instead by developing my own understandings of practitioner research based on my reading of published literature and my experiences as a teacher researcher. In Chapter 3, I present and describe my conceptual framework for an integrated approach to practitioner research, conducted as doctoral dissertation.

As mentioned earlier, my instructional context as a practitioner is an 'English as a Second Language' (ESL) program located within the Department of Workforce Development and Continuing Education at a community college in the U.S. I have found through a review of literature that practitioner research has slowly begun to

find a foothold in academia in recent years, and the volume of published practitioner research both in the U.S. and in non-U.S. contexts is increasing. However, while practitioner research has focused relatively comprehensively on K-12 settings in the U.S., there is need for more research by practitioners in higher education settings (National Center for ESL Literacy Education, 2002). This is especially true for community college settings in the U.S. where more quality dissertations need to be published and made available (Daviesa, Dickmanna, Harbourb, & Banninga, 2011).

Common themes and differences

Reviewing the practitioner research dissertations made me realize the diversity within this subset of dissertations. Each teacher research study was unique. Some practitioner-researchers used qualitative approaches, others brought in quantitative data collection and analyses. Some worked with a single participant, whereas others had larger pools of participants. Some focused on the teacher research aspect of their dissertations in detail and are therefore highly visible in their research reports, others addressed their roles only peripherally and tended to become invisible when discussing the data (for instance in terms of the frequency of use of 'I' and other first person pronouns in the theses). However, as I mentioned earlier, one theme that echoed across all these dissertations was the separation of the researcher from the teacher. While many practitioner-researchers cited in this section talked about the blurring of the theory and practice divide in their studies, no one extended this to the blurring of the teacher and researcher roles. Another common aspect of the practitioner dissertations was the adherence to using established research

methodologies (whether qualitative or quantitative) unproblematically as a practitioner research.

Although this is a gap that I have identified (and will address in the later chapters), I learned many lessons and gained many insights reading these reports of practitioner research dissertations. For instance, there were many advantages to reading dissertations that I had not been able to perceive earlier. Reading a whole range of theses helped guide my own thesis writing in terms of structure and organization. More importantly, dissertations provided in-depth information about all aspects of teacher research, including theoretical and conceptual contexts and methodologies, which were often missing in journal articles and books due to external constraints of word-length and foci. While reading articles and book chapters, I had often been left looking for more details and explanations. Dissertations came closer to satisfying that search.

I was also constantly reminded of one of the main purposes of doing my own practitioner research—to improve and grow as a teacher. Hence, as I read through the dissertations, the teacher researcher in me also began to take notes on ways to improve my instruction and ideas to take into my future classrooms. For instance, Bearse's dissertation (2003) included details of individual conferences and focus interviews that the practitioner-researcher conducted with the student participants and how these meetings benefited both her and the student. Later, Bearse emphasized the role of such feedback in second language learning:

I suggest that … individual conferencing was one of the key elements in helping [the] ESL students succeed in writing sophisticated research reports.

The research on second language writing supports my own findings that both teacher feedback and individual conferencing accelerate the development of adolescent writing. (p. 171)

As I read through this section of Bearse's dissertation, the practitioner-researcher in me made a mental note of providing students this kind of structured feedback and how that can become a source of integrated practitioner research data. In my own dissertation study, I avoided interviewing student, either individually or in a group, as I felt that that would be an unreasonable demand on their already busy schedules. However, I tried to provide as much one-on-one feedback as possible to students who came early to class and those who stayed behind. Reading about Bearse's experience with individual conferencing, however, reinforced the idea that under other circumstances (longer instructional period, less busy students, etc.), I could transfer the idea of providing such feedback to my student in my own future teaching contexts.

As I read through the different dissertations the writer/editor in me also noted and absorbed characteristics of well-written dissertations (as well as what to avoid in a dissertation!). I feel that this was invaluable as not only was I a novice where *doing* practitioner research as dissertation was concerned, I was also a first-timer in terms of *writing* a dissertation. Given my own experiences reading and learning from relevant dissertations, I would strongly recommend that advisors and dissertation committees encourage other doctoral candidates to do the same.

Also, reading these dissertations reinforced my belief that these teacher researchers chose practitioner inquiry because it was best suited for finding answers

to their research questions, not because it was the "attractive" from lack of "energy for ambitious projects elsewhere" (Metz & Page, 2002, p. 26). As one practitioner-researcher wrote in her dissertation,

> My research questions emerged from both my work as a practitioner and my formal studies of theory. To address those questions, teacher research was the most appropriate methodology, not just because I chose to conduct the study in my own classroom, but because I wanted to interrogate the reciprocal relationship of the theoretical and practical *which is why* I chose to conduct the study in my own classroom. (emphasis in original, Hennessy, 2011, p. 52)

This was a common theme across the dissertations I reviewed.

During the year when I was preparing my dissertation proposal, I participated in some departmental discussions on the differences between Ed.D. and Ph.D. programs. From what I understood, dissertations that had a more 'application' focus tended to be seen more as Ed.Ds whereas dissertations with a more theoretical focus were considered eligible for Ph.Ds, with the underlying perception that Ph.Ds were more 'rigorous' and therefore more prestigious than Ed.Ds. One of the questions at the back of my mind as I started reviewing the dissertations was if that reflected on the practitioner-researcher dissertations. I found to my pleasant surprise that there was no such clear distinction between the two. It seemed to vary from university to university, but I found instances of practitioner research conducted by doctoral candidates as dissertations towards both Ph.D. (e.g., Bearse, 2003; Haridopolos, 1997; Walstein, 2010) and Ed.D. (e.g., Armstrong, 1996; S.-Y. Kim, 2006; Wu, 2008) degrees.

I also made note of one lesson: simply because teacher research dissertations that were available through popular databases did not focus on the blurring of the teacher researcher role did not mean that none exist. I came close to not reviewing Brian Morgan's dissertation because it was no longer available in its full format on the ProQuest database. However, I took a chance and emailed Brian. Luckily, he replied and sent me a pdf of a draft of his thesis as he couldn't find a soft copy of the final one. When I read through the text, I realized that I would have missed out on reading an insightful and relevant dissertation had Brian not shared it with me. Later, wishing to obtain the final thesis, I went back to ProQuest to try my luck one more time, and found to my delight, that the thesis was again available for free.

In the light of this realization, I now know that no literature review is ever completely comprehensive and that we should keep looking beyond the readily available sources, as much as is possible. I also realized anew the need for teacher researchers to publish their work in some accessible format or the other. I wonder if there are practitioner research studies out there that explore the blurring of the practitioner and researcher roles, but are simply not available in a published form. I would urge my readership, especially my dissertation committee members to encourage other doctoral candidates to obtain and read their colleagues' dissertations and to facilitate this as much as possible by sharing available resources.

Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework

I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.
~ Robert Frost

In this chapter, I share my conceptualization of the overall framework of my practitioner dissertation. I first explain how I position myself in my dissertation work, delineating my trajectories with reference to the multiple communities that I am participating in as a professional. I then explore the notion of inquiry, and use inquiry as lens to reconceptualize 'practitioner inquiry', and finally apply my understanding to the idea of working the dialectic of practice and inquiry in my dissertation.

My Self-Positioning

I joined the masters' program at the University of Maryland College Park in 2004, and continued as a doctoral student in 2006. The manner in which I position myself impacts every aspect of my work and shapes the ways in which I make sense of my experiences over the past many years. I apply poststructural and postmodern lenses to Wenger's (1998) conceptualizations about *imagination* and *communities of practice* to make sense of these experiences.

Post-modernism "points to an absence of established knowledge, showing us that context, content and voice are all relative to each other and position 'reality' relationally" (Drake & Heath, 2011, p. 38). As a theoretical formulation of post-modernism, post-structuralism challenges structuralist perspectives that tend to contextualize 'reality' as something that can be uncovered objectively and 'objectivity' itself as a largely unproblematic category (Pennycook, 2001); post-structuralist perspectives emphasize subjectivity, "the complexity and the multiple

layer of influences brought by a historical, social, and cultural context [and] interpret reality as multifaceted and complex, in constant and dynamic transformation" (Nobre, 2005, p. 486). Wenger (1998) further proposes that subjectivity in the post-structuralist tradition entails finding a position in historically constituted forms of discourse (p. 284), while Pennycook (2001) defines subjectivity as ways in which our identities are formed through discourse (p. 148) and Norton and Toohey (2011) describe subjectivity as multiple, non-unitary, and dynamic (p.417).

Sometimes, finding such a position, delineating our identities, and exploring our subjectivity involves imagination. Wenger defines *imagination* as the "process of expanding our self by transcending time and space and creating new images of the world and ourselves" (p. 176). If I see research and teaching as embedded within 'historically constituted forms of discourse', I explore my subjectivity in terms of the way I position myself within the academic discourse with the assumption that I cannot step outside of this discourse (especially in the writing of this thesis where I use elements of the discourse, such as vocabulary, to describe my positionality). In doing so, I use certain categories to delineate my position, while being cognizant that from postmodern and poststructural perspectives, those categories are "products of particular cultural and historical ways of thinking" (Pennycook, 2001, p. 94).

As a graduate student at a top-ranked public research university, I have been a student of research for the past eight years. At the same time, my focus has been on education, specifically TESOL. As a result, I have been both a student teacher and teacher educator. As a student teacher, I have conducted ESL conversation classes and taught as an adjunct instructor at a community college. As a novice teacher

educator (and a graduate assistant), I have assisted with the teaching of, and independently taught, graduate and undergraduate courses in my program, albeit peripherally.

Wenger (1998) writes that "peripherality provides an approximation of full participation that gives exposure to actual practice" (p. 100). My teaching experiences in the community college and the university have so far been 'peripheral' in the sense that I have been exposed to actual practice without the requirement to perform the responsibilities of fulltime engagement in the two organizations, such as teaching multiple courses and participating in administrative decision-making at both institutions.

My participation so far has been as that of a kind of 'apprentice'. Wenger, along with his colleague Lave, sees *apprenticeship* as a form of legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Wenger (1998) emphasizes that he and Lave use the term to "broaden the traditional connotations of the concept of apprenticeship – from a master/student or mentor-mentee relationship to one of changing participation and identity transformation in a community of practice" (p. 11).

This view of 'apprenticeship' informs my work. In my practitioner dissertation, in particular, I explore my subjectivity by positioning myself as an apprentice (of *both* the teaching and research) who has engaged with both the members and the practices of the two communities. However, I further explore my subjectivity by modifying Wenger's (1998) words to say that I *imagine* my apprenticeship as that of 'changing participation and identity transformation' not only '*in* a community of practice' but *across* communities of practice, a possibility in a

postmodern world where communities are becoming increasingly less homogeneous

and bounded (Canagarajah, 2013a). Further, Wenger's (1998) conceptualization of

imagination creates spaces for novice scholars, such as I, to find ways to, in turn,

extend this conceptualization of identity-building across two communities of practice.

My *imagined* self-positioning is delineated by my existing institutional

affiliations[13]. As a doctoral student at the University, I have been allowed legitimate

access to the practice of research and the research community, without the

expectation of becoming a full-fledged researcher within that specific institution. As a

novice teacher educator, I have been provided with opportunities to teach preservice

teachers without the expectation to teach a full course load every semester. Similarly,

as part of the adjunct faculty pool I am allowed to engage in teaching at the

community college, without the requirement of full participation in the organization

and the teaching community. I teach there part-time, contingent upon my schedule

and the needs of the community college[14], and am not expected to participate in the

administrative work within the organization nor have the power to make decisions

beyond my own classroom instruction.

Both positions enable me to learn, through peripheral participation, the crafts

of research and of teaching, and in doing so, be part of the two practices as well as

communities of practice. However, the advantage of using the concept of

communities of practice from a postmodern perspective is that it allows me to see

"past more obvious formal structures such as organizations…and perceive the

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[13] Wenger (1998) draws a distinction between institutional boundaries and the boundaries of communities of practice.

[14] and the F1 visa restrictions that I have to comply with as an international student with the expectation of being a temporary migrant in the U.S. (see Alberts & Hazen, 2005)

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structures defined by engagement in practice and the informal learning that comes from it" (Wenger, 2006). Drake and Heath (2011) also state:

> Professional doctoral researchers are negotiating learning in at least two communities of practice. These are the professional setting that the research sets out to illuminate and the higher education setting in which the academic practice must be demonstrated. (p. 20)

The notion of imagining a community (or communities) is significant as both teaching and dissertation work can be isolating acts. Teachers often end up being disconnected from their colleagues as they spend large parts of their professional lives within the walls of their classrooms. Similarly, by its very nature, dissertation work often entails that a doctoral candidate works in somewhat isolation. The dissertation work starts when the student has completed all coursework and has successfully passed a qualifying or comprehensive exam. Further, the academy requires the doctoral candidate to work under guidance of the dissertation supervisor, but essentially isolated from other colleagues. For instance, IRB requirements often mean that the candidate cannot share her data with colleagues, nor involve them directly in the writing process. In writing this dissertation, for instance, as the sole author, I have to constantly employ the 'I', which can be seemingly contradictory to the notions of community being collective and social. This is even more so in my case, as the kind of dissertation work that I have undertaken requires me to reflexively position myself on the peripheries of two communities of practice.

My dual and peripheral membership of the teaching and research settings[15], therefore, is shaping my learning, as I set out to 'illuminate' aspects of my pedagogy in my 'professional setting' and demonstrate my academic practice through my doctoral dissertation, including the writing of this thesis. I explain this self-positioning in more detail in the following sections.

My Trajectories

In positioning myself as an apprentice of both research and teaching, I visualize myself on a trajectory that will eventually lead to my becoming primarily an educator who uses research that is integrated into her work in different instructional settings and with different kinds of learners. Wenger (1998) would define such a trajectory as an '*inbound trajectory*' (p. 154) where:

> Newcomers are joining the community with the prospect of becoming full participants in its practice. Their identities are invested in their future participation, even though their present participation may be peripheral.

As an adjunct faculty member at Port Community College, as I have explained, my participation so far has been peripheral. This also carries over to the larger community of teaching, where I have had peripheral experiences so far. However, my identity is 'invested in my future participation' in anticipation of teaching fulltime at some point.

Conversely, I do not see myself on a trajectory where I would be a fulltime researcher to the exclusion of teaching, although I see my present position as a

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[15] Of course, I am not a member of the communities of teaching and research only. I hold membership to multiple other communities by virtue of my ethnicity, culture, nationality, as well as other professional interests. However, I focus primarily on my participation in the teaching and research communities in this dissertation.

doctoral candidate at a public research university as one of legitimate peripheral

participation in the community of research. Unlike many other doctoral students,

however, who are on an inbound trajectory into the research community, I see myself

as on a kind of '*outbound trajectory*' (p. 155) which Wenger describes one that "leads

out of a community". He further states,

> What matters then is how a form of participation enables what comes next. It
>
> seems perhaps more natural to think of identity formation in terms of all the
>
> learning involved in entering a community of practice. Yet being on the way
>
> out of such a community also involves developing new relationships, finding a
>
> different position with respect to a community, and seeing the world and
>
> oneself in new ways. (p. 155)

I anticipate that, in my desire to continue doing practitioner research as well as other

forms of research in accompaniment to teaching, I will never completely leave the

community of research. Instead, I hope to find a new position with respect to this

community by maintaining a peripheral participation in the community by continuing

to engage in practitioner research and inquiry. Therefore, it would be most

appropriate to identify my positioning with respect to the community of research as

that of being on a *peripheral trajectory*, where:

> By choice or by necessity, some trajectories never lead to full participation.
>
> Yet they may well provide a kind of access to a community and its practice
>
> that becomes significant enough to contribute to one's identity. (p. 154)

By taking this position of prospective fuller participation in teaching and peripheral

participation in research post-dissertation, I believe that I am deviating from the

existing and established models of participation by old-timers that Wenger would

describe as *paradigmatic trajectories* (p.156). In doing so, I believe that:

> [N]ew trajectories do not necessarily align themselves with paradigmatic ones.
> Newcomers must find their own unique identities. And the relation goes both
> ways; newcomers must also provide new models for different ways of
> participating. (Wenger, 1998, p. 156)

I believe the value of my individual work lies in the potential to 'provide new models

for a different way of participating,' as I hope to illustrate in the remaining chapters

of this thesis.

I can identify elements on one more kind of trajectory in my positioning vis-à-

vis my doctoral work. I explore in my dissertation my current peripheral

multimembership into two connected practices: research and teaching; and I

specifically investigate these connections through my practitioner research study in

what could be seen as a *boundary trajectory*. Wenger (1998) describes a boundary

trajectory as one that "find[s]…value in spanning boundaries and linking

communities of practice" (p. 154). In my present peripheral participation in teaching

and research, I am spanning the boundaries of these two communities as well as

linking them through my multimembership.

I anticipate that after finishing my doctoral studies, I will maintain a boundary

trajectory between teaching and research by working as a fulltime employee at the

university, but as a lecturer and as an administrator. I have chosen not to follow the

tenure-track professorship route at a research university as a deliberate attempt to

maintain my peripheral participation and remain on a peripheral trajectory. Also, by

simultaneously teaching at the community college as an adjunct while continuing to do practitioner research and inquiry, I hope to maintain the boundary trajectory between teaching and research.

My Communities of Practice

Periphery, according to Wenger (1998), is "a region that is neither fully inside nor fully outside, and surrounds the practice with a degree of permeability" (p. 117). Wenger further proposes that communities of practice connect with the "rest of the world by providing peripheral experiences…[which] can include observation but…can also go beyond mere observation and involve actual forms of engagement" (p. 117). (See Figure 7)

Figure 7. Peripheries (Adapted from "Figure 4.3. Types of connection provided by practice," by E. Wenger, 1998, *Communities of Practice*, p. 114)

In teaching as a community of practice, teachers who allow researchers to enter their classrooms and collect 'data' from there enable the researchers, by Wenger's definition, to participate peripherally in the practice of teaching. Similarly, researchers who collaborate with teachers by inviting them as participants in their studies also provide these teachers with peripheral experiences of the practice of

research. However, as Wenger suggests, such peripheral participation can also involve deeper forms of engagement.

I propose that when fulltime researchers engage in practitioner research, they 'go beyond mere observation' and work on the *peripheries* of the community of teaching. Similarly, fulltime teachers engaged in practitioner research also create regions of greater permeability on the periphery of the community of research. Such peripheries "refer to continuities, to areas of overlaps and connections, to windows and meeting places, and to organized and casual possibilities for participation offered to outsiders or newcomers" (Wenger, 1998, p. 120).

As an extension of this line of reasoning, one can locate the collective body of practitioner research studies at overlapping peripheries of the two communities of research and teaching. I use my own practitioner dissertation as a case to illustrate this. As I have stated earlier, by virtue of my position as a doctoral student pursuing her doctoral dissertation at a research university, I have 'legitimate peripheral participation' (Lave & Wenger, 1991) in the academic research community. I adapt Wenger's (1998) diagram to illustrate my position vis-à-vis the academic research community. (See Figure 8)

My location at the periphery of the research community: a legitimate peripheral participant/an apprentice of research (as a doctoral student/candidate at a research-intensive university)

Research as a Community of Practice

Figure 8. My point of connection with the practice of academic research. (Adapted from "Figure 4.3. Types of connection provided by practice," by E. Wenger, 1998, *Communities of Practice*, p. 114)

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I would also argue that as an adjunct faculty member at a local community college, I have thus far participated peripherally in the community of teaching as well. (See Figure 9)

My location at the periphery of the teaching community: a legitimate peripheral participant/an apprentice of teaching
(as an adjunct instructor at a community college, and in the teacher education program at the university)

Teaching as a Community of Practice
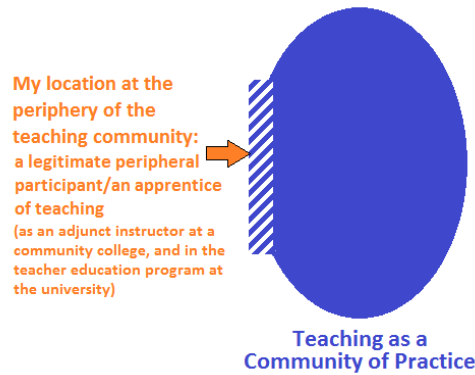
Figure 9. My point of connection with the practice of teaching. (Adapted from "Figure 4.3. Types of connection provided by practice," by E. Wenger, 1998, *Communities of Practice*, p. 114)

As I write this thesis, I see myself as standing on the peripheries of both communities of practice—teaching and research. Further, by engaging in practitioner dissertation, I am creating an overlap (or a *contact zone*) between the two practices, and therefore the two communities, from my peripheral position. Conversely, if practitioner research creates an overlap between the two communities of practice, then my practitioner dissertation is located at that overlap. (See Figure 10)

My practitoner dissertation is located at the overlap between the two communities of practice

Figure 10. The location of my dissertation as a peripheral participant at the points of overlap between the two communities of pract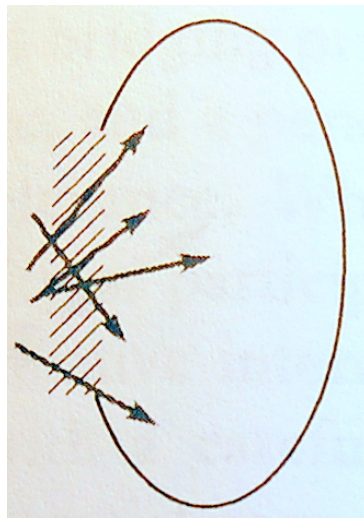ice. (Adapted from "Figure 4.3. Types of connection provided by practice," by E. Wenger, 1998, *Communities of Practice*, p. 114)

I believe that this position gives me a unique vantage point, which is both a strength and a limitation in my dissertation work. Since I have so far taught only four semesters in all at the community college, and that as a part-time adjunct, I lack the deep craft knowledge that comes with teaching full-time for years in a specific context. On the other hand, my extended experiences within the field of TESOL have enabled me to know what questions to ask in preparation of teaching at the community college. Similarly, as a doctoral student I have had limited experiences with conducting research but my coursework as a research student and the limited experiences have given me enough craft knowledge to know how to frame my inquiry in relation to existing research paradigms.

Further, as I discuss in Chapter 5, the existing literature could not provide me with a template for conducting practitioner research that integrates research and teaching practices, which was both a challenge as well as an opportunity to improvise in my study. However, my multimembership also has the potential to create conflict between my two roles. The purpose of my dissertation is to resolve this conflict by harmonizing my dual roles through my practitioner research. I discuss this in more detail in the next section by reconceptualizing existing notions of inquiry and practice, and by extension practitioner inquiry.

(Re)conceptualizing 'Practitioner Inquiry'

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009c) define *inquiry* as "a critical habit of mind that informs professional work in all its aspects…[and where] every site of professional practice becomes a potential site of inquiry" (p. 121). As a 'critical habit

of mind', *inquiry* is ongoing. This fundamental construct of *inquiry* is central to my

approach towards my practitioner dissertation, as I explain in the following sections.

Reonceputalizing 'Practice'

Taking inquiry as my stance, I first turn my attention to the term 'practice'

itself. As Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009d) write, "when practitioners take an inquiry

stance, this transforms and expands traditional views of what counts as practice in the

first place" (p. 135). When I first started conceptualizing my dissertation, I began

with a narrow definition of 'practice' as 'teaching'. As an extension of that, I

understood the term 'practitioner' as limited to one who teaches, or 'teacher'.

It is not uncommon in educational literature for these two terms to be used

interchangeably. Even at its broadest, the term *practitioner* is still used in the sense of

applicable mainly to those engaged in the educational enterprise. Cochran-Smith and

Lytle (2009d), for instance, write:

> [We] use *practitioner* in an expansive and inclusive way to mean a wide array
>
> of education practitioners, including teachers to be sure, but also including
>
> school and school district administrators and other leaders, teacher candidates,
>
> teacher educators, community college instructors, university faculty members
>
> and administrators, adult literacy and language program practitioners,
>
> community-based educational activists, parents, and others who work inside
>
> educational sites of practice. (p. ix)

Once I took inquiry as my stance, I found myself problematizing these expansive, and

yet limited conceptualizations of 'practitioner'. Applying it to my own work, over the

course of the dissertation, I realized that my 'professional practice' was not limited to

my role as a 'teacher', but extended to all other professional settings of which I was a part. This included the university setting which is, in turn, part of the academy. As Wenger (1998) writes, "Some communities may specialize in the production of theories, but that too is practice" (p. 48).

If I visualize the academic community as engaged in the practice of research (Hammer & Schifter, 2001) and the 'creation of theories', then my participation as a doctoral student at a research institution renders the setting one of the sites of my 'professional practice' within the context of the larger research community. Similarly, my participation as an adjunct ESL faculty member in a community college makes that my second site of professional practice within the context of the larger TESOL community. Therefore, I reconceptualized 'practice' in my dissertation work as not only teaching but also research. This broadened conceptualization of the term 'practice', in turn, aided in my reconceptualization of the term 'practitioner inquiry'.

Reconceptualizing 'Inquiry'

Although I am inspired by the writings of Cochran-Smith and Lytle, I draw some further distinctions between the way they use the term 'practitioner inquiry' in their writings and the way I conceptualize it. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009d) use *practitioner inquiry* and *practitioner research* "more or less interchangeably" (p. ix). I, however, am inclined to conceptualize *practitioner inquiry* as ongoing and *practitioner research* as a time-bound project in my dissertation. I create that distinction as I see research as an 'intentional and systematic' activity with a more easily identifiable beginning and an end, but inquiry as stance (to borrow the authors' own terminology) is ongoing and connects different inquiries and research together

with a continuous thread. Such inquiry, and especially reflections that stem from such inquiry, can also lead to knowledge production "although they perhaps lack the systematic rigor of an…account that was intended as research from its inception" (Anderson, 2002, p. 22).

I extend Cochran-Smith and Lytle's conceptualizations of 'inquiry as stance' and 'teacher research as stance', and extend those to 'practitioner inquiry as stance', bringing an inquiry lens to all of my professional work in its entirety: be it as an adjunct teacher in an ESL program at a community college, or an adjunct instructor/teaching assistant in a teacher preparation program and a doctoral candidate in a Ph.D. program in a university setting. Further, although I am not a teacher or teacher candidate in the sense that the authors use the terms (enrolled in a graduate level teacher preparation program), I do conceive my doctoral studies as part of the larger program that I am pursuing to improve my practice as a teacher in community college settings, along with my practice as a researcher in university settings.

It is at the intersection of my two communities of 'professional practice' that I make sense of my practitioner inquiry. In other words, my 'practitioner inquiry' is an inquiry into my practice as both a teacher *and* a researcher. Specifically, in the context of my dissertation, my 'practitioner inquiry' includes, but is not limited to, the practitioner research study I carried out in the community college classroom. If I consider practitioner inquiry as any inquiry that focuses on a 'practice', then a dissertation within a doctoral program itself can be seen as a form of practice, and inquiring on it as a dissertator can be called a practitioner inquiry. I reconceptualize my *practitioner inquiry*, therefore, as broader than the *practitioner research* that I

carried out in the classroom, and include the process of dissertation itself under the purview of my inquiry as a practitioner of both teaching and research, thus beginning to answer my own research question: *What may a practitioner research study look like when it focuses on the continuities between research and teaching, conducted as doctoral dissertation in an 'English as a Second Language' (ESL) classroom in a community college?*

Working the Dialectic of Practitioner Inquiry

In this section, I turn my attention to the concept of *working the dialectic* as proposed by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009d), and also apply the concept to my dissertation as part of my practitioner inquiry. The authors' conceptualization of *inquiry as stance* is also compatible with my belief that research and teaching need not be opposing dichotomies. As the authors write:

> [T]he assumption behind inquiry as stance is that the dialectical relationships of research (or theory) and practice, researchers and practitioner, knowing and doing, analyzing and acting, and conceptual and empirical research make for generative and productive tensions rather than dichotomies. (p. 123)

Further, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009c) describe practitioner inquiry as an epistemological and theoretical hybrid that is "grounded more deeply in the dialectic of critical inquiry and practice than in one particular theoretical tradition or framework" (p. 93). The authors describe the 'dialectic' as "tensions between research and practice, researcher and practitioner, conceptual and empirical research, [and] local and public knowledge" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009c, p. 94).

According to the authors, practitioner research blurs the boundaries between these assumed opposites, linking them together in terms of 'productive and generative tensions' (p. 94). The authors define 'working (the dialectic)' as "capitalizing on these tensions" (p. 94). By 'generative' the authors mean "suggesting new questions and prompting further critique" (p. 97) of existing instructional contexts as ways of creating knowledge. They state:

> When we refer to "working" the dialectic, we mean capitalizing on, learning
>
> from, and mining the dialectic…as a particularly rich resource for the
>
> generation of new knowledge. (p. 96)

The authors give examples from their own scholarship to illustrate how they have 'worked the dialectic' through two decades of research and writing. They especially emphasize their roles as university-based faculty members where:

> contradictions in our own practice have oriented our research just as much as
>
> our reading of the wider literature…in this sense, we have been working the
>
> dialectic in our scholarly publications by writing in…an intentionally hybrid
>
> genre that blurs the conceptual and the empirical. (p. 96)

In another essay, the authors (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009b) describe 'working the dialectic' as "a decidedly non-linear process – more like improvising a dance than climbing a set of stairs" (p. 44). The authors further illustrate the 'nonlinear process' by which 'working the dialectic' has impacted their own practices as teacher educators, helping them reinvent practice as well as revise interpretive framework and questions (p. 97) within the culture of research universities.

As a doctoral candidate, part of my dissertation work is situated within the culture of research universities as well. This thesis, specifically, is a document that I am creating to illustrate my ability to do research and theorize by producing original and valid knowledge through my dissertation work. As I mentioned in Chapter 1, there has been some theorizing about the knowledge that is created at the doctoral level through practitioner research. In the following subsection, I share how what has already been published in this regard has informed my practitioner inquiry.

Practitioner Research as Dissertation

Drake and Heath locate practitioner knowledge at doctoral level at the intersections of "the university, the workplace, and the reflexive self" (p. 62). They use the following figure to illustrate their conceptualization:
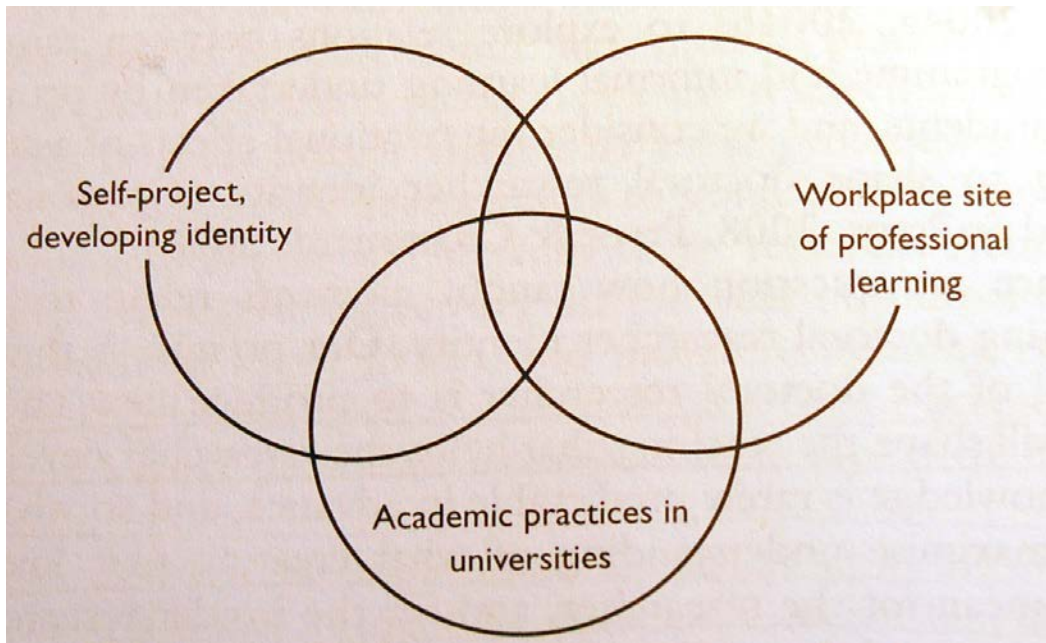
Figure 11. Intersections between the university, the workplace, and the reflexive self. (Adapted from "Figure 6.1. Location of practitioner knowledge at doctoral level" by P. Drake and L. Heath, 2011, Practitioner Research at Doctoral Level, p. 62.)

The authors write:

> Practitioner doctoral students are operating in spaces created through the interaction of several 'contexts' which inevitably interact with each other. This means that the insider researcher develops fluidity with respect to their stance regarding research and practice, with the thesis emerging from an account of position that arises when the researcher and practitioner positions merge. (p. 61)

The central premise of my practitioner dissertation is also that it is located at the point where teaching and research merge. I concur with the authors that it is impossible to separate the teacher and the researcher from each other in practitioner research and this applies even more to my work as I explore the points of connection between my research and teaching practices.

In taking this stance, I realize that I may be invariably disrupting established norms of what counts as original knowledge in doctoral dissertations in the academy. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009a) write that as mentors to those engaging in practitioner dissertations, they "have found that a central dimension of advising practitioner dissertations is listening to the practitioner and being aware that their work disrupts and reinvents certain traditional practices" (p. 106). As the authors emphasize, part of the 'disrupting' work is to blur the boundaries between research and practice, researcher and practitioner, conceptual and empirical research, and local and public knowledge.

Inquiring the 'Dialectic'

In inquiring the dialectic of my own practitioner dissertation, I hope to blur these boundaries by exploring how I, as a practitioner-researcher, can dynamically integrate the two roles of practitioner and researcher in a meaningful and ethical manner. My review of literature (presented in Chapter 2), however, has failed to bring to light studies where the researchers report specifically about how they may have worked the dialectic by capitalizing on the tensions in general, and specifically by dynamically integrating their roles of practitioners and researchers[16]. My proposed self-aware and reflective practitioner inquiry is an attempt to address this 'gap'.

My thoughts stem from my belief that research and teaching need not have competing agendas. I also believe that good teaching is 'researchful' in nature and that effective teachers are capable of threading research and theorizing into their practice, and may already be doing so in both conscious and unconscious ways. This belief is supported by the way good teaching is often defined at the policy level. In the U.S., for instance, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (2012) emphasize the inquiries that teachers undertake and define an 'accomplished teacher' as someone who is capable of analyzing "classroom interactions, student work products, their own actions and plan[ning] in order to reflect on their practice and continually renew and reconstruct their goals and strategies" (p. 6). Similarly good research, that aims to inform teaching directly, is strengthened when it is contextualized in actual pedagogical settings. What is needed, perhaps then, is a further recognition of and making explicit the interactions between teaching and

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[16] As I have discussed earlier, I realize that this lack of detail about research methods and processes may be a result of different purposes of research or of reporting and not necessarily a flaw in the design and execution of the studies themselves.

researching, as well as exploring ways of dynamically integrating teaching and research.

Conclusion

To summarize, I make some key assumptions. I see *inquiry* as ongoing, a critical habit of mind, and broader than research. In my current work as a doctoral candidate, I see myself as engaged in two primary kinds of practices: research and teaching, and position myself at the periphery of two communities of practice: the research community and the teaching community. My practitioner inquiry is, therefore, a broad and ongoing investigation of my dissertation work, which in turn is located at the intersection of the two communities. Further, I see my work as a practitioner-researcher as part of a broader trend located at the points of connection between teaching and research. Specifically, with my focus on the integration (not separation) of research and teaching, I locate my dissertation at the intersection of the two communities.

My dissertation, therefore, is an exercise in understanding deeply practitioner research by doing it in reality. For the record, my proposed research is not an attempt to create yet another sub-field in practitioner research. I am interested in contributing to epistemological pluralism (Borg, 2009) by acknowledging different research traditions, and not claiming one approach as superior to another. My dissertation research primarily aims to draw upon elements of many different kinds of practitioner research[17], and I am less interested in creating further distinctions between the different kinds of research that are done by practitioners and more in sharing with my

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[17] See Markos (2011) for a similar ideological stance. (p.40)

readers how all these different traditions may or may not have informed my practitioner research.

Creswell (2007, 2009) may define this pluralistic approach as 'pragmatic', a concept that I discuss in more detail in the next chapter. To put it simply as of now, I bring another lens. I do not imply that this lens is a better way of looking at or doing practitioner research. I merely aspire to provide an additional way of understanding and conducting practitioner research. I plan to 'work the dialectic' in my community college ESL classrooms with the hope that my research will contribute to the increasing diversity within the field of practitioner research in particular, and educational research at large. With these goals in mind, I undertook the exciting challenge of carrying out self-aware, dynamically and seamlessly integrated, and doable practitioner research in an ESL classroom in a community college setting as my dissertation project, and examine the entire experience through the lens of 'inquiry'.

Chapter 4: Methodology

Though this be madness, yet there is method in't.
~ Shakespeare, Hamlet

In this chapter, I lay out the methodology for the practitioner research study that formed the core of my dissertation. I present details about the instructional setting and the participants, the various data sources and instruments, and the general design of my study. I identify the quantitative and qualitative data that I collected in my dissertation work. I also outline the ways in which I analyzed each type of data. I then turn my attention to the pluralistic nature of my research study. I provide descriptions of how I engaged in the continued conceptual inquiry in terms of data analysis and interpretation. Next, I address issues of trustworthiness and transferability as they pertain to my practitioner research, and finally discuss the scope and the challenges of my study.

The Contexts

Most doctoral dissertations tend to focus on the immediate context of the research—the research site. The 'other' context—the doctoral program—that shapes the dissertation work is implicit, and usually not addressed in detail in the thesis. However, for a practitioner dissertation to be truly reflexive, it is important to explicitly acknowledge the manner in which it has been shaped by the practitioner's participation in the doctoral program. I address that point here.

The Doctoral Program

The doctoral program in Second Language Education and Culture (SLEC) is part of the College of Education at the University of Maryland, a large and diverse public research university that attracts thousands of domestic and international

students to its undergraduate and graduate programs. One indicator of the diversity at the University is that the international members on campus comprise approximately 4000 students and 1400 faculty and staff from around the world (OIS, 2013).

My program is an interdisciplinary one[18]. Besides taking coursework in TESOL-related topics and research methodologies, enrolled students are also expected to complete 15 credits in a cognate area. In my case, I took many courses in teacher education. This interdisciplinary nature of my program was complemented by my experiences teaching undergraduate and graduate courses in the program geared towards preparing preservice and in-service teachers to teach English language learners, albeit peripherally. Further, my professors invited my participation in inquiry and theorizing, scaffolding my apprenticeship in the community of research. Similarly, as I learned TESOL theory in my doctoral courses, I had the opportunity to test it out in my own ESL classrooms in the community college, again as an adjunct. I describe this participation in community college ESL in more detail in the next section. My doctoral studies prepared me to think critically about the nature of both academic and professional practices. As Smith (2009) puts it, "if the doctoral programme does not at some point make you deeply question your role, the knowledge and skill you use and your professional practice and identity, then it is not interrogating your practice at a level commensurate with a professional doctorate" (p. 27). Throughout my thesis, I aim to demonstrate that my doctoral studies and this dissertation especially have indeed facilitated my engaging in deep and critical reflections about my academic and professional practices.

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[18] See program website: http://www.education.umd.edu/TLPL/programs/SLEC/doc.html

Community College ESL

As mentioned earlier, my practitioner research was set in a community college ESL program. Port Community College[19] is a large, multi-campus community college located in an urban setting, in a mid-Atlantic U.S. state. According to the college website, Port Community College in Smith County[20] offers nearly 60,000 students annually credit and noncredit programs in more than 100 areas of study. The ESL program where I taught is located within the department of 'Workforce Development and Continuing Education' (WDCE), and is one of the three programs offered in the area of English language skills and GED. The other two areas are 'Adult ESOL and Literacy-GED' and 'The American English Language Program'. The classes offered under 'Adult ESOL and Literacy-GED' and the ESL program are non-credit, whereas credit classes are offered under 'The American English Language Program'.

The ESL program offers courses for two different tracks: a general communication track, with classes focused on English speaking, listening, and pronunciation; and a pre-academic track, with classes to help students improve reading, writing, and grammar. The pre-academic track, in turn, generally caters to two subsets of students[21]: English language learners who wish to eventually transfer to a four-year college or university, and learners who wish to advance in their professional careers. As a result, within the pre-academic track, two different sets of classes are offered: one titled 'Pre-Academic ESL' and the other title 'Occupational

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[19] Name changed to preserve participants' confidentiality.
[20] Name changed to ensure student confidentiality.
[21] Students are sometimes placed into the WDCE department after taking the college's English placement test. In turn, new students entering the ESL program have to take the department's second language assessment test for placement into appropriate classes. Returning students are placed into new classes based on recommendations by previous instructors.

ESL'. ESL184 Intermediate Writing, the course I taught and made the focus of my dissertation practitioner research, is located within the 'Pre-Academic ESL' sub-track. (See Figure 12)

Figure 12: Locating ESL184 Intermediate Writing in Port Community College ESL Program

As the name suggests, the Intermediate Writing course I taught is located towards the middle of the ESL courses that range from beginning to advanced levels. The primary objective of ESL184 is to instruct enrolled students in pre-academic English writing such as personal essays, letters, and stories. The course also emphasizes paragraph writing and includes reviewing basic grammar and punctuation. (See ESL 184 Syllabus in Appendix A.)

I taught three sections of ESL184 Intermediate Writing in all towards my dissertation research. In spring 2010, I taught two sections, at two different locations—Azalea Park[22] and Creekville[23]. I taught the third section in summer 2010 at Azalea Park again. The spring sessions lasted ten weeks, whereas the summer

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[22] Name changed to ensure student confidentiality.
[23] Name changed to ensure student confidentiality.

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session was shorter with eight weeks. The total number of hours of instruction for each section, however, remained the same. I taught 40 hours in the spring session, spread over ten weeks, teaching twice a week for 2 hours. In summer, I also taught twice a week, but for 2.5 hours each day. For the spring session, classes for the two sections began in the first week of February and ended in the second week of April. For the summer session, I taught the first class on June 14, and the last class took place on August 4. For the sake of convenience, I am going to label from here-on the three sections as Section I, Section II, and Section III, in chronological order.

Section I was taught on the Azalea Park campus on Mondays and Wednesdays, beginning on February 1, 2010, and ending on April 7, 2010. Section II was taught on the Creekville campus on Tuesdays and Thursdays, beginning on February 2, 2010, and ending on April 8, 2010. Both sections took place in evenings, from 7pm to 9pm. I also taught an extra class on April 12 for both sections to make up for some time lost at the beginning of the session due to an unexpected snow blizzard. I taught Section III in summer in Azalea Park from June 14 to August 4 on Mondays and Wednesdays from 6:30pm to 9:00pm. (See Table 1)

Section	Semester	Duration	Total hours of instruction	Final number of students
Section I	Spring 2010	February 1 to April 7	40 hours	15
Section II	Spring 2010	February 2 to April 8	40 hours	13
Section III	Summer 2010	June 14 to August 4	40 hours	8

Table 1. Duration and number of students in course sections

The Participants

The Students

Initially, 16 students registered for Section I, and two students dropped out during the course of the semester. In Section II, 15 students signed up and two dropped out later. In section I, the 14 students comprised five males and nine females. In Section II, the 13 students comprised six females and seven males. In Section III, Eight[24] students signed up, and no one dropped out during the semester. Of these eight students, two were males and six females.

Based on my experiences in summer 2009 and my review of community college literature, I expected the ESL184 sections to have students with diverse backgrounds and experiences. I could have expected refugees, documented and undocumented immigrants, permanent residents, new citizens, and international students (Mellow & Heelan, 2008a) in my classrooms. My students were also likely to be from different ethnic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds.

I found this to be the case in the three sections. I had students from Colombia, Ethiopia, Peru, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Hungary, and also a student each from Afghanistan, Bolivia, Brazil, Cambodia, India, Nigeria, and South Korea. Some of my students had just recently arrived in the U.S., while others had been living in the country for up to two decades. In age, my students ranged from 18 years to 50 years. Besides English as an additional language, collectively the students spoke more than two dozen languages in all. Some of them had attended high school in their country of origin; others had also attended some university courses, while a few had university

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[24] Having eight students in Section III was a stroke of luck. Less than eight students would have resulted in the class being canceled. Also, eight was a much more manageable number.

degrees. Many of them reported having studied English in their home countries, prior to their English language learning experiences in the U.S.

The Instructor

As the adjunct instructor in ESL184 and a doctoral candidate, I was also an active participant in my research project. Like my students in the three sections of ESL184, I bring diverse experiences into the classroom. I am an Indian citizen, and have been in the U.S. since 2004 when at the age of 25, I came to the University of Maryland College Park to pursue graduate studies in TESOL in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction[25] at the College of Education as an international student. I grew up speaking Hindi and English, and was also exposed to other languages, including Punjabi, which my parents spoke as their mother tongue, and German, which I studied as an adult. Since moving to the U.S. as a graduate student, I have been gradually developing a hybrid/transnational identity that helps me mediate academic and non-academic norms for both myself and my students.

The Supervisor

Besides my students in the two sections of ESL184 and myself, there was one more participant in my practitioner research—my supervisor at Port Community College. Sharon[26] is a fellow doctoral student in my program besides a senior program director in WDCE. She has been instrumental in mentoring me as I navigate through my academic and professional lives. Sharon has also been very supportive of my desire to do practitioner research and consented[27] to be a participant in the study

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[25] Now named TLPL
[26] Pseudonym used to preserve confidentiality
[27] See Supervisor Consent Form in Appendix E.

by coming in and observe me teach some of my classes as a critical friend (Samaras, 2011).

The Data Sources and Types

In this sub-section, I lay out the various sources as well as types of data for my practitioner research along with details about how I documented these data. As Johnson (2006) mentions:

> Although teacher research stems from teachers' own desires to make sense of their classroom experiences, it is defined by ordered ways of gathering, recollecting, and recording information; documenting experiences inside and outside the classroom; and creating written records of the insights that emerge. (pp. 241-242)

I describe the instruments to gather and analyze data in more detail in Chapter 5 where I discuss how I integrated research and teaching. Since the data generation, collection, and analysis were the answer to my research question, and since this is a thesis that I am writing in the context of my doctoral dissertation in a research university, I am trying to find a balance between the traditional formats for dissertations and my own unique study. Therefore, I outline the data sources and instruments for analysis here, and discuss the actual processes in depth in the next chapter.

Sources of Data

There were four data sources in my practitioner research: the students, the practitioner-researcher, the supervisor, and Port Community College. Table 2 lists the data sources and instruments. I discuss in depth the "ordered ways of gathering,

recollecting, recording, and documenting" data in the next chapter, where I describe

how I integrated teaching and research.

Data Sources/Participants	Data instruments/items
Practitioner-researcher	• Journal • Instruction and instructional materials
Participating students	• Responses to questionnaires • Assignments • Classroom conversations
Supervisor	• Observation notes • Structured conversations with practitioner-researcher
Institution	• Class roster • Evaluations

Table 2. Data sources and instruments

Instructor-generated Data

In the tradition of many fellow practitioner-researchers (see, e.g., Boozer,

2007; Ramìrez, 2006) I maintained a practitioner-researcher journal. The journal

served as an important tool for reflecting and recording my thoughts on teaching and

research (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2009). Also, the material I created and compiled

for classroom instruction were additional data. These materials included my

syllabus[28], lesson plans, and questionnaires[29], as well as feedback to students in

written and oral formats.

Student-generated Data

A bulk of data for my practitioner research was data generated naturally by

students as a normal part of their coursework. This included responses to surveys I

gave out in the class, as well as assignments by students completed in class and at

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[28] See Appendix A for a sample syllabus.
[29] See Appendix B for a sample survey provided to the instructors by the institutions. I plan to make adaptations to this survey based on informal feedback and observations on the first day of class, and give out the survey the second time I meet my class.

home. These documents and artifacts (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2009) were produced as a normal part of classroom teaching and learning.

In addition, I decided that if my students permitted[30], I would digitally record some of the classroom sessions (audio and/or video). I prioritized student comfort and safety over data collection in this specific instance. I reiterated my underlying principle of ensuring that my 'research' would not be parasitic on my 'teaching'. As I perused other doctoral dissertations that were teacher research studies like mine, I came across similar decision-making by the practitioner-researcher (e.g., Boozer, 2007). Recording my classroom sessions also became a creative substitute to 'field notes, which may have otherwise taken time away from teaching and guiding my students through their classwork. The idea was to make data collection a natural part of my pedagogy and not make it stand apart from teaching (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2009). This additional data helped me consolidate and deepen my understanding of the classroom life. Additionally, by digitally recording the classroom sessions, I was able to collect data by multiple methods thus triangulating[31] it (Maxwell, 2005).

Supervisor-generated data

During the spring semester, I met Sharon five times and engaged in structured conversations about my teaching. Issues we discussed in these conversations included my thoughts about my classroom teaching, reflection on incidents in the instruction, questions about the program and site of instruction, sharing of teaching strategies and ideas, and so forth. Sharon took notes as she observed me teach, and then we had structured conversations that based on her notes and my immediate memories of

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[30] See Appendix C for a copy of the letter I intend to use in the classroom to solicit student participation.
[31] I discuss data triangulation in more detail in later subsections.

specific classroom episodes. As a result of Sharon's note-taking and our meeting soon

after, our conversations were "grounded in the details of authentic moments of

instruction" (Hammer & Schifter, 2001, p. 466). I digitally audio recorded these

conversations, and then later selectively transcribed/annotated[32] and analyzed them.

Institution-generated data

The community college, the WDCE department, and the ESL program

provided me with information about the program and the students ahead of time. In

addition, student evaluations conducted by the institution towards the end of the

course were later mailed to all course instructors. Information about the students and

evaluations by students were additional data for my practitioner research.

As I think through the logistics of data collection at the proposal stage, I was

aware that despite the systematicity that I provided in describing my data sources and

instruments of documentation, in reality I would face some unforeseen challenges by

virtue of the unpredictable nature of teaching, a lack of clear precedence in

conducting dynamically integrated practitioner research, and my status as a novice

researcher. I was heartened, however, by the words of seasoned scholars and

researchers who encourage beginning researchers to be creative in their research. Miles

and Huberman (1994), for instance, write to students and novice researchers:

> The biggest enemy of your learning is the gnawing worry that you're not "doing
>
> it right." Dissertation work tends to encourage that. But any given analytic
>
> problem can be approached in many useful ways. Creativity, inventing your way
>
> out of a problem, is definitely the better stance. (p. 14)

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[32] Another way to phrase the selective transcription/annotation is to call it 'collecting snippets'
(Hammer & Schifter, 2001), something I discuss in more detail in later sections.

I was also mindful of Jacobson's (1998) words:

> My experiences documenting my teaching…reveal that even though the idea of
> documenting teaching is a fairly straightforward concept, it is logistically difficult
> and at times uncomfortable, yet vitally important for bringing implicit
> understandings to the surface for reflection and analysis. (p. 131)

I hope to demonstrate that in actual data documentation of complex everyday classroom realities I was be able to live up to the challenge of creatively overcoming the 'logistical difficulties and discomfort', and thereby collect data and theorize from it in ways that helped me 'bring to surface' the understandings 'implicit' in my practitioner research.

Types of Data

Type of Data	Data Item	(Mixed) Methods of Analysis	Software
Quantitative data	Quantitative information about instructional setting (e.g. number of students, hours of instruction, hours of preparation/planning/grading, student attendance, etc.) Close-ended/quantifiable/numerical survey and evaluation responses (e.g. duration of stay in the U.S., number of additional languages spoken, years of instruction in English, new student or returning student, ethnicity, gender, etc.)	Descriptive statistics: organizing, describing, and summarizing • Graphical procedures: charts, and diagrams (pie-charts, histograms, etc.)	Microsoft Excel
Qualitative data	Qualitative data generated by students, practitioner researcher, supervisor, and institution. Practitioner researcher journal Instructional materials Written participation/feedback in class Open-ended survey responses Assignments Final evaluations Transcribed in-class and supervisor conversations Video recordings from classroom	Adapted grounded theory: coding, analyzing, and interpreting •Open-coding (conceptualizing major themes as they emerge at the first level of abstraction during instruction) •Axial-coding (analyzing data clustered under thematic categories at the second level of abstraction)	Microsoft Word and NVivo

Table 3: Quantitative and qualitative data items and methods of analyses

As shown in Table 2, the 'data' generated through different sources in my practitioner research can be categorized as quantitative and qualitative.

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Quantitative Data

The quantitative data included information about instruction, such as the number of students in each section and hours of instruction, as well as responses in questionnaires and evaluations that are close-ended (e.g., yes/no answers), quantifiable (e.g., gender), or numerical (e.g., years of English instruction). For the quantitative data, I used Microsoft Excel to organize, describe, and summarize the data content. The quantitative data falls in the category of descriptive statistics (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2006). Descriptive statistics allows researchers to methodically describe and summarize data.

Many educational researchers integrate interpretive statistical analysis into their studies, especially when they have large data sets and/or are carrying out longitudinal studies. However, I chose not to carry out interpretive statistical analysis on my data set as it was not a good fit for my integrated practitioner research or my research questions. I summarized the quantitative data using both graphical and mathematical procedures.

Qualitative Data

The qualitative data includes my practitioner-researcher journal (oral and written), classroom materials, open-ended questionnaire and evaluation responses, student assignments, transcripts of classroom discussions and conversations with my supervisor, as well as video recordings of classroom episodes. I discuss these data sources in detail in the next chapter, where I describe the processes of integrating research and teaching.

Collecting both quantitative and qualitative data[33] for my practitioner research also helped in the triangulation of the data. For instance, if I had relied too heavily on my practitioner research journal for ongoing and later analysis of classroom life, I may have ended up being influenced by my own biases and assumptions that I may not have had sufficient opportunity to examine. Multiple types and sources of data, including recording classroom episodes and analyzing official student evaluations, helped me "gain a broader and more secure understanding" (Maxwell, 2005, pp. 93-94) of my data by comparing my own 'biases and assumptions' with classroom realities and by engaging in conversations with my students and 'outsiders' (my supervisor, fellow graduate students and teachers, and members of my dissertation).

A Pluralistic Approach to General Design and Procedures

My practice, both as a teacher and a researcher, is the backbone of the empirical-conceptual part of my practitioner research. In creating the research design, I drew upon my graduate studies in research methods. I recognized the merits of different research approaches as they apply to my research and instructional context, and thus incorporated both quantitative and qualitative techniques in the design.

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[33] Since I intended to use both quantitative and qualitative procedures in my practitioner research, I realize that my research design could be identified as 'mixed methods' (Creswell, 2009). Indeed the research design fits many of the criteria listed (Creswell, 2009, p. 15) for 'mixed methods' studies: pre-determined and emerging methods, open- and close-ended questions, and multiple forms of data. However, mixed methods' studies often use both quantitative and qualitative data for analysis and interpretation. I, on the other hand, used the quantitative data for describing and summarizing primarily, and qualitative data for analyzing and interpreting. Of course, in organizing quantitative data I conducted a certain amount of analysis, and in looking at qualitative data, I incorporated a certain amount of description. Also, I realized that description, analysis, and interpretation while being distinct are not necessarily mutually exclusive activities (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). There were overlaps and 'mixing' of methods as well as the stages of analysis (description, abstraction, interpretation), but not to the extent of being completely 'mixed'. Therefore, I would not call my research design 'mixed methods'.

However, I recognized that practitioner research is embedded in teaching practices, which are dynamic and unpredictable when applied to classroom realities.

As a result, while I gave structure to my research design, making it systematic and intentional (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990), I also left room for flexibility in the day-to-day decision-making (see, Li, 2006) and for innovation in the overall research design. Smith (2009) refers to this aspect of a doctoral student's dissertation work as 'emotional agility' where the practitioner researcher must have the "ability to maintain optimism…to adapt to the unforeseen, and to feel comfortable with a degree of uncertainty" (p. 26). I thus intentionally designed my research procedures to be simultaneously systematic and open-ended, and informed by a diversity of research approaches, methodologies, and methods that best related to my research questions.

One of the core characteristics of my dissertation work is that I was immersed in the data collection as well as an active agent in data generation. I did not distance myself from the data while it was being generated with the intention to first collect it all and then do the analyses. In fact, and similar to many instances of qualitative research, I began to analyze the data as it was being generated. However, unlike many qualitative researchers (including ethnographers) who immerse themselves in the research site as observers or observer-participants, the closest descriptor that I can use from qualitative research to describe my role in my research is to say that I was immersed in the site as primarily a participant-observer.

Indeed, I could not have answered my own research questions if I had maintained the distance between action and analysis. Had I not been both the teacher and the researcher in the classroom, I could not have explored the intersections

between teaching and research as actively, as deeply, or as reflexively as I did. This was an intensely personal dissertation, and I would have been hard put to find another context or another agent who would have engaged in the research questions to the degree that I did.

In fact, as the instructor, I impacted deeply the context in which the data was being generated with my intention to integrate research and teaching. As a result of my agency in the research context, I was able to engage deeply in the analysis of what was taking place from a very early point in the 'data collection'. This is evidenced by my reflections in my journal, where I made notes of not only what I was doing, but also why and how that was resulting in the integration of teaching and research. As Smith (2009) notes, keeping a journal is invaluable in "order to further develop reflexivity and critical reflection on the experience of being a practitioner—researcher" (p. 42).

My practitioner dissertation and processes of my data analysis therefore do not mirror or mimic a specific kind of research or fall under any one established methodology. However, my work does incorporate elements of different approaches and methodologies. I believe that this methodological pluralism, in turn, adds to the uniqueness and richness of my work.

I am writing this section in such detail to not only share my unique approach to my research design and procedures, but also a response to a possible methods' critique of practitioner inquiry, which "assumes that practitioner researchers are bound by the same methodological criteria as those of more traditional university-based research, rather than they are engaged in the emergence of a new genre"

(Cochran-Smith & Donnell, 2006, p. 513). As Drake and Heath (2011) note, debate about practitioner dissertations tends to compare traditional with professional doctorates and "such comparisons not only neglect the diversity of models of practitioner research at doctoral level, but also do not recognize that a paradigm shift has occurred and that the construction of knowledge in the social sciences is not limited to the type of doctoral programme through which it is engendered" (p. 2).

This section is thus also a response to a potential positivistic critique that valid research requires the researcher to operate at an objective distance from the researched. Through this section and next—indeed through my dissertation work—I hope to demonstrate how practitioner research may be stronger due to the deep embeddedness and agency of the practitioner-researcher in the site of practice, and how this embeddedness generates new and relevant knowledge.

Elements of Grounded Theory Approach

I can identify many elements in my dissertation research procedures that are similar to those that fall under the grounded theory approach. However, there are many differences as well. A grounded theory study, as the name suggests, tends to generate a single theory grounded in the experiences of multiple participants, not necessarily located in a single site (Creswell, 2012). In contrast, I conducted my practitioner dissertation at my instruction site, where I was the primary agent. As the sole practitioner-researcher, the 'theory' that may have emerged from the delimited data is grounded in my experiences alone. In this dissertation, therefore, I chose not go beyond my classroom to investigate others' work. I hope to do so through future

investigations, conceptualizing this dissertation work as the beginning of such life-long inquiries.

Further, according to Creswell (2012), the primary form of data collection in grounded theory approach is often interviewing (p. 85). However, a substantial portion of the data in my dissertation was deliberately generated in the classroom as part of the natural proceedings in the setting. I ensured that my research agenda did not in any way require the students to produce any more work than they would have otherwise produced in my classroom. In addition, my conversations with my supervisor were not constructed as interviews, but as discussions between myself and my supervisor as a 'critical friend[34]'.

However, despite these obvious differences, I identified the characteristics about my research design and procedures that are similar to those listed by Creswell as typical features of grounded theory in terms of the focus, the process, and the product[35]. I can say that I *adapted* grounded theory to fit my practitioner research as dissertation. (See Figure 13)

Creswell (2012) identifies one of the major characteristics of a grounded theory study as its focus on a *process* or *action* that the researcher is attempting to explain, which according to Creswell has distinct steps or phases (p. 85). This is similar to my dissertation focus on understanding and explaining the process of integrating research and teaching in pedagogy. However as I mention, unlike the researcher using the grounded study approach, I did not merely observe to understand; I actively engaged in the process to explore ways in which research and

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[34] An element of self-study that I discuss later in this chapter
[35] Please note that Creswell (2012) does not list the characteristics under 'focus', 'process', or 'product' in his book chapter; that is my synthesis of his writing.

teaching could be feasibly integrated in my pedagogy. Looking back, I was able to reflexively identify the steps and the phases involved.

The second characteristic that Creswell (2012) ascribes to grounded theory is the processes involved. Creswell emphasizes memoing to write down ideas that come up as the data are collected and analyzed, as an "attempt to formulate the process that is being seen by the researcher and to sketch out the flow of this process" (p. 85). Creswell's idea of memoing is similar to my own journaling in my dissertation. In fact, I drew upon some of the lessons I had learned in my graduate courses in qualitative methodology to 'memo' about the processes that I was engaging in through my dissertation in my practitioner-researcher journal. Creswell also lists three main steps in the data analysis: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. In a study truly grounded in the data, the researcher first codes all data to develop open categories. Then the researcher focuses on one specific category, and then details other additional categories through axial coding to form a theoretical model. Creswell writes that what emerges at the intersection of these categories, through selective coding, is a *theory*. This leads to a third characteristic: the theory as the final product that explains the process being examined (p. 85).

In terms of my dissertation, I did indeed begin by analyzing the data as it was emerging. The open-coding and initial analyses were also part of the instructional decisions I made on a daily and weekly basis. For instance, I analyzed the 'data' to design classroom lessons, assignments, and projects, which in turn generated more data and guided my ongoing instructional practice. This was an ongoing process throughout the ten weeks of instruction. At the initial stages of analysis, I identified

several other categories that emerged from the data as potential lines of inquiry. However, I did not investigate these categories further to ensure that I stayed focused on my original and primary research question. Therefore, given my very specific focus on looking at the ways in which I integrated research and teaching in my pedagogy, I moved quickly from, what would be described from a grounded theory perspective as, 'open-coding' to 'axial-coding'.

The second level of abstraction occurred mainly after the ten weeks of instruction were over. At this point, I began to revisit the data to identify connections across the two categories that helped provide more detailed answers to my research questions. At both levels of data analysis and abstraction, I found myself fully immersed in the data—in the first level, by virtue of being an active participant during the data generation and collection stages; and in the second level by "reading, rereading, and reading through the data" (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 158) to build upon my understandings of the data.

As I explain in detail in Chapter 5, through ongoing reflections in my journal, as well as more detailed analysis of the data post-date collection, I identified tools from research that I was using to teach in my classroom, as well as tools from teaching that I was employing to do research. To speak in terms familiar to grounded theory researchers, these two categories became my main axial/additional categories, and it is at the intersection of the two categories (my 'researchful' practice and my 'practiceful' research) that I locate the emergent 'theory' of integrated practitioner research.
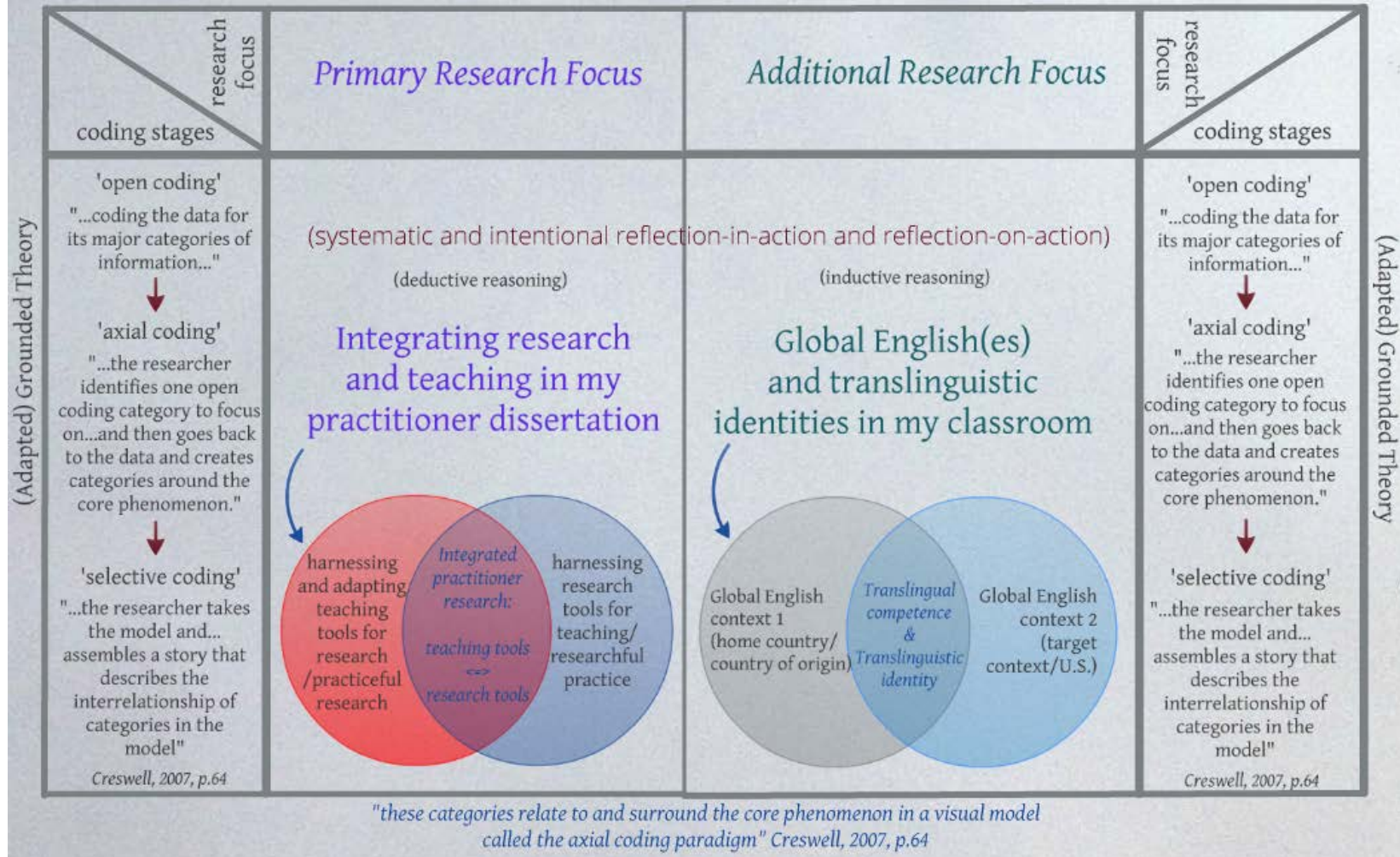
Figure 13. Adapting grounded theory to my practitioner dissertation

At times I was also an observer, but less in the traditional sense. I was not an observer sitting quietly in the corner of the classroom observing the classroom events and participant interactions. I was an observer as a teacher in instances where I saw, but did not participate or intervene in the classroom events and student interactions. I was also an observer during the times when I reviewed video recordings of the classroom sessions.

I analyzed the data both inductively (in the form of adapted grounded theory) and, to some extent, deductively (Markos, 2011). I used deductive reasoning for primarily my original research question. Once I had reasonably settled that question, I moved on to the additional, smaller inquiry (detailed in Chapter 6), this time using an inductive approach that more closely resembled grounded theory in its procedures. At this point, I engaged in processes similar to axial-coding, wherein I selected one of the categories (called 'core phenomenon' by qualitative researchers who engage in grounded theory), and began to position it within a theoretical model (Creswell, 2009, p. 184). Finally, I selectively coded the data wherein I created a narrative linking the different classroom episodes within the larger umbrella of translingualism and translinguistic identity.

Since the additional sub-inquiry also adapted elements of grounded theory, I use the overall label of 'adapted grounded theory' for both the inquiries: the main inquiry, and the sub-inquiry. As I mentioned, I used the term 'adapted' as a recognition of the uniqueness of my project, which does not (and is not intended to) fit neatly into the parameters of the qualitative studies that usually employ a grounded theory approach.

One final distinction between my practitioner research and the grounded theory approach is the description of 'theory' itself. Instead of using such hierarchical terms as 'low-level', 'mid-level', or 'grand theories' (see Creswell, 2012) generated through the grounded theory approach, I would simply say that my practitioner research generated two 'working theories of practice'. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009d) identify working theories of practice as those that stem from an inquiry pedagogy and that blur the traditional distinctions between theory and practice. Although Cochran-Smith and Lytle's reference is primarily to university cultures, when they write about the need to challenge the "assumption that the point of university courses is learning theory to be implemented in practice" (p. 110), their idea of exploring reciprocity and interconnections between theory and practice through an 'inquiry' embedded in pedagogy is very close to my own idea of using practitioner inquiry to create theories of practice that work in real classrooms— through integrated practitioner research (Chapter 5) and through translinguistic identity in pedagogy (Chapter 6).

Elements of Teacher Research

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009c) define teacher research as the inquiries of K-12 teachers and prospective teachers, often in collaboration with university-based colleagues and other educators" (p. 40). Although I am neither a K-12 teacher nor a 'prospective teacher' or 'teacher candidate' in the traditional sense (a preservice teacher enrolled in a Masters' level teacher education program), I do see elements of 'teacher research' as conceptualized by the authors in my own practitioner dissertation.

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Writing about teacher research specifically, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009b) talk about the "key idea…that teachers theorize all the time, negotiating between their classrooms and school life as they struggle to make their daily work connect to larger movements of equity and social change" (p. 47). This view of teachers as theorizers is entirely compatible with my own understanding of teachers as knowledge-creators, capable of embarking upon systematic conceptual and empirical inquiries stemming from their own theorizing (with the intention to reflexively connect the work to 'larger movements of equity and social change' as I illustrate in Chapter 6). Further, it is in Cochran-Smith and Lytle's conceptualization of teacher research and inquiry as stance (2009b) that I find a deep compatibility with my own conception of practitioner inquiry as an ongoing endeavor in postmodern contexts, as I explore in the later chapters of this thesis. Specifically, in connecting my classroom conversations and pedagogy to larger constructs of translingualism and translinguistic identity, I incorporate elements of teacher research in my work.

Elements of Reflective Teaching

Farrell (2012) describes reflective teaching as "evidence-based, in that teachers…systematically collect evidence (or data) about their work and then make decisions (instructional or otherwise) based on this information" (p. 15). There are processes that I engage in and share in this thesis. Someone looking at my practitioner research may then be tempted to ask the question as to how it is not simply reflective teaching. I identify elements of reflective teaching in my dissertation work, especially the part that happened in the classroom. However, I see additional layers of 'research' and therefore hesitate to limit my inquiry to reflective teaching. First, I used research

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tools in my teaching, and in turn, used teaching tools to facilitate research. Secondly, I conducted a metacognitive examination of this integration of research and teaching, analyzing the data, identifying patterns and themes, and theorizing therefrom. In doing so, I went beyond reflective teaching: I blurred the boundaries between teaching and research, creating a dialectic enriched by the resulting generative tensions. Also, in the sub- inquiry, I analyzed data grounded in the classroom teaching and learning, taking my dissertation work beyond simply reflective teaching.

Elements of Self-Study Research

My dissertation work incorporates elements of self-study of teaching practices. I say 'elements', because traditionally self-study has been associated primarily with teacher education practices (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009b; Loughran, Hamilton, LaBoskey, & Russell, 2004), and as a result, most self-study reports are conducted in teacher preparation contexts. However, as I examined the self-study literature, I found many overlaps between what I was doing in my dissertation and the conversations around self-study practices. For instance, like self-study research, I was analyzing data even as it was being generated for a big part of my study. To some extent, the data collection and data analysis were mutually interdependent, given the nature of my practitioner dissertation.

In fact, my 'practitioner dissertation' as practice evolved during the study, that is, "in the course of a given study, important and yet subtle aspects of the researcher's practice…may actually be transformed without conscious awareness, and such transformations may only come to be recognized through post hoc reflections" (Tidwell, Heston, & Fitzgerald, 2009, p. xiv). This was certainly the case, and I

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discuss this in more detail in Chapter 5, with my intention to integrate teaching and research in my pedagogy. Also, my study is systematic and intentional and embedded within the overarching concern of improving my practice, yet one part of it did not begin by formulating ahead of time a specific research question or focus (Tidwell, et al., 2009). Further, a lot of self-study literature emphasizes the role of collaboration. Although I did not engage in collaboration *per se*, I did have a colleague, my supervisor, who acted as what could be seen by self-study scholars as my 'critical friend' (Samaras, 2011). Like practitioner research and inquiry, self-study also emphasizes opening up one's 'reflections' and research to "public critique and dissemination, rather than solely residing in the mind of an individual" (Loughran, 2004b, p. 26), something that I am already doing by virtue of conducting this practitioner inquiry as a dissertation and sharing my work formally and informally in different forums[36] (e.g., Jain, 2012, 2013a; Jain, 2013b).

Elements of Case Study Approach

My study can also be seen as a case study of a practitioner-researcher conducting integrated practitioner research as dissertation. In calling it a case study, note that such a research approach allows the practitioner-researcher to explore in-depth a specific case, and as such the results are not meant to be generalized from that case onto other cases. In the instance of my practitioner dissertation, the manner in which I approached practitioner research and carried it out is unique to my study. My experiences and findings are not intended to be generalizable to the larger set of

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[36] See Appendix F for an example of a handout that I used in TESOL 2013 as part of making my work public and opening it up to critique, as well as disseminating the knowledge generated about doing sustainable teacher practitioner research as applicable to the work of the participants who attended the workshop.

practitioner-researchers, nor replicable to other settings for practitioner research (Drake & Heath, 2011). If other practitioner-researchers read my study and transfer or adapt ideas into their own practitioner research (as dissertation or otherwise), no one will be happier than me. However, even as I discuss the inquiry in this thesis and look at implications in the last chapter, I also invite my readers to explore this dissertation and extract from it lessons that may be relevant to their own individual contexts.

Elements of Pragmatic Approach to Research

The pragmatic 'worldview' focuses on the research problem, instead of research methods, and uses all available approaches to understand the 'problem' (Creswell, 2009). In other words, pragmatists are not wedded to a specific research tradition. As a result, due to its flexibility towards incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods and data, pragmatism is frequently associated with true mixed methods studies.

My research design for my dissertation is not mixed methods. However, in my own methodological pluralistic approach to my dissertation research design, I find some overlaps with pragmatism. Creswell (2009) emphasizes that with pragmatism, individual researchers have a freedom of choice (p. 11). This is certainly true in my case, where my committee has allowed me to choose the methodologies, methods, techniques, and procedures that best meet the project needs and purposes. I will extend this and say that the methods, techniques, and procedures also emerged organically in my dissertation even as they drew upon my doctoral knowledge of qualitative, and to some extent quantitative, research methods. Also, "pragmatists agree that research always occurs in social, historical, political, and other contexts"

(Creswell, 2009), opening the possibility of including a postmodern turn in the research. As I discuss in Chapter 6, I located a part of my dissertation inquiry in specific political and social contexts.

Authenticity and Trustworthiness

When academic researchers report teachers' knowledge, it acts as a conduit of that knowledge. However, when teachers themselves report their work, it lends that report authenticity. However, perhaps one of the biggest challenges that practitioner researchers face today is to establish the methodological integrity of their work. Members of the academic community often critique practitioner research as lacking 'rigor', and rigor is more often than not gauged on the basis of existing conceptualizations around both quantitative and qualitative research. Given the comparative 'youth' of the field of practitioner research, however, the criteria for understanding and evaluating its quality are being established slowly and need to go beyond existing frameworks provided by quantitative and qualitative research traditions.

Traditional academic research, derived from positivist influences, has tried to establish generalizable, objective, and replicable truths. Contrasting constructivist paradigms emphasize that the researcher's own voice and deep understandings of the context create meaning. Writing about practitioner research in adult continuing education settings, Jacobson (1998) argues that "neither conventional nor constructivist paradigms are ideally suited to the needs and interests of us teachers conducting research in order to improve our own practice" (p. 126). According to Jacobson (1998), conventional research tends to create decontextualized theory that

has both practical and philosophical limitations when seen through the practitioner research lens, and inadvertently contributes to the theory-practice divide; while a "purely" constructivist approach "aims only at describing…interpretive systems, not at critically analyzing them or proposing alternatives should they prove inadequate" (p. 127). Jacobson therefore critiques both conventional and constructivist research paradigms for their limitations when applied to practitioner research settings, including an emphasis either on description or interpretation, rather than action.

Despite these limitations, many practitioner researchers may use positivistic constructs of reliability and validity or constructivist constructs of trustworthiness and transferability to establish the rigor in their work. Several practitioner-researchers, for instance, have used the concept of trustworthiness in their doctoral dissertations (e.g., Boozer, 2007; Markos, 2011; Peck, 2011). Practitioners, who engage in self-study research, also emphasize the importance of 'trustworthiness'. In writing about self-study as inquiry-guided research, Tidwell, Heston, and Fitzgerald (2009) emphasize making the data visible and clearly presenting the data analysis processes. Given that I myself draw upon different qualitative research approaches in my methodology in this dissertation, I try to establish the trustworthiness of my practitioner dissertation as well. For instance, I used data triangulation to establish trustworthiness and provide 'thick' descriptions of my practitioner research to enable transferability. The quantitative data helped act as a fact-check for some of the basic descriptions and summaries I provide about my practitioner research. The multiple sources of qualitative data—the journal, digital recordings of classroom sessions, teaching materials, student work, and structured conversations with critical friend—aided in

the compilation of detailed descriptions that I was be able to use for in-depth analysis of data and share with a larger audience in turn.

However, I agree with Jacobson (1998) that using established and traditional measures of rigor to assess the quality of practitioner research projects tends to shortchange the work that practitioners do. What the field needs is "a new definition of rigor…that does not mislead or marginalize practitioner researchers" (Anderson & Herr, 1999, p. 15). In other words, it is time to add other, perhaps more appropriate, items to the list of indicators of quality in research.

As discussed in the preceding section, Drake and Heath theorize about practitioner knowledge created at doctoral level specifically and emphasize the need to establish 'authenticity' through reflexivity in practitioner dissertations. In terms of my practitioner dissertation, I have made myself 'visible' both in the research (by sharing my research agenda with my students) and in its reporting (by using first person narration in the written descriptions of the research, along with details of my own positioning and participation in the study).

This dissertation thesis itself is an attempt to demonstrate authenticity through the deliberate reflexivity in data reporting and writing, in terms of "locating oneself and one's ideas in the research project and exploring what that means for the project" (Drake & Heath, 2011, p. 20). I articulate my self-positioning explicitly in Chapter 3 and implicitly throughout the rest of the thesis. In sharing my values and beliefs, I mirror to some extent the positioning of qualitative researchers. As Creswell (2007) writes,

All researchers bring values to a study, but qualitative researchers like to

make explicit those values. This is the *axiological* assumption that

characterizes qualitative research. How does the researcher implement this

assumption in practice? In a qualitative study, the inquirers admit the value-

laden nature of the study and actively report their values and biases as well as

the value-laden nature of information gathered in the field. We say that they

"position themselves." (p. 18)

Sharing my research in a comprehensible and comprehensive manner and opening it

to the critique of other practitioners and researchers in the field is also a way to ensure

the quality and rigor of my research (Shulman, 2000).

Conducting Practitioner Research Ethically

As in the case of Sharon, I have used pseudonyms for all students who

consent to be participants in my practitioner research during data analysis,

interpretation, and reporting in order to keep student identities confidential (Berg,

2007). Also, in order to ensure that my practitioner research was ethical and my

students did not feel 'coerced', I tried my best to ensure that the students understood

that their participation in the study was completely voluntary, and that they could

'withdrawn' from the study at any given time without penalty. Further, as I have

explained earlier, the data generated was entirely natural in the sense that students

were required to do any additional or alternative assignments besides the assignments

required as a natural part of their coursework.

In Chapter 2, I cited the work by Bailey et al. (1998) where the practitioners

researched their own teaching. The authors found that their research (in this case,

reflective teaching through specific professional development practices) fitted well into their instruction and provided the following explanation for this good fit:

> We believe these…practices worked for us for many reasons. We undertook them voluntarily, so there was a sense of ownership and commitment. They also stemmed directly from and built upon our teaching and other work, so they did not create distractions. And although these practices were time consuming, they did not seem to compete for time in our busy teaching days; instead they grew out of and complemented our regular work. Thus the process of recording and reviewing data about our teaching seemed organic and natural rather than forced or extraneous. (p. 553)

The authors emphasized the 'organic and natural' connections between their professional development practices and their instruction. I followed a similar approach to conducting my practitioner research while I was teaching at Port Community College, to ensure that the research was ethical, to my students and to me. I discuss this aspect of conducting my practitioner dissertation ethically in more detail in Chapter 5.

Limitations, Delimitations, and Challenges

In this subsection, I discuss the scope of my practitioner research. I also write about the limitations of the study, as well as the challenges I faced besides the ones I have already mentioned in preceding sections.

An underlying, often unstated, assumption for practitioner research is that teachers bring years of expertise and insight into their research and are 'native habitants' (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, p. 58) of their instructional sites. I

recognize it as both as a limitation and a strength that, as an adjunct, I can participate peripherally in my practitioner research site. However, I believe that practitioner-researchers need not always be native inhabitants of their instructional contexts. Many of us are beginning teachers, making the transition from one instructional context to another, or gathering experiences in different instructional contexts. When teachers go into new contexts, they bring in fresh perspectives and initiative. I hope that by looking at my instruction setting with 'new' eyes, I have been able to balance out the limited experience I have in teaching in a community college setting.

Also, I did attempt to generate deeper understandings of my context of teaching. The data collection for my dissertation practitioner research was initially intended to be only one semester long and focused on two sections of the same course. However, I extended the scope of the study by conducting practitioner research on an additional section of the same course taught over the consecutive summer semester.

I also realize that teaching can be an isolating act. The conversations I engaged in with my supervisor and my committee members helped disperse some of that isolation. Additionally, I engaged in informal conversations with fellow doctoral students and also presented my work in more formal settings (Jain, 2012, 2013a, 2013b). These formal and informal oral inquiries (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993) have helped me understand my practitioner research experiences from different perspectives.

I also delimited my empirical investigations to my own practitioner dissertation, and did not attempt to gather data from other instances of practitioner

dissertations. I limited my understanding of other practitioner dissertations by engaging in a literature-based inquiry. I hope to engage in empirical research on practitioner dissertations by going beyond and building upon my dissertation work.

I hope that despite the limitations and challenges, my dissertation practitioner research will contribute to the growing body of practitioners who study their own instructional settings and write about it. This emerging body of practitioner research and publications is bringing a balance to a field where until recently it was primarily academic researchers and educational theorists who wrote about practitioner research (Reis-Jorge, 2007).

In terms of the chapters that follow, I have no precedent in terms of the kind of practitioner-researcher I set out to do as my dissertation study. None of the other doctoral dissertations in their written format quite fit what I wish to narrate in the next few chapters. Hence, I have come up with ways of writing the discussion and implication chapters that suitably fit my integrated approach to practitioner research.

I also delimited myself to inquiring in detail and specifically one additional aspect of my teaching, besides the original focus of integrating research and teaching. As I began to focus on the interplay of my identity and my pedagogy, I again delimited the scope of my work to examining the ways in which my translinguistic identity functioned as pedagogy in the classroom. I had to narrow down my focus in order to make adding this sub- inquiry into my dissertation feasible. In the next two chapters, I discuss in detail both the primary and the sub-inquiries.

Chapter 5: Integrating Research and Teaching

> *What we have are new theories, but not new practices.*
> *(Suresh A. Canagarajah, 2013a)*

In this chapter, I describe the larger inquiry that I engaged in: integrating research and teaching in my pedagogy in ESL184 during the spring and summer 2010 semesters. I explain the tools I used to carry out practitioner research ethically in the classroom, and then discuss how I conceptualize the integration of research and teaching in looking back and investigating my experiences. Finally, I address the issue of local and public knowledge generated from practitioner research, using my own study as example.

The Inquiry: Systematic Reflection *in* and *on* Action

As discussed in the previous chapters, I did not have a template for integrating teaching and research in my pedagogy as there is no previous research study that specifically focuses on this aspect of practitioner research. This was both a disadvantage and an advantage. It meant that I was exploring unchartered waters, but it also meant that I was free to improvise. As Schön (1987) writes,

> Because the unique case falls outside the categories of existing theory and
> technique, the practitioner cannot treat it as an instrumental problem to be
> solved by applying one of the rules in her store of professional knowledge.
> The case is "not in the book." If she is to deal with it competently, she must
> do so by a kind of improvisation, inventing and testing in the situation
> strategies of her own devising. (p. 5)

Conducting practitioner research that was integrated into my teaching was certainly a 'unique case' and in my two semesters of teaching the three ESL184 sections at Port

Community College, I improvised many times. I began with the assumption that a lot of what I did as a teacher already had elements of research in it. My plan was to identify this researchful nature of my teaching, and build upon it in ways that were ethical and that strengthened my teaching instead of diminishing it.

As discussed in the previous chapter, I identified four primary sources of data in my practitioner research: the instructor, the students, the supervisor, and the institution. In this chapter, I focus on the instruments that were used to systematically and creatively gather, record, document, and recollect information, as well as analyze the data.

As I immersed myself in my practitioner research, to make the research processes non-intrusive on teaching and learning in the classroom, I capitalized on the elements in teaching that were already conducive to research and, in turn, used research tools for purely pedagogical purposes (which generated rich data for my study) during the period of instruction. I then went a step further by *adapting* research tools for teaching. In analyzing the data generated and reflecting upon my experiences, I realized that this improvisation and inventiveness was critical to creating a coherent practitioner research study.

This part of my practitioner inquiry has elements of both reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action (Schön, 1983) in it. Schön describes reflection *in* and *on* action in the following manner:

> We may reflect *on* action, thinking back on what we have done…We may do
> so after the fact, in tranquility, or we may pause in the midst of action…In
> either case, our reflection has no direct connection to present action.

Alternatively, we may reflect in the midst of action without interrupting it. In an *action present* – a period of time, variable with the context, during which we can still make a difference to the situation in hand – our thinking serves to reshape what we are doing while we are doing it. I shall say, in cases like this, that we reflect-in-action. (Emphasis in original, p. 26)

Just as 'practice' can refer both to teaching and practitioner research, action in the context of my dissertation also can be understood at two different levels: one, the teaching that happens in the classroom, and two, as the action of carrying out practitioner research. During my instruction, I reflected on classroom episodes and also ways in which I could integrate teaching and research. My reflections on classroom action were recorded in my journal and conversations with Sharon (described in the following sections). My journal also became a key place for me to record my ongoing reflections on practitioner research as I was carrying it out. Specifically, there were instances where I constantly reflected on ways to integrate research and teaching, which helped 'reshape what I was doing while I was doing it.' In that sense, those journal reflections were reflection-in-action. This chapter, on the other hand, is a product of the reflection-*on*-action (or reflection on reflection-in-action) and part of the process of thinking back on what I have done in order to discover how my knowing-in-action (Schön, 1983) may have contributed to the outcome.

In the sections that follow, I describe how the classroom context was conducive to research in ways that allowed me to use teaching tools for research, and how I was able to harness research tools for teaching as well. I explain further how I

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reflected in and on action, and I also explain the decisions I made to ensure that the entire process was ethical and non-parasitic on teaching and learning in my classroom.

Harnessing Teaching Tools for Research: Practiceful Research

Teaching lends itself to research in many ways. When teachers teach in a classroom, the site is rich with data. The context, the conversations, the interactions, the content, and the reflections—all are potential data that the practitioner-researcher can then use to make systematic and intentional inquiries at different stages of the research, including during the period of instruction. The key to do so without making it intrusive on teaching and learning in the classroom, in my case, was to harness existing teaching tools for research. These 'tools' were my journal, student worksheets, evaluations that the students submitted at the end of the semester, and structured conversations with my supervisor.

The journal.

Many teachers maintain journals to record their reflections in and on action (Schön, 1987) in the classroom. Teachers researchers also often maintain journals for research and teaching purposes (e.g., Armstrong, 1996; K. Bailey, et al., 1998; Boozer, 2007; Ramìrez, 2006; Wu, 2008). Journaling allows practitioners to document their thoughts on their practices, be it teaching or research, in an ongoing manner. Also, as a "uniquely personal tool" (Hobson, 1996, p. 11), I knew I could tailor my journal to the requirements of my practitioner dissertation. Keeping these benefits in mind, I decided to maintain a journal for my own practitioner research to document (what I can now identify as) my reflections in and on my practitioner

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research. In writing my journal entries, I drew upon my graduate studies in conducting educational research. Specifically, I drew upon the idea of memoing as used by researchers engaging in a grounded theory study (see Creswell, 2012).

I had initially planned to keep both a written and an audio journal anticipating that, as I would drive home after class, I could record my thoughts immediately on an audio recorder while driving, as some researchers do after visiting and observing a research site while the impressions are still fresh in their mind. However, as things turned out, I ended up keeping a written journal only. During the first week of instruction, I was sick and lost my voice. Also, driving while recording my thoughts on a recorder late at night when I was exhausted just didn't seem like a good idea anymore. Thereafter, I found it easier at the end of two to three hours of teaching, which involved a lot of speaking, to give my throat as much rest as I could.

I devoted my energies to keeping a detailed journal on my laptop. I would take my laptop with me to class and type in the journal before class, as well as during class whenever there were a few minutes to spare from teaching and guiding the students. I also added to my journal extensively at home. In my journal, I recorded my impressions of the classroom life, recollection of incidents in the classroom that required deeper reflection, ideas for ongoing instruction and lesson planning, questions that arose from my practice (see, e.g., K. Bailey, et al., 1998), and so forth. In all, I wrote more than 36,000 words into my 86-page long journal, for a total of eighteen weeks of instruction. As I had anticipated, the journal served as a connection between my instructional decisions and actions from one day to another. In addition, my journal documented my reflection-in-action (Schön, 1983) on another level. I

reflected on my practitioner research metacognitively and recorded those thoughts within the journal. Collectively, the journal recorded my reflections in and on my actions in the classroom, and the practitioner research on the whole.

Student worksheets.

During the first few weeks of instruction in the Spring semester, I designed a few worksheets addressing specific areas that students needed more practice on in terms of writing paragraphs. As the semester progressed, I decided to create worksheets specifically tailored to accompany the textbook and scaffold the writing process. The worksheets that I designed provided space for students to go from one step to the next in drafting paragraphs, and complemented the textbook material. I wanted to create a record of student work, as they progressed through the steps of creating a paragraph, so that I could identify specific areas for each student that needed more attention.

There was another motivation for creating the worksheets. There were two instances of plagiarism in the class, where a couple of students took material from the web and submitted that as homework. I hoped that the worksheets would prevent students from going to the Internet for inspiration. On March 15, I noted in my journal:

> I designed the worksheet to see if it can help me understand better the process of writing by students. I also hope that by doing the worksheet, the students will get a better sense of the steps involved in the process and how they connect to each other, with each step leading to the next one, and helping in a good final product. This is also a way to ensure there is no repeat of the

instances of 'plagiarism'. Since students will do most of the work in the class, and it will be (hopefully) nicely scaffolded for them through the worksheet, there should be less temptation and justification for looking for 'other' sources to complete homework assignments. If this 'experiment' works in these two sections, I could repeat it in other such writing classes. (Journal entry, March 15, 2010)

Once we started using the worksheets regularly in the classroom, and I made sure to check on student work as they completed each task in the worksheet, I noticed that there were no more cases of plagiarism in the remaining period of instruction.

Initially designed for purely pedagogical purposes, the worksheets also became an important tool for recording student work. After students completed each worksheet, I would take the material home for grading and the make copies of each worksheet (with student consent) before returning the graded material. I made a folder in which I kept copies of the worksheets for each section. Anytime I was grading student work and needed to assess the progress they were making, I would flip through the folder and look at the student's past work for reference. For instance, I was concerned about spelling errors made by the students in writing in English. I analyzed these errors and identified patterns that I specifically targeted to scaffold for my students the process of spelling English words correctly. I believe that using the worksheets was also appreciated by the students. One of the students mentioned in the end-of-semester anonymous course evaluation that s/he "liked the worksheets…It was easy to follow the class."

Student evaluations.

At the end of each semester, the community college would collect student responses to the end-of-term course evaluation, extract the data, compile the results, and mail a copy to the instructor. These evaluations were very helpful in many ways. Among other things, I received feedback on some of my pedagogical activities, such as the worksheets mentioned in the previous section. I received the hard copies of the evaluations after some mailing delay in June. Although I had already started teaching the summer session by then, I analyzed the student responses carefully to see how it could constructively inform my pedagogy in Section III. For instance, although the class focus was on paragraph writing, grammar was also an area in which I provided students with explicit and implicit instruction. I struggled with striking the right balance between students' need for grammar instruction and covering the required textbook content in the classroom, and was keen to see whether or not students were satisfied with the extent of grammar covered in the class. While analyzing student comments in the evaluation summary on grammar, I noted in my journal:

> I sense that this tension about 'not enough grammar' is a persistent theme in this writing class. I feel that I devoted a lot of time to grammar explanations and practice, esp. in the Part 2 of the textbook chapters, yet many students obviously feel that they needed more grammar instruction. (Journal entry, June 25, 2010)

Grammar was also a topic for discussion that came up in structured conversations with Sharon, my supervisor, after the classes that she observed me teach.

Structured conversations with Sharon.

During my proposal defense, my committee members suggested that since I would be an active participant in my classroom, I should invite someone else to come in and 'observe' the classroom events to help me triangulate the data. I liked the suggestion, also because it would help me talk about my instruction in a structured way with a colleague. When Sharon agreed to be the observer, I was happy and relieved. I anticipated that the conversations with a trusted colleague who had many years of experience working in that instructional setting would be a good pedagogical strategy, in addition to being an aid to conducting robust research. In addition, as a senior doctoral student and mentor, Sharon was in a good position to guide my own thoughts on my pedagogy through structured inquiry.

Initially, the plan was to have Sharon come in and observe classes at both campuses during the Spring Semester. Unfortunately, as it turned out, another instructor moved to a fulltime position elsewhere at the last minute, and Sharon had to teach her class which happened to be at the same time as my Section II classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays, albeit on the same campus. This was an unexpected development and put a heavier demand on Sharon's already tight schedule.

Despite these obstacles, Sharon observed six of my Section I sessions and we talked about her observations either after the session or the next day, before our individual classes. Sharon thus acted as an independent observer-participant (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003) and a 'critical friend' (Samaras, 2011) in my practitioner research. Later in summer, due to other demands on her schedule,

Sharon was not able to observe any of the classes. However, by that time I was digitally recording the classroom sessions.

In our first conservation, Sharon started by explicitly stating what she had done during the observation and how she had organized her notes. She stated,

> What I did in my notes, I have basically descriptive things, and occassionally I have observations, I mean, my thoughts, and then periodically I have questions, you know things to ask you… (Transcript excerpt of structured conversation, Feb. 25, 2010)

In her role as an observer and critical friend, Sharon also mentored me as a more experienced teacher and a colleague. She asked me questions to help me think through some of the things she observed me do in the classroom, such as grammar instruction as mentioned in the preceding section. Sharon was also instrumental in helping me reflect-on-action (Schön, 1983) and identify certain characteristics of my teaching that were almost invisible to me, until she helped me reflect on them. As it turned out, I decided to investigate (as part on an ongoing practitioner inquiry) one of those characteristics after the summer semester was over and I had finished my 'data collection', which I discuss in detail in the next chapter.

Harnessing Research Tools for Teaching: Researchful Practice

In the course of conducting my practitioner research I identified many tools that researchers use for generating, collecting, organizing, and analyzing data that lend themselves to systematic and intentional inquiries in teaching as well. I discuss these tools and how I used them in the following subsections.

Questionnaires.

I believe that teachers engage in mini inquiries on a regular basis in their teaching, some of which can be answered well through systematic inquiry. For instance, many teachers (especially beginning ones and those with a big number of students) may start out with the question: *Who are my students?* The teacher may learn the answer in the general course of her teaching. On the other hand, teachers can also scaffold this process for themselves by doing it more methodically, for instance, through designing a brief initial questionnaire.

Questionnaires are traditionally used along with interviews in survey research for the purpose of gathering data from individuals in a sample set as representative of a larger population. Gall, Gall, and Borg (2003) define questionnaires as simply "documents that ask the same questions of all individuals of a sample" (p. 222). Generally used in both qualitative and quantitative research studies as well as mixed methods studies, questionnaires may comprise close-ended and open-ended questions.

As a doctoral student at a research university, I have been exposed to questionnaires and surveys in various forms and contexts, ranging from frequent end-of-semester course evaluations to participation in large research studies. I understand that one of the advantages of using questionnaires is that they allow similar data to be collected quickly and systematically, and can set the stage for a follow-up interview to obtain more in-depth and insightful data from selectively chosen participants among the sample pool.

When I was assigned to teach an undergraduate course independently for the first time in my department, one of my main concerns was to familiarize myself as

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quickly as possible with who the students were and what they expected from the course and me as the instructor. I used my familiarity with survey research to design a simple questionnaire to give to the students in the first week of classes (see Jain, 2009). When I was asked to teach a graduate course entirely by myself for the first time, I repeated this strategy and found it helpful during that semester.

In ESL184, I again used a questionnaire (Appendix B). In essence, questionnaires are ideal instruments for collecting data efficiently and systematically, and if structured well, facilitate the data analysis process as well. With this in mind, I used a long questionnaire provided by the community college for spring (and a shortened version for summer).

At that time, I had not quite reflected deeply on the fact that I was harnessing a traditional research tool for teaching. I had an 'Aha!' moment after one of the classes early in the spring semester. On February 7, 2010, I noted in my journal:

> While driving back from Creekville[37] I thought about the practitioner research aspect of my work and what I want to do. I was feeling that I haven't been doing 'research' and then I reminded myself not to fall into the research vs. teacher trap. I looked back and thought about how I got students to take the questionnaire…and then looked at their responses to start creating profiles of each one of them for a number of purposes. One, I'm getting to know each one of them as individuals, and appreciate the amount of diversity present in each of my classes. And I'm doing it relatively quickly, given that we have only ten weeks together in all. I don't have the luxury to slowly get to know them over the span of an entire academic year, or even one long semester.

[37] Pseudonym

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Two, I can draw upon these profiles to inform my teaching as well as validate

who they are and where they come from. (Journal entry, February 7, 2010)

This journal entry recorded a moment of reflection-in-action (Schön, 1983); I was

reflecting in the midst of my practitioner research, an *action present*, where my

thinking served to reshape what I was doing while I was doing it, to paraphrase Schön

(1983, p. 26). My mind was making connections between recent actions and thoughts

and present action in ways that impacted the rest of my practitioner research. That

'Aha!' moment served to reinforce my understanding of research and teaching as

compatible and complementary, not separate and conflicting. I was beginning to

recognize the connections and continuities between teaching practices and research

practices, and this line of thought helped me see the rest of my practitioner research

from that lens. It also made more alert to other overlaps between teaching and

research. In another sense, this journal entry also exemplifies a reflection-on-action in

terms of using questionnaires, specifically. In typing the entry, I was thinking back on

what I had done after the students had already completed the questionnaires. That

specific 'action' was over and there was little opportunity for me to go back and

change the activity in the present action.

Using a questionnaire worked well. I analyzed student responses and created

an excel spreadsheet in which I compiled a profile for each student. Since each

questionnaire used the same format, it did not take much time to enter information

from there into the spreadsheet. I also continued to add to this spreadsheet based on

the information gathered through class activities.

I referred to the excel sheet throughout the semester. For instance, I had a total of 31 students in the two sections in spring. Since it was a short 10-week course, I wanted to get to know my students as quickly as possible, starting with simple things like knowing each person's name. As I noted in my journal, despite a rocky start early in the semester, the questionnaire along with other activities in the class helped me get to know my students as individuals:

> Thinking about the total number of students I have in both sections: 31. That's a pretty big number, and it's good that I've been able to quickly figure out who is who despite the interruptions due to my own sickness and the snowstorm. I think the fact that I started out with the intention to get to know them as individuals helped tremendously, and then the questionnaire helped, as well as interacting with students in the classroom, making sure to address them by their names after making notes about the correct pronunciation of their names, reading their descriptions of themselves and their classmates as their written assignments—all of this has helped me to get to know my students as individuals, and use that knowledge to make teaching decisions and teach better. (Journal entry, February 1, 2010)

The 'data' collected through the questionnaire also came in handy during my structured conversations with my supervisor at Port Community College. In one conversation (on March 4), while Sharon and I were discussing an aspect of my instruction (which later formed into a thematic category that I examine in detail in

Chapter 6), I pulled up the spreadsheet to look at how many of students had studied

English in their home contexts and connect that information to our discussion[38].

For summer, I shortened the questionnaire and gave students the choice to take it online if they wished. On the first day of class, I gave the students a hard copy of the questionnaire to fill out. I collected the questionnaires, and while they were writing paragraphs required by the program as a 'pre-test', I quickly scanned the responses to begin forming mental profiles for each of the student in that class. The questionnaires were also a good way to be introduced to student writing, given that the class was on 'Intermediate Writing'. For instance, I noticed that there were some spelling errors and some students had even mentioned spelling as a concern in their responses. I knew that it was something that would need special attention through the coming weeks. I noted this in my journal:

> Last night I started a search on Google and the library's research port[39] for articles and materials on spelling errors made by Ethiopian ESL students. I have at least five students in my class from Ethiopia, and a quick glance at their written responses to the initial questionnaire indicated similar spelling errors as my past Ethiopian students. I didn't really hit any jackpot, but I found a couple of interesting articles. I'm going to investigate this more. (Journal entry, June 16, 2010)

I then devoted some time to looking up research studies that could shed some light on the spelling error patterns I had noticed in my students' writing. In doing so, I again referred to their questionnaire responses:

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[38] I discuss this episode in more detail in Chapter 6.
[39] URL: https//researchport.umd.edu

I found another interesting article titled "Opportunity for literacy? Preliterate learners in the AMEP". The article is about an action research project about preliterate women in ESL programs in Australia. The overlap with my class is that the women included those from Ethiopia. However, these were preliterate with minimal experience of formal schooling. The questionnaire I gave out on Monday, on the other hand, indicates that the four women in my class from Ethiopia had some high school education. I realize though that there was no option for less than high school education in my questionnaire. Perhaps, I should follow up one-on-one with the students. (Journal entry, June 16, 2010)

The questionnaires, therefore, proved to be very helpful throughout the semester. In looking back, I feel that I will continue to use these research tools to pursue future inquiries in my classrooms.

Digital recording.

In qualitative studies, researchers often use digital means for recording data. This includes audio as well as video recordings, and allows 'observers' to replay complex events at the researchers' pace and convenience for deeper analysis (Gall, et al., 2003). A classroom, especially, is a place rife with rich interactions and simultaneously occurring events, which usually include the teacher as an active participant. When the teacher is the researcher, traditional research practices may require the teacher to distance herself from classroom events, 'observe' them carefully, and note down her reflections in the moment. However, creating a distance as a teacher in the moment could also reduce the richness of the data being generated. As I illustrate in the next chapter, a specific line of inquiry that I engaged in would

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not have been possible if I had not continued to be an active participant in the classroom events. If I had taken a distant 'observer' stance as a researcher at that time, it would have altered the richness of the interactions, besides interfering with my responsibilities as a teacher. Technology can help resolve the dilemma of participation vs. distance in practitioner research. Recording the data digitally allows the teacher to focus on teaching and being in the moment, and prevents the research agenda from colliding with the teaching agenda in the classroom.

Traditional research practices also require observers to take copious notes to ensure they do not miss any detail. When teachers are researchers investigating their own teaching, they may not be able to pause in their interactions and note down the details. Later, they may not be able to recall all the details. When the classroom interactions are recorded digitally, the teacher can revisit the data and recall the details from the visual and audio clues embedded in the data. The teacher can see specific sections repeatedly and go back and forth, unlike in a real classroom. Digitally recording classroom events can thus help not only generate rich data, but also facilitate deeper analysis without letting the research encroach upon teaching.

As a practitioner-researcher, I digitally recorded my teaching sessions as well as my conversations with my supervisor which turned out to be invaluable later on in helping me capture the many ways in which I integrated research and teaching. I audio recorded all my conversations, and most of the classroom sessions. I also video recorded many classroom sessions. In making the video recordings, I took permission from all my students. As it turned out, some of them were not comfortable being in the video frame, so I experimented with placing the video in different parts of the

classroom with the students' help, until I found a good setting from where only I and the whiteboard would be visible. I made sure to check again with my students that they were comfortable with the camera placements. (See image below)

Image 1. Snapshots of digitally recorded classroom instruction at Creekville and Azalea Park.

The digital recording worked very well. As the weeks passed, the camcorder seemed to blend into the surroundings. I often myself forgot that the camera was running. Since my classes were in the evening, the recordings gave me the flexibility to download and save the video, and then to review the recordings the morning after. On March 4, I noted in my journal:

> 'have realized that it's impossible to write down reflections after class. It's late and by the time I get home, all I can think of is a quick dinner and bed. It's working out better when I review the next morning, and so far the most effective way to do so has been by watching the video recordings. On my own, I'm not able to recall all the details, impressions, thoughts, etc. Listening to an audio recording is better but I'm able to get much more from visually watching myself teach. (Journal entry, March 4, 2010)

I used the video recordings primarily for review, and kept the audio as backup. As I found from my first-hand experience, the video recordings provided "richer reflective

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stimuli that capture[d] actions, interactions, and contexts in a more cohesive manner than audio" (Hadfield & Haw, 2011, p. 70). There were, however, instances where the digital camera stopped recording due to technical glitches, and I did not notice it as I was focusing on teaching, but I was still able to analyze the audio recording and therefore did not lose an opportunity to have that data.

I reviewed the recordings during the period of instruction. In addition, I continued to review the data after the period of instruction. At this stage of reviewing the video- and audio-recorded data, I went back and forth many times. As the patterns began to emerge from the data analysis, I began to narrow down on to specific snippets of classroom episodes. Throughout the process of data analysis, I visited these snippets many times, watching them from the beginning to the end, slowing down parts to make note of specific things pertinent to the emerging themes, then forwarding to the next section, and then going back to the beginning and running the snippet again. At different points, I transcribed and annotated these snippets, as the process of analysis unfolded.

Data analysis software.

Researchers, especially qualitative researchers, often use special software to facilitate data analysis. I used NVivo to organize and analyze my practitioner research data. I initially saved my journal on a separate word document. However, as I began to explore different NVivo features, I learned that I could import word documents into the software and could add text to them as well as code them. I then decided to import the ongoing journal into the software and write it directly from there. In doing so, I cut a step out of the process of recording elsewhere and then importing it into the

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software. I also did not have to wait until the period of instruction was over to start 'analyzing' the journal. I could both add and analyze the text simultaneously. This was especially useful in the summer semester when I was both writing the journal and beginning to analyze more deeply the journal entries from spring.

I also started importing the digital recordings into the software after each class session, instead of waiting till the end of the semester as I had originally planned to. I created separate folders for audios and videos, with subfolders for the three sections that I taught over the two semesters and my conversations with my supervisor. I named each file by the date on which it was created. (See Image 2)
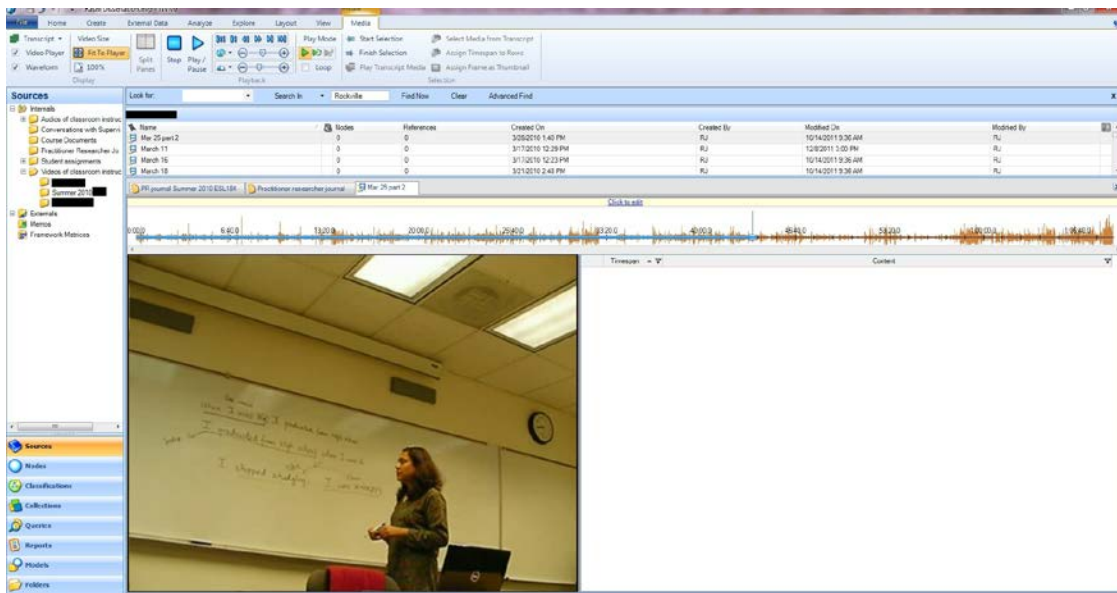
Image 2. Organizing data using NVivo.

As I analyzed the data, I focused on it primarily for immediate pedagogical purposes, but also began to make note of other patterns, especially those emerging through conversations with my supervisor. However, I decided not to transcribe the data in its entirety. As a doctoral student, I had experience with transcriptions and I knew that 10-minutes' worth of recording could easily translate into an hour of transcribing. With hours of data from teaching and conversations with my supervisor,

I would not have been able to transcribe the entire data set while also teaching

through the semester, as it would have taken time away from planning instruction and

grading. In order to solve this problem, I decided to use the annotation feature in

NVivo to instead selectively annotate and transcribe data chunks (See Image 3).
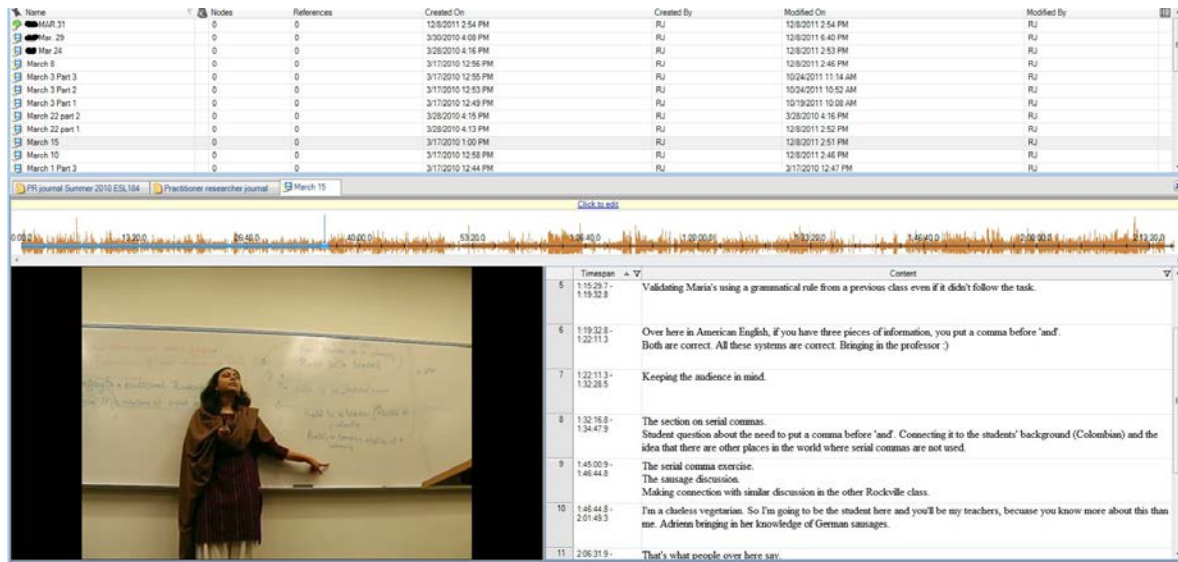
Image 3. Selectively annotating video chunks.

There are other instances in research literature where practitioner-researchers

have selectively transcribed data as well (e.g., Markos, 2011; Wu, 2008). I made a

note of this strategy in my journal:

> I am listening to the audio recording from Monday. I've been trying to figure
>
> out a good way to annotate data in NVivo. What I'm doing today is instead of
>
> listening to the recording minute by minute, I'm first identifying individual
>
> chunks and then briefly annotating these chunks. Once I'm done doing that for
>
> the almost four-hours-long recording, I'll go back to each chunk and annotate
>
> in more detail, time-permitting. This way I get a broad sense of what I did in
>
> class, but do not spend hours listening to the entire recording and annotating

it. Also, as I listen and annotate chunks, I think I'll plan for tonight's class so that it's nicely integrated. (Journal entry, June 30, 2010)

As recorded in the journal entry, I had two-fold purposes for annotating the data. The first was for the purpose of teaching primarily. I would typically audio and/or video record my class, and then review it in detail the morning after. Initially, I recorded my thoughts in a separate word document, but it was cumbersome. I would watch the video, pause it, and then go to word document window and type my notes into it. It required constantly switching between two to three different windows on my PC. Once I figured out a way to import the videos directly into NVivo and annotate the data chunks in the software, I began to do so regularly and it proved to be very useful for the rest of the spring semester as I was teaching the two sections in tandem and the material covered overlapped from one campus to another. Reviewing the material from once class scaffolded my preparation for the other class. Similarly, with my conversations with Sharon, I would revisit the audio recordings and selectively annotate and transcribe chunks.

As I explored more features in NVivo, I stumbled across other ideas to facilitate the data analysis. I figured out ways to hyperlink as well as interlink texts and digital content within the software. For instance, I would annotate an audio or video chunk, and then write down my reflections on that chunk in my journal, and then link that section/paragraph back to the annotated data chunk. That way, the next time when I visited one specific chunk or reflection, I could open the other at a click of the mouse. I made a note of this in my journal:

I just figured out that I can hyperlink in NVivo. I hyperlinked the two questionnaires I've created so far in my previous entry, and tested the links. They work! This is like word doc., but better, since I don't need to transfer/upload the word doc file into NVivo and then analyze it. I can do it directly here, and save myself a couple of steps. (Journal entry, June 13, 2010)

I chose to record data directly into the software, and use the software creatively to store data as a teacher. This facilitated access to different documents on the same platform, saving me valuable time as a teacher researcher. A few days later, I made the following entry in my journal:

As I explore around NVivo, I'm thinking about how using the software is also helping me capture the complexities and intricacies of instruction in one place. I'm doing so many things and there are so many things happening in tandem that I could easily lose sight of some of it, if I weren't recording as much of it as possible in the same place. Doing this 'integrated' practitioner research seems to be helping me be more aware of all that's happening too :) I'm enjoying figuring out ways around things when the initial idea doesn't seem to work. For instance, this version of NVivo doesn't seem to support uploading and viewing PDF files within, so I'm now hyperlinking the PDFs of student writing that I scanned in school yesterday to the relevant chunks in the journal. It may actually work out better this way, as the more things I upload into the software, the slower it will run. Also, when I click on the hyperlink, the pdf doc opens in a separate window, which makes for easier browsing, as I

already tend to have at least two to three tabs open within NVivo at any given time. (Journal entry, June 22, 2010)

NVivo had its limitations however. For instance, in the summer semester, I encouraged my students to send me homework as email attachments. I would correct their writing using the track features in the word document and then individually discuss the corrections and feedback with the students in the class. I tried to upload these documents into NVivo as well, however it didn't work, as I noted in my journal:

I tried uploading the word doc with my comments and changes into NVivo but it does not support viewing the changes and comments. That's a limitation, but I can work around it by directly hyperlinking to the student assignment, as I did earlier. For research and teaching purposes, this is not ideal, since I will have to open the doc each time and locate the exact sentences where I made certain comments and corrections. I need to think through this and see if I can come up with a better solution. (Journal entry, July 7, 2010)

As I learned throughout the two semesters, research lent itself to teaching in many ways in my integrated practitioner research. I discovered both the strengths and the limitations of using traditional research tools creatively in my pedagogy. On the whole, an integrated approach to practitioner research helped me carry out the research in an ethical manner. I discuss this in more detail in the next section.

Ensuring Ethicality in My Practitioner Research

While designing my practitioner research study and carrying it out, I wanted to make sure that it was as ethical as possible. I was aware of the power relations in the classroom and that I, as teacher, was in charge in many ways. Teaching well was

my first and foremost priority and the reason why I engaged in this practitioner dissertation in the first place. I wanted to makes sure that I would not lose sight of that. Therefore, all the decisions I took and the choices I made were directed towards ensuring that I did not prioritize data generation and collection over teaching and learning. I have already referred to these choices and decisions in the previous sections. I tried to ensure that my research was ethical not only in terms of what I chose to do, but also what I chose *not* to do. Here are the choices I made.

As a doctoral student at the University, I am required to take informed consent from all participants for agreeing to participate in my study. Many of my students specified that they did not wish to have themselves recorded on the video or the audio and I made sure not to do so. Any audio recordings that were inadvertently made of students who were uncomfortable with the process were not included in the data. I also ensured that students were not in the video frame by positioning the camera such that only their backs were visible and the main focus was on me and the whiteboard (as can be seen in Image 1).

I chose not to ask my students to do any additional work that I would not have asked them to do as a teacher. They did not earn any extra credits for being in my study, nor was their participation or non-participation allowed to impact their grades in any manner. I imposed similar constraints on myself as a participant. I chose not to transcribe the data in its entirety and instead use the time saved towards planning my instruction and grading, as I would have done had it been 'purely' teaching. In the classroom, I took notes only when the students were engaged in tasks that did not require my assistance. Any time I felt that the students would benefit from one-on-

one attention, I chose to spend the time guiding their work and answering their

questions, instead of writing down my observation notes in my journal.

Early into my study, I began an initial analysis of the data to understand

certain trends and patterns in what was happening during the practitioner research. As

a researcher, it would have been tempting to pursue one specific line of inquiry in the

classroom and get students to generate data directly relevant to that line of inquiry.

However I made sure not to focus on any single aspect of my teaching in case it

distracted me from other aspects that required equal attention inside and outside the

classroom. In other words, I ensured that a 'research agenda' did not overtake the

teaching agenda[40]. As Hammer and Schrifter (2001) point out, "the locus of a

teacher's attention is not fixed by a research agenda, but must respond to the

particular circumstances as they unfold" (2001, p. 454).

It was in my ongoing reflection (and later synthesis of the reflections) that I

viewed the material as research data. I believe that prioritizing teaching over research

helped me strike a healthy balance between my teacher role and researcher role, and

allowed me to conduct ethically-sound practitioner research in my classroom. I will

go a step further and say that research and the way I structured this stage of my

practitioner research actually *helped* me focus on my teaching in a holistic manner.

Due to the integrated nature of my work, I was able to focus on teaching during the

period instruction. During the two semesters at Port Community College, I was

"living the data" (Markos, 2011, p. 63) and did not have to artificially isolate a part

of the teaching and study it in detail greater than the rest, nor did I have to 'fit' my

teaching to my research agenda.

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[40] This is an instance of 'generative tensions' that Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009d) theorize about.

As a result, the data that was generated was all immediately relevant to teaching and learning in the classroom and had specific pedagogical functions. For instance, I designed worksheets to scaffold the process of conceptualizing and drafting paragraphs for my students, and to help them make connections between the process and the final product. The student work in these worksheets was primarily for their benefit, and only incidentally functioned as additional 'data'.

Additionally, I analyzed the classroom data and recorded my reflections primarily for pedagogical purposes. For instance, I analyzed student writing systematically to identify patterns in the spelling errors made by the students in their writing, and adapted my instruction to address those errors. Hence, the analysis was directed by teaching. From a poststructural perspective, I recognized my practitioner research as 'situated' in a specific context, and my conclusions as my own and therefore 'partial.' It is this reflexivity that adds to the ethicality of my work (Norton & Toohey, 2011).

Discussion

In this section, I share my conceptualization of an integrated practitioner research based on my own experience conducting such an inquiry in my classroom.

Integrated Practitioner Research

As illustrated in the preceding sections, during the two semesters at Port Community College, I was harnessing both teaching tools and research tools to inform my teaching. As the weeks progressed, the research tools and teaching tools became interchangeable. In looking back at the data, I struggled to draw distinctions between what was teaching and what could be classified as research. I believe it is at

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this intersection of research and practice that my practitioner research had become

truly integrated. (See Figure 14)
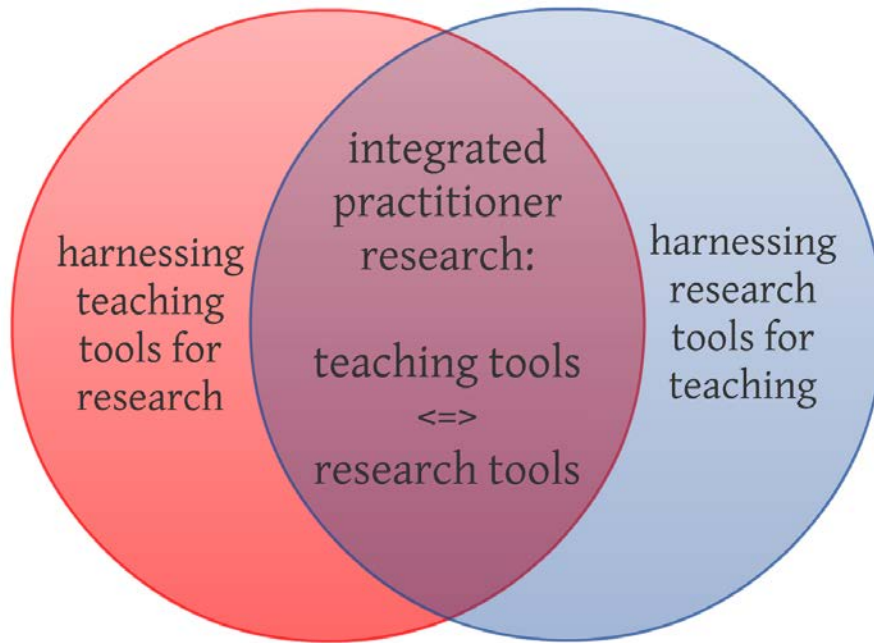
Figure 14. Integrating research and teaching

These were spaces where I brought in my knowledge of research practices to

inform my teaching. For instance, as a doctoral student, I am familiar with survey

research and was able to incorporate elements of questionnaire design into my

teaching. Similarly, I brought in my knowledge of teaching practices to inform my

research. For instance, as an adjunct instructor, I created the worksheets which then

became instruments to record student work. In doing so, I was essentially transferring

elements from one practice to another.

It would be wrong to think however that the solution lies in using more

technology as a teacher researcher. I think the key here is to use available resources

creatively, something that teachers are perforce already adept at. My

multimembership in the communities of research and teaching were thus instrumental

in my being able to recognize existing elements of one in the other as well as transfer and build upon the elements to make my research practiceful and my practice researchful.

Working the Dialectic of Multimembership

Wenger (1998) calls the transferring of some element of one practice into another as a result of one's multimembership in two communities of practice *brokering* (p. 109). According to Wenger, brokers span boundaries, link communities of practice, and sustain an identity across the boundaries (p. 154). In analyzing my work as a practitioner-researcher in the classroom, I can identify elements of brokering in what I did, especially in terms of transferring research practices into teaching and teaching practices into research. However, in positioning myself as a novice researcher and novice teacher in my practitioner dissertation, I also do not quite fit into the definition of a broker, as Wenger uses it. For instance, Wenger notes that,

> Brokers must often avoid two opposite tendencies: being pulled in to become full members and being rejected as intruders. Indeed, their contributions lie precisely in being neither in nor out. (p. 110)

Wenger's (1998) vision of a broker who spans boundaries and connects different communities of practice, therefore, is of someone who is on a boundary trajectory (p. 154) that will <u>never</u> lead to full membership into any one community of practice. Therefore, even as I recognize elements of brokering in my practitioner research study, I problematize the idea that I could be seen as a 'broker'. As I explain in Chapter 3, I see myself on multiple trajectories: an inbound trajectory in the

community of teaching; a peripheral trajectory in the community of research; and currently a boundary trajectory in terms of my peripheral participation in both research and teaching with an emphasis on linking the two communities of practice through my practitioner inquiry. I exemplify what Wenger writes about multiple trajectories: "As we go through a succession of forms of participation, our identities form trajectories, both within an across communities of practice (p. 154)."

In taking an approach that integrated research and teaching, I also see myself as 'working the dialectic' of inquiry and teaching (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009a, p. 94). In taking on simultaneously the roles of both researcher and practitioner, I believe I am exploring the "reciprocal, recursive, and symbiotic relationship" between inquiry and practice, where the "activities and the roles are integrated and dynamic" (p. 94). In the following chapters, I abide by the definition of practitioner research as 'systematic and intentional inquiry made public' and explore how my practitioner research in my classroom resulted in both local and public knowledge (in chapter 6), and a blurring of the two (in the final chapter).

Conclusion

In the larger context of my practitioner dissertation, I identified a basic area of overlap between the two practices of teaching and research: that of inquiry. I believe that by engaging in practitioner research, I was able to identify inquiry as an element that is common to both teaching and research. In research, inquiry is visualized as being part of the research process of data generation, collection, and analysis aimed towards finding an answer to the research question(s) generally intended for public

use. In teaching, inquiry is seen as something that teachers engage in on a regular basis arising from the ground realities of their immediate local practice.

With inquiry as my stance, my teaching in the two semesters at Port Community College became more systematic and structured. Recording everything allowed me to revisit the classroom and keep the lessons learned in there fresh in my mind. I had designed questionnaires before for classes; however, taking an integrated approach to practitioner research provided the impetus for exploring ways to use technology innovatively to aid instruction. For the first time, I kept meticulous records of everything in a way that tied in with my teaching meaningfully. Also, instead of waiting for instruction to end and using practitioner research in an ongoing manner in my teaching, I stayed motivated and made the process relevant to myself in real-time.

Although the immediate relevance of integrating research and teaching in my pedagogy was for my classroom, my work also has implications for the field of practitioner research in general. Cochran-Smith and Donnell (2006) state that "Some scholars have made the argument…that the knowledge generated through practitioner inquiry may also be useful more publicly and generally in that it suggests new insights into the domains of research on teaching" (p. 512). The authors go on to write, "a hallmark of many forms of practitioner inquiry is the invention of new ways to store, retrieve, code, and disseminate practitioners' inquiries…in the form of…electronic innovations…" (p. 512). It is my hope that by sharing my work in detail, I will be able to provide a case study to fellow teachers, researchers, and

teacher researchers who may wish to engage in a similar integrated approach to teaching and research in their classrooms.

In the next chapter, I demonstrate how practitioner inquiry need not cease with the period of instruction. The original intent of my dissertation was to limit my investigation to the intersections of research and teaching. As I explored the dualities between teaching and research, I began to reflect on the idea that when a practitioner adopts an 'inquiry (as) stance' (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009d; Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2009), the inquiry does not end with the period of instruction. It becomes a habit of mind and an ongoing process, where the practitioner-researcher continues to engage in multiple inquiries that can evolve into individual research projects.

With my ethical stance to not let any emergent research agenda disrupt or distract from my teaching or my original research questions, I decided to take the unusual step of not engaging in a specific additional line of inquiry while I was carrying out my dissertation practitioner research work at Port Community College. However, I wanted to keep in mind the suggestion made by a committee member during my dissertation proposal defense to pursue a specific line of inquiry (in addition to and different from my original research questions). I did so, albeit after I had completed teaching at Port Community College and researching my original set of questions.

It is this specific line of inquiry, grounded primarily in the data generated in the classroom interactions, which I present in the next chapter as a self-contained inquiry embedded within the larger practitioner dissertation. I have chosen to present the inquiry as self-contained to (a) demonstrate what an 'inquiry' post-data-collection

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in a practitioner research context may look like (including in terms of a written report typical of what may be submitted as a manuscript to a journal[41]), to (b) create a more coherent narrative in this thesis[42], and (c) to further a line of inquiry that I have engaged in collaboratively with colleagues and connect that line of inquiry to my own teaching as well as emerging theories.

Identity-as-pedagogy is as yet a less explored topic in the field of language teaching. This is especially true of teachers and students who are multilingual, or more appropriately, translingual (Canagarajah, 2013a). I used this opportunity in my dissertation to explore my translinguistic identity-as-pedagogy in more depth precisely because in the middle of teaching, it is unlikely that I would have been able to focus specifically on this aspect of my instruction without it taking time away from other equally important aspects of teaching.

Another reason for my decision to focus specifically on identity was validation by Sharon, my supervisor at Port Community College. As I have mentioned earlier, Sharon has been a mentor in many ways, both in teaching and in research. Early in the Spring semester, Sharon had begun observing me teach. On February 25, she told me as we talked,

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[41] I used the guidelines provided for the TESOL Journal's 'Language Teacher Research' (LTR) section. The TESOL journal is a practitioner-oriented journal and the LTR section specifically includes systematic and intentional inquiries of teachers researching their own practice. I used TESOL journal's LTR section guidelines while drafting this chapter in order to create an authentic example of a manuscript that a practitioner researcher may compose as a product of research and for making their work public.

[42] I am being mindful of one of my committee members who, during my proposal defense, had commented that what I was proposing was two mini-dissertations rolled into one. Since this inquiry is more interpretive, I have to perforce present it as a self-contained inquiry in my dissertation in order to be able to stay true to my original research question about integrating research and teaching. This second inquiry could have been an entire dissertation by itself. However, to approach it as a dissertation would have made it impossible to accommodate this chapter within the larger dissertation without losing focus of the original research question, and yet I wanted to demonstrate what a continuing practitioner inquiry after the period of instruction may look like.

…though I don't think you were conscious of it, your pedagogy was reflecting the values that you hold around L2 user, so I mean, I could see that if I were doing this study, I would take some declarative statements where you said this is my philosophy and the ideas I really like and I would say this is what shows up in her pedagogy. You know, which is nice because a lot of...our beliefs don't show up in our pedagogy, just the opposites do.

It was an intriguing notion. Because these were my 'beliefs', I was not always aware of them. Although teachers do not always (consciously) use their identities as pedagogy, there are times when we do strategically tap into our identities as a pedagogical resource (Motha, et al., 2012). Identifying such instances in my own teaching, I decided to investigate this further and share it here in my own voice. As I do so, I am mindful that, "it is not the respondents' version of reality that practitioner-researchers are seeking to present, but their own, even though these personal interpretations may often be based on respondents' expressed perspectives" (Drake & Heath, 2011, p. 105).

Writing about teacher inquiry, Dana and Yendol-Hoppey (2009) state that many inquiries by practitioners occur at the intersections of their beliefs and practice, and that of their personal and professional identities. I exemplify this in my inquiry in the next chapter.

Chapter 6: Global English(es) and Translinguistic Identities in an ESL Classroom

Teaching is not simply what one does, it is who one is.
(William Ayers, 1989)

In a world where those who speak more than one language outnumber those who speak less than two, it is surprising how pervasive monolingual norms and assumptions can be when it comes to English as a second language (ESL) teaching and learning contexts (Oxford & Jain, 2010). Like many other world languages, English now exists in multiple global contexts (Selvi & Yazan, 2013). Specifically, the language's historical and economic spread has resulted in it being added to the multilingual landscapes of many countries around the world and has resulted in the emergence of global Englishes (Canagarajah, 2013a; Pennycook, 2007). Further, postmodern globalization has created migration patterns comprising the mass movement of these global English users from one continent to another. ESL classrooms in the U.S., for instance, increasingly include students who are familiar with and use varieties of English other than the target standard variety (Nero, 2000; Jenkins, 2006).

English language classrooms in the U.S., however, have not kept pace with these 21st-century realities (Canagarajah, 2013b), and persistently display a monolingual orientation. For instance, the target language taught and learnt in an English classroom in the U.S. is standard American English; the textbook and other materials provided for teacher use in the programs are U.S.-centric and normalize the teaching of exclusively one English language variety; and English as a second language classrooms in the U.S. schools are still often visualized as populated with

students who 'speak little, no, or incorrect English,' regardless of the students' prior and current experiences with and exposure to multiple languages, including different Englishes. This is true for adult ESL settings as well.

As a result, even as students continue to bring their Englishes into the classroom, these Englishes remain invisible, unless explicitly discussed. Also, if the teacher in the classroom is unaware of the variations that exist in Englishes, it can lead to confusion and obstruct learning. In addition, sometimes teachers fail to acknowledge the different Englishes present in their classrooms as valid and valuable, and thereby miss an opportunity to validate their students' linguistic identities, learn from the linguistic diversity in the classroom, and draw upon the diverse identities to teach their students even more effectively. Further, teachers who are themselves proficient in a variety of English in addition to the target mainstream variety, and yet subscribe to a monolingual orientation that projects the target variety as more desirable and superior, may fail to validate their own translinguistic identities in the classroom.

In response to the monolingual paradigm and as an attempt to more accurately reflect the increasingly dynamic and complex global English realities, ideas around *translingualism* have begun to emerge in TESOL (see Canagarajah, 2012b; Canagarajah, 2013a; Horner, Lu, Royster, & Trimbur, 2011; Horner, NeCamp, & Donahue, 2011; Jain, 2013b; Motha, et al., 2012; Pennycook, 2008a, 2008b; Venuti, 1998). Writing about the need for the neologism 'translingual', Canagarajah (2013b) emphasizes that the term helps us to talk beyond the binaries of mono/multi and uni/pluri by providing an alternative to "such terms like multilingual or plurilingual

[that] keep languages somewhat separated evens as they address the co-existence of multiple languages" (p. 1). These ideas are part of a paradigm shift from the dominant monolingual orientation to a translingual orientation (Canagarajah, 2013a).

As part of this emerging paradigm, I collaborated with my colleagues to theorize about the notion of translinguistic identity-as-pedagogy (Motha, et al., 2012). In our collective inquiry, we asked ourselves how our translinguistic identities—as teachers who have undergone the cognitively complex processes of developing proficiency in multiple languages and language varieties—impact our pedagogies. We proposed that by acknowledging our translinguistic identities, we as teachers can strategically position ourselves to use our identities as pedagogical resources. Given the newness of this paradigm, there is a paucity of teacher-initiated inquiries into translingualism in ESL classrooms. Our collaborative inquiry helped address that gap.

With inquiry as my stance (Barnatt, 2009; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009d), I now investigate further how my translinguistic identity and the (budding) translinguistic identities of my students impacted conversations in my classroom. I examine ideas around translinguistic identity in pedagogy and developing students' translingual competence—the ability to use diverse codes across language varieties in ways that are contextually appropriate and that facilitate successful communication.

As I do so, I apply a critical lens and problematize even as I describe and discuss some of my own classroom practices in my practitioner inquiry. To the best of my knowledge, no similar inquiry has been undertaken and published by a teacher who is herself from a global English context, and has chosen to investigate how her

translinguistic identity may impact classroom discussions in an ESL classroom, with the objective of improving practice.

Contextualizing the Inquiry

I see myself as a research-engaged language teacher (Borg, 2010). In other words, I engage both *with* research and *in* research as part of my quest to become a more effective teacher of English as a second language. My engagement *with* research takes the shape of my reading current literature, both empirical and theoretical, and establishing connections between the current theories and my own practice. My engagement *in* research is exemplified by the systematic and intentional inquiries I undertake as a practitioner-researcher.

I am an adjunct professor at Port Community College, a mid-Atlantic community college. I conducted this inquiry as a systematic reflection-on-action (Schön, 1983). Here 'action' refers to the instruction and interactions that took place in my class at Port Community College during Spring 2010 and Summer 2010, and 'systematicity' refers to my structured data collection and analysis practices, as well as reflections on the way theory and practice intersected in my teaching (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009d). This is reflected in my writing as I weave in existing and emerging theories from the field of TESOL to investigate classroom data and make sense of those specific classroom episodes.

I taught three sections of preacademic intermediate writing to ESL learners over Spring and Summer 2010. The intermediate writing course aimed to develop the students' preacademic writing skills, with the final product oftentimes being simple paragraphs. My students in the three sections were very diverse in terms of

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ethnicities, nationalities, linguistic backgrounds, age, and duration of stay in the U.S. This diversity lent itself to lively classroom discussions and contributed to a rich teaching and learning experience.

Procedures

The data for this inquiry was generated organically as a normal part of the classroom life. In the first class in each section, I explained the research study to the students, both in writing and orally, and solicited their participation. I shared copies of the script (Appendix C) with the students, and gave them time to read the document. Then, I read out aloud and clearly from the document. This was followed by time for students' questions about the document in particular, and the research in general. I provided all necessary explanations to ensure that the students understood the contents of the document properly.

All students were informed that (a) they could ask me questions about the research throughout the duration of the study; (b) participation was voluntary; (c) participants could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits for which they would otherwise qualify; (d) participation or nonparticipation in the study would not affect the course grades; (e) only pseudonyms will be used during data analysis, interpretation, and reporting in order to protect the identity of each participant and ensure confidentiality; and (f) only I and the principal investigator were authorized to have access to the information linking participants' names with the assigned pseudonyms.

Once the students gave their consent, I began collecting the data by video and audio recording the classroom sessions, with the students' permission. During the two

semesters of data collection, I visited the recordings on a regular basis to aid in my reflections as well as lesson planning. These reflections and investigations, both during and after the period of instruction, became data analysis.

To speak in qualitative research terms, my approach to analyzing the data for this inquiry was to adapt grounded theory to fit into my practitioner inquiry. I collected the organic data as it was being generated during the period of instruction by using both teaching and research tools in an integrated manner. During this time, I continually revisited the data for pedagogical purposes primarily. As I reviewed the 'data,' I began to identify some common themes across the class sessions and started marking the data thematically for later review and analysis. After the teaching assignments had been completed, I continued to annotate the data selectively to identify chunks that seemed to connect with the emerging themes. This phase of data coding can be called 'open-coding,' to borrow adapted grounded theory terminology. However, unlike other 'grounded theory' studies, I did not code everything (as qualitative researchers who use grounded theory approach are often urged to do), although I read, heard, and viewed the data many times over, both during and post-instruction.

As I explained in previous chapters, the primary reason for not spending exhaustive amounts of time in coding 'everything' as the data was being generated during the period of instruction was to ensure that the 'research' did not overwhelm and prey upon the 'teaching'. Given the limited time I had, I made the choice to review the data (and mark it) primarily for pedagogical purposes, such as reviewing classroom episodes and discussions to plan subsequent lessons more effectively.

However, the marking and identification of broad themes that I carried out during this time was very helpful once I began to analyze the data deeply after the period of instruction. Given that I had already identified broadly a number of themes across the data, I was able to move on to the next step quite easily.

I next identified one specific theme (the sub-inquiry that I present here) that I wished to investigate further, and upon identifying this focus, I began to selectively transcribe relevant chunks and analyze them more ever more closely. Specifically, I began to narrow the analysis down to various instances in the data where the conversations in the classroom between the students and me briefly centered on variations in English at the level of everyday vocabulary. I next selectively transcribed these episodes and analyzed them further. This phase of data analysis was similar to 'axial-coding' as described in qualitative research literature around grounded theory.

In writing up this narrative of this sub-inquiry, I selected four specific instances (through procedures similar to 'selective coding'), spanning the three sections I taught between February 2010 and August 2010, to illustrate how even fleeting and seemingly innocuous episodes in a classroom can individually demonstrate the diversity within English in the classroom, and collectively emerge as opportunities to build (upon) students' translingual practices. I chose to focus on these fleeting moments, which I call 'classroom snippets', also to demonstrate that teachers' identities are ever-present in their pedagogy.

As I mentioned earlier, I adapted the grounded theory approach to match my practitioner inquiry. In addition to the explanations above, I say 'adapted' because

unlike 'true' grounded theory approach, where the 'theory' emerges from an analysis of the data primarily, I identified sections of data that seemed to connect with the existing and emerging theories around translingualism. My theorization was thus grounded in my data, but was informed and shaped closely by theories already out there in the field. I did not aim nor attempt to create my own unique theory although, as I hope to illustrate in this chapter, my inquiry helps extend the existing theorizations in the field.

Descriptions and Discussion

Classroom Snippet 1: In the bus/On the bus

The first classroom snippet is from the class session that took place on March 1, and occurred about an hour-and-half into the class session. It lasted about a couple of minutes in all. Earlier in the class, the students and I had discussed prepositions, and I was taking students' questions about preposition use, clarifying doubts and answering questions. The students were asking me about preposition usage that they had come across but not understood completely.

One of my students, from Brazil, asked me the difference between being 'in the bus' and 'on the bus.' In reply, I asked the student and the class, "Is there any difference? The man was *on* the bus. The man was *in* the bus. Are they incorrect or correct?"

The student began to think aloud different cases where she had heard the preposition 'in' being used: "in the bus, in the car, in the…" At this point, the student sitting next to her, who had arrived from Afghanistan a year before, said something to her that was not audible to me, but he seemed to be helping her out with the

confusion. I smiled as I saw them confer, and then said, "Right? You can say both. 'The man was on the bus', because what do you say, 'I got on to the bus'. So, here, people say 'I'm on the bus.'"

I saw confusion on the students' faces, and responded by acknowledging, "It's a little confusing. When you say, 'I'm on the bus,' it sounds like you're sitting on top of the bus." I raised my hand and gestured to show the height of someone sitting on top of a bus. The students responded by saying, "Yes. Yeah. Yes."

I continued, "Right? It's confusing, but over here…here…" The student from Brazil was still confused, and asked, "When I, when [do] I use 'on'?" The student from Afghanistan said "Like we go to Punjab for bus..with bus..by bus." As the student said this, revising his own English as he spoke, I assumed that he must have visited Punjab, a region that overlaps between Pakistan and India, and is accessible from Afghanistan. Further, it is possible that the student assumed that I would be familiar with Punjab too, and was comfortable making a reference to the region. He was correct. I was familiar with Punjab (I am ethnically a Punjabi and had likely mentioned it in the class before), and demonstrated it by responding, "Oh, my god. Yes, if you don't have space in the bus, you get on top of the bus."

The students laughed and I laughed with them saying, "You do that right? It's quite common in some countries." The student from Afghanistan affirmed it by saying, "Yeaa…I do a lot…a lot…" The student from Brazil said, "scared, scared", and the student from Afghanistan responded, "No! Not scared. It's amazing!"

There was some more discussion, and then I summed the discussion up by responding, "What I'm saying is, here, in this country people are more used to

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hearing you say 'on the bus'. If you were back home in India, like if I were back home in India, and if I said, "I'm on the bus," they would actually visualize me sitting on the top of the bus…, and they would get confused by that."

To an English speaker in the U.S., the expression 'in the bus' may sound a little awkward. American English speakers generally tend to say, "I'm on the bus," to indicate that they are traveling by bus at that given moment. It would be an unusual sight to see someone actually on the top of a bus in the U.S. (unless it is a tourist bus). Americans, in general, have no need to travel on top of buses. Therefore, if an American English speaker uses the expression 'on the bus' with another American English speaker, it will not cause confusion in the communication. The listener, if s/he happens to share the cultural expression, will know that what the speaker means is that s/he is inside the bus at the time of speech.

However, there are other parts of the world where the available resources are inadequate for the size of the population, and people are often forced to (or sometimes prefer to) travel on bus-tops. English speakers from such contexts may find the expression 'on the bus' suggestive of traveling actually on top of the bus. For instance, an English speaker in India might be puzzled by the expression, because in his/her repertoire of visual images, there may exist an actual image of people traveling on top of a bus (or clinging to its sides, and therefore 'on' the bus).

In such a context, if one wishes to convey the information that they are traveling by bus but not by sitting on top of it, a more accurate and less confusing expression would be 'I'm in the bus'. In such a scenario, saying "I'm on the bus" might actually sound like an arbitrary use of the preposition 'on', when the speaker is

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located 'inside' the bus. Being aware of this and in my capacity as the instructor, I had to convince my students that despite the 'arbitrariness', 'on the bus' was also correct and was the expression more commonly used in the U.S.

I was trying to help my students acquire communicative competence in the target American English. However, my approach was to build upon their existing English proficiency and help them acquire translinguistic competence. In order to do so, I had to draw upon my own translinguistic identity. Had I not done so and had I not shared the visual repertoire of my students as a result of our common translinguistic identities, I might have missed the cue, and failed to legitimize my students' identities as users of English in their home contexts.

Classroom Snippet 2: Full stop/period

The second snippet is from the class session that took place on March 15, 2010. We were discussing punctuation rules and my students were completing a related grammar exercise from their textbook. I was answering student questions and the following conversation took place.

One of the students, a compatriot from India, was clarifying a question about appropriate punctuation use, and said, "I put the full stop after…" I responded to his question, confirmed that his reasoning was sound, and then proceeded to say, "Yeah…since the sentence is ending there, you should put a full stop, or a period, there, right?"

I then paused and looked around at all the students in the class. I wanted to make sure that everyone was following the explanation, and asked, "Does everybody know what a 'full stop' is?"

Some students responded with '*yes*', others with '*no*'. Realizing that not all the students were on the same page regarding the synonyms 'full stop' and 'period', I continued, "It's the same thing as a 'period', ok, in places like Sri Lanka, India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, instead of saying 'period' we say 'full stop', right? That's why (Student 1) is saying 'full stop'. And I also sometimes say 'full stop', right? It's the same thing as a period. Did you all follow that?"

At this point, I turned back to the board to continue the lesson, when one of my Ethiopian students volunteered the information that they also use the term 'full stop' in their country. The other Ethiopian students nodded their heads in agreement. I responded by saying, "You also? In Ethiopia? Fascinating!" before turning my attention again back to the board.

The entire conversation lasted for exactly 42 seconds. However, it was rich in the way it made visible the translinguistic identities present in the room. Student 1 brought in his identity as an English speaker from India when he used the term 'full stop'. My response in turn attempted to build upon Student 1's existing vocabulary by including the American English equivalent: 'period'. It is possible that Student 1 was already familiar with the variation, but used the one that he was more familiar with and in the habit of using. It is also possible that he knew that I, as a fellow Indian[43], would be familiar with 'full stop' as well and therefore chose to use it in our conversation.

As the teacher, I wanted to make sure that everyone in the class was familiar with the variants, and could follow Student 1's question and my response. When I

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[43] I usually introduce myself as an Indian at the beginning of the semester, and often refer to my Indian background when teaching.

clarified that English users in several South Asian countries, with a common history of British colonization, use the term 'full stop' (equivalent to the American 'period'), my Ethiopian student expanded my own understanding of English usage in Ethiopia by sharing that they also use the term 'full stop'. Unfortunately, given that I needed to complete a certain portion of the textbook exercises that day, I had to return to the lesson, and put aside what could have been a fascinating discussion about variations in English usage in present-day post-colonial contexts.

Classroom Snippet 3: Parentheses/brackets

The third snippet that I share here is from the class session on March 16, the day after the 'full stop/period' discussion. The incident happened one hour and forty minutes into the class, and the specific conversation snippet lasted about 46 seconds.

I was reading aloud from the textbook, "Complete the paragraph below with the correct form of the verb in parentheses." I stopped there, knowing that some students could be unfamiliar with the word 'parentheses'. Turning to the whiteboard, I drew '( )', and said, "Parentheses means this, in brackets."
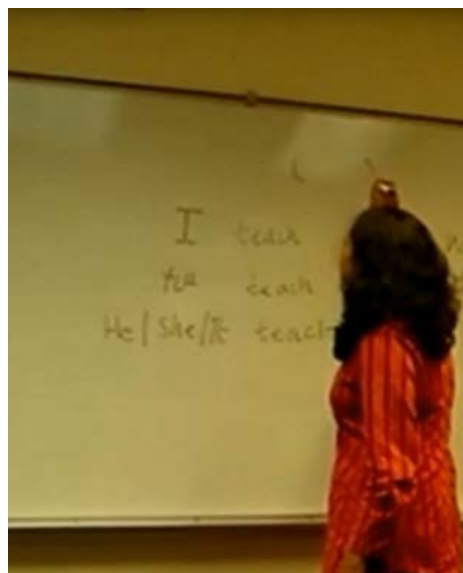
Image 4 Drawing '( )' on the whiteboard

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I then turned back to look at the students to make sure they were following me, and said, "Alright? Look at the word, the verb in the brackets and then conjugate that using this chart," pointing to the board where I had earlier written down a verb conjugation chart for simple present tense.

At this point, one of my students (from Ecuador), asked me, "Parentheses is the same as brackets?" I nodded in response, and turning back to the board, drew a line from ( ) and wrote down 'brackets' at the end of the line. "In some places, we say 'brackets'."

The student from Ecuador asked, "Where?" I paused in my writing, and looked at the student and replied, "Places like India," the student laughed, and I smiled in return and continued, "Sri Lanka, Ethiopia…" I turned to the couple from Pakistan in my class and continued, "…even Pakistan, I believe you say 'brackets'." The couple said together, nodding their heads, "Yes."

I drew another line from ( ) on the board, and wrote the word 'parentheses' at the end of it. I said, "When I first came here, I had no idea what this word 'parentheses' meant. I guessed it. I guessed it on my own by reading the text. I was like what..where..I don't see anything else that looks like a 'parenthesis' so it must be this," pointing to the board.

Image 5. Discussing brackets and parentheses

In this episode, I emphasized my own learning curve when I transitioned from the English language contexts in India to the English language contexts in the U.S. I often do so to demonstrate to my students that I empathize with their struggles with learning (a 'new') English as an adult, and to suggest that like me they can achieve the required levels of academic English proficiency to function successfully in the U.S. academic and professional settings.

As I explained what the word 'parentheses' meant, I used the synonym equivalent that was used in the Indian context – 'brackets'. Although, I did not go into the details (such as 'brackets' in the U.S. usually refer to [ ] or 'square brackets') to stay 'on task', I wanted to make sure my students from other post-colonial English contexts would know that the 'brackets' they were familiar with were called 'parentheses' in the U.S.

Classroom Snippet 4: Shops/Stores

The fourth classroom episode, and an especially powerful one, occurred on July 14, 2010, during the summer semester, about 20 minutes into the classroom session. The students and I had started reading a new chapter from the textbook that day. After an initial warm-up activity based on the chapter title 'Living in the Community' and an overview of the chapter objectives, I asked the students to look at the picture of a busy community on the first page of the chapter and asked them to describe it. The picture showed a main street lined with stores and apartments on either side, and with cars on the road and pedestrians crowding the walkways in front of the buildings. We had a brief discussion based on some prompts provided alongside the picture with students describing what they saw in the picture, and during the conversation, the following interaction took place.

Student 1, looking at the picture in the textbook, said "There are so many shops..." The student looked up, and I smiled and nodded in response, waiting for the student to give more description. The student continued, "There are many cars." Seeing that the student had finished speaking, I said, "Over here in this country, instead of saying 'shops' they say 'stores'. … in India also we say 'shops', so I'm familiar with that word. But over here,[writing 'store' on the board and pointing to it] the word that is usually used is 'stores', not 'shops'. They both mean the same, but it's good to know that over here…"

At this point, Student 2 who was from Ethiopia, interjected, "Eh..in our country," the student paused and then began again, "as I know, the store is like, you can buy all the same things. After I know these places, I know it's the same. But in

my country, a store is a place where you put stuff that you don't [use] like, say products and things like that."

"Yeah," I said, "that's where you store things. Right?"

The student said, "Yes."

I continued, "In India also a place where you can store things, storage spaces are called 'stores', but here 'shops' are called 'stores'."

Student 2 responded, "They are selling….they say 'store'."

I replied, "Right! So, that's, that's…it's English, but it's used differently in different spaces. So when you're talking to somebody from here, or you're describing [a shop] then it's better to use the word 'store' because they may not know what the word 'shop' means."

"Shops, they think, shoppings…," said Student 2, "they don't call it shop."

I said, "Right! So when they hear the word 'shop'," and wrote the word 'shop' on the board, "you might mean it as a noun," drawing a line from the word 'shop' and writing the word 'noun' at the end of it, "But they hear it as a verb. Right? For them it's to shop or shopping, like you said."

Student 2 nodded her head, and said, "Yeah."

I continued, "But when you say shop you can mean it in this way [pointing to the board where I had written 'noun']. So when you write a paragraph for someone here, try to remember that instead of using the word 'shop', use the word 'store', and when you are writing a letter in English to a friend back home or a friend from Ethiopia, then remember to use the word 'shop' instead of 'store'. Alright? If you know both of these words…"
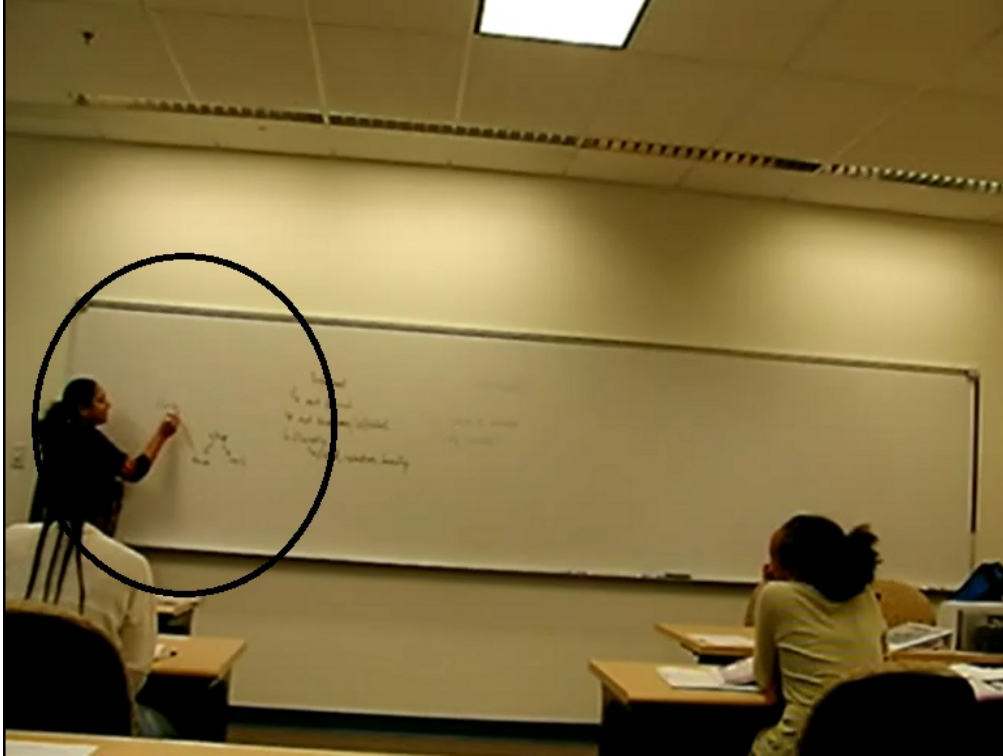
Image 6. 'Shops' and 'Stores'

The conversation, transcribed in the previous page, lasted less than two minutes, but was replete with indicators of the participants' rich transnational and translingual experiences. Student 1 (not visible in the image above) hailed from Cameroon, a West African nation that has a history of British (and French) colonization. His English, therefore, showed a historically British origin with its use of the word 'shops' for places that sell goods, instead of 'stores' as generally used in American English. As an Indian, I am familiar with similar patterns of use given India's own history of British colonization and the subsequent nativization of English (Annamalai, 2004) in the language landscape of the country.

When I, as the teacher, began to expand the student's English language repertoire by highlighting the difference between 'shop' and 'store' as used in different English contexts (Cameroonian, Indian, and the U.S.), Student 2 (on the

right hand side in the image) voluntarily brought in her knowledge of the English language context in her home country, Ethiopia[44], and facilitated the discussion with her insights. In doing so, she verbalized metalinguistic awareness and demonstrated that she was already learning to use English trans-contextually and developing translingual competence in terms of her ability to deal with diverse English codes across her home context in Ethiopia and the new 'target' context in the U.S.

In reflecting on this episode and investigating it more deeply, I realize that I simplified my explanations and clarifications to ensure that we kept moving at the required pace during the lesson. Again, I could have gone into more detail and depth, and drawn upon the students' translinguistic experiences to make the mutual learning richer and more meaningful. However, I was constrained by my own lesson plan and the materials I was using in the classroom.

I have now described each of the four snippets individually along with some discussion following each description. In the next section, I reflect on them *en masse*. In doing so, I make connections across the four incidents, and bring the critical insights that emerged as I analyzed and interpreted the data, and connected these reflections with current and emerging literature in the field.

Critical Reflections

The four classroom snippets demonstrate how, in a language classroom populated by global English users learning to negotiate the target English norms, even fleeting conversations can bring the (budding) translinguistic identities to the fore.

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[44] Unlike India (my home country) or Cameroon (student 1's home country), Ethiopia does not have a colonial history and does not share the long Anglophone background of some of the neighboring African nations (Schmied, 2006). Yet, over the past many decades, English has become the most widely-spoken foreign language, replacing French as the most common the medium of instruction in secondary schools as far back as the 1940s (Yigezu, 2010).

Whether initiated by me or by my students, these conversations made visible the diversity in the classroom and became opportunities for mutual learning.

My primary aim, as the teacher, was to raise my students' awareness of norms of the target English so that they could use the language competently in other settings. Given that many of my students brought prior knowledge of other global contexts of English use into the classroom, I had to compare and contrast the norms to facilitate student comprehension. In reiterating to my students to be aware of the target audience and the target context when choosing between the expressions 'in the bus' and 'on the bus', or the words 'shop' and 'store' as a noun; highlighting that 'full stop' and 'period' were synonyms; and indicating that 'parentheses' and 'brackets' could mean the same thing in two different English language contexts[45], my purpose was also hoping to build upon students' understanding of the diversity that exists within English varieties and usage, and thus exemplify translingual practice.

The four classroom snippets illustrate that diversity in terms of both *semiodiversity* and *glossodiversity*. Semiodiversity, or semodiversity as Halliday (Halliday, 2002, 2007) originally called it, refers to the diversity of meanings that exist in a language, as compared to glossodiversity which refers to diversity of languages as well as diversity of form between language varieties. Dominant models of global Englishes have thus far focused more on diversity in terms of form and language varieties, or glossodiversity (see Canagarajah, 2013a; Pennycook, 2008a). However, Canagarajah (2013a) reminds us, "We should not consider the diversity and appropriation of English in instances of form changes only. The same word or

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[45] or two different things in the same English language context, such as the U.S. However, I did not discuss this aspect at the time, given the constraints.

grammatical item can be made to index new values and meanings as it travels through diverse spatio-temporal contexts (p. 57)".

It is this diversity, encompassing both semiodiversity and glossodiversity, which was evident in the fleeting classroom discussions that I described in the preceding section. The vocabulary variations between 'full stop' and 'period', 'parentheses' and 'brackets', and 'shops' and 'stores' illustrate glossodiversity, with its change in terms of form between different varieties of English. The discussion around 'on the bus' and 'in the bus,' on the other hand, exemplifies both semiodiversity and glossodiversity. I acknowledged to my students that the expression 'on the bus' was confusing in its evocation of the image of passengers being literally 'on top of the bus', but reiterated that it was perfectly appropriate in an American English context as American English users understood that the expression referred to people riding on the bus, in terms of being seated inside it.

I was referring to the fact that the expression 'on the bus' was an example of semiodiversity as it could be 'made to index new values and meanings' in two different spatial contexts. My students and I also looked at the glossodiversity of the expressions 'on the bus' and 'in the bus' in terms of these expressions being synonymous despite the change in form from one context to another. I did not use the terms 'glossodiversity' and 'semiodiversity' in the classroom due to time constraints and potential cognitive overload (Cummins, 2000) on the students. Instead I explained by simply stating that "It's English, but it's used differently in different contexts."

By making my students aware of the diversity that exists in global English contexts, I was hoping to enable my students to become strategic in their use of appropriate codes according to their audience and purpose of communication. As Canagarajah (2013a) writes, "Translingual practice applies…to the strategies of engaging with diverse codes, with the awareness that the shape of the final textual products will vary according to the contextual expectations (p. 8)"

Willing English language teachers can investigate and draw upon students' potential translinguistic knowledge, to make all students aware of the diversity that exists in global Englishes. Such an approach serves both the English language learners in the classroom who already possess diverse English language resources, as well as such English language learners who may not have translinguistic experiences in English but would benefit from such explicit instruction to be able to communicate effectively across a diverse global English community. In my conversations with Sharon, my critical friend (Samaras, 2011), I articulated this approach:

> The purpose behind taking these classes and learning to be proficient in the language is not always only to be understood by the Americans…it's becoming rapidly globalized, very multicultural setting, and it might be more useful for them to be aware that there are many Englishes that exist and…to get them used to the idea that they should be able to pick between those different Englishes…because that might be much more helpful to them in a diverse work setting… (Conversation, March 4, 2010)

I try to teach from a translingual perspective, one that "treats diversity as the norm in the study of English" (Canagarajah, 2013a, p. 75). This is especially relevant as many

of my students at Port Community College came from multilingual contexts. Specifically, *all* of my students during spring and summer 2010 indicated in their responses to an initial questionnaire that they could speak more than one language, and of the total of 35 students in the three sections I taught, 27 (more than 77%) responded that they had learned English in their home countries/countries of origin.

Further, the students were expected to have sufficient reading and writing skills in English to be enrolled in an intermediate writing class. Additionally, the one common language in the classroom between all the members was English, and we all used English to communicate verbally with each other. As a result, I viewed my all students as both English language users and English language learners.

My aim in the classroom is to help improve students' competence in a U.S. English setting, not to 'get rid of' their 'accents' or 'replace' their existing English competencies with the target English norms. I hope to prepare them for future settings where they may have to communicate with and demonstrate their English proficiency to someone in a more powerful position who may have a monolingual orientation to English (Canagarajah, 2013a). Such a person may lack the translinguistic insights into global contexts of English usage and an awareness of the global Englishes in present-day post-colonial settings. As a result of the person's linguistic ethnocentrism, linguistic misunderstandings (Nero, 2006) may occur and the students may end up being repeatedly penalized and denigrated for using English differently from the U.S. norm.

My dilemma is that despite having experienced and practiced translingualism all my life as an Indian, I am preparing my students to operate successfully in current

monolingually-oriented systems[46]. This is primarily because having been exposed to linguistic ethnocentrism and monolingual ideologies (Canagarajah, 2013b) frequently during my time in the U.S. (see Motha, et al., 2012; Oxford & Jain, 2010), my instinct is to prepare my students for those realities. I am one of those teachers who, as Canagarajah (2013a) writes, "fear[s] that deviating from SWE is costly for multilingual…students" (p. 109), especially in the inequitable linguistic landscape in the U.S.

My compromise, far from an ideal one, is to ensure that students do not lose their existing English and to build (upon) their translinguistic competence so that they can function successfully in the U.S. academic and professional settings. As Canagarajah (2013a) writes,

> The translingual paradigm does not disregard established norms and conventions as defined for certain contexts by dominant institutions and social groups. What is more important is that speakers and writers negotiate these norms in relation to their translingual repertoire and practices. (pp. 8-9)

I say that my compromise is far from ideal because a truly critical pedagogy would have challenged the inequities inherent in the system and tried to level the playing field for my students. However, given that I had the students for only a few weeks in my classroom and that I myself am an adjunct in a community college setting, I did not know how to make things more equitable for my students outside of my own classroom.

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[46] I can trace parallels with critical pedagogy in my intention to make my students aware of the dominant norms, in order to empower to use language strategically in contexts where the dominant norms operate.

Inside the classroom, my teaching was constrained by the materials I was required to use. For instance, the textbook that I was using in the classroom normalized the U.S. standard English as the target language and provided little space for acknowledging and accommodating the other Englishes present in the classroom. Sharon, my critical friend in the inquiry, made a similar observation during one of our conversations. She has been teaching in the community college context for many years, and mentioned how the textbooks we use normalize the practice of using North American English as a universal standard.

As I reviewed the snippets, I recognized that my explanations could have been more lucid, and I would have been greatly helped if I and my students had been using a textbook that facilitated discussions around translingual Englishes while helping students increase their proficiency in the target English and helping me learn more about my students' diverse Englishes. However, since this was not the case, I had to create a dialogue about global Englishes and translingualism myself in my pedagogy by frequently drawing upon my own translinguistic identity as a pedagogical resource. My hope was that the students would respond with their own (trans)linguistic insights, and as evidenced in the previous section, they certainly did.

Implications

In this section, I discuss some of the insights and implications for teaching and inquiry that emerged from my practitioner inquiry. Specifically, I emphasize the need for acknowledging and validating the translinguistic identities present in global English classrooms, as well as try to make a case for teachers to engage in practitioner inquiries.

Making a case for validating translinguistic identities

At a logistical level, it is imperative for teachers to know about their students' prior experiences and backgrounds, in order to be able to draw upon those experiences as resources in the classroom. My knowledge of my students' prior English learning and use did not arise out my familiarity with global contexts of English alone. Early on in the semesters, I requested the students to fill out simple questionnaires eliciting specific information about whether they had learned English in their 'home' contexts. Many of my students self-reported having learned English (as an additional language) in their countries of origin.

I wonder what may not have happened in the classroom, had I not brought in my translinguistic insights—and hence my translinguistic identity—to the classroom discussions. The situation gets compounded if the teacher also comes from a context where a variety different from American English is used, but fails to validate all her English(es) and her own translinguistic identity. On the other hand, when the teacher validates her own linguistic identities, it opens up the space for students to bring their own languages into the classroom in a productive and relevant manner, and presents opportunities for the teacher to learn more deeply about her students' translinguistic identities.

I modified the original questionnaire to include the question of the different contexts where the students may have learned English. This was based on my own understanding of the global contexts where English is taught and used, built through my life experiences as well as my graduate studies. For instance, in summer 2007 I had assisted in the instruction of a graduate course at my university where we had

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discussed the historical spread and current realities of English in global contexts, and

had conducted a collaborative practitioner inquiry with the primary instructor which

had helped consolidate my understanding of global Englishes (see Oxford & Jain,

2010).

I wonder if had I not had the lived experiences and educational background of

functioning in multiple contexts of English, I could have made the error of simply

'correcting' my student and moving on with the lesson. Thus a 'teaching and learning

moment' would have been lost. However, I wanted my students to retain and develop

their translingual competence in terms of their exposure to different kinds of

Englishes in different global English contexts—their home countries/countries of

origin as well as the target context, that is the U.S. (See Figure 15)
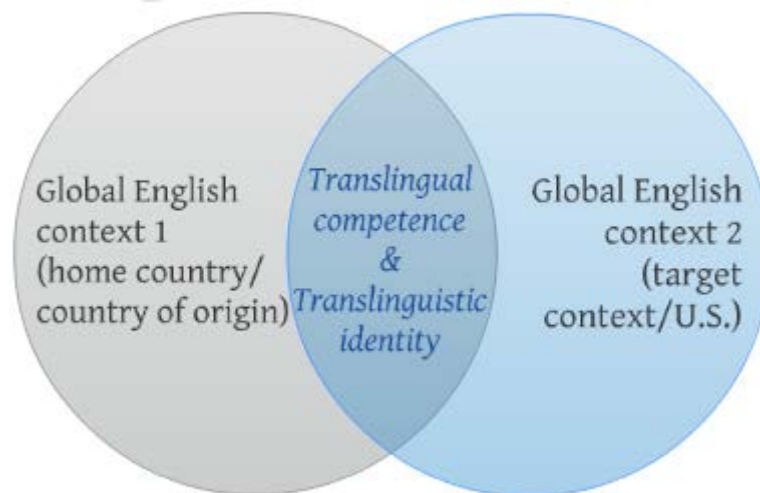
Figure 15. Developing translingual competence and a translinguistic identity across different global English contexts

I was thus validating my students as global English language users even as I

taught them in their roles as (target) English language learners. Such an additive

approach to language instruction, where the learners' prior language learning and

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identity is validated even as the new norms of the target language are taught, has been shown to be beneficial to language learning.

In doing so, I also co-created spaces in the classroom where my students and I could bring up our prior English language learning experiences as well as our (developing) translinguistic competence to share with others. However, my work as a translinguistic teacher does not end here. In preparing my students to acquire 'new' codes of the target standard variety, I come dangerously close to pluralizing monolingualism, where "multilingualism champions the use of separate codes rather than challenging their existence" (Pennycook, 2007, p. 49). In future inquiries, I need to delve more deeply into this issue and look for ways to make my teaching more equitable, and to challenge the system that makes it difficult to do so in the first place. After all, in a truly equitable world, the 'monolingual' professors reading my students' paragraphs, would know about and accept the interchangeability of 'shops' and 'stores'; 'parentheses' and 'brackets'; 'full stops' and 'periods'; and 'in the bus' and 'on the bus'. In other words, they would be aware of and receptive to the inherent glossodiversity and semiodiversity present in postmodern postcolonial translinguistic classrooms. They would be truly translingual themselves.

Making a case for engaging in practitioner inquiry

Traditionally, teachers are expected to take theory and apply it as best they can to their classroom realities. Yet, it is often argued that theory tends to be practice-light and practice tends to be theory-light (Levine & Phipps, 2010). The frequent disconnect between theoretical assumptions, usually derived from university-based

research, and practical realities in the classroom often lead to teachers giving up trying to apply theory to their practice.

Research-engaged (Borg, 2010) practitioners, including classroom teachers, can help provide an alternative to this dilemma. By engaging in inquiries where teachers themselves theorize deeply about specific aspects of their practice and embed this theorizing in literature current in their discipline, teacher researchers can help bridge the theory-practice gap directly.

Engaging in inquiry also allows teachers to focus on specific aspects of their instruction that they may not be able to do otherwise in a structured and systematic way. It helps put the spotlight on those fleeting moments in the classroom that are important strands woven into the classroom fabric, but may otherwise go unexamined. It is in the post-teaching reflection-on-action that the teacher herself can make her implicit beliefs explicit. Teachers can choose to conduct such an inquiry systematically and intentionally, and then make public the knowledge generated.

However, teacher researchers cannot and should not be expected to reproduce university-based academic research practices in their own inquiries. The field of educational research needs to recognize that teacher inquiries require adaptation and innovation of research in ways that are non-parasitic on teaching and sustainable in the long run. Teachers should be encouraged to take ownership of this process, and define for themselves the research practices that seem to best suit their questions and contexts.

Existing literature around teacher research, especially action research, often urges teachers to find a 'problem' and focus on it as part of their inquiry. However, as

I illustrate, teacher researchers need not necessarily identify 'problems[47]' (followed by appropriate 'interventions' or 'innovations' to 'improve' the situation and study their effectiveness in a typical action research project) in their pedagogy to engage in deeply theoretical yet relevant inquiries.

I hope to illustrate that teacher inquiries can be carried out in ways that are sustainable with teaching. Through my own inquiry where I integrated teaching and research tools, and adapted a grounded theory approach to conduct deeper analysis of the data post-instruction, I demonstrate that teachers can theorize deeply about their own practice without having to mimic exactly traditional educational research practices.

In fact, teacher inquiries may be well suited for engaging in deeper reflection in those very fleeting moments in pedagogy that could pass by uninvestigated in the daily humdrum of classroom life and the quest to solver larger and immediately visible 'problems'. Hammer and Shifter (2001) note that:

> [t]eacher perceptions and intentions are often tacit. They must be because in the course of everyday teaching, teachers must take in and process more information than explicit thought could accommodate. No teacher could articulate all of his or her perceptions and intentions. Similar to practitioners' thinking in other fields, such as chess, medicine, or architecture, teachers' thinking is largely unarticulated and contextual (Schön, 1983) unless they work specifically to make it explicit.

Engaging in inquiry can help teachers articulate explicitly their perceptions and intentions. I would further argue that the teacher is well-positioned to inquire into

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[47] The language most commonly used in action research, for instance.

those fleeting moments (as opposed to a dispassionate outside observer), as s/he can recall and capture implicit details, by him/herself or with the help of critical friends (Samaras, 2011), about that moment that an outsider may not.

Conclusion

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009b) define 'local knowledge' as "both a way of knowing about teaching and what teachers and communities come to know when they build knowledge collaboratively" (p. 45). Explaining further, the authors state that local knowledge can be "understood as a process of building and critiquing conceptual frameworks that link action and problem-posing to an immediate teaching context as well as to larger and more public social, cultural, and political issues" (p. 45).

Engaging in this practitioner inquiry has helped me understand more deeply the political nature of language in the classroom, and theorize my practice by making connections between theoretical constructs, including my own prior theorizing in collaboration with my colleagues (Motha, et al., 2012), and my actual classroom teaching. Also, by engaging in these empirical and conceptual inquiries, I am creating future opportunities for tapping into my translinguistic identity as a pedagogical resource, and to problematize the way English is taught in ESL classrooms. To deny the role that my identities and beliefs play in my classroom practice, and the political nature of the English language teaching enterprise, would be to forfeit control over the ways in which they collectively shape the events in my classroom and to leave the potential of my translinguistic identity as a pedagogical tool unrealized (Motha, et al., 2012).

As the classroom snippets indicate, I was performing a postcolonial, postmodern, and poststructural identity (albeit, not always consciously). I did not go into the classroom with a specific political agenda or with clearly delineated goals of empowerment, but I realize that, as Pennycook writes, "Language is always already political" (p. 95). My work could be seen as an instance of how teachers and students can co-create a learning environment that is more critical despite the constraints imposed by a set curriculum (such as a prescribed textbook) as well as institutional restraints (such as the duration of a class). In my work, indeed in the work of any translingual teacher, there is the potential to view English language teaching as a form of translingual activism (Pennycook, 2008b).

However, being in the classroom, working with my students, is not where the translingual activism should end. I also need to step out of the classroom regularly to work with fellow practitioners in the field to raise awareness about the worlds of Englishes that students bring into the classroom and to learn from scholars about emerging theorizations around translingualism. I need to then bring those critical insights back into the classroom to make the English language teaching and learning enterprise a more affirming one for my students. When I do that, I can say that I am truly working with a social justice perspective[48] towards making the linguistic landscape more equitable for 'English language learners'.

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[48] When I successfully carry out such critical work inside and outside the classroom, I can begin to say that I am engaging in critical praxis (Freire, 2000) where I am reflecting and acting upon the world with the hope that in the process it will be transformed into a more equitable and just place for translinguistic English language learners. As I believe that I am yet to reach that point of professional action, I avoid using the term 'praxis' in this dissertation to describe my work, and instead draw upon Schön's concepts of reflection in and on action to define my dissertation. I discuss this in more detail in Chapter 7.

In the previous section, I turned a critical eye towards my own work, I can problematize my practice by asking if my pedagogy in the classroom as evidenced through my inquiry championed more multilingualism than translingualism. I now expand upon my reflections and problematize my own teaching by asking myself some uncomfortable questions.

In asking my students to follow the conventions of American Standard English in a future college classroom, was I perpetuating the inequalities or was I helping my students become strategic in their use of variations within English? Further, in trying to level the playing field, was I myself falling into the 'deficit' orientation by viewing the monolingual professor as lacking awareness of different Englishes operating in their classrooms? Was I thus perpetuating some stereotypes myself? Was I engaging in a kind of ethnocentricism (Cook, 1999), perhaps translinguistic ethnocentricism, and inadvertently measuring one group (the hypothetical monolingual professors) against the norm of another (my multicomponent and translinguistic students) by seeing monolinguals as 'failed' translinguals?

Was I continuing the 'status quo' by telling my students to maintain the use of American Standard English when interacting with an American audience? To paraphrase Canagarajah's (2013a, p. 199) criticism of postmodern discourses, were my well-intentioned postmodern discourses encouraging students to compromise, rather than challenge, and thus not really an empowering one. Was I guilty of telling my students to effectively 'reduce' their home 'accents' in their writing for a U.S. academic audience? In other words, was I taking the pragmatist's position in my

approach to teaching about writing (Canagarajah, 2013a)? Did I unwittingly marginalize those students who did indeed study English primarily as a foreign language confined within the classroom walls?

Many of these questions are a result of trying to engage in translingual practices in a context determined by a monolingual orientation at the systemic level[49]. The participants (my students and I) may exemplify translingualism, and yet the context (the setting, the program, the course materials) exemplifies a monolingual paradigm. This tension was manifested in my using a multilingual discourse to identify English language practices in different contexts. I made frequent references to the different nationalities, including my own, present in the classroom, an essentially modern construct. I referred to the variations that exist in English usage across these nations. That is a multilingual construct. And yet, I am trying to move towards a translingual paradigm in terms of my pedagogy. In order to fully explore my translinguistic identity, I need to constantly remind myself of something that Suresh Canagarajah emphasized to me recently: "You present your identity as Indian. But I think it is your hybrid/transnational identity that also helps you understand American norms and serve as a good mediator between diverse norms for your students. You are a translingual teacher!" (E-mail communication on March 30, 2013)

This translingualism is my lived reality that I was sharing with my students. I do so mindful that the students are likely being exposed to other discourses that

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[49] In a way, this thesis itself is an exercise in translingual practice, wherein I am writing a high-stakes extensive academic document for a U.S.-centric context where standard American English is the accepted and expected norm. I have thus deliberately chosen to use, for instance, American English spellings throughout the text, except in one case where I use the Hindi/Sanskrit word 'avatar' in Chapter 2 and in cases where I am quoting other people and honoring their English(es).

constantly challenge their translinguistic identity, having been exposed to such discourses myself, even within the relatively intellectual and safe environment of the academy (see Motha, et al., 2012). I realize, from a poststructuralist perspective, that human agency is both individual and social, and is co-constructed (Pavlenko, 2002), and I worry about my students being exposed to discourses that refuse to see them as legitimate English language users. I am aware that, as Canagarajah (2013a) writes,

> It is important to emphasize that power and dominant ideologies restrict possibilities of community and identity in diverse social contexts. Any effort toward voice and resistant identities has to strategically negotiate power structures and discourses. (p. 199)

These and many other thoughts are part my problematizing my own practice, knowing that I have no immediate answers to my own questions that are grounded in events that occurred three years ago. I thus acknowledge the limits of my own knowing. The only claims I can make are for I, myself. I also acknowledge that I cannot satisfactorily answer all the questions. But therein lays the richness of practitioner research. Such questions become part of the ongoing problematizing, reflecting, conceptualizing, and theorizing, and I hope to continue seeking answers in my current and future questions.

Chapter 7: Implications and Conclusion

The challenge is to extend one's identity without losing it.
(Julian Edge, 1997)

I have come a long way from that time when I first started to question the perceived dichotomy between teaching and researching. Over the previous six chapters, I hope to have demonstrated what a practitioner dissertation may look like when it focuses on the continuities between research and teaching, thus answering my own primary research question. As I reflect on this dissertation journey, I can trace my own development as a practitioner researcher from the beginnings of my dissertation work to now culminating into this thesis. Drake and Heath (2011) describe doctoral theses as exemplifying endeavors of professional reflexion-in-action. I believe that my thesis exemplifies this[50], even as my practice of practitioner research and inquiry is ongoing beyond the completion of this doctorate. In this final chapter, I explore the implications of my dissertation work in relation to my primary and emergent research questions, and conclude my thesis with some thoughts on the identity that I have begun to visualize for myself on this journey.

Implications

My doctoral dissertation has many implications for the fields of both teacher education and TESOL. Although the implications overlap, I attempt to list as distinctly as possible in this section. I hope to illustrate that my dissertation work is an instance of "doctoral work…individualized and undertaken successfully by those practitioner-researchers who are able to understand the relations between higher

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[50] As I describe in Chapter 5, engaging in my practitioner dissertation and writing thesis had elements of reflection in action, reflection on action, and reflection on reflection-in-action.

education practices: research, professional and pedagogic" (Drake & Heath, 2011, p. 5).

Implications for teacher preparation and professional development

Traditional teacher preparation and professional development have generally focused on 'experts' imparting knowledge about teaching and research practices to preservice and in-service teachers, through teacher certification programs based out of universities and other post-secondary institutions or through professional development schools. While such knowledge has its place and value, practitioner inquiry offers additional and alternative substantive ways of engaging in the generation and dissemination of knowledge that result in actual and meaningful change in the classroom (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2009).

However, teachers cannot be taught to engage in and with research (Borg, 2009, 2010) successfully without teacher preparation programs and professional development schools adequately addressing the questions of sustainability and relevance. If teachers are taught research methods that are incompatible with teaching or exposed to research literature that does not immediately connect to classroom realities, then it is little wonder that teachers would resist engaging in and with research beyond the requirements of the professional development workshops.

For instance, teacher-research courses in teacher-preparation programs are often limited to teaching action research. Teacher research, however, as I have demonstrated in my dissertation, is more than action research. It is important to examine the content of 'teacher research' courses and the 'teacher research' methodologies teachers are introduced to. This is especially critical as increasingly

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teachers are required to do research as part of their professional work in schools (Hammer & Schifter, 2001) and as coursework in teacher education programs in university settings. Therefore, simply requiring teachers to conduct practitioner inquiries during their student teaching period may not ensure that they will understand the intentional nature of inquiry, develop an inquiry stance, or continue to engage in practitioner inquiry in their own classrooms (Barnatt, 2009). If teachers enrolled in these courses and professional development workshops are taught methodologies without adequate examination of whether the methodologies are viable, sustainable, and relevant to actual instructional settings, then teachers may be put on a predictable path where the teachers are turned off 'research' completely. Teacher educators need to work with teachers to create and adapt research approaches and methodologies that work with real-life teaching.

The single-most important factor that deters teachers from engaging in research seems to be time (see Barnatt, 2009; Borg, 2009). I have hoped to demonstrate that an integrated approach to practitioner research or a pedagogical student-centered methodology (Boozer, 2007) may offer a solution here. Instead of trying to identify topics of research prior to teaching or engaging in a specific line of inquiry during teaching, teachers could maintain an inquiry stance, letting the questions emerge from an initial analysis of data collected naturally through classroom life, and conduct deeper analyses of the data post-instruction as part of ongoing inquiry.

Also, the nature of doing research in a classroom can be quite similar to teaching in that classroom. Researchers going into a classroom can never be

completely in control of all the 'variables' in and outside the classroom that impact what's happening in the classroom. This is especially true for teachers who research their own contexts (e.g., Li, 2006). Both teaching and researching in real-life instructional contexts require an acceptance of the unexpected, and a willingness to adapt each time. Unlike a sterilized laboratory setting, where an experiment usually goes as expected through a rigidly controlled environment, classrooms are like real life – the unexpected happens on a regular basis, and often gives vitality to the classroom life. Teachers often capitalize on this vitality to find 'teaching moments' when they are able to teach even more effectively. Similarly, teachers doing research in their own real-life classroom contexts may stumble across similar 'research moments' when 'richer' data is generated and the participants are able gain valuable insights. Some practitioner-researchers may thus choose to use an approach that combines initial planning with ongoing adaptation (e.g., Li, 2006).

It was beyond the scope of this study to explore the reasons behind the tension and the perceived conflict between practitioner role and researcher role in many instances of practitioner-researcher. The available literature also does not adequately explain this phenomenon in satisfactory depth. If it happens that research conflicts with teaching, then why do teachers persist in carrying out practitioner research? My readings of the published literature have allowed me to get a broad sense of 'why'.

I have seen that in some cases, the teachers felt that the long-term pluses of conducting the inquiry outweighed the short-term negatives. Also, some teachers felt that the advantages of carrying out inquiry into their own teaching context compensated for the disadvantages (e.g., Canagarajah, 1993). In both cases, teachers

have an agency in their research project. They *choose* to do the practitioner inquiry, and that may account for their largely positive feelings about practitioner research.

A second scenario is where teachers may carry out inquiries not out of their own choice, but due to institutional requirements. This is especially true of many teacher certification programs where enrolled teachers (both preservice and in-service) are increasingly required to carry out teacher inquiry projects (Barnatt, 2009). However, as I have noted, these programs may not able to provide teachers with research tools and practices that can be easily transferred to their teaching practices (Reis-Jorge, 2007) or set up in ways to inadvertently encourage student teachers to base their "pedagogical and research decisions on outside referents and not their own practices" (Montoya-Vargas, et al., 2011, p. 169).

If adequate scaffolding is not provided to the teachers and, more importantly, they are not acknowledged as valid knowledge producers, along with strategies to minimize/eliminate teacher-researcher role conflict, teachers may carry out the research to meet program or institutional requirements, and yet develop ambiguous understandings of, say, action research (L. Valli, 2000). In the same vein, when teachers see research as a 'project' the message they receive is that engaging in research and inquiry "is something that is turned off and on at given points in time with the lines separating teaching and inquiry clearly drawn" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2011, p. 20).

A third scenario is where teachers engage in research voluntarily and willingly for such reasons as improvement in teaching, professional development, and problem solving in the instructional contexts (Borg, 2009). However, this may occur without

the teachers paying adequate attention to potential conflict in being practitioner-researchers or even the awareness that they are engaging in practitioner research (e.g., Li, 2006, p. 454). Such teachers may find themselves in the middle of a study/teaching, and struggling to balance the two roles. From there, it may either lead to eventual teacher burnout or to the teacher developing a deeper understanding of the connections between researching and teaching in the same context and learning to 'balance' the two (e.g., Li, 2006).

If teachers wish to carry out an integrated practitioner research, then they need to design their study around their instruction in such a way that there would be no conflict between 'research' and 'teaching'. It may sound simple, but there are instances of studies (including dissertations), where the teacher researchers did not plan their study entirely around their instruction, and therefore later struggled to reconcile the two roles. The design and the implementation of the study play a critical role in determining whether the two roles will be conflicting, complementary, harmonious, or integrated. That is not to say that all practitioner research must integrate teaching and research seamlessly. Sometimes, tension is good, and dissonance can be productive.

Above all, the research focus must determine the study design, methodology, and implementation (not the other way around). If the research questions mean that research needs will be different from teaching needs, then teacher researchers need to be prepared to encounter tension in their study and teaching. However, my point is that teaching and research need not always be so.

An integrated approach to practitioner research, one that combines teaching and research, may also be more ethical. In it, a teacher remains cognizant of harmonizing and amalgamating the 'two' roles and taking decisions based on what would be in the best interest of students (for instance, being transparent about the research, telling students ahead of time and answering questions as they arise, not requiring students to do any additional purely data-oriented tasks, taking student comfort into account when collecting data through video/audio taping, and so forth). Such an approach has certain advantages, as well as limitations. It is different from other approaches to practitioner inquiry described in literature—not better, nor worse. It simply increases the range of teacher research, and provides an additional or alternative way of doing practitioner research.

Engaging in holistic and integrated practitioner research can also set the stage for later studies that go into more detail of a specific aspect of the data already gathered, if the teacher researchers have the time and the inclination to do so. This is especially true of beginning teachers. This insight came to me when I was listening back to the comments and suggestions of my committee after my proposal presentation. Despite having taught one semester a few months prior, I still considered myself a novice community college ESL instructor. My committee suggested that one of the things I could do to make my ambitious study more manageable was to focus on a specific aspect early on in the study. It was a good suggestion. However, my novice status made it difficult for me to find such a focus early on. There was so much going on in the classroom that demanded my time and attention. I believe that if I had tried to narrow down the focus of my 'research' to a

specific kind of data or a specific emerging theme in the data, other aspects of my

teaching would have suffered, which would have been in direct violation of my

determination to not let my research become parasitic in any manner on my teaching.

On the other hand, I kept the suggestion in mind, as I began to analyze the data, and

this suggestion became foundational to my notes to myself about further research that

I could do from my dissertation data or data gathered from another similar

instructional site.

Engaging in an integrated practitioner inquiry has thus enabled me to "reflect

critically on [my] own practice, and to articulate that reflection to [my]self and to

others," in my goal to become a 'master' teacher (Erickson, 1986, p. 157). Other

beginning teachers could be encouraged to do the same. They can use an integrated

practitioner research approach to get a broad as well as thorough understanding of

their instructional context, and then later delve into deeper detail about specific

aspects of the instructional episode or transfer their understanding to another context,

and look more deeply at a specific aspect there. I suggest here that an integrated

approach to practitioner research is helpful but not necessarily the only way. It allows

teachers to maximize and capitalize on the researchful elements of their teaching.

However, teachers can take ownership of the research process and adapt it to their

unique contexts and to their individual pedagogical goals. In her dissertation, Bearse

shared the following insight from her cooperating teacher, Ms. Hamilton, about what

she had learned from the teacher research project:

> An excellent teacher is always researching. You must do research to inform
>
> your future practice …Pick one class a year and focus on one aspect of your

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teaching. Collect data and look at it each week for an hour…write an article at

the end of the year for a professional journal and present it to interested

colleagues. Basically, teaching cannot exist without ongoing teacher-research.

(Ms. Hamilton's notes as cited in Bearse, 2003, p. 217)

I would like to reiterate the point I made in the introductory chapter of this

dissertation: that of teachers being knowledge-makers and theory-doers. Boozer

(2007) illustrates this point eloquently,

The paramount appeal of starting my Ph.D. program was the lure of working

alongside other experienced teachers in a communal study of education—

hearing their theories and developing confidence in my right to identify as a

theorist, myself. That right, however, is due all teachers, not merely those

engaged in doctoral programs and dissertation research. Whether we are

actually engaged in sharing our thoughts with others, we are all theorists when

we teach and consider our teaching. (p. 169)

Teachers can find answers to their practice-oriented questions by engaging with and

in research. Engaging in research may be of more immediate use, however, as instead

of abstract, it can be made specific to the teacher's own questions. By enabling and

legitimatizing teachers as researchers, teachers can cut out the middlemen from the

theory to practice processes. In other words, if the primary purpose of educational

research is to answer teachers' questions, that purpose can be achieved directly by

teachers doing research to find answers to their questions that academic research may

not adequately or specifically address.

However, teachers need to be supported in being able to carry out such reflexive inquiries post-instruction. Back-to-back teaching schedules may leave teachers with little time for engaging in reflection and inquiry. In my case, once I completed the data collection (and the teaching), I could no longer work off-campus due to my status as an international student on an F1 visa. That gave me the time to focus on a continued analysis of the data along. Teachers need to be given all support possible, including breaks in-between teaching assignments to engage in inquiry and research. Further, the responsibility of applying research to teaching cannot be put on the shoulders' of teachers alone, whether preservice or in-service. It is the collective responsibility of all stakeholders in the community including, and I would argue especially, those in leadership or power positions (within their classrooms, and in their programs, departments, colleges, and schools) with the authority to introduce reforms as needed.

Implications for doctoral education

Writing about students who pursue doctorates in education, Golde and Walker (2006) note that, "For many, 'researcher' is not, nor will it ever be, at the center of their professional identity, which presents [a] challenge to faculty, for whom research is usually an integral part of their professional identity." It is to be appreciated that despite such challenges, faculty in doctoral programs often allow their students to pursue practitioner dissertations and thus render an important service to their community. Such programs potentially prevent their doctoral students' experience of multimembership from being limited to private musings. As Wenger (1998) states:

… the experience of multimembership can become so private that it no longer fits within the enterprise of any community. The potentially difficult work of reconciliation can be facilitated by communities that endeavor to encompass, within their own practice, an increasing portion of the nexus of multimembership of their members…In other words, the work of reconciliation can be integrated in the community's enterprise and thus, to some extent, become part of a shared learning practice. Such communities will not only gain the allegiance of their members, they will also enrich their own practice. (p. 216)

However, when the same programs do not provide coursework that directly addresses the epistemological and methodological issues of conducting practitioner research work, then a significant disconnect is created between what the doctoral students are being taught and what they need to know to complete their practitioner dissertations successfully.

It is understandable, however, why colleges of education in research universities may not offer such coursework, especially given that the field of practitioner research and inquiry in general is still evolving and there may not be enough educators to teach such courses at the graduate level. I hope that for such faculty members interested in offering coursework in practitioner dissertations, such dissertations as mine can contribute to the content of relevant doctoral education courses.

I would also suggest that dissertation advisors and guides encourage their doctoral students and candidates to read fellow students' dissertations. In the case of

practitioner-researchers, especially, reading such dissertations can boost the feeling of legitimacy and community that may otherwise hamper a doctoral candidate pursuing practitioner research as doctoral dissertation. Due to certain circumstances, I was not able to participate in a writing group, nor participate in discussions with my peers about their dissertation work. However, by reading electronic copies of dissertations that had been published, I felt that I learned and remained intellectually engaged in the 'field' and belonged to a community of fellow 'dissertators' across time and space.

I would like to revisit the notion of inquiry as stance in the context of all instances of practitioner research conducted at doctoral level (course-based research projects, pilot studies, and dissertation). Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2011) state that when inquiry is reduced to a time-bound project or a method or steps for solving problems, it becomes restricted and narrow. On the other hand, when inquiry is a stance, it becomes a "worldview, a critical habit of mind, a dynamic and fluid way of knowing and being in a world of educational practice that carries across professional careers and educational settings" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2011, p. 20). Similarly, Dana and Yendol-Hoppey (2009) emphasize the need to see teacher inquiry as a continual cycle or circle, and not as a linear project that ends with the completion of the written report. Dissertations are often seen and treated as time-bound projects— the sooner completed the better. However, if a practitioner-researcher adopts inquiry as a stance and worldview, it helps break away from that narrow perception of doctoral theses as a completed work, and perhaps allows the practitioner-researcher to see practitioner research as going beyond the dissertation itself.

It was this stance that allowed me to follow up on my committee's suggestion of identifying a specific focus embedded in my instructional context, in addition to my original research question. Although, the suggestion stemmed from the committee's past experiences with traditional dissertation work and resulted in my putting in additional time towards my dissertation, the tension was both generative and productive. It provided me with the opportunity to see inquiry itself as an ongoing project, wherein new questions and new directions may emerge in the process of engaging in original research work, and were worth pursuing in their entirety.

The practitioner dissertation also helped me understand that it is also important to see doctoral programs embedded within the field of education as an extension of teacher education. In my case, specifically, one of the primary purposes for continuing beyond the masters' program into the doctoral program, and for engaging deliberately in a practitioner dissertation, was to develop myself as a teacher researcher. By allowing me to shape my doctoral research as practitioner dissertation, and embedding my practitioner inquiry on using translinguistic identity-as-pedagogy in my classroom context, my dissertation committee provided me the space where I was able to make deep connections between the content of teacher education, my identities and life history, and my pedagogy. Other doctoral candidates, and indeed teacher candidates could be allowed similar space to ensure that the "content of teacher education is not framed as a static body of knowledge disconnected from their identities but as intertwined organically with their lives and experiences" (Motha, et al., 2012, p. 14).

Implications for community college practice and TESOL research

Studies on professional development in adult education have identified the need for adult ESL instructors to engage in reflective practice, collaborations with other teachers and researchers, and practitioner research (Schaetzel & Young, 2010). Since the core site of my doctoral dissertation was my site of instruction in Port Community College, my research has many implications for community college practices and research. Specifically, other community college and adult ESL instructors can adapt for their own instructional contexts the strategies that I used to collect and analyze data to facilitate my instruction and research. In their bounded qualitative meta-analysis of community college dissertations, Daviesa, Dickmanna, Harbourb, and Banninga (2011) identify the need for dissertation work conducted in diverse classrooms in community college settings. I hope that my dissertation project has made a significant contribution towards addressing this need. I hope that I have demonstrated adequately the linguistic diversity that can exist in an adult ESL community college classroom, and how teachers and students can collectively draw upon their translingual resources to negotiate with and acquire target language norms.

Further, my doctoral practice is embedded institutionally within my Second Language Education and Culture program, and professionally within the larger field of TESOL. According to recent estimates, those who teach English to speakers of 'other' languages are increasingly themselves speakers of more than one language. Often identified singularly as nonnative English speaking teachers (NNESTs), these teachers in reality represent a diversity of language experiences. Additionally, the seemingly neutral label of NNEST perpetuates an artificial dichotomy between those

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who speaking English 'natively' and those who do not, which then gets transferred to ideas about who is a legitimate English teacher and who is not. This fallacy of the native (English) speaker as the 'ideal' (English) teacher has done much disservice to all participants in TESOL, teachers and students alike. By theorizing more deeply about an alternative way to construct my language experiences and my work as a translinguistic teacher, I hope to contribute to a more nuanced picture of those dynamic individuals who engage in the practices of teaching English to others. Through my dissertation, I have theorized further about my own 'translinguistic identity' exploring its impact on my pedagogy, and also broadening it to include all students who themselves are in the process of creating their own translinguistic identities.

Implications for practitioner research

As mentioned a few pages earlier, one of the key lessons that were reinforced by my practitioner dissertation is that a practitioner's inquiry does not get over when the 'teaching episode' ends. It is ongoing and can continue long afterwards and open up avenue for further research (e.g., Li, 2006; Reynolds, 2004). During my proposal defense, my advisor suggested that, in order to make the data analysis more manageable, I focus on a specific aspect of my instruction early on in the study. I made a note of the suggestion, and during the instruction period, I tried to identify specific aspects that I could focus on. However, I realized quickly that to spend time focusing on a single aspect of instruction, is to take time away from other aspects of instruction. Therefore, I decided not to do so *during* the instructional period. Instead, I wondered if I could do so *after* the period of instruction was over and when I had

more time to dedicate to a specific aspect. There are pros and cons to this approach, of course. Once the data is collected, I cannot go back and generate more data related to that specific aspect. I must perforce depend on what I already have. However, this drawback can be mitigated to a certain extent by identifying potential foci during the instructional period and then ensuring a good amount of data is collected within the constraints of classroom realities, without sacrificing teaching and learning in the process. Another potential drawback is that not every teacher may have the luxury of more time to look back and study one single aspect after the period of instruction is over, as I did in my dissertation work. However, if a teacher does have such time or is allowed such time through a supportive instructional environment and institution, then leaving more detailed analysis of one single aspect of instruction for later might be better. For fulltime teachers, who work without break in between assignments, my dissertation work has limited implications. However, for fellow community college practitioners who work as adjuncts, and have more flexibility in arranging their teaching assignments, it may be more feasible to see research as a two-step process with deeper analyses occurring post-instruction.

An additional related criticism may be that in such a scenario, what's actually happening from a researcher's perspective during instruction is merely data collection and the real analysis starts afterwards. However, this criticism would not be valid, for instance, in the case of my practitioner research. Throughout my instructional period, I was carrying out data collection and analysis simultaneously. The difference is that the data analysis and interpretation during the period of instruction was primarily carried out for the purpose of immediate teaching. For instance, I administered the

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initial questionnaire so that I could have a better understanding of the students specifically to be able to bring that knowledge into my weekly instruction. Similarly, I closely analyzed student writing for common errors (such as misspellings) to inform ongoing instruction.

The data analysis and interpretation after the instruction period was over, on the other hand, was carried out for a much broader and less immediate (to teaching) purpose. The post-instruction conceptual and empirical inquiry is primarily for me to understand myself better as a teacher, and to take those lessons and understandings into my future teaching contexts.

Finally, I believe that teachers need not be passive consumers, but are often intelligent and reflective 'users' who voice criticism when theory does not effectively inform their practice (e.g., Radencich, et al., 1998) and concern when research comes into conflict with teaching (e.g., Li, 2006). Teachers have unique ways of taking 'theory' and applying it to their teaching contexts, and by reflecting upon and expressing these unique ways in their own words teachers can gain an authentic voice. Fecho (1993) made a plea for recognizing teachers as constituting a 'distinct interpretive community' and wrote in his essay:

> What I want to argue here is that unless teachers seriously consider what it means to read educational theory and *to research as teachers*[51], we will continue to replicate the administrative and research communities that exist already. Consequently, our voice will not be heard except as an echo. This [essay] argues that as teachers, we have a unique and necessary perspective in relationship to theory and research and that our conceptualizing of what that

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[51] Emphasis mine.

perspective is and what it can mean will create for us a niche that will give our

collective voices both authenticity and resonance. (p. 266)

There exist, therefore, parallel needs to 'demystify' research (Radencich, et al., 1998,

p. 105), to 'legitimize' practitioners as researchers (Anderson, 2002, p. 23), to have

teachers identify existing overlaps and interactions between teaching and research as

well as explore the possibility of dynamically and seamlessly integrating the two, and

for teacher education programs to prepare teachers for a coherent unity in their roles

as teachers and researchers in their own classrooms. As I discussed earlier, teachers

need to take ownership of these multiple parallel processes themselves since

academic research has so far woefully failed to provide adequate answers, and the

academic community can then learn from such teacher research and begin its own

journey in doing and teaching about research with a more inherent teaching

perspective.

I (as one such teacher) through my attempt at self-aware and dynamically

integrated practitioner research can help create public spaces that would contribute to

the visibility and legitimization of the complex ways in which teachers become "users

and producers of theory in [ours] own right, for [our] own means, and as appropriate

for [our] own instructional contexts" (Johnson, 2006, p. 240). Having completed my

practitioner dissertation project, I have come to believe that the essence of

practitioner research is the practitioner's desire to conduct research that facilitates

effective teaching and learning in the classroom. It is this practice-centered and

practice-oriented approach to research that distinguishes practitioner research from

other bodies of educational research. At the same time, it is imperative for teachers to

engage with the latest research and theoretical literature to help in their own conceptualizations, theorizations, and knowledge-production.

The conceptual and theoretical inquiries that I engaged in as part of my practitioner dissertation have also helped me understand that practitioner inquiry is not limited to the practitioner's own instructional context. There are practitioners who engage in inquiries located in other teachers' classrooms. Similarly, practitioners may have additional or alternative roles to teaching. They may be school leaders, administrators, etc. The inquiries that they engage in may also be brought under the purview of practitioner inquiry. One critical component of such inquiries would likely be that the investigators identify themselves as educational practitioners and not simply researchers or academics.

Any inquiry, therefore, regardless of whether it is conducted by the practitioner in his or her own instructional site or not, could come under the purview of practitioner inquiry. For instance, a teacher working with adult ESL students may decide to undertake an inquiry into the home countries of her students to understand better where they come from and the funds of knowledge they bring with them. Technically, this may not be research within the teacher's own instructional site, yet it could be identified as practitioner inquiry as the questions generate from the teacher's instructional context and the purpose would be to directly inform her own practice, and indirectly the field of education at large. This broadening of our understanding of practitioner inquiry has implications for both research and teaching.

During my proposal defense, one of my committee members, Dr. Megan Peercy, suggested that I think more deeply about what I mean by 'research'. How do I

define it? I answer that question briefly here. Having engaged in this practitioner inquiry, I now see research for education as broader than educational research as it is traditionally perceived. Just as there has been a paradigm shift in understanding that teachers can be theorizers, that the knowledge they create is indeed valid, the idea of research also needs to broaden to encompass systematic and intentional inquiries that teachers undertake and share with colleagues without falling into the trap of trying to make their work ape 'academic research' or create theory abstracted from practice. Further, as notions of what counts as research broaden, teachers should be an equal partner in the conversations around what counts as (teacher) research and what kind of research and theory is helpful in actual teaching contexts. These discussions should be taken into consideration when setting research agendas at multiple levels. My practitioner research, specifically, contributes to the discussions that identify teaching as a form of professional practice (Clarke & Erickson, 2003) and teacher research as an act of professional development. Above all, engaging in and with research has become an act of creating an identity for myself that allows me to be simultaneously both practitioner and researcher, which I now discuss as conclusion to my dissertation journey.

Conclusion: (Re)imagining a Coherent, Unified, Hybrid Identity

Conducting practitioner research as my doctoral dissertation was very exciting in its novelty, but also extremely challenging for the same reason. I had to constantly dig deeper and ferret out relevant nuggets as my conceptualization of practitioner research, and of myself, evolved during the entire course of the study. As I have emphasized in this thesis, the field of educational research has been woefully lacking

in being able to provide a model of practitioner research, in theory or in application, where teaching and research could coexist in a coherent unity. When I first started hunting around for literature about and by practitioners doing research on their own teaching[52], I found a common assumption across most publications: research and teaching were separate acts, whether conflicting, complementary, coherent, or compatible. My subsequent review of doctoral dissertations showed a similar conception on the part of practitioner-researchers as well. I began with a simple question at the beginning of my dissertation, and I continued to ask that question as an ongoing conceptual inquiry: Why do many teachers, researchers, and teacher researchers assume that research and teaching are two separate activities?

Using Wenger's conceptualization of boundaries and peripheries, I would argue that those who view teaching and research as conflicting or separate practices perhaps inadvertently focus on the boundaries that separate the two communities (e.g., Hammer & Schifter, 2001). Wenger takes pains to distinguish peripheries from boundaries. According to him, both "refer to the 'edges' of communities of practice, to their points of contact with the rest of the world, but they emphasize different aspects."

While peripheries refer to areas of continuities, 'boundaries' according to Wenger (1998) refer to "discontinuities, to lines of distinction between inside and outside, membership and nonmembership, inclusion and exclusion" (p. 119-120). I believe that those in education have tended to focus more on discontinuities between teaching and research, while a handful of people have theorized about the continuities. An interesting question that deserves future examination is whether the

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[52] I initially started with narrow notions of practitioner: teachers and teacher educators.

reason why some see the relationship between research and teaching as dichotomous while others see it as harmonious and generative is that the former focus on the boundaries while the latter focus on the peripheries.

For now, as I reflect 'in action' and investigate the continuities that have been created in my practitioner dissertation, the concept of *duality* (as opposed to *dichotomy*) further helps me theorize about the compatibility between teaching and research. Wenger (1998) describes *duality* as, "a single conceptual unit that is formed by two inseparable and mutually constitutive elements whose inherent tension and complementarity give the concept richness and dynamism (p. 66). My practitioner research embodies a duality: through my teaching during the two semesters of instruction at Port Community College and through this dissertation work, my practitioner research has emerged as a 'single conceptual unit' in which teaching and research became two 'inseparable and mutually constitutive elements'.

The elements' inherent tension and complementarity has brought 'richness and dynamism' to my work. In transferring elements from one practice to another, I have explored their 'complementarity', and in choosing to discard elements from one that might have otherwise reduced the other, I have dealt with the 'inherent tension'.

Writing about such work, Edge (1997) muses, "Our prevailing image of crossing borders is of moving from one area, or stage, to another…Yet a great deal of contemporary writing…stresses the importance of in-between-ness, of new hybrids which do not resolve themselves in terms of 'either-or'-ness" (pp. 8-9). Wenger (1998) also writes that "the very notion of identity entails an experience of multimembership [as well as] the work of reconciliation necessary to maintain one

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identity across boundaries" (p. 158). This is especially true of practitioner research

work where there is the potential of conflict and tension between the roles of teacher

and researcher. Wenger (1998) further states:

> Reconciling…requires the construction of an identity that can include…
>
> different meanings and forms of participation into one nexus…[and] entails
>
> finding ways to make our various forms of membership coexist, whether the
>
> process of reconciliation leads to successful resolution or is a constant
>
> struggle. In other words, by including processes of reconciliation in the very
>
> definition of identity, I am suggesting that the maintenance of an identity
>
> across boundaries requires work and, moreover, that the work of integrating
>
> our various forms of participation is not just a secondary process…rather it is
>
> at the core of what it means to be a person. Multimembership and the work of
>
> reconciliation are intrinsic to the very core concept of identity. (160-161)

I see my practitioner research as a duality: an integrated enterprise resulting in 'a

resolution', a 'finding of a way to make my multiple memberships coexist', and in my

dissertation work I focus specifically on this 'reconciliation' between the two roles of

teacher and researchers. As a step closer in the direction of creating a successful

resolution, I have looked for an identity that privileges neither role over the other.

The search for such an identity is a result of a question that I had been

subconsciously asking myself at different stages of my doctoral studies—what is it

that I am becoming during this journey: a practitioner who can take theory and

translate it into effective practice in her classrooms, or an academic who produces the

knowledge-ridden theories in the first place? In engaging in the last stage of my

doctoral studies—this practitioner dissertation, I looked at the manner in which I positioned myself, and also became aware that from the perspective of traditional researchers and teachers, my positionality may have shifted back and forth between the two roles. For instance, at the time when I was teaching in the community college classroom, I was primarily a teacher. However, post-instruction when I engaged in deeper and additional analyses, I could be perceived as primarily a researcher.

I know that I wish to be both teacher and researcher in all my professional work (and perhaps neither if it means the exclusion of the other). As a doctoral student who is passionate about teaching, I wish to explore the 'ongoing roles research may play in my years of teaching'. However, I do not wish to stop there. I also wish to understand the role that teaching may play in my years of research. In other words, I seek to find ways to connect my life as a budding researcher (and academic), as closely as possible, to my life as a budding teacher (and teacher educator) in the U.S.

In his autoethnography, Canagarajah (2012a) writes about the "tensions in the diverse identities one enjoys that may never be resolved. This is not debilitating, however; these tensions can lead to forms of negotiation that generate critical insights and in-between identities." (p. 261). In a similar sense, I wish to create an 'in-between identity.' I wish to be neither purely an academic nor a practitioner, but an amalgamation of the two. In other words, I am looking for an identity, a label if you wish, that expresses that duality of teaching and research adequately. I have found a possible answer in the term *pracademic*.

The word *pracademic* is "a portmanteau term, combining 'academic,' in

senses both of person and of subject matter, and 'practice' or 'practitioner',"

(Lohmann, Van Til, & Ford, 2011, p. 5). The term seems to have been in use in the

vernacular language for many decades, although it is unclear as to who coined it and

when. It began to emerge in published literature at the turn of the century (e.g.,

Nalbandian, 1994; Ospina & Dodge, 2005; Van Til, 2000; Volpe & Chandler, 1999;

Volpe & Chandler, 2001).

A pracademic is, in essence, both a practitioner and an academic, a boundary

spanner (Posner, 2009) creating an intersection of theory and practice, and located at

the overlap of research and teaching. Although historically situated in public

administration scholarship and business management literature, the term 'pracademic'

has relevance for all fields populated by practitioners as well as academics[53],

including teacher education in general and TESOL in particular.

Like the term *translingualism* (Canagarajah, 2013b), *pracademic* is also a

neologism that is needed today. So far, *pracademic* is the only term that I have come

across that enables me to visualize myself on a professional track where I can remain

both a practitioner and an academic, and simultaneously participate in both the

communities of teaching and research. Although I have used the term 'practitioner-

researcher' throughout my dissertation, and one that leading scholars in the field

currently exploring these issues use (e.g., Allwright, 2005; Cochran-Smith & Lytle,

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[53] All my readings of the literature in TESOL and teacher education failed to bring up a term that
captured that unified 'in-between' identity that I am striving to create. It is serendipity perhaps that
while unsuccessfully looking for such a term in my own profession, I stumbled across the answer
while on a walk with my husband who had been sympathetic to my efforts and suggested that the term
pracademic seemed to capture the self-identity I was trying to create in my dissertation. He had just
come across the term at a professional conference in his field of Ocean Energy Management.

2009d; Drake & Heath, 2011), I acknowledge that even this term does not completely afford me the unified identity that I hope to create for myself. 'Practitioner-Researcher' suggests a semantic, syntactic, and cognitive separation of the 'practitioner' from the 'researcher,' and vice versa, that even the often-used hyphen cannot completely bridge. *Pracademic*, on the other hand, exemplifies a coherent, albeit hybridized, unity. It truly allows me to be both a practitioner and an academic without having to separate the two and without privileging, even in writing, one role over the other (see Figure 16).
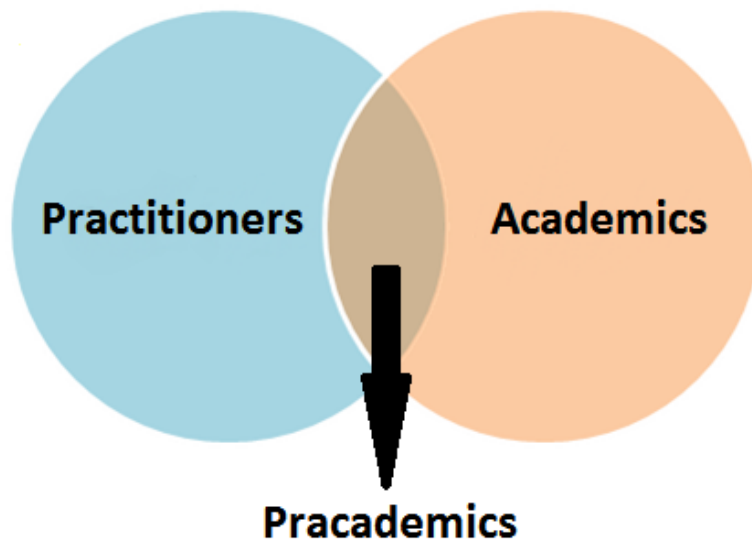
Figure 16: Pracademics are *both* practitioners and academics.

Practitioner research, however, is integral to the enterprise of creating such a unified identity. In (re)imagining myself as a pracademic, I am entering the (imagined) community of pracademics by conducting my practitioner research in a teaching-oriented community college ESL classroom while being cognizant of my identity of that of a doctoral candidate in a research-intensive university. In other words, my practitioner research dissertation has become the first self-aware step in my journey towards becoming a pracademic, and as such has become an act of

identity formation, as well as that of creating my affiliation with the community of fellow pracademics.

I draw upon the writings of scholars from the field of TESOL in this work of (re)imagining my identity as a pracademic. As a pracademic, I can engage *in* and *with* research (Borg, 2009) to identify and develop tools and theories that will enable my research and teaching to inform each other as closely as possible. In other words, and as I explained in detail in Chapter 5, I wish to enact practitioner research as a composite of 'researchful practice' *and* 'practiceful research'. As a pracademic, who envisions herself engaged in teaching and research independent of institutional requirements, I can also be seen as a 'post-modern' professional, one who is "not bounded by formal organizational structures, rules and constraints" (Kakihara & Sørensen, 2002) and who resists, and challenges, the notion of conforming to one particular professional identity to the exclusion of the other.

I see *hybridity*, which I have referred to in different parts of my thesis, as a common theme underlying both my conceptualizations of a pracademic identity and a translinguistic identity. The construct of *hybridity* is itself a postmodern postcolonial child, borne of experiences that defy the singular (see Bhabha, 1990). For instance, *translingualism* is a hybrid term that captures effectively the idea that languages are not as disparate as they are made out to be, and that in an increasingly globalized world, we see an intermeshing of languages far more than we see their separation. The concept of translinguistic identity is another instance of "an experience of multimembership [as well as] the work of reconciliation necessary to maintain one identity across borders" (Wenger, 1998, p. 158). Those who function in and across

multiple language contexts, create areas of continuity on the peripheries of the different languages and language contexts through (re)conceptualizing and (re)imagining themselves as 'translinguals'. Those who feel conflicted between the different language contexts or restricted by such dichotomizations as 'native speaker' and 'nonnative speaker', can use the concept of the translinguistic self to create that 'one identity across borders'. This is especially true of teachers and students who participate in a language learning context that is specific to one setting, while at the same time functioning in another context for the same language.

Similarly, the term *pracademic* is a hybrid. It captures the integration of teaching and research far more effectively than other labels current in education literature. It offers the possibility of an identity that is not fragmented, but unified and coherent in its unity. *Hybridity*, like *duality*, thus allows me to reimagine myself as a member of the otherwise invisible community or pracademics in both teacher education and TESOL.

Norton and Toohey (2011) write that "in imagining ourselves allied with others across time and space, we can feel a sense of community with people we have not yet met and with whom we may never have any direct dealings" (p. 422). In the course of working on this dissertation, I have begun to share the term 'pracademic' with other members of my professional communities. So far, it appears to be a novelty, both in teacher education and in TESOL. I do not know if such a community of pracademics is aware of its own existence. However, as Wenger (1998) states, "a community of practice need not be reified as such to be a community: it enters into the experience of participants through their very engagement" (p. 84).

That there are many members of the academy who engage in researching their own practice is now an established fact. Seen through a 'pracademic lens', the literature in both teacher education and TESOL is replete with pracademic reports—all academics who engage in inquiries contextualized in their professional practice can be seen as engaging in pracademic work. For instance, such university-based academics who practice teacher education as well as theorize about it are also pracademics. Similarly, professors and lecturers who teach specific content-based disciplines in university programs and investigate their content areas could also come under the pracademic umbrella. The identities of these 'insiders' of the academic world have the potential to be even more dynamic and nuanced, and in keeping with postmodern realities, than the title 'academic' suggests.

Seen from a community of practice perspective, many established scholars in the field of education are on insider or paradigmatic trajectories (Wenger, 1998) in the academic community. However, through their dynamic work as teacher educators in teacher education and/or TESOL, they are helping create continuities between the communities of teaching and research. In conceptualizing the idea of being a pracademic, I am hoping to facilitate an opportunity for those who are embedded in the academy and engaged in practitioner research to reimagine themselves as pracademics as well. As Wenger (1998) writes[54], "Of course, new trajectories do not necessarily align themselves with paradigmatic ones. Newcomers must find their own unique identities. And the relation goes both ways; newcomers must also provide new models for different ways of participating." (p. 156)

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[54] (shared in Chapter 3 as well)

It is my humble hope that the addition of a pracademic identity will contribute to the already nuanced and dynamic identities of academics in university settings. I end this thesis with a reiteration of a final wise quote by Wenger (1998):

> Embroiled in the politics of their community and with the confidence derived from participation in a history they know too well, [old-timers] may want to invest themselves in future not so much to continue it as to give it new wings. They might thus welcome the new potentials afforded by new generations who are less hostage to the past. (p. 157)

Appendices

Appendix A: ESL 184 Syllabus

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Port Community College
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & CONTINUING EDUCATION
SYLLABUS[55]

COURSE TITLE: INTERMEDIATE WRITING
COURSE NUMBER: ESL 184
CLASS TIMES AND DATES: February 2, 2010 TO April 8, 2010
                                           TUESDAYS AND THURSDAYS;
                                           7:00PM TO 9:00PM
                                           40 HOURS (10 WEEKS)
INSTRUCTOR: RASHI JAIN
                                           EMAIL: jainrashi@yahoo.com
                                           Cell (for emergencies only): 443-838-4994
REQUIRED TEXT: INTERACTIONS 1 WRITING
                                           SILVER EDITION, 2007

Course description
In this course, we pursue preacademic writing, such as personal essays, letters, and stories. The course emphasizes paragraph writing. We also review basic grammar and punctuation.

Course objectives and goals
1. We will create, develop, edit, and revise paragraphs.
2. We will practice paragraph writing for a variety of purposes.
3. We will practice writing strategies: prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing.
4. We will learn to edit writing using knowledge of parts of speech, verb tenses, subject and verb agreement, articles and pronouns agreement, as well as the knowledge of sentence structures and punctuation.
5. We will increase our English vocabulary and improve spelling.

Course assignments, tasks, and grading

Writing assignments
Through the semester, you will practice writing. Each week, I will give you one writing assignment that you will be required to complete and submit on time.
There will be a total of ten such writing assignments. Each assignment will be graded and awarded a maximum of ten points based on a rubric that I will provide in the class. At the end of the semester, I will total the points and give you a final grade based on your overall performance in the writing assignments.
Note: Class attendance and timely completion and submission of assignments are important. If you are unable to attend a class or come in late, or cannot submit your assignments on time, your grade may be lowered.

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[55] This syllabus is a work in progress. It will be adapted to the needs of the students.

Informal grammar practice

This class is going to focus primarily on English writing. However, each week we will also practice grammar informally. From your own writing assignments, I will pick five to ten sentences from your own assignments that have grammatical mistakes in them. Then, together in class, we will go over these sentences and understand the grammatically correct way of writing them. I will not tell who the writers are, since that is not the purpose of this task. This will help you identify common mistakes in your writing, as well as learn how not to repeat them.

Pretest and Posttest

At the beginning of the semester, you will be given a pretest. At the end of classes, you will take a posttest. These writing tests will be graded on the basis of rubrics provided to the instructor by your institution.

The improvements you show in your writing, your class participation, your overall performance in the class, and your scores on the posttest will help the instructor make recommendations about your placement in other classes. This is how your final grades will be determined:

	Assignment	**Percentage of total grade**
1.	Class participation	10 %
2.	All writing assignments	80%
3.	Posttest	10%

Evaluation will be done according to the following scale:

A	90-100	**85-100**
B	80-99.99	**70-84.99**
C	70-89.99	**55-69.99**
D	60-79.99	**40-54.99**
F	00-59.99	**00-39.99**

If you receive an A or B in this class, you may take the recommended Reading and Writing class or attend the Writing Workshop.

If you receive a C or a D in this class, you may repeat this class or take the recommended Reading and Writing class or attend the Writing Workshop.

Rules and ideas for the classroom

1. We will use English as much as possible in the class. However, if necessary, we may use our first language or another language (e.g., to help a classmate understand a class activity).
2. We will ensure that we get plenty of writing practice, and will complete daily writing assignments.
3. We will reach class on time, and ensure that we submit home writing assignments on time.
4. We will keep our cell phones silent during the class. If we need to take a call urgently, we will quietly leave the room and return as soon as possible.
5. Some food and drink in the class are fine.
6. We will be courteous to our classmates.
7. We will use additional materials, such as newspapers, in the class.
8. We will prepare for grammar quizzes, and also practice for the LOEP test.

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TENTATIVE OUTLINE

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Weekdays	Themes
Week 1, Day 1	Introductions Questionnaire and Pretest
Week 1, Day 2	Chapter 1: Academic Life Around the World Writing assignment 1
Week 2, Day 1	Chapter 2: Experiencing Nature Writing assignment 2
Week 2, Day 2	Grammar practice
Week 3, Day 1	Chapter 3: Living to Eat or Eating to Live? Writing assignment 3
Week 3, Day 2	Grammar practice
Week 4, Day 1	Chapter 4: In the Community Writing assignment 4
Week 4, Day 2	Grammar practice
Week 5, Day 1	Chapter 5: Home Writing assignment 5
Week 5, Day 2	Grammar practice
Week 6, Day 1	Chapter 6: Cultures of the World Writing assignment 6
Week 6, Day 2	Grammar practice
Week 7, Day 1	Chapter 7: Health Writing assignment 7
Week 7, Day 2	Grammar practice
Week 8, Day 1	Chapter 8: Entertainment and the Media Writing assignment 8
Week 8, Day 2	Grammar practice
Week 9, Day 1	Chapter 9: Social Life Writing assignment 9
Week 9, Day 2	Grammar practice
Week 10, Day 1	Chapter 10: Sports Writing assignment 10
Week 10, Day 2	Posttest

Appendix B: Questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE PROVIDED BY PORT COLLEGE FOR INSTRUCTORS TO
ADAPT AND U.S.E IN THE CLASSROOOM

Name_____

Country_____   How long have you been in the U.S.?_____

What are your languages? _____

Age (circle one)   18-23   24-30   31-40   41-50   51-64   65+

What is your highest level of education?
      High school _____
      some university _____
      University degree _____   What did you study? _____

Why are you taking this English class?

Where have you learned English before? (check all that are applicable)
____ In my country
____ In this program
____ In other programs in the U.S.

Think back to your experiences. Put a check mark to show how much you agree with this statement.

1 = I strongly agree   3 = I neither agree or disagree
2 = I agree a little   4 = I disagree a little   5 = I strongly disagree

		1	2	3	4	5
1.	I like to write in my first language.					
2.	I write well in my first language.					
3.	I read a lot in my first language.					
4.	I like to write in English.					
5.	I write well in English.					
6.	I can express my ideas easily in English.					
7.	I can write interesting ideas in English.					
8.	I can organize my ideas well in English.					
9.	I have learned a lot about writing in English from reading.					
10.	I can use a computer to write in English.					
11.	I plan what I am going to write before I begin.					

12.	When I revise my papers, I often make a lot of changes.					
13.	When I revise my papers, I like to add new ideas.					
14.	When I revise my papers, I think about the person who will read the paper and what they want or need to know.					
15.	I know when to begin a new paragraph.					
16.	Each of my paragraphs has a main idea.					
17.	I add a lot of examples or explanations to help the reader understand my main idea.					
18.	It is easy for me to write a paragraph in English.					
19.	It is easy for me to know when to divide my paragraph.					
20.	When I turn in my papers, they have only a few grammar mistakes.					
21.	My papers show that I know a lot of English vocabulary.					
22.	When I turn in my papers, they have only a few spelling or punctuation mistakes.					
23.	I use a dictionary or a thesaurus or spell-check on the computer when I write.					
24.	Generally, I learn a lot from the comments and corrections that I can use in future writing.					
25.	I learn things from my teachers' comments and corrections that I can use in future writing.					
26.	I like reading other students' writing and can learn a lot from it.					
27.	I like sharing my writing with other students.					
28.	I feel happy when I turn in my revised paper.					
29.	I feel happy when I get my papers back from my teacher.					
30.	I think I will be able to write well in English in future.					

Write the three things you do best when you write in English.
1.
2.
3.

Write the three things you hope to improve in the future in writing English.
1.
2.
3.

Appendix C: Solicitation Letter

LETTER SOLICITING PARTICIPATION GIVEN TO STUDENTS

Hello Students,

Thank you for enrolling in ESL184 Intermediate Writing. I, as your instructor, am delighted to have you in my class and I am looking forward to a semester of teaching you and learning from you.

You know me as an ESL instructor at your community college. I am also a doctoral student at the University of Maryland, College Park. As a student, I am doing research along with my university professor, Dr. Linda Valli. Dr. Valli and I are interested in studying ways in which teachers can teach better by conducting research on their own teaching.

Dr. Valli and I would like to invite you to participate in our research and help us understand how teachers can integrate teaching and researching in meaningful ways.

You will not have to do any extra work to participate in our study other than contribute naturally in the class as students. The work you do in the class as students will be our 'data'. For instance, your assignments from the class will be collected as part of the data we use in our research.

Also, in order to understand teaching and learning in the classroom, we may video and/or audio record some of the classes <u>with your consent</u>. We have provided more details in the consent form.

I am looking forward to a wonderful semester of teaching and learning with all of you!
Thank you,
Rashi Jain
ESL184 Intermediate Writing Instructor

Appendix D: Student Consent Form

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center"><u>CONSENT FORM FOR STUDENTS</u></td></tr>
<tr><td>Project Title</td><td><i>Conducting Practitioner Research in Community College Settings: Integrating Research into Practice</i></td></tr>
<tr><td>Why is this research being done?</td><td>This is a research study being conducted by Dr. Linda Valli and Rashi Jain, Ph.D. student, at the University of Maryland, College Park. We invite you to participate in the study because you are currently enrolled in the course ESL184 Intermediate Writing. The purpose of the study is to examine the process of integrating research into practice in order to improve teaching and learning in a university instructional setting.</td></tr>
<tr><td>What will I be asked to do?</td><td>The procedures involve collection and thematic analysis and interpretation of data generated from the Spring 2010 course, ESL184 Intermediate Writing. You will be asked to participate normally in the class (e.g., submit written assignments). In other words, your assignments from the class will be collected as part of the data we use in our research. Further, you will not be required to do any additional or alternative assignments besides the assignments required as a natural part of you classwork.
In order to understand teaching and learning in the classroom, the instructor may video/audio record some of the classes with your consent. Please check either one of the below:
___   I agree to be video recorded during my participation in this study.
___   I do not agree to be video recorded during my participation in this study.
Please check either one of the below:
___   I agree to be audio recorded during my participation in this study.
___   I do not agree to be audio recorded during my participation in this study.</td></tr>
<tr><td>What about confidentiality?</td><td>We will do our best to keep your personal information confidential. To protect your confidentiality, we will use pseudonyms in the data analysis, interpretation, and reporting phases of the research. Only we will have access to the information linking your real names with the assigned pseudonyms. We will store all data electronically in password-protected folders in our personal computers, with electronic versions to be erased 5 years after the end of the study, and in hard copy in a locked file cabinet in the student investigator's home, with hard-copy versions to be shredded 5 years after the end of the study. We will also take all measures to ensure that the data are accessible to only ourselves as the investigators. No student will see other students' data or feedback. In any report or article about this research project, only pseudonyms will be used. (Your information may be shared with representatives of the University of Maryland, College Park or governmental authorities if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law.)</td></tr>
</table>

Project Title	*Conducting Practitioner Research in Community College Settings: Integrating Research into Practice*
What are the risks of this research?	There are no known risks associated with participating in this research project. Participation or nonparticipation will not affect your grade in this course, nor cause you to lose any course benefits.
What are the benefits of this research?	It is possible that, as a byproduct of participating in this study, you will have the chance to reflect more deeply on your understanding of the course materials, thus consolidating and expanding your learning from the course. We hope that, in future, other people might benefit from this study through improved understanding of the role that practitioner research may play in university instruction settings.
Do I have to be in this research? **May I stop participating at any time?**	Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of any benefits for which you would otherwise qualify.
What if I have questions?	This research is being conducted by Dr. Linda Valli at the University of Maryland, College Park. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact Dr. Linda Valli at: 2311 Benjamin Building University of Maryland College Park MD 20742 Phone: 301/345-5453 E-mail: lrv@umd.edu If you have questions about your rights as a research subject or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact: **Institutional Review Board Office, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, 20742; (e-mail) irb@deans.umd.edu; (telephone) 301-405-0678** This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.
Statement of Age of Subject and Consent	Your signature indicates that: you are at least 18 years of age; the research has been explained to you; your questions have been fully answered; and you freely and voluntarily choose to participate in this research project.
Signature and Date	**NAME OF SUBJECT**	
	SIGNATURE OF SUBJECT	
	DATE	

Appendix E: Supervisor Consent Form

CONSENT FORM FOR SUPERVISOR	
Project Title	*Conducting Practitioner Research in Community College Settings: Integrating Research into Practice*
Why is this research being done?	This is a research study being conducted by Dr. Linda Valli and Rashi Jain, Ph.D. student, at the University of Maryland, College Park. The purpose of the study is to examine the process of integrating research into practice in order to improve teaching and learning in a university instructional setting. We invite you to participate in the study because you are supervising the instructor, who is the student investigator, of the course ESL184 Intermediate Writing.
What will I be asked to do?	The procedures involve collection and thematic analysis and interpretation of data generated from the Spring 2010 course, ESL184 Intermediate Writing. Specifically, you will be asked to engage in structured conversations with the student investigator/instructor. Issues discussed in these conversations could include the student investigator/instructor's thoughts about her classroom teaching, reflection on incidents in the instruction, questions about the program and site of instruction, sharing of teaching strategies and ideas, and so forth. The instructor may audio record some of the conversations with your consent. Please check either one of the below. ___ I agree to be audio recorded during my participation in this study. ___ I do not agree to be audio recorded during my participation in this study.
What about confidentiality?	We will do our best to keep your personal information confidential. To protect your confidentiality, we will use pseudonyms in the data analysis, interpretation, and reporting phases of the research. Only we will have access to the information linking your real names with the assigned pseudonyms. We will store all data electronically in password-protected folders in our personal computers, with electronic versions to be erased 5 years after the end of the study, and in hard copy in a locked file cabinet in the student investigator's home, with hard-copy versions to be shredded 5 years after the end of the study. We will also take all measures to ensure that the data are accessible to only ourselves as the investigators. In any report or article about this research project, only pseudonyms will be used. (Your information may be shared with representatives of the University of Maryland, College Park or governmental authorities if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law.)
What are the risks of this research?	There are no known risks associated with participating in this research project. Your participation in the research will complement your role as the instructor's supervisor, with you and the instructor engaging in structured conversations about the instructor's teaching.

Project Title	*Conducting Practitioner Research in Community College Settings: Integrating Research into Practice*
What are the benefits of this research?	It is possible that, as a byproduct of participating in this study, you will have the chance to reflect more deeply on your understanding of the course materials, thus consolidating and expanding your learning from the course. We hope that, in future, other people might benefit from this study through improved understanding of the role that practitioner research may play in university instruction settings.
Do I have to be in this research? **May I stop participating at any time?**	Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of any benefits for which you would otherwise qualify.
What if I have questions?	This research is being conducted by Dr. Linda Valli at the University of Maryland, College Park. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact Dr. Linda Valli at: 2311 Benjamin Building University of Maryland College Park MD 20742 Phone: 301/345-5453 E-mail: lrv@umd.edu If you have questions about your rights as a research subject or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact: **Institutional Review Board Office, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, 20742; (e-mail) irb@deans.umd.edu; (telephone) 301-405-0678** This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.
Statement of Age of Subject and Consent	Your signature indicates that: you are at least 18 years of age; the research has been explained to you; your questions have been fully answered; and you freely and voluntarily choose to participate in this research project.
Signature and Date	**NAME OF SUBJECT**	
	SIGNATURE OF SUBJECT	
	DATE	

Appendix F: TESOL 2013 Workshop Handout

TESOL 2013 Workshop   Presenter:
Rashi Jain
March 22, 2013   University
of Maryland College Park

Teaching Teachers to do Research Sustainably:
Thinking beyond Action Research

1. **Why is it important for teachers* to do research? Take a couple of minutes to think about the question. Please write your thoughts down in the space below.**
   (*By 'teachers', I refer to all practitioners who engage in the practice of teaching.)

2. **Read the quotation by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1990, p.2).**
   Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1990) write: "what is missing from the knowledge base of teaching…are the voices of the teachers themselves, the questions teachers ask, the ways teachers use writing and the interpretive frames teachers use to understand and improve their own classroom practices" (p. 2).

   Do you agree? You may add your thoughts to the space above.

3. **You, the practitioner:**
   o **What is the professional context in which you work? (E.g., University, 4/2 year college, community-based organization, High School, Middle School, Elementary School, etc.)**

   o **What is your role in the professional context? (E.g., teacher, teacher educator, administrator, etc.)**

   o **What populations do you work with? (E.g., preservice or inservice teachers; ELLs: adults or adolescents or children, international students or 1.5 generation students or first-generation immigrants, etc.)**

4. **Being research-engaged (Borg, 2010):**
   Simon Borg (2010) talks about the need for language teachers to be research-engaged, that is, engaged *with* research (reading research literature) and *in* research (conducting research).
   Do you engage *in* or *with* research? Why or Why not? Write your thoughts down here, and share them with your neighbor.

5. **There are many forms of teacher research (action research, self-study of practice, exploratory practice, reflective practice, and so forth). Are you familiar with any of these forms of teacher research?**

6. **Essentially, teacher research is a systematic and intentional inquiry made public (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009)**
   Some key characteristics of teacher research are:
   o **Teacher = researcher**
   o **Professional site = context of study**
   o **Professional practice = focus of study**
   o **Blurred boundaries between 'practice' and 'research'**
   o **Trustworthy and transferable**
   o **Generates original knowledge**
   o **Open to public critique**
   o Any other that you would like to add here?

7. **(Re)Thinking Teacher Research: Some steps in conducting (teacher) research**
   o **The 'research question' or 'research focus':**
     What may you (or your student teachers) be interested in investigating?
     Would you determine the focus before, during, or after the data generation and collection?
     Is it feasible for interning or beginning teachers to identify a focus or research question in advance or in the early stages of the inquiry project? If not, what might be some good topics for such teachers to explore?

- The data:
  - *Data generation*
  How can you (or your student teachers) generate data in ways that are sustainable, ethical, and non-parasitic on classroom life?

  - *Data collection*
  What are some of the ways in which you (or your student teachers) can collect and record data that is sustainable, ethical, and non-parasitic on classroom life?

  - *Data analysis*
  What are some of the strategies by which you (or your student teachers) can analyze data that is sustainable, ethical, and non-parasitic on classroom life?

- Collaborating with others:
  Would you be interested in finding 'critical friends' (Samaras, 2011) to discuss your work with? Would you be willing to form collaborative inquiry groups? Or perhaps you already have such critical friends or groups?

- o **Making your inquiry public:**
  What are some of the forums where you may feel comfortable sharing your teacher research and inquiries?
  (E.g., collaborative groups, professional development workshops, conferences, newsletters, journals, books, etc.)

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Additional Notes and Thoughts:

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