

# Learning to Teach: CELTA trainees' beliefs, experiences and reflections

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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# Abstract

This study investigates the process of learning on a Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA) course. Research on many courses in teacher education has indicated that courses have a weak impact on the beliefs of trainees, in that trainees emerged from these courses largely unaffected by the ideas presented on the course and entered teaching with an approach which echoed their experiences as students in school. It is somewhat surprising therefore that within ELT it has long been argued that the Certificate programme has a strong impact on trainees.

The aim of the present study is to explore the learning on the CELTA programme, focusing particularly on the pedagogic beliefs of the trainees themselves. Rather than adopt a purely constructivist approach to learning to teach, which involves the study of trainees' beliefs and reflections on the course, I have adopted a more eclectic framework and a multi-perspectival approach. In addition to more individually focused constructivist ideas I incorporated theory from sociocultural approaches such as the use of tools and a learning as participation approach, and also theory from the study of cognitive skill or expertise.

The study employed an in-depth case study approach, using multiple research tools: interviews, questionnaires, observation of a course in its entirety, in addition to the collection of documents such as lesson plans and assignments. It was intended that this would provide a thick description of the course which was studied.

The findings centre around the cases of six trainees on the course, their beliefs, experiences and reflections. It was found that trainees begin the course with a range of beliefs, some of which are idiosyncratic and others which could be summarised as 'anti-didactic'. These latter beliefs seem often to be a reaction to their school experiences. As such, the trainees on the whole welcome the more student-focused approach to which they are exposed on the course and their beliefs are largely unchanged.

These findings also suggest the importance of social interaction amongst the trainees for learning to teach, and that this should be considered for mainstream teacher education courses. They also indicate that trainees' beliefs need to be recognised and engaged on teacher education courses in general and, in particular, the CELTA programme.

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# Abbreviations and Conventions

## 1. Abbreviations

CELTA	Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults
CILTS	Cambridge Integrated Language Teaching Scheme
CTEFLA	Certificate in Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Adults
DELTA	Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults
DTEFLA	Diploma in Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Adults
(T)EFL	(Teaching) English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
RSA	Royal Society of Arts (Examination Board)
UCLES	University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (the co-organisers of the CELTA along with the RSA Examinations Syndicate)

## 2. Transcript Conventions

/\	indicates where 2 or more speakers talk at the same time – beginning and ending
=	speaker interrupts / cuts in, or no pause between speakers
<: >	used within a turn when brief verbal agreement is being expressed by another trainee or tutor
[inaudible]	inaudible
CAPITALS	indicate stress
^	indicates substantial pause (counted in 3 second lengths, first one begun at three seconds)
..	false start
[...]	Omission of dialogue

## 3. Other Conventions

### 3.1 Conventions for referring to people involved in the study

People involved in the study	Referred to as:	Abbreviations (where used):
The teacher trainers (Robert and Jim)	Teacher trainers; trainers; tutors	TT
The trainees:		–
Penny	–	P
Theo	–	T
Helen	–	H

David	—	D
Angela	—	A
Jeff	—	J
Samantha	—	Sm
Shirley	—	Sh
Sarinder	—	S
James	—	Jm
Richard	—	R
Natalie	—	N
The experienced teachers	The experienced teachers	—
The learners of English	The learners; the students	—

### 3.2 Conventions for referring to elements of the course

- TP Teaching Practice
- TPF Teaching Practice Feedback
- GP Guided Preparation for teaching practice

In the extracts from elements of the course, for example the guided preparation and TP feedback sessions, the numbering system indicates the week then the day eg TPF 1.3 indicates that the session took place in Week 1 and on Day 3 – ie Wednesday.

**SECTION I:  
BACKGROUND AND  
METHODOLOGY**

# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Background to the Study

The study of teacher education programmes and the processes by which individuals learn to teach gained prominence in the late 1970s and 1980s as research established the central role of the teacher in the process of teaching, something which had often been overlooked. Studies, often within the area known as teacher cognition or teacher thinking, also promoted the idea that, in order to better understand teaching, we need to look not only at the teacher's behaviours but also at the nature of what they know and think, and how they learn (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Freeman & Richards, 1996). Although research on learning to teach became a recognised area of educational research, work proceeded rather slowly, leading to the comment in 1988 by the National Centre for Research on Teacher Education that it largely remained an 'unstudied problem' (NCRTE, 1988: 27). Since this time a large number of studies have been carried out on learning to teach and more is now understood about, for example, the role played by trainees' past histories in the process of learning to teach and factors affecting course impact.

Within the field of language teacher education, however, research on learning to teach has not made such progress, leading Freeman to comment that language teacher education practices are based more on established practice than on sound research:

most conventional practices in language teacher education have operated like hand-me-down stories, folk wisdom shared as "truths" of the profession with little other than habit and convention on which to base them. (Freeman, 1996: 351)

ELT has long existed as a community somewhat apart from other areas of education, and much of the research taking place in the broader educational field, for example, on the impact of preservice teacher education courses on trainees' beliefs, has not received commensurate attention within the ELT world. Whilst some researchers have sought to correct this lack, for example, Fradd & Lee (1998), Johnson (1994), and Kamhi-Stein & Galván (1997), there remains a need for more research in this vital area. My study, which is situated firmly both in TESOL and in education, aims to learn more about the process of learning to teach within the field of ELT. As such the focus will be on one of the most popular initial teacher training courses in British ELT, the

Cambridge/RSA Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (henceforth referred to as the 'CELTA' or 'the Certificate').

The CELTA is one of the most important qualifications in British ELT, recognised and required by many employers worldwide. Considered to be the basic qualification for entry into the ELT profession, it is described as a preservice or initial teacher training course. There are approximately 600 CELTA courses per year, producing some 7,000 qualified teachers per annum (UCLES/RSA, 1998c).

As the above figures suggest thousands enter English Language teaching every year upon completion of a CELTA course, taking positions in the UK on Summer courses and variable length contracts abroad. The qualification is practical with theory being kept to a minimum, a practice justified by the idea that the Certificate is intended to be followed by further teacher training later in a teacher's career: the Diploma or DELTA – minimum 2 years experience required; and possibly a Master's – usually 2 years experience required (in the UK). In reality few teachers undertake further training or education and hence the Certificate retains an even more central role in the world of ELT. It is not simply *the* gateway into the profession, but in many cases it may also be the only qualification a teacher undertakes.

Despite the importance of the CELTA course for British ELT professionals, there has been a distinct lack of research into the course, its impact and many other aspects. And, whilst it is commonly asserted that the course is highly effective, this has not been systematically established. Indeed, the idea, based largely on anecdotal evidence, that the course has such a strong impact on trainees goes against much current thinking about teacher education courses in general. The brevity of the course when compared with BEd degrees and PGCE and Master's at postgraduate level, which are thought to have only a limited impact on trainees, would suggest that the CELTA should have little effect. Whilst my study is not setting out to establish the effectiveness of the CELTA for training ELT professionals, I am interested in looking at the learning which occurs on such programmes.

The next section will look in more detail at the aims which drove this study and then a brief outline of the research approach will be sketched.

## 1.2 Aims of the Study and Research Approach

The aim of this study is broadly to obtain a picture of what occurs on a CELTA programme, in terms of the trainees' learning. I am interested in the stances and beliefs the trainees bring with them to the course and how these variously interact with their experiences whilst on the course. I am also interested in trainees' post-course teaching experiences, and their reflections on the programme.

Many of the studies which have been carried out on learning to teach have been within a fairly restricted framework, commonly described under the approach known as teacher cognition or teacher thinking. These studies have commonly taken a constructivist approach with a strongly individualist bent. They sought to understand the process of learning to teach by looking almost exclusively at the trainees themselves with little or no attention paid to the social and contextual environment in which learning occurs. My study sets out counter this by adopting a more eclectic stance which draws on various theories in order to better understand the complex individual *and* social processes which occur.

In order to collect data on both individual and social processes I have adopted a broadly naturalistic approach which sets out to study individuals in their setting. Further, the use of thick description is thought vital to the building of a rich picture in my attempt to understand the complexity of the learning environment.

## 1.3 Overview of the Thesis

All of the points raised in this section will be dealt with in more detail in the three sections of the thesis proper: the first section provides more information on the background and methodology of the study; the second outlines the findings of the study and the third focuses on the discussion of the findings and their relationship to the literature.

In more detail, **Section 1** contains: an introduction to the course under investigation – the Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults or CELTA course (Chapter 2); a chapter on the theoretical framework which underpins the study; and an exploration of the key terms used (Chapter 3); a review of research which



informed the study and into which the study is placed (Chapter 4); and an outline of and rationale for the methodology used (Chapter 5). **Section 2** has the findings chapters: the first outlines the context of the learning environment (Chapter 6); and the remaining chapters present findings on the six trainees who were the focus of the study – Penny (Chapter 7), Theo (Chapter 8), Helen (Chapter 9), David (Chapter 10), Angela (Chapter 11) and Jeff (Chapter 12). **Section 3** consists of the discussion chapter.

# Chapter 2: Introduction to CELTA Courses

This chapter will briefly describe the CELTA course, detailing its history and the aims which underlie the course and syllabus. The chapter will also provide some background information on trainees who undertake the CELTA qualification. Later in the thesis, Chapter Six in Section Two, there will be a detailed account of the particular CELTA course which was the focus of my study and I will describe in some depth what occurred on the course and who was involved. This chapter however will maintain the approach of a general introduction to the programme.

## 2.1 The CELTA Course: Introduction and Aims

The CELTA course (previously known as the CTEFLA) is one of the most important qualifications in the ELT industry, being recognised worldwide by both private sector and public teaching institutions. Among many private language schools in particular, the Certificate and Diploma are widely accepted as a reliable form of English language teacher accreditation (Roberts, 1998). The CELTA course is run in over 35 countries worldwide and the approximately 600 courses per year produce around 7,000 qualified teachers per annum (UCLES/RSA, 1998c). One staggering statistic is that at International House alone, an estimated 30,000 candidates have taken the Certificate (in its various forms) since 1962 (Roberts, 1998). Of the individuals who leave Britain each year to teach overseas, it is estimated that 90% have a Certificate from either UCLES or its nearest rival, Trinity (Gray, 2000)

The CELTA course is run by UCLES, an examining board rather than an educational institution, who ‘define the syllabus, set assessment requirements, appoint and monitor assessors and inspect centres awarding qualifications’ (Roberts, 1998: 199). Trainees are internally assessed, usually by several trainers, and courses are ‘externally’ moderated, that is they are visited by trainers from other centres participating in the scheme.

The CELTA itself is an initial teacher training course intended to introduce candidates with little or no language teaching experience to ELT and ‘prepare them for

their entry into the profession' (UCLES/RSA, nd). From its conception, the course rationale carried an explicit expectation that training would continue, post-course, in the novice teachers' place of employment: 'those who did well on the course would teach mainly abroad for a year or two as virtual apprentices before becoming fully professional teachers' (Haycraft, 1988: 9). After the course was taken over by the RSA this expectation was reflected primarily in the final grades of a candidate's award: grade C indicated that the newly qualified teacher would need 'guidance to help them to develop their potential and broaden their range of skills as teachers'; grade B candidates would require 'a degree of guidance'; and grade A 'much less guidance' (UCLES/RSA, nd). One problem with this was there was no means by which to ensure that teachers received such guidance once in the workplace. A survey of ex-trainees on Leeds Metropolitan University CELTA courses carried out in 1995/6 revealed that 70% of their respondents (N=90, no information given on return rates) 'received no further structured professional development post CELTA' (Timmis, 2000). With the recent revision of the course (see the next section) its introductory nature, regardless of grade achieved, has been re-emphasised (Davis, 1990), as point six on the syllabus below indicates. The onus, now on trainees, is for them to 'recognise and acknowledge the nature and limited scope of their training so far, and understand the importance of continuing professional development' (UCLES/RSA, 1999). In a connected move, UCLES now refer to CELTA graduates as 'TEFL-*initiated*' rather than 'TEFL-*qualified*' (Lewis, 2001).

Moving on to the aims of the course as detailed in the syllabus, it can be seen that the emphasis is on the practical aspects of learning to teach rather than on gaining academic or theoretical knowledge (UCLES/RSA, nd):

Specifically, the Certificate is designed to enable candidates to:

1. Develop an awareness of language and a knowledge of the description of English and apply these in their professional practice
2. Develop an initial understanding of the contexts within which adults learn English, their motivations and the roles of the teacher and the learner
3. Develop familiarity with the principles and practice of effective teaching to adult learners of English
4. Develop basic skills for teaching adults in the language classroom
5. Develop familiarity with appropriate resources and materials for use with adult learners of English for teaching, testing and for reference
6. Identify opportunities for their future development as professionals in the field

**Table 2.1: Aims of the CELTA course (UCLES/RSA, 1998a: 2)**

The course is open to candidates fulfilling three basic criteria: they must be at least 20 years old; 'have a standard of education which would allow entry to Higher Education in their country'; and be competent in both written and spoken English (UCLES/RSA, 1998a). A screening process, usually consisting of a language test and interview, is carried out prior to the course and around 5% of candidates are rejected, often due to inadequate language awareness (Andrews, 1994). Acceptance on the course is, however, largely at the discretion of the school with no checks being made on intake by UCLES.

## 2.2 History and Recent Changes

The modern day CELTA has its origins in a course set up in 1962 by International House founders John and Brita Haycraft which was initially intended to train teachers for their own school of English (Haycraft, 1988, 1998). In these early days of TEFL, the only course available to trainee teachers in EFL was a one-year PGCE which tended to focus on the philosophy of education and was thus far removed from the practical, applied course which the Haycrafts desired. The model they used for their short two-week course was one taken from business and industry where training tended to be short and applied (Haycraft, 1988). The stated objective of this early course was 'to give the trainees as much practical grounding and exposure to the classroom as possible' (Haycraft, 1988: 4). The following extracts from Haycraft's autobiography written shortly before his death are informative:

I became increasingly interested in teaching techniques. There were few inspiring or instructive text-books. Practical teacher training was largely unexplored. No university courses told you how to teach a class of beginners all of different nationalities. (Haycraft, 1998: 185)

The crux was to suggest ways of teaching a beginners' class with different nationalities, in English. Without translating, new words had to be taught with pictures, mime, or blackboard drawing, or real objects brought into the class. Practice was done through repetition drills and acting out little situations [...] The only parallel was primary school level, where teachers talked less and used visual teaching and games more. (Haycraft, 1998: 193-4)

Haycraft described the foreign language lesson, providing theory in the morning, teaching practice in the afternoon and grammar input, all of which is familiar on modern

courses and he observed: ‘Interestingly the outline of the course has remained the same over more than thirty years’ (Haycraft, 1998: 195).

The course was very successful and it was lengthened to four weeks as demand for training teachers for work outside the International House chain of affiliated schools increased. In 1978 the running of the course, in terms of syllabus and administration, was taken over by the RSA and it was named the RSA Preparatory Certificate. The next major change occurred ten years later, in 1988, when UCLES took over the administrative and validating role and it was renamed the CTEFLA (UCLES/RSA, nd).

During the period outlined above, the Certificate in its various guises developed in a ‘piecemeal and often ad hoc’ manner (UCLES/RSA, nd: 89). The Certificate was one of four EFL teacher training qualifications which were separated according to L1 and experience:

native English speakers	a) a preservice certificate	(CTEFLA)
	b) a post-experience diploma	(DTEFLA)
non-native English speakers	c) an early in-service certificate	(COTE)
	d) a post-experience inservice diploma	(DOTE)

In 1991 a project was begun to revise and expand both the Cambridge/RSA CTEFLA and the DTEFLA, integrating the courses into a more coherent framework, named CILTS, with a clearer incremental progression for teachers. A lengthy period of consultation and revision followed involving visits and meetings with teacher trainers and others, in addition to a questionnaire which was sent to over 1000 institutions and individuals: teacher training centres; assessors; official bodies such as The British Council; employers both in the UK and abroad; individual TEFL and education professionals; and candidates (UCLES/RSA, 1992).

The CELTA course which replaced the CTEFLA was launched in October 1996 and is now widely available (UCLES/RSA, 1998b). The revised COTE course, an early inservice qualification, is available for non-native English speakers and the Certificate in English Language Teaching to Young Learners can be taken either as a stand-alone qualification or as an add-on to the CELTA programme. The new diploma, DELTA, was piloted in 1997 and 1998 and has now replaced the DTEFLA (UCLES/RSA, 1998b).

## 2.3 Course Content

UCLES, as the governing body, stipulates course content. One of the stipulations is that the centres running the CELTA programmes must provide at least 114 contact hours for trainees (100 hours on CTEFLA) and this is generally fitted into a four-week framework<sup>1</sup>. Part-time courses are also often run which vary considerably in length from two months to a year. UCLES specifies that the 114 hours is to include input, tutorials, supervised lesson preparation, feedback and peer observation, in addition to supervised teaching practice and directed observation of experienced teachers.

On full-time courses in many centres, the day is usually split into input and teaching practice, with mornings and afternoons providing a natural divide. Mornings may be taken up with input sessions which cover basic ELT theory, key concepts and methodology. This will include theory and practical ideas for teaching the four skills, in addition to input on phonology, textbook evaluation, and approaches to language teaching, motivation and learning styles. A considerable amount of time is usually devoted to language awareness, which provides trainees with a basic understanding of and terminology for language description and an appreciation of how this can be taught. Eight hours of observation of experienced teachers must also be accommodated in the timetable.

Teaching practice often takes place in the afternoons. UCLES specify that trainees must complete at least 6 hours of teaching at two different levels. In many centres, sessions are organised so that trainees prepare for teaching in groups and teaching is often staged so that students begin with twenty minutes and build up to a full hour of teaching. This practice does vary from centre to centre, with some trainees starting with a full hour; feedback is usually carried out after teaching practice.

Although UCLES does not specify or promote a particular way of teaching, the certificate has been strongly linked to an approach known as Presentation, Practice, Production or PPP. This approach requires the presentation of discrete grammatical items such as the present continuous followed by controlled practice in exercises such as drilling and gapfills before ending with the 'free' practice of the item (the production

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<sup>1</sup> With competition from an increasing number of UCLES-validated centres and a decreasing number of candidates applying, centres are offering 'extras' for example: International House, Newcastle offer 140 contact hours and an optional two week teaching practice post-course; Cheltenham & Gloucester College offer a slightly less intensive five week course; and Gloscat, a two-day pre-course language awareness programme.

phase). It should be noted that within this approach grammar is often interpreted as verb tenses (Deller, 2002). This prescriptive approach has been rather heavily criticised on many grounds, chiefly for not reflecting current language learning theory by writers such as Ellis & Hedge (1993), Holliday (1998), Lewis (1996), Skehan (1996) and Willis (1996). It has been suggested that the PPP format owes much of its popularity to the ease with which it can be presented to preservice teachers, bundled together with a range of strategies and sub-strategies (Scrivner, 1996; Skehan, 1996). As Skehan (1996) observes:

it is curious to see how resistant to change the PPP approach has been. Given that there is little *evidence* in its favour, or *theory*, it is surprising that it has been so enduring in its influence. To account for this, we must return to the points which were made regarding its convenience for the teaching profession. It has served to perpetuate a comfortable position for teachers and for teacher trainers. (Skehan, 1996: 18, italics in original)

Although PPP is still taught on courses, UCLES is keen to emphasise that this approach is only one of a number to be covered along with skills lessons and possibly task based teaching (Murphy-O'Dwyer & Willis, 1996; Woodward, 1998). In reality, some centres remain attached to this way of teaching and it has been said that the 'teach PPP or fail' mentality remains in some centres (Holliday, 1998; Rockwell, 1998a, 1998b).

## 2.4 The Student Teachers

The majority of the following data on trainees is from a survey carried out by Andrews which asked trainers for their 'impressions' of course participants (Andrews, 1994). It therefore constitutes information which gives a general sense of what courses are like rather than providing concrete reliable data.

### 2.4.1 Candidates' teaching experience

As already mentioned, the CELTA is aimed at candidates with no previous teaching experience, and indeed many of the students who undertake the course fall into this category. However, of those candidates who do have teaching experience, there are two other relatively common backgrounds: the first group are candidates who have teaching

experience in other subjects, typically in mainstream schools but also possibly at Further Education level; the second group are individuals who have been working in TEFL but have up until now been unqualified in this field. In a national survey of Certificate courses, Andrews (1994) found that:

- 63.5% No TEFL experience
- 20.1% Up to 1 year TEFL experience
- 10.4% 1 - 3 years
- 3.7% 4 - 5 years
- 2.3% Over 5 years EFL teaching experience (Andrews, 1994: 73)

Clearly, judging by these figures a third of trainees were experienced in TEFL (corresponding figures were not available for non-EFL teaching experience), and some of these candidates might have been better taking the Diploma which caters for experienced teachers although the Diploma requires at least two year's experience and usually a Certificate for entry. Further evidence of trainees' teaching backgrounds is provided by Harmer (1988) who detailed the backgrounds of 9 trainees on a course he was teaching: 3 trainees had taught EFL prior to the course; 2 had no teaching experience; 3 trainees had PGCEs and non-EFL teaching experience; and 1 other had non-EFL teaching experience with no mention of qualifications.

## 2.4.2 Candidates' ages

Andrews (1994) found that, according to CTEFLA teacher trainers, trainees' ages could be divided into:

- 28% Under 25
- 31.6% 25 - 30
- 23.5% 31 - 40
- 11.5% 41 - 50
- 5.4% Over 50 (Andrews, 1994: 73)

This large number of mature students undertaking the course is certain to have an effect as these individuals will likely have different learning styles, attitudes and life experiences when compared to recent graduates who form the majority of other teacher education courses such as PGCEs or BEds.



### 2.4.3 Candidates' academic backgrounds

As UCLES stipulates minimum entry qualifications to the course, all trainees should have a reasonable level of education. Andrews' (1994) survey reveals the breakdown for academic background as:

- 48% Arts graduates
- 22.5% Non-Arts graduates
- 12.7% Non-graduate teaching certificate
- 10.4% Other HE qualifications
- 6.4% No post-school qualifications (Andrews, 1994: 73)

With regard to the types of experience of trainees, it is quite possible that trainees who have been teaching non-TEFL subjects or teachers who have been working in EFL without qualifications may hold other teaching qualifications such as a PGCE or BEd.

### 2.4.4 Candidates' language backgrounds

- 76.5% British native speakers
- 8.2% North American native speakers
- 10.2% Australian / New Zealand native speakers
- 2.6% Other native speakers
- 2.5% Non-native speakers (Andrews, 1994: 73)

The small number of non-native English speakers can be explained by two factors: the course does not qualify overseas teachers to teach in their respective state systems, and hence, unless they wish to work in the private language school sector, the course would be of little value; UCLES also provide a certificate especially for non-native English speakers (the COTE); there is also a language requirement for acceptance to the course although this is vague.

As a note of interest some other statistics available concerning the CELTA are:

- 20-30% of the 7,000 people who undertake the CELTA course each year do not take up a teaching position at the end of it (*How you can learn while you teach*, 2000); the figure offered by a single school group (Saxoncourt) for

their graduates is 30% ("UK language graduates lured by business sector," 2000)

- At Bell Schools, a major language school chain, 30-50% of people doing the CELTA are career-changers (*How you can learn while you teach*, 2000)

The reference to the large numbers of people who are career-changers undertaking the course does fit with the statistics on the age of participants and helps to give an impression of the trainees who undertake this course, highlighting a difference between this course and other teacher training or teacher education courses such as the BEd or the PGCE.

## 2.5 Other Routes into the EFL Profession

Although the UCLES/RSA CELTA course is the most popular course there are other options available to would-be EFL teachers. Trinity College London run a Certificate in TESOL in 90 centres mostly in the UK. It is very similar to the CELTA although 130 hours are specified as standard for their courses (Trinity College London, 1998). There are other options, for example, a number of universities and language schools run their own courses, although as they often do not include teaching practice they are not as widely accepted by employers and hence not as popular. In the United States many TESOL teachers undertake a preservice Master's degree course which may not have an experience requirement (unlike many British Master's degrees). TEFL is also offered as a subsidiary course on some UK PGCE courses.

## 2.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has outlined the background of the CELTA course and has provided some detail concerning the kind of trainees who take it and the expectations the syllabus designers and course providers have of the level at which the trainees will enter and exit. The next chapter will outline the theoretical frameworks which were drawn on and the key terms used in the present study.

# Chapter 3: Key Terms and Theoretical Underpinnings

There have been numerous studies carried out on the learning of trainees on teacher education courses which have set out to understand and investigate this learning. One of the difficulties in reviewing these studies and indeed of situating my own research amongst them is the issue of the differing theories which inform the research. This chapter will outline some of these theories – constructivism, and cognitive skill theory, in addition to various sociocultural approaches associated with researchers such as Wertsch, Lave and Wenger. It will emphasise the complementarity of these approaches and conclude with a section which sketches how I see these approaches working together to provide a richer and more complex understanding of human behaviour and interaction.

Following this section is a second section which aims to pin down and define a concept which is of crucial importance to constructivist research and hence influential in my eclectic approach. This concept is that of ‘teachers’ beliefs’. Often poorly defined and conceived, this concept is frequently used as a central element of studies in the area of teacher learning. The concept is also used in this study and as such a workable and clear definition is sought.

Chapter 3 is thus divided into two sections, the first (3.1) outlines the various theories – constructivism, sociocultural psychology and skill theory – which are of relevance to my study and to an understanding of other studies which will be reviewed. The second section (3.2) defines and characterises the key concept of ‘belief’ by exploring the history of the word and its usage in different disciplines.

## 3.1: Theoretical Framework

### 3.1.1 Constructivism

#### 3.1.1.1 Introduction

The development of cognitive psychology, which sought to understand the workings of the human mind, followed a period in which psychology had been dominated in many parts of the world and particularly in North America by behaviourism with its positivistic concentration on observable behaviour and controlled experimentation. Cognitive psychology in contrast focused on thinking processes and learning, although in its major academic manifestation it continued to employ experimental methodology. One of the major approaches within cognitive psychology is constructivism, an approach whose modern roots are often seen as emerging from the work of Piaget, (for example 1971) and Kelly (1955).

Before turning to look at the major ideas which form constructivism, it is necessary to acknowledge that this is not a fully cohesive theory; rather, it is more of a collection of different positions on a central theme (Tynjälä, 1999). How these can be divided up will be considered a little later in the section.

The central notion of constructivism is that learners do not passively receive information but rather they construe and interpret incoming information through the screen of their existing knowledge and beliefs. The learners then will construct and reconstruct meaning in a continuous process which will to some extent be idiosyncratic and personally significant (Cobb, 1996; Tynjälä, 1999; Williams, 1999; Williams & Burden, 1997). Von Glaserfeld, a major proponent of constructivism lists the first principle (of constructivism) as ‘knowledge is not passively received but actively built up by the cognizing subject’ (von Glaserfeld, 1989: 11). For those perspectives which base their understanding of constructivism solely on this principle, von Glaserfeld suggests the term ‘trivial constructivism’.

There are a number of pedagogical implications of constructivism, which include:

- Learners’ existing beliefs, knowledge, and conceptions will play a major role in the learning process (Ernest, 1995; Tynjälä, 1999)

- Emphasis should be on the learners constructing and negotiating their own meaning from situations rather than on the training of behaviours (Cobb, 1996: Tynjälä, 1999)
- Knowing is active, individual and personal (Ernest, 1995), which means that ‘formal knowledge as represented in a textbook and read by thirty different students will be understood in thirty different ways’, a point which raises questions about the nature of knowledge and testing (Richardson, 1997: 4-5)
- Mistakes and errors should be viewed as opportunities to learn about learners’ current understandings (Cobb, 1996)

Within a constructivist perspective, as Borko and Putnam state:

Although learning can be heavily influenced by instruction, how and what individuals learn is always shaped and filtered by their existing knowledge and beliefs. It can therefore never be completely determined by instruction (1995: 647)

As a result of constructivist views of learning being adopted in schools, a focus of interest has fallen on the development of students’ conceptions of various phenomena, and the literature on conceptual change has become quite extensive (Tynjälä, 1999).

Many of the studies in the literature on conceptual change have indicated the potential for pre-existing knowledge and beliefs to block or shape the acquisition of new knowledge, leading to the rejection or distortion of the incoming information. Crucial to this are two Piagetian concepts: *assimilation* and *accommodation*. *Assimilation* is the process by which new information is incorporated through a process of accretion into already existing structures; it is conservative, in that new structures are simply variants of already existing ones. If the new structure is so different that it causes a change or modification of the existing structure, this is then known as *accommodation* (Iran-Nejad, 1990; Posner, Strike, Hewson & Gertzog, 1982; Rogoff, Matusov & White, 1996; Vosniadou & Brewer, 1987). Much of the literature on conceptual change therefore concentrates on various interventions which raise learners’ awareness of their (mis)conceptions as the first step in encouraging conceptual change or development. In a major review of the literature on the pedagogical strategies employed by researchers and teachers using a conceptual change model, two distinct groups of strategies were identified:

1. those which centre around the creation of cognitive conflict – this group are described as deriving from a Piagetian view of the importance of accommodation in knowledge growth (Scott, Asoko & Driver, 1991).
2. those which are based on identifying and extending learners' existing conceptions – the authors describe this group as focusing more on the teacher's intervention in the form of scaffolding (Scott et al., 1991).

The authors underline how the various approaches which fall within these two groups have in common a concern with acknowledging the learners' existing conceptions and incorporating them into the teaching intervention in one form or another. Another underlying feature of both kinds of conceptual change approach is the inclusion of some form of conflict, although whether these are made explicit and a focus of the intervention is dependent upon the type of approach used (Scott et al., 1991). The need to make the conceptions understandable for the students is also a common desire, as it is recognised that learners will not embrace a new conception unless it is comprehensible to them. Finally, approaches in both strands recognise the need for learners to adopt conceptions which are internally consistent, and which are not simply understood but also believed (Scott et al., 1991).

Although much of the work, such as that reported above, has been carried out in the area of scientific conceptions, the theories of conceptual change have also been applied to trainees on teacher education courses. Teacher education students arrive on a course with numerous beliefs about teaching derived largely from their time in school as pupils. These preconceptions and beliefs may or may not be valid, and they can conflict with the information and theories presented to them on their course. In contrast to courses which adopt a 'tabula rasa' approach to teacher education, some, using conceptual change models, have been adopted specifically to help trainees deal with their often tacit preconceptions and beliefs, and to restructure their knowledge base to make them compatible with input provided on the course. Examples can be found in the work of researchers such as Tillema and Knol working in the Netherlands who have explored the effectiveness of a conceptual change approach to teaching on a teacher education course (Tillema, 1994, 1997a, 1997b; Tillema & Knol, 1997a). Their interventional approach, which is based on earlier work by researchers Chinn and Brewer (1993), Desforges (1995) and Smith and Neale (1989), involves four stages:

(1) *recognition and attention*: this stage requires trainees to make their beliefs and any emotional attachment to those beliefs explicit. Conflict or dissonance at this level is not a required starting point; an incremental approach is also possible providing students are prepared to open their beliefs to external scrutiny.

(2) *evaluation and investigation*: this stage allows trainees to try out new ideas, testing for intelligibility, plausibility and fruitfulness in a ‘safe’ environment, that is, not in the classroom

(3) *decision to change*: this is the point at which the individual student teacher must decide if the new information or belief is acceptable.

(4) *reconstruction*: at this stage the trainee must reconstruct their knowledge schema, integrating the new belief into the system and resolving any discrepancies which result from its incorporation. (Tillema, 1997b; Tillema & Knol, 1997a)

In an empirical study of one such programme, an experiment was carried out to test the effectiveness of a conceptual change programme versus a direct instruction programme. Findings were that the conceptual change programme did lead trainees to a greater awareness of their beliefs but the recorded movement was not unidirectional (Tillema & Knol, 1997a, 1997b). The movement of some trainees in one direction was compensated for by others moving in another direction, resulting in group-level changes being masked. With regard to reflection about teaching problems, neither course seemed to have a noticeable effect, although a slightly negative score for the conceptual change trainees suggested a reaction against this programme (*op cit*). In the area of the acquisition of new knowledge the conceptual change programme had a stronger effect although neither course evidenced a great deal of change. The authors conclude that the programme may not have been powerful enough, serving to challenge rather than change trainees’ beliefs – ‘it stirred, but did not restructure their beliefs’ (Tillema & Knol, 1997b: 591).

Returning to constructivism, the sizeable literature which examines student teachers’ beliefs and knowledge, most noticeably under the mantle of teacher cognition (teacher thinking / teacher knowledge) research, is also concerned with the screening or filtering effects of beliefs on new knowledge and experience provided on teacher preparation courses. Subsequently, many trainers and researchers focus on the need for teacher educators to help student teachers to ‘make the tacit explicit’ (Freeman, 1991) as a gateway to learning, although there are a small number of voices challenging this idea, see for example Atkinson (2000) and Gilpin and Clibbon (2000).

### 3.1.1.2 Types of constructivism

As was mentioned earlier, the label of constructivism actually includes a large number of perspectives which differ in sometimes quite significant ways. Phillips (1995) in a paper entitled ‘The good, the bad, and the ugly: the many faces of constructivism’ proposed a framework for comparing constructivist writers which considers three main axes along which differences are seen: the first axis relates to a cline where the focus of interest rests on either the individual and their construction of knowledge or on the construction of human knowledge in a more general sense; the second relates to the question of whether this knowledge, either individual or public, is ‘*made* or *discovered*’ (he suggests that the latter position is minimally constructive at most); the third axis concerns the question of whether the active construction is individual or social (or both), mental or physical (or both) (Phillips, 1995: 9). Phillips identifies the ‘good’ element of constructivism from his title as being the focus which constructivism has brought to the need for active learners, and the acknowledgement by many researchers in this field of the social character of learning (Phillips, 1995). He labels the ‘bad’ as the tendency, particularly in some branches of constructivism – most notably in the radical position (see below) – ‘towards relativism, or towards treating the justification of our knowledge as being entirely a matter of sociopolitical processes or consensus, or toward the jettisoning of any substantial warrant at all’ (Phillips, 1995: 11). The ‘ugly’ of the title is the ‘descent into sectarianism’ as the various ‘factions’ within constructivism separate into different groups. Clearly, Phillips’ views are not in line with those of radical constructivists.

Although constructivism has been sliced up into variously labelled positions and perspectives, two quite different but commonly mentioned ones relate to the function of cognition and to the nature of knowledge. These ‘cognitive constructivist’ positions have been labelled: ‘realist’ and ‘radicalist’, respectively and contrast with the social constructivist positions which will be described later (Cobb, 1996).

Within the ‘realist’ camp, the position can be summarised as: ‘cognition is the process by which learners eventually construct mental structures that correspond to or match external structures located in the environment’ (Cobb, 1996: 338). Cobb continues by discussing how the idea of individuals learning in an environment which ‘exists independently of human activity, culture, and history’ needs to be harmonised with the ideas of individuals as members of a community (*op cit*).



In contrast to this is the position held by ‘radical’ (or ‘strong’) constructivists, such as von Glaserfeld, which is characterised as one in which: ‘cognition serves to organise the learners’ experiential world rather than to discover ontological reality’ (Cobb, 1996: 338). Further, as in this view ontological reality is not accessible to humans, no constructed view is more or less correct than another, although judgements can be made in comparison to consensual norms (Derry, 1996). Within this perspective the learner’s knowledge is constructed based on personal experience and hence is individual and subjective. This position has been rejected by many including Prawat who wrote that ‘schemes, constructed in the head, mediate between mind and world, subject and object’ resulting in a position in which ‘mind and world go their separate ways’ (Prawat, 1996: 216). Driver et al. (1994) also take issue with this relativist position. Following Harré, they contend that although scientific knowledge is socially constructed and validated it is nevertheless ‘constrained by how the world is’ and is based on empirical evidence (Driver et al., 1994: 6).

Driver (1995), writing elsewhere, offers a new perspective on constructivism, or more literally three concentric perspectives:

- At the core is an inner perspective which describes an individual’s sense-making and construction of knowledge. This is the traditional personal constructivism perspective;
- Outside of this perspective is an interpersonal, social interactional knowledge construction perspective;
- Finally there is the broader sociocultural context of the construction of knowledge as public knowledge. It is here that individual and interpersonal construction takes place.

The two perspectives outlined briefly above – radical constructivism and realist constructivism – have been described by Prawat as ‘modern constructivisms’, and contrast with what he labels ‘postmodern constructivisms’ – sociocultural theory, symbolic interactionism, and social psychological constructionism (Prawat, 1996). These ‘postmodern constructivisms’ will be explored briefly later in the section. Tynjälä, too, (1999) in a list which mirrors that of Prawat, outlines how constructivism can be divided into a number of schools of thought – radical or cognitive constructivism; social constructionism; the sociocultural approach; symbolic

interactionism; and social constructivism. Tynjälä (1999: 364) emphasises the link between these constructivist approaches as the belief that 'knowledge is actively constructed by individuals or social communities' and a rejection of the view of learning as one of knowledge transmission, (cf von Glaserfeld's 'trivial constructivism'). She writes that the various branches listed differ considerably in the emphasis they place on the individual and on the social processes of learning (Tynjälä, 1999). These perspectives will now be discussed under the heading of social (and individual) aspects of learning.

### 3.1.2 Social (and individual) aspects of learning

More recently the notion of the individual learning in isolation has been questioned and there has been a growing interest in the role of the social in learning, where learning is viewed as being embedded in social, cultural and interactional settings, for example Wertsch (1991b). Before embarking on the next section which will look at the idea of social learning and at some of the various perspectives which fall under this umbrella, it is necessary to acknowledge that adherents of the constructivist approach have not failed to embrace the notion of the social aspects of learning. Driver et al. (1994) propose that learning science involves both the enculturation of individuals into the scientific community and the process by which individuals made sense of these ideas and practices on an individual basis. This induction into the community takes place through the medium of talk and the novice appropriates cultural tools whilst taking part in this dialogue. Furthermore, Driver et al. (1994) write that the ideas and practices of the scientific community are not actually natural phenomena but rather constructs fixed onto them for the sake of interpretation and understanding. The authors conclude that individuals learn through making sense in an individual way, modifying and adjusting their previous knowledge to take into account new understandings, and they learn socially through the process of appropriating the tools of the community whilst being enculturated into that community (*op cit*).

The next section will look at some of the ideas which fall under the notion of social learning, and it will be seen that many of these ideas share a degree of commonality with those expressed by Driver et al. (1994), particularly those under the heading of social constructivism.

Salomon and Perkins (1998) in their review of individual and social aspects of learning discern a number of different views of social learning which relate to the differing perspectives taken. They label these: ‘active social mediation of individual learning’; ‘social mediation as participatory knowledge construction’; ‘social mediation by cultural artifacts’; and ‘the social entity as a learning system’ (Salomon & Perkins, 1998). The first three of these will now be discussed in some detail whilst the fourth, dealing with the distributed cognition found in the learning of teams and groups, will not be considered here. Although some authors would subsume the learning as participation approach (2) under the auspices of the sociocultural approach (3), for example Ernest (1995) or Prawat (1996), I think it is helpful here to disentangle the views and present them separately. This allows a focus on their differences as well as their underlying commonalities.

### **3.1.2.1 Active social mediation of individual learning**

This aspect of learning could be seen as when a person (or persons) helps another to learn with the basic aim being to ‘create a better learning system for the primary learner by bringing in a facilitating social agent to help meet the critical conditions of learning’ (Salomon & Perkins, 1998: 4). This facilitating agent may be a teacher or a parent and may take the form of a one-to-one interaction or a one to group, involving asymmetrical or symmetrical power relations such as the teacher helping a student or two pupils working together, respectively. One of the major influences in this perspective on social learning is Vygotsky and specifically the notion of the *zone of proximal development* (ZPD). The concept of the ZPD can be defined as one in which ‘external social processes become internalized to serve in a mental capacity, thereby raising the level of individuals’ cognitive performance to one they could not have reached on their own’ (Salomon & Perkins, 1998: 7). A related concept is that of *scaffolding* which ‘entails two critical processes: internalization and active construction of knowledge in the form of active solutions to problems or formulation of designs, with the help of explicit guidance, modeling, encouragement, mirroring, and feedback’ (Salomon & Perkins, 1998: 7). These two processes see the social element as mediating individual learning.

This view uses constructivist ideas of the individual learner actively constructing knowledge, but sees the learner placed in a social setting where the ‘social knowledge

construction serves individual knowledge construction' (Salomon & Perkins, 1998). The focus is still on the individual learner and the notion that the 'other' is also learning, through this process is not a major consideration. This focus on dyadic interaction, which has been labelled 'strategy-based constructivism', has been criticised by Wertsch, who stated that this interpretation of Vygotsky has failed to take fully into account his point about the importance of the social element in cognition and hence was a 'kind of individualistic reductionism' (Prawat, 1996; Wertsch & Rupert, 1993). Within this perspective the goal of education is to arm the learner with transferable knowledge and skills (Salomon & Perkins, 1998).

### **3.1.2.2 Social mediation as participatory knowledge construction**

In contrast to the previous approach to social mediation of learning, Wertsch summarises the underlying basic assumption of a participatory approach as 'human mental functioning is inherently situated in social interactional, cultural, institutional, and historical context'. He contrasts this with approaches 'that assume, implicitly or explicitly, that it is possible to examine mental processes such as thinking or memory independently of the sociocultural setting in which individuals and groups function' (Wertsch, 1991a: 86).

Salomon and Perkins describe this neo-Vygotskian sociocultural version of social mediation as one 'which sees learning less as the socially facilitated acquisition of knowledge and skill and more as a matter of participation in a social process of knowledge construction' (Salomon & Perkins, 1998: 4). In this perspective the individual and the agent of social mediation are not viewed separately; rather they are an 'integrated and highly situated system' in which the learning is jointly constructed and distributed in the interaction.

Whereas proponents of the individual cognitive approach described in (3.1.2.1) focus on the construction of knowledge and skills through processes such as transmission and internalisation, and the transferability of those skills and understandings to other situations, the participatory approach emphasises the *joint* construction or appropriation of knowledge through the process of interaction and the subsequent distributed nature of this knowledge among participants. It is thus highly situated, both to the context and to the activity in which it arises (Salomon & Perkins, 1998). The central notion is the changing participation of the individual rather than that

individual's acquisition of knowledge. Within this framework, learning is not simply situated in the practice; rather, 'learning is an integral part of generative social practice in the lived-in world' (Lave & Wenger, 1991: 35). The focus is not entirely on the individual who is learning but considers that the community is also transformed by the process of providing training for its learners (*op cit*).

With their focus on changing participation in a community of practice, many researchers in this area have concentrated on learning in less formal, non-school settings such as the apprenticeship of Liberian tailors (Lave & Wenger, 1991), sailors learning to navigate (Hutchins, 1993), girl scouts learning to sell cookies (Rogoff, 1995) or little league baseball players in the United States learning the language of the game (Heath, 1991).

Theorists in a 'learning as participation' approach have tended to concentrate on conditions which influence and affect changing participation (and hence learning) rather than looking at the mechanisms by which this learning takes place (Cobb, 1994). Lave proposes the term 'legitimate peripheral participation' (LPP) to describe the process by which novices move from a limited role to full participation in a community of practice. The learning of relevant knowledge and skills is subsumed within this process (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The next section will outline briefly some of the conditions that positively influence the newcomer's ability to move towards full participation in the community.

There are a number of conditions needed to enable newcomers to move from their initial peripheral position to one of full membership. Broadly speaking they require 'access to a wide range of ongoing activity, old-timers, and other members of the community; and to information, resources, and opportunities for participation' (Lave & Wenger, 1991: 101). This access can then be seen to be made up of a number of key elements. One of the factors initially involved in the process concerns the peripheral element of LPP which allows newcomers to remain at the edge of the community, observing the practice. Lave discusses how this provides learners with the opportunity to gain a general sense of what the practices of the community are, including who is involved, how they behave, how they interact and what is required in order to become a full member. The learners' perspective will evolve as they become increasingly involved in the action, moving from involvement in 'peripheral, less intense, less complex, less vital tasks' towards 'more central aspects of practice' (Lave & Wenger, 1991: 96). It is important that the early tasks given to novices, although limited in

complexity, are not too repetitive or too limited. The newcomers' responsibility, which is also initially limited, increases as their participation changes. An example of this is to be found in the work of Hutchins who looked at sailors learning to navigate (1993). In this case, the initial task for the novice is to learn to organise their behaviour in order to achieve the task and this is often done with the assistance of a more experienced practitioner. However, Hutchins writes that, as the novices become more experienced, they will take on both the organising and the performance elements of the task themselves (Hutchins, 1993).

Another key element to learning to be a full participant involves 'engaging with the technologies of everyday practice' (Lave & Wenger, 1991: 101). This element is of considerable importance as 'understanding the technology of practice is more than learning to use tools; it is a way to connect with the history of the practice and to participate more directly in its cultural life' (and, as is discussed in the next section, the use of these 'tools of the trade' leads to the transformation of the agent using the tool).

Newcomers do not only learn from observation and interaction with experts who 'embody practice at its fullest in the community of practice' (Lave & Wenger, 1991: 85), but the element of learning from peers is also significant and 'where the circulation of knowledge among peers and near-peers is possible, it spreads exceedingly rapidly and effectively' (Lave & Wenger, 1991: 93). The authors point out that, unlike school where the changing knowledge of the learner is the object of many activities, in real communities of practice, the object is *engagement* in that practice and here the success of circulation of knowledge among peers would suggest that this may be a 'condition for the effectiveness of learning' (Lave & Wenger, 1991: 93).

Another key element in the process of moving from peripheral to full participation in a community of practice involves 'learning how to talk (and be silent) in the manner of full participants' (Lave & Wenger, 1991: 105). Learning to talk like an expert is inherent in the development of a new identity as a full member of the community in which 'learning and a sense of identity are inseparable: They are aspects of the same phenomenon' (Lave & Wenger, 1991: 115).

The increasing participation of the newcomers to the point of full membership or expertise in the community serves the function of continuing that community and its practices. The 'new' experts feed back into the community both through their practice and through their help to the next generation of novices. The community is thus

changed by the new members who are involved in ‘both absorbing and being absorbed in the culture of practice’ (Lave & Wenger, 1991: 95).

Another researcher in this ‘learning as participation’ field uses slightly different terminology to present similar ideas to those of Lave. Rogoff writes of a ‘community of learners model’ and working together in ‘shared endeavour’ in order to achieve a ‘transformation of participation’ (Rogoff et al., 1996). She draws parallels between her concept of ‘guided participation’ and Vygotsky’s ZPD. She describes how guided participation is a practice in which children participate with others in activities in which there is a gradual transfer of responsibility to the child as they become able to deal with more complex problems (Rogoff, 1991; Rogoff et al., 1996).

The enculturation of newcomers into a target community of practice is often discussed with reference to an apprenticeship which serves as the frame for this increasing participation. Within a traditional apprenticeship approach various techniques are used to help apprentices – modelling, coaching and fading (Collins, Brown & Newman, 1989). The learner is involved in observation of the expert who models the practice and may include the learner in carrying out sub-skills with guidance and support. This guidance and support is reduced as the learner begins to master the procedure in a process known as *fading*. This whole procedure is likely to be carried out in a social setting in which learners are exposed to a variety of models of expertise – important to enable them to see that there may be multiple ways to carry out a task – and also to the practices of other learners, which allows them to calibrate their own performances against those of peers (Collins et al., 1989). In applying this apprenticeship model to schooling, the authors propose the term ‘cognitive apprenticeship’ in order to highlight the fact that it is ‘conceptual and factual knowledge’ which is learned for use ‘in a variety of contexts’. Collins et al. (1989: 457) suggest that their term ‘refers to the focus of the learning-through-guided-experience on cognitive and metacognitive, rather than physical, skills and processes’. Whilst wishing to avoid drawing a distinction between the teaching of cognitive and physical skills, the authors suggest that this has practical implications for teaching and learning activities. They support this by pointing out that traditional apprenticeships, upon which the idea is based, focus on skills or domains in which:

the process of carrying out the target skills is external and thus readily available to both student and teacher for observation, comment, refinement, and correction and

bears a relatively transparent relationship to concrete products (Collins et al., 1989: 457).

Thus, as a result of the external processes and methods which lie at the heart of traditional apprenticeships, observation can serve as a major learning tool. Additionally the element of transparency in the relationship between process and product makes it possible for the novices themselves to recognise errors and the strategies needed to correct them. In contrast, the application of apprenticeship to cognitive skills entails the externalisation of internal tacit processes in order to facilitate their accessibility to observation and practice (*op cit*). In addition, the lack of transparency between process and product which is characteristic of a cognitive apprenticeship means that novices have to learn self-monitoring and self-correction. This can be achieved through techniques such as 'abstracted replay' whereby the novice's performance is relived through reflection and is thus available to analysis and criticism, and through the encouragement of novices to change roles whilst carrying out the task. Collins et al. summarise by saying:

cognitive apprenticeship involves the development and externalization of a producer – critic dialogue that students can gradually internalize. This development and externalization are accomplished through discussion, alternation of teacher and learner roles, and group problem solving (Collins et al., 1989: 458)

There are however a number of significant differences between traditional and cognitive apprenticeship relating to the selection and sequencing of tasks, the meaningfulness of the activity and the situatedness of practice (*op cit*). The authors cite the selection of tasks by work demands as being a highly inefficient aspect of traditional apprenticeships. They contrast this with a cognitive apprenticeship where the careful selection of tasks is sequenced according to increasing complexity, cognitive demand and following a line of the integration of skills. They point out that this is a more efficient practice for learning. The meaningfulness of the activity relates to the fact that, due to economic factors, traditional apprentices quickly learn those practices which result in a viable product and this carries within it a sense of the meaningfulness of practice. However in cognitive apprenticeship, meaningful standards and incentives must be created in order to encourage novices to seek to develop their practice. The third point mentioned above relates to the situatedness of the practice and is the idea that with traditional apprenticeships the activity and skill is strongly tied to the context of use. However, Collins et al. (1989) support the notion that in schooling the aim



should be towards abstracted skills and knowledge and that novices in an educational setting should be exposed to various contexts in which their skill and knowledge is used in order to achieve a more decontextualised and hence transferable knowledge.

Collins et al. (1989) cite three models which they have identified as following a cognitive apprenticeship model of learning: Palincsar and Brown's 'reciprocal teaching of reading' (1984); Scardamalia and Bereiter's 'procedural facilitation of writing' (1985); and Schoenfeld's 'method for teaching mathematical problem solving' (1985). From their discussion and analysis of these models they have evolved a framework of the characteristics of an ideal learning environment, under four 'dimensions'. The table below is adapted from Collins et al. (1989: 476), with an additional explanatory column which I extracted from their commentary:

<b>DIMENSIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS</b>	<b>EXPLANATION</b>
<b>CONTENT</b>	
<i>Domain knowledge</i>	The knowledge (conceptual, factual and procedural) related to a particular subject matter
<i>Heuristic strategies</i>	Strategies for realising a task which, when they work are useful
<i>Control strategies</i>	Knowledge for choosing between strategies to deploy; includes some reflection on problem solving
<i>Learning strategies</i>	Knowledge about learning to learn
<b>METHODS</b>	
<i>Modelling</i>	The expert performs a task observed by the novices; typically in terms of cognitive modelling this involves the externalisation of internal processes and activities by the expert, especially with regard to heuristics and control strategies
<i>Coaching</i>	The observation and assistance given by the expert to the novice whilst the novice is carrying out the task; includes scaffolding, 'highly interactive and highly situated feedback and suggestions', etc
<i>Scaffolding and fading</i>	The support provided by the expert to help the novice carry out the task; initially involving the teacher taking on the elements that the student cannot yet perform and then the gradual reduction of support
<i>Articulation</i>	Helping students to articulate their domain knowledge through strategies such as questioning or a student taking on the teacher role
<i>Reflection</i>	Helps students to compare their performance with that of an expert, with their peers and with internal model; can involve abstracted replay by teacher
<i>Exploration</i>	Encouraging students to explore how to set their own questions or problems

SEQUENCE	
<i>Increasing complexity</i>	The progression from simpler to more complex tasks involving increasing number of skills and concepts being required for expert performance; begin with simply carrying out tasks and move to self-direction and management
<i>Increasing diversity</i>	Tasks increase in variety of skills and strategies needed; need task diversity as well as practice
<i>Global before local skills</i>	Involves the ‘sequencing of lessons so students have a chance to apply a set of skills in constructing an interesting problem solution before they are required to remember or generate those skills’; this helps students build a conceptual model of the whole, enabling them to make sense of the pieces and helps the development of monitoring and self-correction skills
SOCIOLOGY	
<i>Situated learning</i>	Students carry out tasks in a setting ‘that reflects the multiple uses to which their knowledge will be put in the future’; hence learning is more meaningful and they learn the ‘application conditions’ of their knowledge which helps with knowledge abstraction and questions of transfer
<i>Culture of expert practice</i>	The creation of an environment in which ‘participants actively communicate about and engage in the skills involved in expertise’; this provides models for learners; it must involve experts externalising cognitive processes for learners, helping them to ‘think like experts’
<i>Intrinsic motivation</i>	Involves the encouragement of intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivation through carrying out realistic and purposeful activity
<i>Exploiting cooperation</i>	Helping students to share their knowledge and skills and learn from each other; cooperative learning also encourages articulation of processes and concepts which help students ‘gain conscious access to and control of cognitive and metacognitive processes’
<i>Exploiting competition</i>	Comparison allows students to focus on making improvements; should be concerned with comparison of process not product

**Table 3.1 Dimensions and characteristics of an ideal learning environment adapted from Collins et al. (1989: 476-90)**

### 3.1.2.3 Social mediation by cultural artifacts

This perspective focuses on the role of cultural tools or artifacts to mediate action. This mediation involves a ‘dialectic between agent and instrumentality’ thus forming a learning system with the learner (Wertsch, 1998: 17). This work draws on the ideas of Vygotsky who considered ‘the introduction of a psychological tool (for example, language) into a mental function (for example memory) as causing a fundamental transformation of that function’ (Wertsch, 1991a: 91). Wertsch writes that this element of Vygotsky’s work was not unique but that his assertion regarding the social nature of

signs ('psychological tools') was. Vygotsky stated that tools were social in two major ways. Firstly they are characteristic of interpsychological processes, and, secondly, they are 'inherently situated culturally, institutionally, and historically' (Wertsch, 1998: 24). Thus 'instead of locating mental functioning in the individual in isolation, Vygotsky locates it in the individual functioning together with a mediational means' (Wertsch, 1991a: 92).

Salomon and Perkins elaborate on Vygotsky's list of tools, by dividing them into: 'physical implements' such as books or in the case of teaching, tape recorders and whiteboards; 'technical procedures', for example procedures for carrying out a mathematical calculation or presenting the present simple; and 'symbolic resources', that is the language used to talk about elements of the discipline (Salomon & Perkins, 1998; Wertsch, 1998). However it is the psychological tools which were of primary importance to Vygotsky:

The [technical] tool's function is to serve as the conductor of human influence on the object of activity; it is externally oriented; it must lead to changes in objects. It is a means by which human external activity is aimed at mastering, and triumphing over, nature. The sign [psychological tool], on the other hand, changes nothing in the object of a psychological operation. It is a means of internal activity aimed at mastering oneself; the sign is internally oriented. These activities are so different from each other that the nature of the means they use cannot be the same in both cases. (Vygotsky, 1978: 55)

Drawing on Bakhtin's writing on the nature of social language, Wertsch stresses that any communicative act is inherently social as it involves the use of a social voice and hence, like the sociocultural situatedness of tools, is tied to the social setting. According to Wertsch:

virtually all human action, be it on the individual or social interactional plane, is socioculturally situated; even when an individual sits in solitude and contemplates something, she is socioculturally situated by virtue of the mediational means she employs (Wertsch, 1998: 109)

Wertsch (1998) continues by listing ten characteristics of mediated action and cultural tools, and these will be outlined, briefly, below:

1. 'An Irreducible Tension: Agent and Mediational Means': Wertsch writes of the importance of studying the interaction between the two elements and rejects the possibility of reducing the study to one or other of the two elements, although he accepts a selective focus to aid analysis. A feature of this characteristic of

mediated action is the blurring of the boundaries between agent and means and ‘instead of assuming that an agent, considered in isolation, is responsible for action, the appropriate designation of agent maybe something like “individual-operating-with-mediational-means”’ (Wertsch, 1998: 26).

2. ‘The Materiality of Mediational Means’: this characteristic focuses on the material property of mediational means in that they exist across time and space and independently of their use in action. This existence may be fleeting, as in speech; nevertheless it is no less material for this. Wertsch underlines the importance of this element of artifacts when he notes that there are:

important implications for understanding how internal processes come into existence and operate. Such internal processes can be thought of as skills in using particular mediational means. The development of such skills requires acting with, and reacting to, the material properties of cultural tools. Without such materiality, there would be nothing to act with or react to, and the emergence of socioculturally situated skills could not occur (Wertsch, 1998: 31)

3. ‘The Multiple Goals of Action’: this characteristic refers to the existence of multiple, sometimes conflicting, goals involved in mediated action. This is brought about by the fact that the purposes for which the tool is being used by the agent do not necessarily match those for which the tool was developed.

Salomon and Perkins (1998) discuss how a system consisting of agents using mediational means is not likely to be *primarily* a learning system – it is a system for carrying out a task. In their role as part of a learning system however, tools will serve both in the development of the agent and in the development of the practice (Salomon & Perkins, 1998). The agent using the tool is a new system which helps the user to achieve things not achievable without the tool. Feedback directed back from the tool use and the objects to which it is applied aid learning and hence can help to further the effectiveness of the system (*op. cit.*).

4. ‘Developmental Paths’: this characteristic relates to Wertsch’s assertion that all mediated action is historically situated and that agents and tools have a past and are always changing (Wertsch, 1998).

5. ‘Constraint and Affordances’: as mentioned earlier, the use of mediational means empowers the user to achieve things they would not be able to do without their use. However, Wertsch (1998) describes a lesser mentioned property, which is also inherent in the process, which serves to constrain the deployment of skills and action. This limit or constraint has been referred to by a number of terms: Burke writes of ‘terministic screens’ by which he means that language and culture serve not only to open experiences but also to limit them (Burke, 1966 cited in Wertsch, 1998). Wertsch describes how the instances of ‘negative affordance’ or constraint are often only recognised in retrospect when we look back with ‘new, further empowering (and constraining) forms of mediation’ (Wertsch, 1998: 40). An example Wertsch gives of this concept is that of development of the pole vault. Within this sport, the earliest wooden poles were replaced by bamboo then by steel and aluminium after the Second World War and more recently by fibreglass which, with its increased flexibility and strength, has allowed a new vaulting style to be adopted and new records to be set. With each of these changes athletes have been able to achieve better results, and yet each in its time was viewed entirely in the sense of the affordances it offered to vaulters; the constraints it placed on the sport were not recognised until each successive replacement was brought into being (Wertsch, 1998).
6. ‘Transformations of Mediated Action’: this characteristic relates to the way in which the introduction of new tools ‘transforms the action’ (Wertsch, 1998).

Salomon and Perkins (1998) point out that the use of tools also serves to transform the agent’s cognition. They ascribe the transforming effect to two elements: ‘learning effects *with* the tool’ which they define as ‘the changed functioning and expanded capability that takes place as the user uses and becomes accustomed to particular tools’; and ‘learning effects *of* the tool’ defined as the longer term effects of using the tool ‘beyond actual occasions of use: the impact on one’s cognitive arsenal of skills, perspectives, and ways of representing the world’ (Salomon & Perkins, 1998: 11).
7. ‘Internalization as Mastery’: Wertsch writes that the mastery of tools is often formulated in terms of internalization which he criticises as encouraging a search for ‘suspect’ mental entities such as concepts and rules. Resisting the

urge to give an abstract definition and then apply the construct to specific examples which he says has lead to confusion over its usage, Wertsch prefers instead to consider internalization to be a term which is ‘closely bound up with particular phenomena and examples’ and hence has ‘a variety of interpretations’ (Wertsch, 1998: 48). Wertsch wrote: ‘The notion of internalization I have in mind can be termed “mastery”. When speaking of mastery, I have in mind “knowing how” (Ryle, 1949) to use a mediational means with facility’ (Wertsch, 1998: 50). For a more detailed discussion of ‘knowing how’ see Chapter 3.2.

8. ‘Internalization as Appropriation’: Wertsch here bases his notion of appropriation on the ideas of Bakhtin by which he means that ‘the process is one of taking something that belongs to others and making it one’s own’ (Wertsch, 1998: 53). He describes how the appropriation of cultural tools by an agent is often not a straightforward case, and, more often than not, ‘friction’ or ‘resistance’ is involved. In the words of Bakhtin:

The word in language is half someone else’s. It becomes ‘one’s own’ only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. Prior to this moment of appropriation, the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language (it is not, after all, out of a dictionary that a speaker gets his words!), but rather it exists in other people’s mouths, in other people’s contexts, serving other people’s intentions: it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one’s own. And not all words for just anyone submit equally easily to this appropriation, to this seizure and transformation into private property: many words stubbornly resist, others remain alien, sound foreign in the mouth of the one who appropriated them and who now speaks them; they cannot be assimilated into his context and fall out of it; it is as if they put themselves in quotation marks against the will of the speaker. Language is not a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker’s intentions; it is populated – overpopulated – with the intentions of others. Expropriating it, forcing it to submit to one’s own intentions and accents, is a difficult and complicated process. (Bakhtin, 1981: 293-4)

Similarly, as mentioned in point (5), when appropriating tools we also take on the affordances and constraints associated with that tool (Wertsch, 1998). This may cause the friction mentioned earlier and the tool may be used – mastered – but not fully appropriated due to resistance by the agent (*op cit*).

9. ‘Spin-off’: this characteristic relates to the idea that tools have often been designed for a purpose other than that for which they are being used and further.

‘they often emerge in response to forces that have nothing to do with the ideal design of mediational means’ (Wertsch, 1998: 59). One of the major implications for this is that users may actually be using a tool which impedes rather than aids their performance. Wertsch cites the example of the QUERTY keyboard which was developed in order to slow down typing and thereby prevent the typewriter from jamming. Another element which ties in to this characteristic is that the cultural tool being used may have been imported from a context which is distinctly different from that in which it is currently being used (Wertsch, 1998).

10. ‘Power and Authority’: this aspect relates to the idea that the tools being used are not neutral, rather they are ‘differentially imbued’ with the power and authority invested in them by their sociocultural context. This has an influence on what kinds of knowledge are considered worth having and a notion of preferred responses or solutions (Wertsch, 1998).

### 3.1.3 Other ‘postmodern constructivism’ positions

According to Prawat (1996), there are two other major perspectives which build on constructivist theory and he labels these ‘postmodern constructivism’. They are ‘symbolic interactionism’ and ‘social psychological constructionism’. Under the latter he includes social constructivism and social constructionism. These will now be outlined briefly.

#### 3.1.3.1 Symbolic interactionism

Prawat ascribes much of the initial development of this approach to Blumer (1969, cited in Prawat, 1996) who adapted the approach he labelled ‘symbolic interactionism’ from Mead’s earlier sociological work (which Mead called ‘symbolic interactionism’). It should be noted, that many authors use Mead’s term when discussing this approach, for example Cobb and Yackel (1996) and Ernest (1995), although I shall follow Prawat and use ‘symbolic interactionism’. Symbolic interactionism seeks to establish a more equal concern with both the individual and the social elements of learning by shifting

focus back and forth between individual and group. Prawat summarises the advantage of this approach for education as lying in:

its ability to account for how a group of individuals interactively constitutes and stabilizes meaning at the classroom level while taking into account the fact that individuals within the group have their own unique take on aspects of this meaning. (Prawat, 1996: 220)

Two key concepts for this approach are ‘institutionalized knowledge’ which is the understanding which emerges in a group, and although there may be individual differences from the group understanding, these differences must be ‘compatible’ if not ‘fully consistent’ (Cobb, 1989 cited in Prawat, 1996). The second key concept is ‘consensual domains’. These facilitate communication and coordination within a group by allowing members to assume a sameness of meaning and perspective across individuals. This ‘sameness fiction’ emerges through ‘a process of social interaction and negotiation’ (Prawat, 1996: 220).

The central concept for symbolic interactionists is that communities are built and maintained by the need for ‘effective social action’ which forces individuals to coordinate effort and requires that ‘they must define and interpret one another’s actions’ in a way which creates meaning through interaction (*op cit*).

The focus for symbolic interactionists is on the socially negotiated meanings of the community, and, although individuals may have to some extent an idiosyncratic understanding, this is created from the social perspective of the community. In this sense the community provides the ‘reference frame’ by which the individual makes meaning (Prawat, 1996). Despite this focus on the community level, Prawat writes that there is a tension between individual and social which allows for more autonomous individuals than other approaches. This is because, within this perspective, ‘individuals who are engaged in social activity do not just internalize the meaning that was socially constructed; they communicate with themselves about the activity as well – replicating at a personal level what has occurred and is occurring on the social level’ (Prawat, 1996: 220).



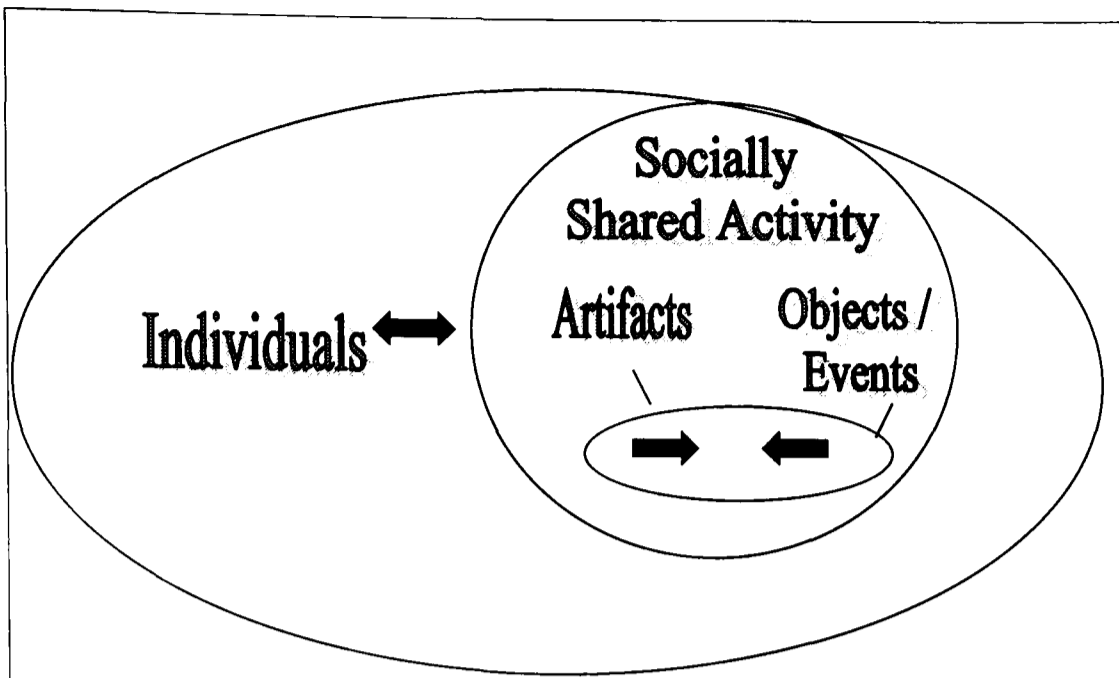


Figure 1: Symbolic Interactionist constructivism (Prawat, 1996: 220)

The (linguistic) artifacts which play a crucial role in the diagram above are, as discussed, socially constructed during the course of individuals pursuing purposeful shared activity. The artifacts are not however ‘extensions of the individual, rather they become part of the object world to which the individual responds’. The previously discussed autonomy of the individual is represented by their separation from the circle. These individuals share perspectives on objects and events with others engaged in their shared activity (Prawat, 1996).

Differences between the symbolic interactionist perspective and sociocultural perspectives include the fact that in a sociocultural approach the tool is an extension of the individual working in a dialectic relationship and theorists ‘emphasize commonalities within social groupings’ (Prawat, 1996). The focus for symbolic interactionists is more on diversity of individuals within the group. Prawat also writes that whereas socioculturalists take a broad view of context and culture, symbolic interactionists are more concerned with a more restricted local community (Cobb & Yackel, 1996; Prawat, 1996).

### 3.1.3.2 Social constructivism

Ernest, who compared forms of constructivism in a paper entitled ‘The one and the many’, proposed that the most appropriate metaphor for a social constructivist approach was that of ‘persons in conversation – persons in meaningful linguistic and extralinguistic interaction and dialogue’ (Ernest, 1995: 480). The metaphor accords

primacy to the role of language in shaping individual minds. It was also chosen to represent the ideas of the approach which centre around the notion that the individual and the social are interconnected and that:

the social constructivist model of the world is that of a socially constructed world that creates (and is constrained by) the shared experience of the underlying physical reality. [...] The humanly constructed reality is all the time being modified and interacting to fit ontological reality, although it can never give a true picture of it. (Ernest, 1995: 480)

It can be seen from the brief summary above there is a degree of similarity in the underlying ideas of radical and social constructivism. Further, with radical constructivist researchers moving towards the incorporation of social constructivist ideas into their approach, the distinction between the two has blurred considerably (Ernest, 1995).

It should be noted that different authors divide the offshoots of constructivist theories in different ways. An example is to be found in the contrast between the division of Prawat (1996) as used to inform this chapter and that of Richardson (1997). In her division of constructivism she suggests a distinction between ‘Piagetian psychological constructivism’ and ‘social cognition’ or ‘social constructivism’. Under the latter heading she places ‘situated cognition’ and ‘sociocultural approaches’ (Richardson, 1997).

A further point which needs to be made here relates to the current usage of the term ‘social constructivism’. It seems that many people are using the term to describe the notion of constructivism with an acknowledgement of the importance of social elements. Social constructivism is therefore being used more to express belief in social plus constructivist ideas and does not refer to the kind of perspective briefly outlined in this section.

### **3.1.3.3 Social constructionism**

The underlying theory of social constructionism is similar to that of social constructivism, although the former emphasises the social over the individual: ‘mind is regarded as the introjected social dimension. To put it another way, evidence of the mental is to be found in social performance and public display’ (Ernest, 1995: 481).

Rorty is one of the major figures associated with the social constructionist movement in which the focus of attention is language rather than the individual or the real world. Within this perspective, everything is ‘essentially linguistic’ and it is in language that knowledge and truth are located (Rorty, 1989: 9 cited in Prawat, 1996). As a result of this, theorists in the field hold that the world is subject to multiple interpretations and that ‘there is nothing outside of language to which individuals may refer to validate the truthfulness of the language the community has chosen to use’ (Prawat, 1996: 221). Hence, according to Prawat, there is ‘no room for reality’ in this approach which does not recognise individual mind or world:

Social constructionist theory takes a more radical stance toward the mind-world dilemma. It abolishes both mind and world: Mind, as an individual entity that accounts for understanding, is superfluous; all understanding is linguistic. There is no such thing as a concept independent of language. Because language is a communal enterprise, mind is a communal enterprise. World, if by that one means a reality existing outside of language, is also superfluous. It may exist but there is no way to get at it other than through the community’s way of talking about it. (Prawat, 1996: 223)

The discussion above of social constructivism and social constructionism are included to lend more comprehensiveness to the coverage of various approaches. However, the views of proponents of some of these approaches are rather extreme and their anti-realist stance is a little perplexing.

The next section will look at cognitive skill theory, sometimes known as expertise.

### 3.1.4 Cognitive skill theory / Expertise

Although commonly associated with behaviourism, the study of skills or expertise actually has a long history in the field of cognitive psychology (cf. Anderson, 2000; Welford, 1968), it has enjoyed a recent renaissance in which the study of expertise has not been connected to the earlier work. Before moving on to look at the acquisition of skilled capability, the concept of skill will first be defined and then some points made regarding the characteristics of skill or expertise.

*Skill*, like many words which are used in common parlance, is understood and used in many different ways, although most commonly its definition includes notions of expertise, competence and ability.

One (general purpose) dictionary defines it as:

Skill: 1. Special ability in a task, sport, etc., esp. ability acquired by training. 2. something, esp. a trade or technique, requiring special training or manual proficiency. (*Collins Concise Dictionary*, 1995)

Tomlinson suggests that the underlying commonality in meaning of the various definitions available would be:

A skill is a relatively consistent ability to achieve a particular kind of goal through action in/on relevant kinds of contexts (Tomlinson, 1998: 87)

An additional definition, this time of ‘skilled behaviour’ is from Eraut and deals with what he claims is the concept’s core meaning:

‘skilled behaviour’ [is] a complex sequence of actions which has become so routinized through practice and experience that it is performed almost automatically (Eraut, 1994: 111)

The elements of the definitions above will be discussed in further detail in the following section on the characteristics of ‘skill’.

### **3.1.4.1 Characteristics of skill**

According to Tomlinson (1998), skills can vary in a number of ways, which include:

- a) a continuum of simplicity to complexity: this relates to the goals, processes and context of the skilled behaviour
- b) whether they are discrete or continuous: as in a single action or a series of continuous actions – many skills include both elements
- c) whether they are open or closed: this point relates to the ‘relative predictability of the context’
- d) the nature of their content: for example physical skills, cognitive skills and social skills (although, of course, there is overlap between these categories; for example, a social skill can involve both cognitive and physical skill)

The three definitions above say a great deal about the nature of expertise and its characteristics. The first, from the dictionary (*Collins Concise Dictionary*, 1995) touches on an issue often associated with skill or expertise, and that is the association of the term with physical behaviour or action. The second definition (Tomlinson, 1998)

focuses on the idea that skillful action is intended to accomplish a goal and does so with some consistency and makes the point that the skillful deployment of behaviour is context-sensitive. Eraut's definition (1994), which actually relates more to the typical nature of processes involved in 'skill' rather than what defines the concept, focuses solely on the proceduralisation of the skill concerned, bringing in the idea that, with use, deployment becomes intuitive. This 'definition' does not deal with the purposive or goal-directed nature of such action and hence appears somewhat incomplete. Some of the characteristics of 'skill' will now be looked at in more detail.

#### **3.1.4.1.1 The strategic nature of skills**

A skilled person has a range of strategies at their disposal which can be deployed in order to achieve the desired goal in the context (Tomlinson, 1998). The goal-directed behaviour is both reactive, that is, it adapts to changing events through the correct reading of feedback, and also predictive, in that the skilled individual is anticipating what will come. These strategies vary, from algorithmic ones in a closed skill which guarantee success, to the use of heuristics in more open skilled behaviour (*op cit*).

#### **3.1.4.1.2 The hierarchical nature of skills**

Skilled behaviour tends to have multiple levels of skills and sub-skills embedded in the overall activity. An example of this is the skill of driving, which includes amongst other elements, changing gear, which itself includes finding the correct position for the gear stick (Tomlinson, 1998).

#### **3.1.4.1.3 The knowledge base**

One characteristic of 'skill' not directly mentioned in the definitions above is that it is dependent on knowledge of some sort. The kind of knowledge most commonly associated with skilled behaviour is procedural knowledge or '*knowing how*' (Ryle, 1949). Traditionally, this form of knowledge is considered to be unconscious and automatised and is often characterised as being situated in the procedure in question (Johnson, 1996; Ryle, 1949; Tomlinson, 1995). It has also been referred to as 'techne' or performance knowledge (Fenstermacher, 1994) and as 'knowledge-in-action' (Schön.

1983, 1987). However, another kind of knowledge is also involved in the deployment of skilled behaviour and that is the kind of knowledge known as '*knowing that*' (Ryle, 1949). This form of knowledge concerns knowledge of the world or of facts and is known by various terms including 'declarative knowledge', 'episteme', 'scientific knowledge', 'informational knowledge', and 'theoretical knowledge' (Fenstermacher, 1994). In contrast to procedural knowledge, declarative knowledge has been thought of as conscious and readily articulated. This point will be explored in greater detail in the section on 'belief' which follows (Chapter 3,2)

#### **3.1.4.1.4 Automatisation and tacitness**

As novice teachers gain experience of classrooms, they find that much of what they previously considered and thought through in a sometimes laboured process becomes routinised or automatised, and their actions become increasingly fluent and effortless (Tomlinson, 1999). This is due to the chunking of sub-skills and a reduction in conscious control.

The automatisisation of skills is recognised as a key feature of expertise and, as was seen in the definition above by Eraut (1994), some researchers make it the sole defining feature of skilled activity. The prime value of automatisisation or proceduralisation is that it enables the user to overcome limitations of conscious cognitive processing and counters the danger that too much new information can lead to a cognitive overload (Tomlinson, 1999). The automatisisation of skill provides 'great economy of effort' (Berliner, 1986). Of course with a complex open skill such as teaching, not all skills or sub-skills will be automatised, and there will be elements of skill in which some conscious control remains. Hence the definition cited earlier from Eraut (1994) can be seen as overly restrictive. The negative side to this automatisisation is the development of habits which are hard to change, and the difficulty that an expert may have in articulating a developed skill to a novice (Tomlinson, 1995).

#### **3.1.4.2 Acquiring skill: the skill cycle**

Classically, the major route to the acquisition of skill is thought to be learning by doing in an organised, systematic way, in which 'repeated attempts [are] informed by planning

and corrected by relevant and relatable feedback' (Tomlinson, 1998: 92). This typically involves a cyclical process of:

plan – attempt – feedback – re-plan (Tomlinson, 1998)

Breaking this down into finer detail, an individual first needs to have a goal which they want to realise; they then need to make a decision concerning the comparison between the skill they already have and what they need in order to achieve their goal. This is followed by the development of a plan and then the attempt. The outcome of the attempt needs to be compared against the original intention or goal, and this feedback can then lead to an adjustment in the plan before another attempt is made (Tomlinson, 1995, 1998).

The importance of feedback to the development of expertise is emphasised by Anderson (2000). In his analysis of what makes an expert he identified the long period of study or practice which tends to separate novices from experts; however he noted that it was not simply practice but 'deliberate practice' which made the difference (*op cit*). Citing a study by Ericsson, Krampe and Tesch-Römer (1993) he separates individuals who may practice over a lifetime without much improvement from those who engage in deliberate practice. He states that:

In deliberate practice, the learners are motivated to learn, not just perform; the learners are given feedback on their performance; and they carefully monitor how well their performance corresponds to the correct performance and where the deviations occur. The learners focus on eliminating these points of discrepancy. (Anderson, 2000: 304)

Roberts (1998: 73) summarising work by Joyce and Showers (1980; 1984) indicated a number of conditions which were required for effective skill training, and, although they have a rather behaviourist view of skills, their points are of interest:

- a close match between conditions of training and those of actual use;
- unambiguous description of skill;
- demonstration or modelling of skill;
- establish the basic skills before going on to finer tuning;
- optimal practice time;
- individual skill-focused feedback on task performance;
- multiple contexts of demonstration and use;
- understanding of principles underlying behavioural skills (by means of reading or lectures);
- the availability of coaching after training.

Studies in skill acquisition in the 1950s and 1960s suggested that learners typically went through three stages in their development (Anderson, 2000; Tomlinson, 1995, 1998):

- a ‘cognitive stage’: in which planning and the deployment of skills and sub-skills are conscious and hence challenging in terms of cognitive processing: there is a reliance on declarative rather than procedural knowledge (Anderson, 2000)
- an ‘associative stage’: through the repetition of the skill cycle, various elements become more intuitive, and more reliable and accurate; in this phase the declarative and the procedural knowledge are likely to ‘coexist side by side’ although it is the procedural knowledge which guides the skilled performance (Anderson, 2000: 281)
- an ‘autonomous stage’: much of the skill is now automatised and further development is more in terms of ‘unconscious fine tuning’ (Tomlinson, 1998); improvements are in the form of increased speed and accuracy, and also in decisions regarding the appropriateness of a particular action, possibly in the form of ‘if-then’ propositions (Anderson, 2000)

Another model of phases of skill acquisition was proposed by Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986). This model involves five stages in the development of expertise and is summarised concisely by Eraut (1994: 124):



<b>Level 1</b>	<b>Novice</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rigid adherence to taught rules or plans</li> <li>• Little situational perception</li> <li>• No discretionary judgment</li> </ul>
<b>Level 2</b>	<b>Advanced Beginner</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidelines for action based on attributes or aspects (aspects are global characteristics of situations recognisable only after some prior experience)</li> <li>• Situational perception still limited</li> <li>• All attributes and aspects are treated separately and given equal importance</li> </ul>
<b>Level 3</b>	<b>Competent</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coping with crowdedness</li> <li>• Now sees actions at least partially in terms of longer-term goals</li> <li>• Conscious deliberative planning</li> <li>• Standardized and routinized procedures</li> </ul>
<b>Level 4</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sees situations holistically rather than in terms of aspects</li> <li>• See what is most important in a situation</li> <li>• Perceives deviations from the normal pattern</li> <li>• Decision-making less laboured</li> <li>• Uses maxims for guidance, whose meaning varies according to the situation</li> </ul>
<b>Level 5</b>	<b>Expert</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No longer relies on rules, guidelines or maxims</li> <li>• Intuitive grasp of situations based on deep tacit understanding</li> <li>• Analytic approaches used only in novel situations or when problems occur</li> <li>• Vision of what is possible</li> </ul>

**Table 3.2: Dreyfus and Dreyfus' model of skill acquisition, taken from Eraut (1994: 124)**

Dreyfus and Dreyfus' model (1986) has been criticised on several grounds: for an over-emphasis on 'procedural prescription' which sees learners as needing to start by unthinkingly following rules (Tomlinson, 1995: 26); an 'ambiguous treatment of deliberative processes' (Eraut, 1994: 128); and a 'neglect of the metaprocesses involved in controlling one's own behaviour' (Eraut, 1994: 127, 128). In short, Eraut concludes that 'the process of learning from experience has been idealized and the psychological research in the fallibility of human judgment ignored' (Eraut, 1994: 128).

Despite the criticism reported above, one of the strengths of the Dreyfus and Dreyfus model is its recognition of the role of tacit knowledge and intuition in

professional judgement and expertise (Eraut, 1994). Eraut describes how, in a busy and complex place such as a classroom, decisions must be made in real-time with little opportunity for reflection and deliberation. As was discussed earlier, Eraut defined 'skilled behaviour' as that which has, through a process of proceduralisation, become intuitive and implicit. Although this is not fully adequate as a definition, the notion of the proceduralisation of knowledge is a crucial element of skill and the decision-making processes of the teacher is a prime example of the importance of this. As Eraut states:

these decisions do not involve the deliberative processes [...] but are interactive decisions made on the spur of the moment in response to rapid readings of the situation and the overall purpose of the action. Such decisions have to be largely intuitive. (Eraut, 1994: 111)

Two researchers looking at the acquisition of skill pointed out that, whilst it has been long accepted that teaching skills are learnt through practice and through observation, a third process has been neglected (Gleissman & Pugh, 1987). This is the acquisition of skills through understanding. With the premise that when a skill is 'grasped conceptually' it is 'more likely to be enacted' that is, concepts mediate skills or strategies, they propose a method of training which they refer to as following a conceptual instruction and intervention approach (*op cit*). The authors discuss teaching skills such as questioning and praising students and suggest that 'when the categories of behaviour to which these concepts refer are well defined and delineated, the concepts themselves become optimally clear' (Gleissman & Pugh, 1987: 556). Two forms of conceptual learning are described: 'concept acquisition' in which a trainee learns the key features of a skill and can identify examples of it; and 'concept formation' in which trainees identify a skill or group of skills which are needed (such as keeping learners' attention) and hence construct a concept in an emergent way. Their paper presents the results of a re-analysis of older studies which focused on improving trainees' ability with questioning. They report that all studies which targeted the development of clear concepts about questioning showed improvements and that studies in which practice was added to this conceptual instruction did not have significantly higher gains over those with instruction alone (Gleissman & Pugh, 1987). Their own research supported this finding, and found a positive correlation between concept acquisition and skill deployment. They concluded that 'concept mastery should be the primary goal of skill training [because if] concepts about skills are mastered, skills are highly likely to follow' (Gleissman & Pugh, 1987: 562).

### 3.1.5 In search of a pragmatic reconciliation

It is tempting to think that the above description of various theoretical positions which fall under the umbrella of constructivism is relatively comprehensive and that having now laid out the territory, it is a simple process to map out my plot. However, it should be remembered that in my act of ‘ventriloquising’ the positions there is bound to be interpretation on my part and on the part of the people whose work I report which transforms their ideas and their meanings. A further note of caution comes from several key writers in the field of cognitive psychology who note that even *within* the different approaches there are researchers who have different interpretations and differing emphases, or, as Ernest (1995: 459) writes, ‘there are almost as many varieties of constructivism as there are researchers’ (Derry, 1996; John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996; Marshall, 1996).

There were a number of complicating factors in producing this overview: the tendency of many writers to limit their discussion of a theoretical framework to a narrow literature from which they are drawing inspiration; the wide variety of positions held within any one approach; and the plethora of terms, some of which are well-defined and delineated and others less so, and some of which overlap. Whilst it is understandable that researchers would wish to use a single framework and not seek to compare or contrast it with other frameworks or approaches, I feel the result is large scale theoretical fragmentation. As an example, to say one is a constructivist is now of questionable meaningfulness because the approach encompasses such a broad array of theories and positions within it.

Further, researchers using for example, a sociocultural ‘learning as participation’ approach not only often fail to acknowledge work done in the related field of mediation of tool use but also it seems they are developing terminology which overlaps with researchers in the same area, without a full discussion of why this is desirable or how the terms compare. The result is a wooliness of terminology and the development of narrow positions. It is appreciated that many of the approaches have developed from different histories; however the lack of bridge-building in the field is surprising.

Although this chapter has dealt with many positions and I have made a point of emphasising the differences within as well as between camps, I will now try and deal

with some of these ideas in a more coherent way, and, as I am looking for a comprehensive and coherent framework of analysis for my study. I will ignore some of the more extreme positions held and focus on commonality rather than conflict.

### **3.1.5.1 The individual and the social**

We have seen in the earlier section that there are two major conceptions of learning which are often held to be in conflict: in the first, the individual learner is seen as actively constructing knowledge and the focus is on the acquisition of knowledge and of skills and their transfer to other learning situations; in the second, the learning is seen as more of a collaborative participatory process in which context, interaction and situatedness are emphasised. However this distinction is becoming blurred as constructivist researchers recognise the need to acknowledge the social aspects of learning and incorporate these notions into their theorising. An example of this was the work by Driver (1995) who proposed three concentric perspectives, the inner, the interpersonal and the sociocultural.

When the focus of the two approaches is examined, it can be seen that rather than being contradictory, they differ in their choice of focus. In sociocultural theory there is a concentration on the conditions which best support learning, which contrasts with the focus for constructivists on the content and processes of learning (Cobb, 1994). Cobb adds:

constructivists might argue that sociocultural theories do not adequately account for the process of learning, and sociocultural theories might retort that constructivist theories fail to account for the production and reproduction of the practices of schooling and the social order (Cobb, 1994: 18)

This next section will focus on why and how these approaches can be combined.

The question concerning the desirability of combining the approaches is reasonably straightforward. Although there are those who might argue that their perspective can fully illuminate the subject under investigation, a few researchers are now focusing on how each approach can serve to highlight different aspects of a study and thus complement each other by facilitating understanding in a more coherent and integrated way. This position can be seen in the writing of researchers such as Salomon and Perkins who wrote that 'although each process can be understood in its own right, understanding the interplay yields a richer and conceptually more satisfying picture'

(Salomon & Perkins, 1998: 2) and Cobb, who states that 'each of the two perspectives, the sociocultural and the constructivist, tells half of a good story, and each can be used to complement the other' (Cobb, 1994: 17).

Before the question of how the approaches can be used to complement each other in a single study, there is the related question of whether this interplay is possible or whether there is something inherent in the theory of one approach which rules out this possibility. Each approach is adhered to by a large number of researchers, representing a large range of opinions and positions held. On the whole there seem to be few writers who address the issue of comparison or compatibility; however, this does not mean that the approaches cannot be united. Bereiter, who does deal with this issue, summarises:

Stripped to their essentials, constructivism tells us to pay close attention to the mental activities of the learner, and socioculturalism tells us to pay close attention to cultural practices in the learner's milieu. Except for the practical difficulty of doing both at once, there is nothing incompatible in these proposals. Neither one implies rejection of the other. (Bereiter, 1994: 21)

In a similar vein, Cobb, taking Rogoff as representative of a sociocultural 'participation' approach and von Glaserfeld as representative of constructivism, writes:

In comparing Rogoff's and von Glaserfeld's work, it can be noted that Rogoff's view of learning as acculturation via guided participation implicitly assumes an actively constructing child. Conversely, von Glaserfeld's view of learning as cognitive self-organization implicitly assumes that the child is participating in cultural practices. In effect, active individual construction constitutes the background against which guided participation in cultural practices comes to the fore for Rogoff, and this participation is the background against which self-organization comes to the fore for von Glaserfeld. (Cobb, 1994: 17)

Both Cobb and Bereiter are of the opinion that the concept of the learner as individual can be considered along with the notion of the learner in interaction as two aspects or perspectives which, when combined, can offer a richer picture of the learning or enculturation process which occurs. Neither writer seems to consider that there are any inherent contradictions in the approaches. Cobb (1994) and Resnick (1991) both consider the two perspectives as foreground and background, with each coming to the fore at different times. The approach of shifting focus between the individual and the context or community is also advocated by Nuthall (1996). Rogoff also takes up this idea with the notion of three levels of analysis, the 'personal', 'interpersonal' and 'community processes' which, although inseparable and inherently interconnected, can each be the focus of attention at different times (Rogoff, 1995: 139).

The key to understanding how these two approaches can be usefully combined is a pragmatic one of viewing them less as theoretical positions and more as perspectives, albeit underpinned by theory. The two positions have differing perspectives on learning: one views learning as centring on an individual, learning through the construction of meaningful knowledge; and the other focuses on the learner in a participatory, socioculturally-situated context. The two perspectives also have differing emphases, the first on the content and processes of learning, and the latter on the conditions which affect this learning.

From constructivist views of learning we can take the idea of the learner as an active thinking individual who has concepts, beliefs and knowledge of things around them. This knowledge is to some degree idiosyncratic and to some degree influenced or formed by the society or culture that surrounds the individual. The beliefs and knowledge held by the individual exert an influence on their learning because their presence influences the construal and interpretation of new information, serving as a ‘cognitive-affective filter’ (Pennington, 1996), an ‘intuitive screen’ (Goodman, 1988), or a ‘lens’ (Anderson & Bird, 1995; Zulich, Bean & Herrick, 1992) through which input is filtered. Hence rather than simply passively receiving and storing new information, the individual makes sense of new knowledge in a more individualised way and thus constructs their own new meanings by blending the old and the new. The processes by which this learning occurs centre on the Piagetian concepts of *accommodation* and *assimilation* which were discussed earlier (Section 3.1.1.1).

The view of the learner as an active sense maker is one which is also recognised by adherents of a sociocultural perspective. However, they reject the notion of the individual in isolation and also the idea that the social is merely the background to learning. Researchers following a Vygotskian or Wertschian approach focus on the interaction between individuals and tools. The individual alone is not primary, rather it is the individual and the tool which form a unit which Wertsch referred to as ‘individual-operating-with-mediational-means’ (Wertsch, 1998: 26). This unit is inherently a social unit due to the fact that it is socially situated and socially influenced. The idea that individuals have a past, that is, they are historically situated, which influences them is also recognised – as is the idea that the tools themselves are also historically situated. Wertsch attributes a filter effect to the tools, discussing the constraints and affordances which they bring to the action, citing Burke who writes of ‘terministic screens’ (Burke, 1966: 50 cited in Wertsch, 1998: 17). Wertsch also

discusses the filtering which is carried out by the individuals who may resist appropriating the tools, giving the example of Estonians resisting the official line from the Soviet history of their country. He refers to Bakhtin who wrote about words being populated by others' intentions, and the struggle one can have to force the word to 'submit to one's own intentions and accents' (Bakhtin, 1981: 294). This discussion does not raise the issue of the beliefs of the individual and their influence on the interpretation of information although it can clearly be seen to parallel this point. Wertsch draws a distinction between the use or mastery of the tool and its appropriation. The latter construct is seen as influenced by the embracing or resistance of the individual, that is, their beliefs about the tool and its use.

The other major perspective within a sociocultural approach is that of 'learning as participation'. This approach, championed by researchers such as Lave, again rejects the concept that the learner and the social context can be separated, and also more radically rejects the notion of learning per se. Instead learning is viewed as the individual's changing participation in social activity. Further discussion of the commonalities between this perspective and constructivist ideas is difficult due to the socioculturalist's focus on the conditions of learning rather than the learning itself. The role of learning to use the 'tools of the trade' is somewhat underplayed by 'participation' researchers although it is usually mentioned as a feature of the apprenticeship of legitimate peripheral participants. If tools are given more of a central role as in a Wertschian approach then the participation work can usefully be employed to add understanding to this learning through an appreciation of effective learning environments and conditions.

As explored earlier there are good reasons for seeking to unite these two perspectives, particularly from a research point of view. These reasons are essentially pragmatic. In the search to understand what is occurring in a research environment, it makes sense to use all the information available to explore alternatives. Obviously this would be problematic if the theories relied upon were inconsistent or contradictory. However that is not the case here. Essentially the ideas of constructivism and those of sociocultural approaches can be viewed as perspectives on learning. With this view then, one or other can be brought into focus at a particular time, with the other being backgrounded, although necessarily still involved. Like Cobb and others, I believe that by using both approaches a richer and more complex picture can be built up.

### 3.1.5.2 Bringing in cognitive skill theory and implicit learning

The emphasis on the use of tools as mediational agents within sociocultural approaches to learning links to the work on skill theory, in that skill theory can be seen to provide a framework by which individuals learn to use the tools. In this section, I will explore that assertion.

In the earlier section on Wertsch's notions of tool use and learning, the processes by which learning with tools occurs were discussed. There are two points of particular interest: learning by appropriation and mastery, and a point not mentioned earlier of 'performance before mastery'. Wertsch chooses to tie his interpretation of internalisation to the concept of 'mastery' or as he states "'knowing how" (Ryle, 1949) to use a mediational means with facility' (Wertsch, 1998: 48). Wertsch writes of the greater appropriateness of the term 'knowing how' over that of 'internalisation' because the latter implies that processes which were carried out externally move to an internal plane. He points out that many processes never become internalised, and cites as an example the distributed cognition in the study of navigators by Hutchins (1993). Another key concept at work in the learning of tools is what Wertsch (1998) terms 'appropriation' ('taking something that belongs to others and making it one's own'), although, as was discussed earlier, the skill of using a tool may be mastered but due to individual conflict or resistance never appropriated.

Moving on to the second point of interest, Wertsch asserts that performance precedes mastery, that is, 'development often occurs through using a cultural tool *before* an agent fully understands what this cultural tool is or how it works' (Wertsch, 1998: 132, italics in the original). Citing an unpublished study by Herrenkohl (1995) of reciprocal teaching, Wertsch reports that, although early on in the project the students had little or no mastery of the tools involved, it was the use of these tools which enabled them to become a part of the dialogue and hence achieve mastery. Clearly this point relates to the notion explored at length by writers in a 'learning as participation' approach.

In terms of the connections between skill theory and the sociocultural ideas summarised above, there is a clear connection between Wertsch's definition of internalisation and cognitive skill theory (1998). Although he does not engage in further discussion of his understanding of 'knowing how', as he cites Ryle (1949) it can



be assumed that he is comfortable with Ryle's concept. Of course the element of knowledge labelled 'knowing how' is also considered a key component of skilled behaviour (see Section 3.1.4.1.3 in particular). Related to this is Wertsch's point about performance before mastery which is also a major feature of the acquisition of skill.

Wertsch does not however go into detail as to how procedural knowledge is acquired, and this is where skill theory enters the frame. As discussed in the skill section (Section 3.1.4), skilled competence can be learnt through a skill cycle of plan – attempt – feedback – re-plan. A major element of skill is the presence of a goal, that is, it is not purposeless behaviour but rather is goal-directed. This goal may be transparently mastery-oriented, that is 'I want to do this in order to (learn to) do it better', but the goal could equally be less clearly mastery-oriented, such as the goals discussed by Wertsch or Lave – 'I want to do this so I am / become a member of the group / an expert'. The notion of resistance of course comes in, but individuals faced with no option of rejecting the goal of mastery of the tool could embark on a more 'strategically compliant'<sup>2</sup> goal of 'I want to do this to pass my course'. leading to what Wertsch calls mastery but not appropriation. This is understood as the neglect of the tool after the pressure to use it has been removed. Obviously this kind of learning is not consistent with constructivist ideas of the meaningful construction of knowledge by the individual. However the training of skills with little or no regard for the pre-conceptions held by the trainees is not entirely unusual (Britten, 1985a) and may, at least in the short term, be effective (in the sense of mastery), and so the Wertschian notion of mastery without appropriation is a useful concept here.

A major feature of the learning of skill is the element of feedback. This can take many forms depending on the complexity and openness of the skill under consideration and the social setting in which the skill is being learnt – feedback could be *self*-recognised such as the archer who sees where the arrow hits and adjusts the aim accordingly, or the learner who compares his or her performance to that of their peers or that of an expert; or it could be *other*-recognised – the teacher trainer who tells the student where they are going wrong, or of course both, for example, the teacher trainer who elicits from the student teacher as well as offering advice themselves. However it is mediated, for the feedback to be successful, it needs to be maximally relevant.

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<sup>2</sup> This term is from Lacey (1977)

immediate<sup>3</sup> and situated. This enables the individual learning the skill to use this information to adjust their performance / planning in order to move closer to the achievement of the goal.

The social nature of feedback is often overlooked in writing on skill theory as the focus is on the changing ability of the individual and the nature of the skill they are performing. However, it is clear that feedback, whether it consists of one-to-one, novice-expert feedback or individual in a group, is interactionally and socially framed and situated. This social element ties well with notions expressed by sociocultural theorists who see interaction as a key feature in the 'learning as participation' approach. In some teacher training classrooms, learning through feedback within a skill cycle is likely to be very interactionally based as trainers elicit from individuals how they have performed and encourage feedback from peers to the same effect. Trainees will of course also receive feedback from the students or learners that they teach, although at this early stage of their career it is possible that they will need assistance in noticing and interpreting of at least some of the feedback they receive, and hence the teacher trainer will play a central mediatory role in this case.

As was outlined in the section on the skill cycle, the difference between individuals who can practise their skill for years without improvement and the development of expertise lies in the notion of 'deliberate practice' (Anderson, 2000). Anderson described how learners who would develop as experts were 'motivated to learn, not just perform' and how they used monitoring and feedback to identify weaknesses and make changes. This notion fits happily with both the skill cycle and a more socially-oriented view of learning, as the motivation of joining a community and performing as an expert in that community (in addition to more instrumental motivation such as passing a course, or creating a saleable product) can serve to drive learners to employ 'deliberate practice' and hence to increase their chances of becoming expert.

Feedback is also seen as important by adherents of a sociocultural approach. Lave and Wenger discuss the importance of feedback from peers and 'near-peers' (Lave & Wenger, 1991: 93) and Collins et al. (1989) see feedback from the expert to the novice as part of coaching. Salomon and Perkins were cited earlier as saying that the feedback given by the tool or the object to which the tool is applied helps learning by assisting the agent to adjust their performance accordingly (Salomon & Perkins, 1998). The concept

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<sup>3</sup> Despite this focus on immediate feedback in skill theory, many in teacher education value the use of delayed feedback which allows trainees to reflect on the event in a more thoughtful way.

of feedback is not discussed in any great detail by some writers such as Lave, presumably because it is seen as a feature of more formal or ‘intentional learning’<sup>4</sup>; Collins et al. however, see the practice as part of the procedures for a cognitive apprenticeship. However it would seem fairly obvious that novices would seek and receive feedback from more experienced practitioners and would learn to develop what Collins et al. termed a ‘producer-critic dialogue’, that is, they would develop the skill of providing their own feedback (1989: 458). This would probably be developed through the comparison of their own performance / product with those of peers and of experts or between their performance and their idealised conceptual frames.

The feedback on tool use provided by peers and experts to novices, will, of course, include the feedback on the use of physical tools and technical procedures as discussed and will also include feedback on the symbolic resources used. The processes at work in the adoption of the new professional discourse by novices include ‘naming’ (Freeman, 1992) ‘repetition’ (Maybin, 1999) and ‘appropriation’. The adoption of this new discourse is not however straightforward, as indicated in the extract (referred to earlier in section 3.1.2.3) by Bakhtin where he wrote of words which ‘stubbornly resist’ use and ‘put themselves in quotation marks against the will of the speaker’ (Bakhtin, 1981: 294).

However, there may also be a role for feedback in the appropriation of shared terminology. In second language learning, the use of a word can lead to a discussion, adjustment or re-formulation in order for all parties to understand the meaning – a process known as the ‘negotiation of meaning’<sup>5</sup> (for example Lightbown & Spada, 1999). This could also occur in a first language environment where novices are using domain specific or ‘foreign’ terminology.

Proponents of the ‘learning as participation’ perspective emphasise the role of observation and of expert modelling far more than that of feedback, and this is an element which is not given a particularly high profile in some discussions of skill learning. A major way in which observation features in skill learning is in the area surrounding previous experience. This is particularly so in the field of teacher education where the ‘apprenticeship of observation’ (Lortie, 1975) has meant that

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<sup>4</sup> that is ‘cognitive processes that have learning as a goal rather than an incidental outcome’ (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1989: 363)

<sup>5</sup> Wenger, writing in a ‘learning as participation’ approach, also uses the term ‘negotiation of meaning’ but his definition is more general, referring to ‘the process by which we experience the world and our engagement within it as meaningful’ (Wenger, 1998: 53). This is not the meaning I have in mind.

trainee teachers arrive on their courses with knowledge of and models of teacher behaviour. I say 'behaviour' here because, due to the nature of what is observable, the teacher's thinking and reasoning which lies behind their actions is not likely to have been imbued. These often implicitly-held models and beliefs are therefore often considered by teacher trainers as something to be overcome rather than a benefit on such courses. Opportunities for trainees to observe experienced practitioners, either directly or via video, is seen as part of the process of helping teachers to broaden their knowledge of teacher activity, showing them alternative models of teaching to those which they experienced at school (Britten, 1985b). Trainees can also be given observational opportunities through the practice of reflexive modelling by the teacher trainer (Britten, 1985b). This observation will obviously provide models of skills and techniques which the trainer will want to make explicit, but will also include implicit opportunities for learning. Finally, in many teacher training situations it is likely that trainees will observe their peers teaching, either in micro-teaching or with real students. This can provide a model of do's as well as don't's for trainees and also has the advantage of allowing trainees to compare themselves to others and see their own progress and mistakes in a more distanced way.

Within the sociocultural approach, observation and modelling also have a role to play. With the notion of peripheral participation comes the idea that novices will spend time observing experienced practitioners at work, whilst all the time being inculcated into the culture. According to Lave and Wenger, this enables learners to acquire a sense of:

who is involved; what they do; what everyday life is like; how masters talk, walk, work, and generally conduct their lives; how people who are not part of the community interact with it; what other learners are doing; and what learners need to learn to become full practitioners. It includes an increasing understanding of how, when, and about what old-timers collaborate, collude, and collide, and what they enjoy, dislike, respect, and admire (Lave & Wenger, 1991: 95)

Although they do not discuss implicit or explicit learning at all, it is clear that some of the learning as listed above which takes place will be implicit. Within this idea of the novice watching the practice is also the idea, as outlined in the extract above, of the role of modelling by the expert practitioner(s). The importance of multiple experts is made by several researchers in the area (Collins et al., 1989; Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Another way in which the social and the skill cycle fit together, in addition to those mentioned above, is the way in which the skill cycle trains individuals to perform

using the tools of the culture. These tools are multiply embedded, in that, for example, the teaching procedure tool of ‘Presentation, Practice, Production’ which forms a major part of some teacher training courses in ELT contains within it other tools such as drilling and presentation of grammar, which of course could be broken down further to include, for example, the use of a grammar reference book, and techniques for whiteboard presentation. Additionally, the language used to discuss these concepts and sub-skills is an example of a symbolic or psychological tool. All of these tools are historically and socially situated, that is, they were developed by particular people for a particular purpose in a particular time. Their use is not necessarily logically determined so much as determined by tradition and culture. The question of their appropriateness for the situation and time in which they are now being used is a pertinent one.

In summary, I do not find any inherently contradictory elements in skill theory and in sociocultural and constructivist approaches to learning. Rather it seems that skill learning can be considered as the process by which some of the learning in a social ‘participatory’ setting takes place. The skill cycle can also illuminate the process by which mastery of tool use can take place. As was pointed out earlier in this chapter, the sociocultural approaches have been criticised for paying more attention to learning conditions and less to the process of learning, and I feel that in this respect in particular the various perspectives are complementary.

## 3.2 An Exploration of the Concept of Belief

### 3.2.1 Introduction

We have seen in the previous section how the concept of *'belief'* is of crucial importance in a constructivist approach to learning. This next section will seek to define the term and outline its characteristics. Part of this defining process includes contrasting it with *'knowledge'*, a term with which it is commonly associated (and sometimes confused).

I will show that far from being straightforward in definition, the concept is, in research terms at least, in a terminological quagmire. The result of this is a general state of confusion in which researchers adopt new terms which may or may not overlap, resulting in studies which cannot easily be compared. This study uses the term *'belief'* in an effort to understand what the trainees bring with them to the course and to help appreciate the more individual aspects of the learning which is taking place on the course.

#### 3.1.2.1 The role of *'belief'*

As explored in the previous section, from constructivist approaches, an individual's beliefs will play an influential role in the appraisal and acceptance or rejection of new information. Trainees arriving on a teacher education course are no exception to this rule. They bring with them a large number of well-established preconceptions and beliefs about teaching and learning. These beliefs will affect the impact of the course as trainees' pre-existing beliefs may lead to the rejection of the information presented to them on the course. The filtering effect of beliefs has been commented on by many researchers such as Tillema (1994), Nisbett and Ross (1980), Weinstein (1989; 1990), Pennington (1996), Goodman, (1988), Anderson & Bird (1995) and Zulich et al. (1992).

In addition to the filtering role that beliefs can have, they have also been ascribed two further important functions in teaching: *'task definition and cognitive strategy selection'*; and *'facilitation of retrieval and reconstruction in memory processes'* (Nespor, 1987: 321). The work by Nespor (1987), drawing on research by Schoenfeld

(1983), states that certain properties of beliefs and belief systems are very important influences on how individuals view tasks. Beliefs serve to define or frame tasks and problems, and thus influence the skills and strategies deployed in order to solve a problem. In a study of mathematical problem solving, Schoenfeld (1983) found that in some cases information which individuals held which would have enabled them to complete the task at hand was not used due to their beliefs about what was useful and appropriate knowledge. Schoenfeld argues that there are two issues at work, one is the possession of the relevant knowledge and the second is access to that knowledge, which may be strongly influenced by an individual's beliefs (Schoenfeld, 1983).

Although this section has been brief, it is clear that beliefs play a major role in how one interprets and understands new information and tasks. It is little wonder therefore that beliefs are considered so important in research which draws on constructivist thinking. I will now outline some major definitions and characterisations of belief before offering a definition of the term which will be used in this study.

### **3.2.1.2 The need for a definition**

All words begin as servants, eager to oblige and assume whatever function may be assigned them, but, that accomplished, they become masters, imposing the will of their predefined intention and dominating the essence of human discourse. (Pajares, 1992: 308)

This extract serves to highlight the importance of establishing clear definitions, something which many researchers in the area of teachers' beliefs have neglected. The field is fraught with confusion, which is due in no small part to the fact that there is as yet no commonly accepted definition for 'belief' (Eisenhart, Shrum, Harding & Cuthbert, 1988). Pajares has been particularly critical of this state of affairs, contending that defining beliefs is 'at best a game of player's choice' (Pajares, 1992: 309). The situation is made worse by the large number of other analogous terms which are used either independently of 'beliefs' or as its near-synonyms despite their differing meanings (Anderson & Bird, 1995; Bird, Anderson, Sullivan & Swidler, 1993; Carter, 1990; Pajares, 1992). Pajares asserts that frequently beliefs 'travel in disguise and often under alias' (Pajares, 1992: 309). Examples of terms which could be described thus include:

axioms, culture, perspectives, social strategies, internal mental processes, rules of practice, practical principles, and constructs (Eisenhart et al., 1988);

attitudes, values, judgements, opinions, ideology, perceptions, conceptions, conceptual systems, preconceptions, dispositions, implicit theories, explicit theories, personal theories, action strategies, and repertoires of understanding (Pajares, 1992).

The reasons which may account for this lack of a widely sanctioned definition will now be considered (the order in which they are taken is not intended to be significant). The word ‘belief’ has a number of commonly understood meanings which has probably led to its use, without definition, in the work of a number of researchers (Eisenhart et al., 1988; Thompson, 1992). Researchers who do define ‘beliefs’ often comment on the range of meanings which are ascribed to the term and this can create a vicious circle as an alternative term is chosen to replace the less precise ‘beliefs’. Similarly, confusion can arise through researchers choosing a definition of beliefs and then adopting an alternative term because they are unhappy with that of ‘beliefs’. Depending on the definition of ‘belief’ chosen, it can be a difficult term to operationalise for researchers, and again this can lead to the adoption of a ‘new’ term. Of course, the defining of ‘belief’, like the choosing of alternative terms often reflects the different agendas of the researchers (Eisenhart et al., 1988), or the different disciplines within which they are working. Finally, the widely acknowledged difficulty of distinguishing belief from knowledge also contributes to the ‘messy construct’ in the title of Pajares’ paper (Pajares, 1992).

The remainder of this section then, is intended to explore definitions of ‘belief’. It is divided into four main parts with numerous sub-sections. The first considers definitions of beliefs from within several disciplines – philosophy, psychology and education. In the second part the definition of ‘knowledge’ is examined and then in the third section ‘beliefs’ are contrasted with ‘knowledge’. Finally some of the major kinds of teacher knowledge are explored.

## 3.2.2 Belief

### 3.2.2.1 Mental attitude

A perusal of the philosophical literature which deals with defining beliefs indicates three main views: the idea that beliefs are ‘conscious occurrences’ or ‘mental acts’; the view that beliefs are dispositions; and the view that beliefs are states in the mind of the



believer (Armstrong, 1973). These three ways of considering beliefs will now be discussed in greater detail. Following traditions of the discipline, where required a capital, 'A' will indicate the subject and 'p' will indicate the proposition under discussion, for example, 'A believes that p'.

### **3.2.2.1.1 Beliefs as mental acts**

This has been described as the 'traditional way' of analysing beliefs (Price, 1969) and is associated with Hume. According to Hume's account, a belief is 'a vivid or lively idea associated with a present impression' (Armstrong, 1973: 7) and whilst there is no requirement for the proposition to be introspected by the person, it would be available to introspection should he / she desire it (Price, 1969). This definition however falls short on several counts: it is perfectly possible for someone who is sleeping or unconscious to hold beliefs even though they may not be currently in the realms of conscious awareness (Armstrong, 1973). Similarly many beliefs are held which, except in unusual circumstances, could not be described as being 'associated with a present impression'. An oft-quoted example of this is the belief that the earth is round which, although widely accepted, is infrequently assented to (Price, 1969). As Price maintains:

Acquiring a belief, and losing it, are indeed occurrences, though we are not always able to assign precise dates to them. But the belief itself is not something which happens at a particular moment, but something which we have or possess throughout a period, long or short. And though it is liable to manifest itself by various sorts of occurrences, when and if suitable circumstances arise, none of these occurrences are themselves believings. (Price, 1969: 20)

### **3.2.2.1.2 Beliefs as behavioural dispositions**

This view was developed by Ryle (1949) and can be understood when it is considered within the major tradition of the time, that is Behaviourism. Accordingly, the view equates the possession of a belief with a disposition to act in accordance with that belief. Price (1969: 20) explains this by stating that if someone believes the proposition *p*, it is 'equivalent to a series of conditional statements describing what he [or she] *would* be likely to say or do or feel if such and such circumstances were to arise.' The belief held by the individual can be manifested through 'unspoken thoughts, mental images or inward motions of assent' in addition to actual behaviour (Armstrong, 1973: 9).

There are however some important differences between beliefs and dispositions. The first can be understood if brittleness is taken as an example of a disposition (Armstrong, 1973). A brittle glass will break if struck, that is, the manifestation of the disposition of brittleness is dependent upon a trigger, therefore, dispositions are said to be stimulus-dependent. This contrasts with beliefs which do not need a cause or trigger in order to be manifested, that is they are stimulus-independent. A related difference is that the brittleness of the glass has only one means of being manifested, that is, breaking, whereas a belief, such as the one cited earlier that the earth is round, may be manifested in many ways. Finally, dispositions are attributed to certain objects on the grounds of evidence, either indirect or inferential, that is the disposition is not observed directly, rather it is the manifestation which is evidential. In the case of beliefs, whilst the beliefs of others are similarly limited to indirect evidence, our own beliefs can be known through introspection which is independent of any expression or manifestation of the belief. Armstrong however argues that this point is not as important as has been claimed because a person may gain information of disposition through the use of their senses rather than based on the evidence of a manifestation of that disposition. He cites as an example a piece of glass which may be judged brittle (or not) through the sense of touch (Armstrong, 1973). However, this would seem to be a difficult task, even for an experienced glazier.

### **3.2.2.1.3 Beliefs as states**

The theory of beliefs which seems to have received acceptance more recently is the idea that beliefs are states in the mind of the believer (Armstrong, 1973; Honderich, 1995). Armstrong summarises this position by stating that 'A's believing that *p* is a matter of A's being in a certain continuing state, a state which endures for the whole time that A holds the belief' (Armstrong, 1973: 9). He continues by describing dispositions as a 'species' of state thus subsuming the previous category into the larger view of beliefs as states. Therefore beliefs are states of the mind which may dispose someone to think or act in a certain way.

### 3.2.2.2 Representation and evaluation

#### 3.2.2.2.1 'Belief in' and 'belief that'

In order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the term 'belief', one has to look beyond 'belief that', the subject of the discussion thus far, to the use of 'belief in'. Traditionally, belief-in<sup>6</sup> has been somewhat neglected by epistemologists, being seen as falling more in the domain of students of religion (Price, 1969). Possibly due to this lack of analysis, the term has suffered two generalisations which, although partly true, do not represent the full story. The first of these is that belief-in has frequently been considered as simply reducible to a belief-that proposition (for example Scheffler, 1965), Price labelled this the 'reducibility thesis' and contrasted it with the view that the two terms differ in important ways – the 'irreducibility thesis' (Price, 1969). The second generalisation is that belief-in is an attitude to a person or divinity whilst belief-that is an attitude to a proposition (*op cit*). These points will now be examined in more detail.

The number and variety of examples cited by Price (1969) lend support to the 'irreducibility thesis' and demonstrate that the view of belief-in as an attitude to a person or divinity is an 'over-simplification'. Examples include: belief in an animal such as a guide dog; belief in a machine such as a car; belief in an institution or class of institutions such as a bank; belief in a procedure, policy or method such as the National Curriculum; and belief in a theory (*op cit*). Interestingly, these examples indicate more than the simple acceptance of the belief, they attest to the esteeming or valuing of that proposition, that is they are believed *in*, not simply believed (*op cit*). Other belief-in propositions, such as belief-in UFOs or belief-in Father Christmas can indeed be rewritten as belief-that clauses, conforming to the reducibility thesis for example 'A believes that Father Christmas exists'. From this discussion Price (1969) concludes that there are two kinds of belief-in propositions:

- the first is the evaluative sense of belief-in which includes the idea of esteem and trust and does not seem to be reducible to belief-that;
- the second is a factual or existential sense of belief-in which is reducible to a belief-that proposition.

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<sup>6</sup>Following Price (1969) the terms 'belief-in' and 'belief-that' shall sometimes be hyphenated for the sake of clarity.

Price then takes the idea further, suggesting that the evaluative belief-in could in fact be reduced to a belief-that proposition if appropriate value-concepts are added. He concedes however that this reduction fails in at least one area and that is in an acknowledgement of the esteem and trust conditions of the evaluative sense which are reflected in the 'warmth' he describes as characteristic of this kind of belief-in (Price, 1969). An example would be 'A believes *in* the Labour Party' where the proposition can be rewritten as 'A believes *that* the Labour Party is the best option / is good for the country' etc. The reduction to a belief-that statement clearly expresses part of the message but omits the more implicit sense of value and trust which the belief-in statement carries. Examples such as this lead Price to conclude:

There is something more than assenting or being disposed to assent to a proposition, no matter what concepts the proposition contains. That much-neglected aspect of human nature which used to be called 'the heart' enters into evaluative belief-in. Trusting is an affective attitude. We might even say that it is in some degree an affectionate one. (Price, 1969: 452)

#### **3.2.2.2 Beliefs as representation versus beliefs as commitment**

There would appear to be two aspects to belief, 'belief as representation' and 'belief as commitment'. Beliefs are representations of reality, they are descriptive in nature and, through various media, portray the world in, for example, images, symbolic, or linguistic form. Price (1967: 43) describes this aspect as the 'entertaining of a proposition'. According to Armstrong (1973), this element standing alone could be considered 'mere thought'. The other aspect, belief as commitment, incorporates an element of evaluation into the equation. It is the 'assenting to or adopting' of a proposition and involves volition and emotional elements (Price, 1967: 43). Quine and Ullian (1970) contend that beliefs which are evaluative in nature may actually be articulated in ways which avoid the label of evaluation. Thus a teacher who claims that a particular activity-type is the most effective for learning may actually be making a value-judgement which could be more accurately expressed by stating 'I think learners should learn in this way'. A related point is raised by Price (1967) who suggests that a belief may be influenced by affective factors although these factors may not be acknowledged or be immediately available to conscious reflection.

### **3.2.2.3 Important issues in defining beliefs**

There are a number of issues which are debated in the literature on beliefs; however only those which can contribute to the development of a definition suitable for the purpose of this chapter will be discussed here. Important omissions include the debate over the existence of beliefs without language, that is in young children and animals: and the ethics of belief. Those chosen for discussion here are: the question of whether beliefs can be unconsciously held; and whether there can be degrees of belief.

#### **3.2.2.3.1 The question of consciousness**

An important point for consideration is concerned with the question of a person's consciousness of their beliefs. Armstrong (1973) writes that a person need not be conscious of being in a state of belief and therefore may not be aware that they hold a particular belief. He adds that the existence of a particular belief may be surmised by others or by ourselves at a later date in order to account for some behaviour or mental state. In undertaking action based on a belief, we may be aware of the belief in our consciousness or we may be unaware, only becoming cognisant of the fact if the belief turns out to be false and the action fails (Armstrong, 1973). Price also advocates the position that a belief is not necessarily consciously held, stating that:

There are unconscious or repressed beliefs, and there are also subconscious ones (beliefs that we do not know that we have, though we could discover that we have them if we made a not impracticably-great effort of attention). (Price, 1969: 37)

#### **3.2.2.3.2 Degrees of belief**

Unlike knowledge, of which one must be certain for it to be classified as knowledge, belief can exist in degrees<sup>7</sup> (Price, 1969). Something may be believed with absolute conviction or a belief may be more moderately held to be true whilst accepting that it may prove false, 'one is, of course, claiming (rightly or wrongly) that one has evidence for the proposition believed. But one is not claiming that the evidence is conclusive' (Price, 1969: 39). Price asserts that when questioning someone's belief, not only is their right to hold such a belief questioned, but also their right to hold it to the degree of sureness that they do (Price, 1969). There are people however, who do not accept that

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<sup>7</sup>The contrast between belief and knowledge will be dealt with more fully in Section 3.2.3.

there can be degrees of belief, insisting that belief requires certainty, otherwise terms such as ‘thinks’ or ‘has the opinion that’ should be used in its place (*op cit*).

In sum, the clearest and most concise definition of beliefs which is in line with the discussion so far is that provided by Honderich:

A mental state, representational in character, taking a proposition (either true or false) as its content and involved, together with motivational factors, in the direction and control of voluntary behaviour. (Honderich, 1995: 82)

To this definition needs to be added a reference to the idea that beliefs admit of degrees and that their distinction from the evaluative components of cognition is not sharply defined as evidenced by the belief-in aspect.

### **3.2.2.4 Beliefs as defined in psychology and education literature**

As outlined in the introduction to section 3.2, much of the published work on teachers’ beliefs fails to offer a clear definition of what is being referred to in the respective articles. Definitions of beliefs, where present, fall into several categories – those that use a number of other terms as synonyms, hyponyms and superordinates to make the meaning clear; those that focus on belief as propositional content; and those that utilise the ideas from a number of sources, commonly literature on education and psychology in order to define beliefs. These approaches will be reviewed in turn.

#### **3.2.2.4.1 Defining beliefs through the use of alternative terms**

This approach is used commonly in literature which is intended to appeal to a general, practitioner-oriented readership. The avoidance of several pages of debate concerning the specific meaning of beliefs and how that definition contrasts with other commonly used terms such as ‘perspectives’ or ‘conceptions’ is made possible by a general understanding of the term ‘belief’.

Ernest defines beliefs as ‘the teacher’s system of beliefs, conceptions, values and ideology’ equating this with Kuhs and Balls’ (1986) use of ‘teacher’s dispositions’ (Ernest, 1989: 20). Elsewhere in his paper he uses terms such as ‘views’, ‘philosophies’ and ‘constructs’ as synonyms for beliefs. Richards defines teachers’ belief systems as the ‘information, attitudes, values, expectations, theories and assumptions about teaching and learning that teachers build up over time and bring with them to the

classroom' (Richards, 1998: 66) and Kagan refers to beliefs as 'tacit, often unconsciously held assumptions' (Kagan, 1992a: 65).

This way of defining beliefs can also be found with little modification in some dictionaries, as in the following extract: (the first from a general dictionary and the latter two from specialist psychology dictionaries):

*belief* 1. a principle, etc., accepted as true, esp. without proof. 2 opinion; conviction. 3. religious faith. 4. trust or confidence, as in a person's abilities, etc. (*Collins Concise Dictionary*, 1995)

*belief* Generally used in the standard dictionary sense for an emotional acceptance of some proposition, statement or doctrine. ⇨ attitude, opinion (Reber, 1985).

*belief system* an individual's more or less organized set of attitudes, opinions, and convictions that implicitly or explicitly affect his behaviour, interpersonal relationships, and attitudes toward life (Goldenson, 1984).

However, as is discussed below, the terms which are often used synonymously have particular meanings and usages which, whilst not interfering with the general understanding of the word, can cause confusion if a more specific understanding is sought, as is generally the case in research.

#### **3.2.2.4.2 Beliefs as propositional content**

In referring to beliefs [...] one may be referring to either a particular mental state occurring in the believer (a state that has content) or the propositional content itself – something more like a meaning that is not locatable in the believer. (Honderich, 1995: 83)

Reference to the latter of these two meanings can be found in several influential definitions which generally assert that a belief is a proposition which is accepted as true by the believer: 'any simple proposition, conscious or unconscious, inferred from what a person says or does, capable of being preceded by the phrase 'I believe that ...' (Rokeach, 1968: 113); 'reasonably explicit 'propositions' about the characteristics of objects or object classes' (Nisbett & Ross, 1980: 28); and derived from the work of Green (1971) 'a proposition that is accepted as true by the individual holding the belief' (Richardson, 1996: 104); beliefs are propositions which are accepted as true and are used as 'guides for assessing the future, are cited in support of decisions, or are referred

to in passing judgment on the behavior of others' (Goodenough, 1963: 151, cited in Richardson, 1996); Brown and Cooney's definition also refers to beliefs as dispositions to action (Brown & Cooney, 1982) .

#### **3.2.2.4.3 Other definitions of belief**

Some researchers reflect the discussions in the philosophy literature of the mental state in the believer, for example: 'a set of conceptual representations which signify to its holder a reality or given state of affairs of sufficient validity, truth or trustworthiness to warrant reliance upon it as a guide to personal thought and action' (Harvey, 1986: 660); 'mental constructions of experience – often condensed and integrated into schemata or concepts' which are accepted as true and guide behaviour (Sigel, 1985 cited in Pajares, 1992); and 'socially constructed representational systems that people use to interpret and act upon the world' (Rust, 1994: 206), building on definitions by Sigel (1985) and O'Loughlin (1989).

Eisenhart et al., following work on beliefs by cognitive anthropologists, defined beliefs as 'a way to describe a relationship between a task, an action, an event, or another person and an attitude of a person toward it' (Eisenhart et al., 1988: 54).

Several researchers comment on the question of the evaluative nature of beliefs. Nisbett and Ross (1980) conceive of beliefs as a component of knowledge, carrying elements of evaluation and judgement. Eisenhart et al. (1988) ascribe 'emotionally-laden dimensions' to beliefs and, in a similar vein, Calderhead also describes beliefs as 'generalised, abstract value commitments' (Calderhead, 1995). Rokeach (1968) makes the connection between beliefs and values when he groups them, together with attitudes, to make up a belief system. As described earlier (Section 3.2.2.2) this association is largely due to the evaluative aspect of belief which exists alongside belief as representation.

#### **3.2.2.5 Etymology**

Looking at 'belief' and 'believe' from an etymological standpoint, the connection with values and affect is clear. Coming originally from the Aryan word *lubh*, meaning 'to like or to hold dear' (from which 'love' also derives), the original form *ileve* and its shorter versions, *leafa*, *leafe* and *leve* existed until the thirteenth century when they were



superseded by the present compound, in the form of *beeleve* (*Oxford English Dictionary, 1989*). In the sixteenth century *beleefe* was added, probably following the pattern of the pairs grieve-grief and prove-proof. The present day spellings are accredited to misspellings in the seventeenth century (*op cit*).

A further point of interest is the fact that ‘belief’ was originally used for faith, only being supplanted in the fourteenth century by the use of the term to refer to a mental state. This distinction continues to the present day, cf. faith in a god is considered more significant than belief in a god (*Oxford English Dictionary, 1989*).

### 3.2.3 Knowledge

The discussion of knowledge and what it means to know something is extensive and is covered both in epistemology, for example Scheffler (1965) and Wolgast (1977), and in work more applied to teaching, for example Calderhead (1988) and Shulman (1987). This section will deal very briefly with a theoretical definition of knowledge before moving on to the more fruitful question of the difference between knowledge and belief. Following this, types of knowledge relevant to teaching, will be examined, with a particular focus on practical knowledge as this is probably the area in which distinguishing belief from knowledge becomes most complex.

#### 3.2.3.1 Defining knowledge

Defining knowledge is a subject that has preoccupied many a philosopher and filled many books and I would not presume to offer a comprehensive or by any means conclusive discussion. However before looking at the belief – knowledge distinction, it would be helpful to outline some ideas concerning the definition of this term.

##### 3.2.3.1.1 Knowledge as ‘justified true belief’

In philosophy or, more precisely epistemology, knowledge has long been defined as having three conditions which must all be satisfied before the cognitive state can be classed as ‘knowing’ (‘A knows that *p*’). Fenstermacher (1994) calls this the standard analysis of knowledge or ‘justified true belief’(Fenstermacher, 1994); it has also been

referred to as the ‘tripartite definition’ (Honderich, 1995). The conditions which need to be met are:

- the truth condition – ‘ $p$  is true’
- the belief condition – ‘A believes that  $p$ ’ or, ‘A is certain that  $p$ ’
- the evidence condition – ‘A has conclusive reasons for believing  $p$ ’ (these reasons must be sufficient to warrant the holding of the proposition)

(Taken from Armstrong, 1973; Price, 1969)

The problems associated with this definition are not within the scope of this treatment to discuss, beyond mentioning the difficulties involved in establishing ‘truth’ and in defining that which constitutes proper justification for ‘A believing that  $p$ ’ (Fenstermacher, 1994). Price (1969) maintains that in order to establish whether or not ‘A knows  $p$ ’ one needs to be able to establish if  $p$  is true and what A’s reasons are.

The question of truth seems particularly problematic in dealing with the educational literature where ideas and theories evolve as we discover more about learning and language acquisition, to name just two fields (Green, 1971). Aside from historical advances in knowledge, there are also other factors which make the establishing of ‘truth’ problematic. Firstly, these advances are not necessarily widely agreed upon, nor are they liable to remain unchanged. Within a community, whether an academic community or a practitioner community, full agreement on a theory is often a rarity. So, how then can ‘truth’ be established? One way might be in interpreting the term knowledge not in its strictest sense, the tripartite definition, but by adopting a less rigorous definition (Fenstermacher, 1994), that is, knowledge as ‘objectively reasonable belief’ (Green, 1971).

### **3.2.3.1.2 Knowledge as ‘objectively reasonable belief’**

Green’s (1971) discussion of the nature of truth, with regard to the truth condition of the standard definition of knowledge, is illuminating. Working in the context of the philosophy of education, he expresses the idea that the truth of a proposition is something which exists independently of our discovery of evidence and emphasises that there are undiscovered truths. He proposes that rather than questioning the truth of a proposition, we should ask ‘What is it reasonable to believe?’. He further distinguishes between the reasonableness of a belief as held by an individual or *subjective* reasonable belief and the more desirable *objective* reasonable belief, which is when the evidence

which supports the proposition is considered reasonable by all those to whom it is available (*op cit*). Fenstermacher (1994) concludes that, as regards educational practice, objectively reasonable belief is an acceptable form of knowledge (Fenstermacher, 1994). However, he also acknowledges the debate in epistemology which surrounds its inclusion as a legitimate form of knowledge, and points out that the term may not prove acceptable for educational research.

### 3.2.3.2 Knowledge versus belief

Work setting out to define belief for research purposes has to consider the question of how to distinguish between belief and knowledge – there are many difficulties. One of the key differences rests on the ‘truth condition’: ‘knowledge is by definition infallible [...] belief on the other hand is always fallible’ (Price, 1967: 41). This refers to the idea that a belief, however firmly held or however conclusive the evidence, may prove to be untrue (Price, 1967). Several researchers take issue with this point, asserting that knowledge too, is fallible because, for example, much of what is accepted as knowledge in the realms of science may be later judged ‘belief’ as theories change (Chinn & Brewer, 1993; Thompson, 1992).

Acknowledging the importance of the truth condition for the definition of knowledge, Scheffler sees a distinction between knowing and believing in terms of the existence of some external, independent reality:

While believing may be construed as a *purely psychological* state without any special difficulty, this seems ruled out in the case of knowing, for knowing attributions assert not only the existence of a relevant psychological state, but also the existence of some appropriate, generally independent, state of the world. (Scheffler, 1965: 28)

Moving from philosophy to cognitive psychology, the frequently quoted Nespor (1987), building on the work of Abelson (1979), described a number of features which serve to differentiate belief from knowledge. Nespor claims that the features, whilst not individually definitive, when combined can provide suitable criteria for distinguishing between belief and knowledge. Four features relate to beliefs and a further two relate to the organisation of belief systems. The characteristic structures of beliefs / belief systems are:

- ‘existential presumption’: this refers to assumptions and propositions about the existence of entities and the reification of abstract characteristics into concrete form. For example, laziness is seen not simply as a label but as an entity which can be embodied in a particular student (Nespor, 1987).
- ‘alternativity’: this refers to the of ideas of alternative or ideal worlds which individuals may hold. References to the ‘ideal classroom / teacher / student’ fall into this category.
- ‘affective and evaluative aspects’: affect and evaluation are more important in belief systems than in knowledge systems.
- ‘episodic storage’: according to Abelson and Nespor, information stored in a knowledge system is semantically stored whereas in a belief system it is stored episodically, that is, in terms of ‘personal experiences, episodes or events’ (Schank & Abelson, 1977 cited in Nespor, 1987). This point at least is debated in the psychology literature.
- ‘non-consensuality’ (of belief systems): this feature refers to the recognition, either by the ‘believer’ or by another, that the propositions which are held are open to dispute.
- ‘unboundedness’ (of belief systems): this feature is tied to the personal and episodic nature of beliefs and refers to the fact that, unlike knowledge which has recognised domains and rules which control its application, people apply belief-based meanings in situations in which some may question their relevance.

Taken from Nespor (1987) and Abelson (1979)

The non-consensuality feature, which is based on the notion that the proposition is acknowledged to be open to debate is reminiscent of the discussion earlier of the fallibility of belief. This point is of as much relevance in education as it is in science, as much of what is ‘known’ in the field as current theory is expected to change and evolve as more research is carried out.

According to Honderich, working in philosophy, particularly in the philosophy of mind, belief is taken to be the ‘primary cognitive state’ with other states such as knowledge being a combination of belief plus other factors; for knowledge, these factors would be truth and justification (Honderich, 1995: 82-3). Rokeach also attributed primacy to belief, reflected in his definition which subsumed knowledge into his concept of belief, which he described as having three components: a cognitive

component, representing an individual's knowledge; an affective component: and a behavioural component (Rokeach, 1968: 113-4). This is in contrast to Nisbett and Ross's (1980) definition in which belief was expressed as a component of generic knowledge (along with a cognitive component).

Researchers in education, writing about teachers' beliefs / teachers' knowledge often fail to distinguish between these two concepts. Some researchers explicitly state that they do not intend to divide the terms, for example, Kagan (1990: 421), who states that she uses the terms interchangeably 'in light of mounting evidence that much of what a teacher knows of his or her craft appears to be defined in highly subjective terms'. However, as Fenstermacher (1994) reasons, this is confusing, as Kagan seems to suggest that the two terms can be distinguished based on subjectivity or objectivity, independent of the epistemic quality inherent in the term knowledge. Some other researchers, who do not distinguish between beliefs and knowledge, choose the term 'knowledge' for 'political' reasons, using it as an umbrella term. It should be noted that the reverse is also often true, many researchers use 'belief' in their work but fail to acknowledge that they are incorporating 'knowledge' into their definition.

In simple terms, a distinction between knowledge and belief has been defined in several ways in the education literature, mostly reflecting the philosophical stance: knowledge is 'justified belief' (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986); knowledge requires epistemic warrant, that is, evidence to confirm the proposition (Richardson, 1996); knowledge is defined as 'factual propositions and the understandings that inform skilful action' (Calderhead, 1995: 715). Only the latter definition seems to allow for teachers' practical knowledge to be incorporated fully into the domain of knowledge.

Before concluding this section I will look briefly at some of the major types of knowledge which have been distinguished.

### **3.2.3.3 Types of teachers' knowledge**

Let us now turn attention from the theoretical definition of knowledge to an appreciation of the complexities which are brought to light when knowledge is considered in the more applied area of teachers' knowledge. There are many kinds of teachers' knowledge, Alexander et al. (1991) in their review of the various ways knowledge is referred to in the literature on learning and literacy, distinguish between

knowledge as defined in epistemology and knowledge as used by researchers in the field of teacher cognition. They define the latter as:

an individual's personal stock of information, skills, experiences, beliefs, and memories. This knowledge is always idiosyncratic, representing the vagaries of a person's own history [...] Knowledge encompasses all that a person knows or believes to be true, whether or not it is verified as true in some sort of objective or external way (Alexander et al., 1991: 317)

From this starting point, they continue to unravel and define the numerous ways in which knowledge was referred to and defined, in both an implicit and explicit sense in the literature under review. They distinguish twenty six kinds of knowledge. Other researchers in the field have chosen to focus on other major distinctions or categories, for example: Borko and Putnam (1995) list general pedagogical knowledge and beliefs, subject matter knowledge and beliefs, and pedagogical content knowledge and beliefs as being important; Calderhead (1995) adds craft knowledge, personal practical knowledge, case knowledge, theoretical knowledge and metaphors and images to the previous list. The list seems to be largely based on differentiating knowledge by the content of that knowledge.

For the purposes of this paper however, only a few of these categories will be discussed in any detail, namely: subject knowledge; practical knowledge; craft knowledge; situated knowledge; declarative and procedural knowledge.

#### **3.2.3.3.1 Subject knowledge**

Shulman (1987), working on subject knowledge suggested that this consists of three main categories: subject matter content knowledge – the facts and organisation of those facts within a discipline, how they are generated and validated; pedagogical content knowledge – knowledge of the way in which particular content is taught, which includes examples, analogies and demonstrations in addition to an understanding of subject specific misconceptions and difficulties; curricular knowledge - refers to the use of materials, for example their availability and organisation. Although there are aspects of Shulman's work which draw on practical knowledge, formal knowledge plays a larger part (Fenstermacher, 1994).

### 3.2.3.3.2 Practical knowledge

This category will be given more of a focus because it seems to stand between belief and knowledge and thus blurs the distinction between the two terms yet further (Carter, 1990). Definitions for this kind of knowledge are reasonably consistent but tend to rely on a definition via characterisation rather than a definition per se: it is directly related to action; time-bound and situation-specific; it is an understanding teachers have of classrooms and the situations they face; and it is shaped by experience, both of classrooms and of life (Calderhead, 1988; Carter, 1990; Connelly & Clandinin, 1985; Feiman-Nemser & Buchman, 1986; Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986; Fenstermacher, 1994). Carter (1990) states that it includes tacit and implicit theories, Feiman-Nemser and Floden describe practical knowledge as ‘those beliefs, insights and habits that enable teachers to do their work in schools [which are] time bound and situation specific, personally compelling and oriented toward action’ (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986: 512). Carter maintains however that the term is not synonymous with belief because practical knowledge is ‘thought of as embodied within the whole person, not just the mind’ (Carter, 1990: 104).

Elbaz (1983) who was instrumental in bring this kind of knowing to the attention of researchers and teachers alike, proposed five categories of the content of teachers’ practical knowledge – ‘knowledge of self, of the milieu of teaching, of subject matter, of curriculum development, and of instruction’ (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986: 513) which are organised into three interrelated levels (within practical knowledge). They are rules of practice, practical principles and images:

- Rules of practice: a ‘brief, clearly formulated statement of what to do in a particular situation’ (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986: 514)
- Practical principles: a more general level, statements at this level are reflections of teachers’ rationales and beliefs (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986)
- Images: the most general level governing conduct rather than specific actions: ‘The teacher’s feelings, values, needs and beliefs combine as she forms images of how teaching should be, and marshals experience, theoretical knowledge, school folklore to give substance to these images’ (Elbaz, 1983: 134)

It is the concept of image which has proven particularly useful in research on teachers’ practical knowledge and a good deal of research has been carried out using

this construct (for example: Calderhead & Robson, 1991; Johnston, 1992). The level of image, as the choice of term would suggest, is strongly visual and metaphorical in nature and often contains an affective component due to its association with particular feelings and attitudes (Calderhead, 1995; Calderhead & Robson, 1991).

Reference was made earlier in this section to the contribution practical knowledge has made to the blurring of the distinction between knowledge and beliefs. In particular, images seem to occupy space which is closer to many notions of belief than knowledge. They would appear to satisfy at least five of the six features which Nespor (1987) and Abelson (1979) cite as distinguishing between belief (belief systems) and knowledge: images can contain reference to alternative worlds, such as the “classroom as home” (Clandinin, 1986); they have strong affective and evaluative components (Calderhead, 1995; Calderhead & Robson, 1991); they indicate episodic storage, that is memory is organised in terms of personal experiences, episodes and events (Calderhead, 1995); information held in the form of images can be non-consensual – it is disputable which may be recognised by either the believer or an outsider; and unboundedness, which refers to an individual’s ability to perceive connections and applications which are not necessarily obvious to others. The last two points were inferred from Calderhead and Robson’s (1991) discussion of their student teachers’ images rather than being referred to directly by the authors.

### **3.2.3.3.3 Craft knowledge**

Grimmett and MacKinnon (1992) in their review of the literature on craft knowledge distinguish two traditions: the ‘conservative tradition’ and the ‘progressive and radical tradition’. The former, according to Grimmett and MacKinnon, uses the term pejoratively, viewing craft knowledge as anti-scientific and a means by which practices from the past are perpetuated. Grimmett and MacKinnon describe how craft knowledge is ‘equated by some British writers to the mindless imitation of practice’ (1992: 389). This negative characterisation of craft knowledge contrasts with that used by the progressive and radical tradition who view it as ‘the wisdom of practice’ (Shulman, 1987). Calderhead ascribes much of the increase in interest in craft knowledge to Schön’s work on reflective practitioners. Schön (1983; 1987) proposed that practitioners, rather than relying on applied academic or propositional knowledge, develop a body of context-specific craft knowledge to enable them to apply their



classroom experience to the current situation in order to 'frame' a problem and work towards a solution (Brown & McIntyre, 1993; Schön, 1983, 1987).

Craft knowledge, therefore, concerns itself both with teachers' representations of the declarative knowledge contained in subject matter content and with teachers' tacit instantiations of procedural ways of dealing rigorously and supportively with learners. As a form of professional expertise, craft knowledge is neither technical skill, the application of theory or general principles to practice, nor critical analysis; rather, it represents the construction of situated, learner-focused, procedural and content-related pedagogical knowledge through 'deliberate action'. (Grimmett & MacKinnon, 1992: 393)

Calderhead (1995) contrasts craft knowledge which is derived from classroom experience with practical knowledge, stating that practical knowledge stems from and is shaped by a teachers' personality and past experience.

#### **3.2.3.3.4 Situated knowledge**

A great deal of the knowledge that teachers have about teaching is situation- or context-specific knowledge (Leinhardt, 1988). The knowledge is developed within a particular context and is relevant to dealing with problems and features in that situation. Examples could include the knowledge teachers have of students as individuals and the physical features of the classroom. As such, situated knowledge stands in contrast to generalisable, context-free propositional knowledge (*op cit*). Leinhardt characterises situated knowledge as:

a form of expertise in which declarative knowledge is highly proceduralised and automatic and in which a highly efficient collection of heuristics exist for the solution of very specific problems in teaching. (Leinhardt, 1988: 146)

Brown et al. (1989) account for the acquisition of situated knowledge through the process of enculturation. Accordingly new or novice teachers serve a kind of 'cognitive apprenticeship' in which they adopt (either consciously or unconsciously) the behaviour and belief systems of the social group (*op cit*). Of course trainee or novice teachers do not acquire mastery or expertise immediately; rather they progress through stages such as that proposed by Ryan - fantasy, survival, mastery (Ryan, 1986).

### 3.2.3.3.5 Declarative and procedural knowledge

Since Aristotle, epistemologists have discerned two major types of knowledge which in Greek were named *episteme* and *techne* (Fenstermacher, 1994). *Episteme* refers to knowledge about the world and is equivalent in more recent reference to propositional knowledge (also: scientific knowledge; informational knowledge; and theoretical knowledge) (*op cit*). In recent literature the term declarative knowledge – ‘knowing that’ is often used. The second term, *techne* involves knowing how to do something, for example, a skill, craft or art (*op cit*). It is also known as performance knowledge, and procedural knowledge – ‘knowing how’. Traditionally, propositional knowledge has been the focus of study of epistemologists and philosophers, whilst performance knowledge had until relatively recently, received scant attention by comparison (Fenstermacher, 1994; Ryle, 1949).

Johnson (1996: 82) describes the difference in terms of ‘two paths for the production of a piece of behaviour’. According to this idea, knowledge in the declarative path is stored in memory in semantic networks which, when required to perform an operation, provide a set of ‘rules’ or procedures to be utilised. An example he cites is that of a language learner who stores grammatical rules in memory and applies them when constructing an utterance, such as, ‘the past participle of regular verbs is formed by adding *-ed*.’ (*op cit*). In the procedural ‘path’, the knowledge is embedded in the procedure and is not stored separately (Johnson, 1996). Ryle, who is credited with reintroducing these concepts, rejected the idea that what he called ‘intelligent performance’ involves first thinking, then doing ‘When I do something intelligently [...] I am doing one thing and not two’ (Ryle, 1949: 31).

There is, however, some confusion associated with the terms procedural and declarative knowledge, and this is connected with two possible interpretations of the expressions (Tomlinson, 1999a). The first interpretation is the contrasting types of knowledge object: the association between procedural knowledge and ‘capacity for action’ which contrasts with declarative ‘awareness of reality’. This could also be mapped as ‘description versus prescription’ (*op cit*). The second interpretation concerns the differing ‘modes or ways in which we deploy knowledge’, that is declarative knowledge is often associated with the ability to articulate or make explicit one’s knowledge and the opposite to this would be implicit or tacit knowledge. The two terms ‘declarative knowledge’ and ‘procedural knowledge’ are therefore to some extent dealing with different things, the former with ‘knowledge mode’ and the latter with

‘knowledge object’ (Tomlinson, 1999). Both knowledge types can be implicit or explicit, conscious or unconscious, and the traditional polarisation and separation of implicit procedural action from explicit declarative awareness does not tell the whole story (*op cit*).

Comparisons of belief-that and ‘knowing that’ / ‘knowing how’ are reasonably well represented in the literature of epistemology, although as mentioned earlier belief-in is usually subsumed into belief-that. The table below shows the distinctions between these categories and follows Price (1969) in separating out two divisions of belief-in:

<b>Propositional</b>	Know that	Belief that Belief in ( <i>factual</i> )
<b>Procedural</b>	Know how	No equivalent
<b>Evaluative</b>	No equivalent	Belief in ( <i>evaluative</i> )

**Table 3.3: A comparison of belief and knowledge**

Price (1969) writes that nowhere is the contrast between belief and knowledge more obvious than in the distinction between ‘knowing that’ and ‘belief-that’. With regard to these two terms and the reference to facts or truths, belief can be regarded as second-rate when compared with knowledge. An example would be ‘I know that it was him’ compared with ‘I believe that it was him’ with the latter chosen by the speaker to reflect less certainty (or more caution in revealing) the truth of the statement. In Price’s (1969) discussion of the factual division of belief-in, he concludes that this group is indeed reducible to belief-that propositions. However, elsewhere he points out that despite this, something is lost from the proposition when it is reduced, which roughly corresponds to ‘attaches importance to’ reflecting the fact that belief-in, even in the factual division is a ‘valuational attitude’ (*op cit*).

The kind of knowledge which corresponds to ‘knowing how’ does not have an obvious contrast with belief; as Ryle states ‘we never speak of a person believing or opining *how*’ (Ryle, 1949: 29). Price suggests that even in an example where someone is asked ‘Do you know how to ...?’ and replies ‘Yes, I believe I do / know how to ...’ that this is actually reducible to a belief-that proposition, for example ‘Yes, I believe that I can do it but I’m not completely sure’. If a second-rate alternative to ‘I know how to do it’ is sought, then ‘I have some idea how to do it’ is probably the closest.

According to Price (1969) however, this alternative relates more to the difference between ‘knowing all about something’ and ‘knowing a little about something’. rather than reflecting a know that / belief-that distinction. Further, it could be proposed that ‘procedural belief’, that is, ‘believing-how’, is somewhat equivalent to a heuristic and could be contrasted with ‘procedural knowledge’, that is ‘knowing how’ which would be equivalent to an algorithm.

One area in which the concept of belief appears broader than that of knowledge is in ‘belief-in’, especially the evaluative subdivision. This category, which is considered more important in the philosophy of religion than in epistemology, does not have an equivalent form of knowledge (Price, 1969). As mentioned earlier, it carries notions of esteeming and valuing which do not play a part in traditional views of knowledge.

One question which has not yet been addressed here is how procedural knowledge is to be judged. It is often associated with novice / expert distinctions which reflect the degree of proficiency with which the performance is carried out, with an expert performance presumably achieving the intended result more often than not. If the case of an expert tennis player is taken, it is clear that expertise with respect to procedural knowledge cannot imply infallibility in the sense that propositional knowledge does. Fenstermacher proposes that justification is as important for performance knowledge, as it is for propositional knowledge, and states that it is not simply the performance which provides justification, rather there is also a need to consider the reasonableness of the performance as a whole, in addition to considering the outcome with regard to the purpose (Fenstermacher, 1994).

#### **3.2.3.4 Belief and knowledge: relevance for the present study**

To summarise, after reviewing the literature from several fields, most notably epistemology and psychology, I have chosen a definition of ‘belief’ which accepts the possibility that it may be held consciously or unconsciously, and that it is evaluative, that it is accepted as true by the individual for whom it serves as a guide to thought and behaviour.

This section has shown that there are considerable problems with the use of the terms ‘belief’ and ‘knowledge’. The centrality of these concepts to my thesis thus required a full account of the definitions in order to avoid misleading terminology and

in order to make clear the reasons which underlay my choice of ‘belief’ as a construct rather than ‘knowledge’. The fact that the term ‘knowledge’ is often associated with claims of truth or infallibility meant that this term carries implications which were marginal to my interests. I am interested in what trainees bring to a teacher education course, that is what they hold. I therefore chose the term ‘belief’ which labels what trainees bring with them without imputing anything relating to the truthfulness or claims of validity which the term ‘knowledge’ would imply.

Before finishing this section it is necessary to mention two further terms which are of interest in this study, that is ‘experience’ and ‘reflections’. As stated above, I am interested in teachers beliefs, that is what they bring with them to a teacher education course and what happens in the process of the course that is their experience. Thus ‘experience’ is used in the relatively straightforward sense of the process or participation on the course; and ‘reflection’ is used in the sense of careful thinking about that experience. Definitions from a dictionary will suffice here (the relevant parts of the definitions only are reported):

‘experience’: 1. direct personal participation or observation. 2. a particular incident, feeling, etc., that a person has undergone.

‘reflection’: careful or long consideration or thought.

(*Collins Concise Dictionary*, 1995)

### 3.2.4 Chapter summary

This chapter has outlined the key theories which are relevant in a study of trainees’ learning on a teacher education course. I have attempted to show that although theories which draw on *individual* accounts of learning and those which draw on *social* accounts are frequently set up in opposition, they can in fact be considered complementary. If combined, these approaches with their different focuses can enrich our understanding of the learning and interaction which is the subject of the present research. By shifting the focus between the individuals and the group or context we can build up a picture which is more detailed and richer in its complexity than a study which relies upon a single theoretical approach.

The chapter outlined some of the elements which form the core of the different approaches, the notions of tool and of participation in the sociocultural approach, and

the notion of belief which is considered crucial in a more individually-focused constructivist approach. These elements are summarised in the table below. It should be noted that some features of the various theories have not been highlighted here as they were felt to be less relevant to the present study, for example Wertsch's 'spin-off' or his points related to the social, cultural and historical situatedness of the tools themselves.

<b>Theoretical perspective</b>	<b>Individual or Social focus</b>	<b>Key elements of relevance to this study</b>
<b>Constructivism</b>	Relates to individuals on the course	The nature of beliefs and pre-conceptions especially those relating to teaching and learning
		The nature of beliefs formed during the apprenticeship of observation
		The role played by those beliefs on the CELTA
<b>Social mediation as participatory knowledge construction</b>	Relates to the social elements of participation/learning and conditions of participation/learning	Changing participation from peripheral to central: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- increase of responsibility</li> <li>- variety of tasks</li> </ul>
		Access to activities and experts in the community
		'Engaging with the technologies of everyday practice'
		Interaction with experts who embody practice
		Learning from peers – circulation of knowledge
		Expert modelling
		Observation of peers and experts
		Learning how to talk and be silent in the manner of an expert
<b>Social mediation by cultural artifacts</b>	Relates to the social elements of learning and conditions of learning	Agent operating with mediational means
		Learning to use the tools of the trade
		Feedback from tool use
		Mastery and appropriation
		Performance before mastery
		Transformation of mediated action
<b>Skill cycle</b>	Relates to individuals on the course	Plan – attempt – feedback – re-plan
		Deliberate practice
		Role of feedback
		Reflexive modelling

**Table 3.4: Summary of relevant points from theories related to learning**

The second part of Chapter 3 (3.2) dealt with the concept of 'belief' and it was pointed out that despite a common understanding of the term in a real world sense, it is far more complex when employed for research. In research terms, its use is confusing and can be misleading if simply taken at face value.

This chapter thus situates my study in terms of the theoretical underpinnings which inform my research approach. It has explained my understanding of various theories such as constructivism and justified my position of approaching the study using an eclectic blending of these theories in order to best understand the research focus. The chapter also defined and characterised one of the major concepts which will be used in the study, that of teachers' beliefs.

The next chapter, Chapter 4, will look at studies of trainees on courses and will consider these under the broad approaches in which they are situated, that is an individual (or narrow) constructivist approach and approaches which are more social, such as sociocultural and social constructivism.

# Chapter 4: Review of Studies

The previous chapter outlined the different frameworks and theories which underlie many of the studies of trainees on teacher education courses. The range of theories from constructivism through social constructivism and sociocultural approaches were explored. The chapter outlined my own position which is that these approaches with their differing focuses of interest can usefully be combined to paint a richer and more complex picture than could otherwise be obtained with a single theory approach.

This chapter will review studies of relevance to mine and I will do this within the frameworks which have so far been discussed. The vast majority of studies fall under a constructivist framework, many identifying themselves as belonging to a teacher cognition approach. The smaller number of studies adopting a sociocultural framework to illuminate teacher learning will also be reviewed. Where relevant, studies of the CELTA (or CTEFLA<sup>8</sup>) course will be examined, although these are few in number.

## 4.1 Studies Adopting a Constructivist/Individual Approach to Learning to Teach

Within a constructivist framework, much of the research on teacher education has been carried out under the mantle of teacher cognition or, as it is alternatively known, teacher knowledge or teacher thinking. There are many studies in this area and, before moving on to describing some of them, it is useful to briefly outline the history of this field of research. This will allow several key points to be brought out, such as the increasing importance in research terms of the construct ‘belief’ and also the role that the apprenticeship of observation plays in teacher education.

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<sup>8</sup> To review, prior to 1996 the Certificate was known as the CTEFLA. When referring to studies which were carried out on the certificate during this period, I will retain the ‘CTEFLA’ term.



### 4.1.1 History of teacher cognition research with particular reference to beliefs

Research on teaching in the 1960s and previously reflected the largely Behaviourist ideas of the times where teaching was viewed as sets of behaviours which were observable and describable. The process-product tradition, popular at the time, created an interest in linking teachers' observed behaviours to children's learning. This focus on overt behaviours began to change in the 1970s as awareness grew of the importance of teachers' cognition in the act of teaching. Books such as Jackson's *Life in Classrooms* (1968) and Lortie's *Schoolteacher: A Sociological Study* (1975) argued for a refocusing of attention on the classroom. Whilst Jackson's work drew on the relatively standard assumptions (at that time) of the teacher as someone with minimal sophistication who avoided technical terms and elaborate ideas, and worked in a 'relatively stable physical environment' with a 'fairly constant social context' (Jackson, 1968: 7), Lortie called for more attention to be paid to the perspectives of teachers themselves (Lortie, 1975). Both of these works contributed to the development of a new conceptual framework which sought to gain a better understanding of the teaching context and the life experiences of teachers (Freeman, 1996). The idea that to better understand teaching required insight into how teachers thought about their work gained ground and led to the development of an area of research known alternatively as teacher thinking, teacher cognition, or teacher knowledge (*op cit*). Two further developments have been credited with bringing about such change, the advent of cognitive psychology and the broadening of educational research (Calderhead, 1995). The first of these points, the development of cognitive psychology, which promoted the idea that teachers, like all humans, construct their own reality in a unique way, created 'a place for the study of belief systems in relation to other aspects of human cognition and human affect' (Abelson, 1979: 355). The second point, dealing with the expansion of research into other educational areas such as curriculum development, led to the recognition of the central role played by teachers in the process of curriculum innovation and change (Calderhead, 1995).

Unlike the study of attitudes, which has a considerable history and has been applied to the social sciences, the investigation and study of beliefs had largely been left to epistemology and to students of religion. However as discussed above, the flourishing interest in teachers' mental lives, which was particularly pronounced in the

1980s, was associated with the idea that to understand teaching it is necessary to understand teachers and their thinking. This brought the role of teachers' beliefs as an element of cognition under the spotlight. Clark and Peterson's highly influential chapter on teacher thinking outlined three major categories of teachers' thought processes: '(a) teacher planning [...]; (b) teachers' interactive thoughts and decisions; and (c) teachers' theories and beliefs' (Clark & Peterson, 1986: 257). Research in the area of teachers' knowledge and thinking has moved through three distinct phases: first was a concentration on decision-making, which was viewed as the link between thought and behaviour; second was a diversification into other areas of teacher thinking such as perceptions and routines; third and most recent has been a focus on teachers' knowledge and beliefs (Calderhead, 1995).

The role and importance of teachers' beliefs have been studied in several key areas and this has resulted in teachers' beliefs being considered an extremely valuable construct for educational research (Pajares, 1992; Thompson, 1992):

- the influence of teachers' beliefs on their classroom behaviours (for example Anning, 1988; Bennett, Wood & Rogers, 1997; Brown & Rose, 1995; Woods, 1991, 1996);
- the role of teachers' beliefs in the process of curriculum change or innovation (for example Guskey, 1986; Lamb, 1995; Richardson, 1990);
- the influence of pre-existing beliefs and conceptions on the learning of trainee teachers on a course (for example Grossman, 1991; Gupta & Saravanan, 1995; Holt-Reynolds, 1992; Pennington, 1996);
- beliefs as a measure of change in teacher learning (for example Nettle, 1998).

Against this backdrop came the development of and research into an area known as 'learning to teach'. This body of research investigated the 'evolution of professional growth' of teachers and teacher trainees with a focus on 'the cognitions, beliefs, and mental processes that underlie teachers' classroom behaviors' (Kagan, 1992b: 129). Carter (1990) discusses conceptual inconsistencies in the use of the term 'learning to teach', which she states is used both to refer globally to teacher education and is used synonymously with the terms 'teacher development' and 'teacher socialisation'. She chooses to define it as 'the acquisition of knowledge directly related to classroom performance' (Carter, 1990: 291).

The next section looks at a major construct in teacher cognition research, that is, the apprenticeship of observation. Although clearly the apprenticeship of observation relates to a kind of learning which was discussed in the framework chapter (3.1) on legitimate peripheral participation, that is, learning whilst observing (at least initially) from the periphery of the action, it is placed here because many studies in teacher education draw on this concept.

#### 4.1.2 The apprenticeship of observation

In his 1975 book, *Schoolteacher: A Sociological Study*, Lortie (1975) introduced and discussed an idea which was to play a central role in our understanding of the preconceptions and beliefs of preservice teachers. He pointed out that unlike other professions such as lawyers or doctors, student teachers arrive for their training courses having spent a great many hours (as schoolchildren) observing and evaluating what would be their chosen profession. He coined the term the ‘apprenticeship of observation’ to describe this period of teacher watching which is likely to amount to thousands of hours. This apprenticeship, he argued, is largely responsible for many of the preconceptions that preservice teacher trainees hold about teaching. The notion would appear to be supported by research into children’s conceptions of teaching and teachers. It has been found that schoolchildren, some as young as seven, evidence an understanding and awareness of teacher roles, albeit often at an intuitive level (Emler, Ohana & Moscovici, 1987; McCabe, 1995; Morgan & Morris, 1999).

One of the consequences of this apprenticeship period is that, whereas people entering other professions, such as medical students or law students, are more likely to be aware of the limitations of their knowledge, teacher trainees may fail to realise that the aspects of teaching which they perceived as students represented only a partial view of the teacher’s job. Lortie writes of how a student ‘sees the teacher frontstage and centre like an audience viewing a play’, and so the student thus sees the teacher doing things – organising activities, monitoring, correcting, lecturing etc. The students do not, however, see what we could call the ‘backstage’ behaviours of teaching – the thinking, planning, preparing, reflecting, selecting goals or aims and the selection or matching of activities to these aims (Rust, 1994). That is, it is likely that the students gained little sense of the pedagogical principles underlying teacher behaviour during their long apprenticeship.

Nor are pupils likely to analyse the teaching behaviours they observe in any detail, meaning that ‘what students learn about teaching, then, is intuitive and imitative rather than explicit and analytical; it is based on individual personalities rather than pedagogical principles’ (Lortie, 1975). What we can say they have learnt from the apprenticeship of observation, therefore, are the ‘folkways of teaching’, that is ‘ready-made recipes for action and interpretation that do not require testing or analysis while promising familiar, safe results’ (Buchmann, 1987: 161). This provides trainees with ‘default options’, a set of tried and tested strategies which they can revert to in times of indecision or uncertainty (Tomlinson, 1999b).

The net result of this highly influential period is that teacher education courses are often said to have a weak effect on teacher education students. This limited effect and the reported tendency for novice teachers to revert to the default model they know so well can lead to teachers teaching as they were taught, hence exerting a conservative pressure on the profession. Studies which are relevant to this will be explored in the section which follows, as this section will be confined to a discussion of the major elements of Lortie’s concept.

Research on teacher trainees tends to confirm a tendency both to *underestimate* the complexity of teaching and to *overestimate* their own ability to begin teaching right away. Research also supports the idea that trainees revert to teaching as they were taught, often despite a stated desire to do things differently.

We may wonder why the apprenticeship of observation appears so powerful that it can influence people even whilst they are on a teacher training course. There are several possible reasons for this: firstly, relating to the period of the apprenticeship itself – it is a lengthy period of time which, in hours, far outweighs even the most rigorous teacher education courses; secondly, occurring as it does during childhood, it is very influential, especially as the classroom, and what happens within it carries consequences for those involved, thus becoming imbued with affect. Other reasons may be related to the nature of the teacher education experience, for example, if the course is delivered predominantly in a lecture format, then the lessons learnt at school may actually be reinforced; in addition, the tendency to have multiple voices on courses with sometimes opposing views can have an effect of watering down or negating the effectiveness of new messages. Further, the survival instinct which trainees feel when confronted with teaching practice can lead to a desire for action and recipes which make their lives easier. Thus many teacher education courses which provide student teachers with the

theory that they need to make informed choices may seem irrelevant and distracting when compared with practical ideas and strategies.

Having considered the major ideas of Lortie's apprenticeship of observation, we can now turn to look at studies which relate to this and particularly to the origins and influence of trainees' beliefs about teaching and learning. Beliefs can be associated with two roles in the literature on teacher education; the first relates to preservice teachers' beliefs and in this sense they are studied as important influences on the process of learning to teach. The second role sees beliefs as being an ideal construct for measuring or indicating the effectiveness (or lack thereof) of a teacher education programme (Richardson, 1996). Both roles are of interest here and shall be reviewed in turn.

Research on studies which focused on constructs other than 'belief' in the process of learning to teach are not reported here; examples of such constructs / studies include the following: metaphors (Bullough Jr., 1991; Bullough with Stokes, 1994); well-remembered events (Carter, 1994; Carter & Gonzalez, 1993); perspectives (Goodman, 1988; Ross & Smith, 1992); personal and practical theories (Kettle & Sellars, 1996; Marland, 1998; Tann, 1993); and preconceptions (Duit, 1996; Weinstein, 1989; Wubbels, 1992).

### 4.1.3 Studies relating to the origins and influence of trainees' entering beliefs about teaching and learning

#### 4.1.3.1 The apprenticeship of observation

A oft-quoted paper which explored the influence of prior beliefs on learning to teach was by Holt-Reynolds who used the constructs 'lay theories and beliefs'. Lay theories were defined as 'beliefs developed naturally over time without the influence of instruction' (Holt-Reynolds, 1992: 326). The study focused on nine student teachers' reactions to a particular course, measured through interview, and found that the preservice teachers' beliefs were already well-established at the outset of the course (Holt-Reynolds, 1992). As a result, when the course tutor presented information which contradicted the student teachers' beliefs they reacted by questioning the validity of his

arguments rather than their own preconceptions. Holt-Reynolds concluded that compared to the ‘the longevity and cohesive character’ of prior beliefs formed over years of teacher watching, the influence of a single preservice course is severely limited (Holt-Reynolds, 1992).

Student teachers’ entering beliefs were also studied by Von Wright (1997). Von Wright, who defined beliefs as ‘part of the students’ internal representation of the world’, equated them with a ‘world view’ that affords them organisational and evaluative qualities within a social sphere (Von Wright, 1997: 259). The findings of two studies reported in the paper indicated that student teachers bring explicit and value-laden expectations of what is pedagogically correct, in addition to implicit beliefs about learning and development. These implicit beliefs are often incoherent and are more difficult to change than the explicit expectations. Von Wright argued that, in the traditionally additive approach to teacher education, implicit beliefs are often not problematised and the inconsistencies between the beliefs the students may hold and what is presented to them are not explored. She suggested that this often results in the development of ‘parallel models’ or ‘separate line[s] of thought’ whereby student teachers learn the rhetoric of their teacher education programme without real development of their reflective capabilities and awarenesses (Von Wright, 1997: 264).

Hollingsworth (1989) investigated changes over the course of a year in fourteen elementary and secondary student teachers’ beliefs and knowledge about reading instruction. Although neither term was defined she states that beliefs are developed prior to the course and cannot be easily articulated. Using a methodology based on interview and observation combined with student teachers’ journals, she found that there was an interaction between the pre-course beliefs and the course content, with beliefs serving to filter content. Indeed she proposes that ‘differences in prior beliefs become a significant factor in suggesting differential learning of other program concepts’ (Hollingsworth, 1989: 172). Further, change in beliefs and knowledge was to a large extent dependent upon the supervising teacher, although, contrary to ideas at the time, it was those trainees whose beliefs were *incongruent* with those of their mentor who seemed to develop most. Where there was congruence, she concluded, imitating and limited processing of information abounded (Hollingsworth, 1989).

In a study carried out in Britain, John (1996) interviewed 42 PGCE history student teachers at the start of their of their course. Like Holt-Reynolds (1992), Von Wright

(1997) and Hollingsworth (1989), he found that trainees began the course with many implicit theories (eclectic rules of thumb and generalisations developed from experience in the form of beliefs, values and biases) about the nature of teaching and the way in which history is taught or learnt. Student teachers referred to teachers who inspired them largely in terms of personal attributes such as 'enthusiasm, charisma, warmth, likeability and good subject knowledge' (John, 1996: 94). The negative memories of teachers centred around a lack of pedagogic skills and a tendency to be overly didactic. Similar results were obtained by Virta who commented that student teachers saw strong charismatic teachers as their role models and saw the ideal to which they would aspire as involving enthusiasm, encouragement and being popular with students (Virta, 2002).

John writes, however, that despite the trainees on the whole being keen to adopt new and varied ways of teaching in order to engage learners, their apprenticeship proved too powerful:

Despite their enthusiasm for the alternative methods of teaching observed in schools these were still regarded as peripheral to the learning process which was in their eyes based firmly on the learning of events, dates, facts, places and people. (John, 1996: 97)

John described how student teachers had a 'limited and unproblematic view of teaching and learning' which could be related to the limitations which the apprenticeship of observation imposed, in that they saw teaching from the learners' audience-like point of view (John, 1996). Virta's study of student teachers in Finland, likewise found that although prospective history teachers often had negative attitudes towards their school history experiences, they retained 'conservative beliefs about teaching as teacher-driven distribution of factual content' (Virta, 2002: 696).

A further example that the power of the apprenticeship of observation and its associated beliefs exerts on learning to teach can be found in a study of five first-year teachers in Hong Kong. These teachers were followed for a year after graduating from a three year preservice BA programme (Richards & Pennington, 1998). The degree programme emphasised and promoted a communicative approach to language teaching which contrasted with the established methods of teaching English in the Hong Kong state system with its emphasis on rote learning, examination preparation and teacher-centredness. Within a year the novice teachers had abandoned much of their training and to a large extent reverted to the traditional teaching approach typical of Hong Kong schools (Richards & Pennington, 1998). The authors discuss a number of possible

reasons for the lack of impact of the course, including the lack of consistency in teaching philosophy of the teacher educators, the influence of significant others in the schools and the shock of the constraints of their classroom context (Richards & Pennington, 1998). Whatever the cause or combination of causes, the apprenticeship of observation in this case proved too powerful to overcome.

The reversion of the Hong Kong teachers in Richards and Pennington's study (1998) is mirrored in a study of four preservice Masters students in the USA. Johnson's study (1994) offers an insight into the tension trainees face as they struggle to establish a teaching style which reflects their beliefs rather than simply applying the models learnt at school during their long apprenticeship of observation. The trainees seemed to recognise the limitations of the models learnt during their schooldays but despite this they found themselves reverting to their schoolday models. Although they were aware of the limitations of this kind of teacher-centred didactic teaching, they record feeling powerless to change due to a lack of alternative models available. One student teacher rather insightfully records in her journal:

It's been really frustrating to watch myself do the old behaviors and not know how to 'fix it' at the time. I know now that I don't want to teach like this, I don't want to be this kind of teacher, but I don't have any other experiences. It's like I just fall into the trap of teaching like I was taught and I don't know how to get myself out of that model. I think I still need more role models of how to do this, but it's up to me to really strive to apply what I believe in when I'm actually teaching. (Johnson, 1994: 446)

As Johnson's student teacher records, trainees may wish to break free from their apprenticeship of observation model but may lack clear models to which they can aspire. Part of this may be due to the fact that, during their university teacher training, student teachers are likely to be taught in a fairly traditional manner of lectures. This is likely to reinforce any transmission-oriented schooling experience and deprive them of an alternative model for putting into practice the ideas presented on the course. A quotation from one student teacher, taken from an article which detailed the theory – practice dichotomy of teacher education – illustrates just this point:

We're being taught about getting the students motivated and interested and do a variety of things like provide opportunities for quality learning and help them think for themselves, and then the way they [the course instructors] teach us, it's almost completely opposite of what they tell us. (Rodriguez, 1993: 217)



In response to studies like those reported thus far, some course organisers have adopted a more interventional approach which goes beyond the more regular teacher education course and deliberately sets out to confront and change student teachers' beliefs. Two interesting examples are Anderson and Bird (1995) and Lauriala (1997). Anderson and Bird (1995) used a series of three cases with trainees which were intended to challenge their beliefs by presenting them with alternative ways of teaching, and encouraging them to become more aware of the beliefs they bring with them to the course. Results however were disappointing, with end of term interviews revealing that student teachers had interpreted each of the cases according to their initial beliefs. Thus students illustrated their ideas about good teaching with references to the case which was closest to their original image of teaching. The study is an example of a case where the attempt to use dissonance to bring about conceptual change did not have the desired effect (Anderson & Bird, 1995).

The final study to be considered here is concerned with dissonance deliberately created within the practicum context. Lauriala (1997) reported on a programme in which innovative classrooms have been established in order to encourage student teachers to question many of the beliefs about teaching and learning that they take for granted. Lauriala groups beliefs (characterised as involving 'value statements and action orientations') and perspectives together here, labelling them 'professional knowledge', (Lauriala, 1997: 275). Sixteen student teachers were studied using interviews, observation and student writing, in the form of reports and narratives. The researcher reports generally positive results but indicates that not all student teachers benefited from the experience. Three main orientations of trainees were found: those trainees who found congruence between their initial beliefs and the classroom practices reacted very positively to the experience; students who had an 'neutral initial orientation' were largely challenged by the dissonance they encountered but were less sure of the ideas than the first group; the last group consisted of student teachers who had a 'defensive disposition' and reacted negatively to the experience. This later group seemed to conform behaviourally to the demands of the course and classroom situation but appeared essentially unchanged by it (Lauriala, 1997).

There are a number of other studies, some of which have more success in influencing the beliefs of student teachers than those reported here, which also use an intervention in an effort to help student teachers explore their beliefs and the influences

that these beliefs have on their behaviour; for example Graber (1996), Joram and Gabriele (1998), Stuart and Thurlow (2000).

Aside from the powerful effects that the apprenticeship of observation seems to exert on student teachers, it also, as Lortie suggested, leads them in general to overestimate their ability to immediately take on the teacher role and to underestimate the complexity of teaching. Book, Byers and Freeman (1983) found that a significant number of trainees expressed confidence in their ability to begin teaching *immediately*. Similarly, Weinstein reports that 92% of trainees on one course rated themselves as 'above average' with regard to their future teaching (Weinstein, 1990) and trainees consistently felt that they would have less difficulty teaching than the average first year teacher (Weinstein, 1988). Weinstein (1988) labels this kind of view 'unrealistic optimism'. A study by Kalaian and Freeman (1994) also found this phenomenon although they report that in general females entering the course have lower levels of confidence than their male counterparts.

In parallel with a tendency to initially overestimate their own abilities to teach is a commensurate underestimation of the complexity and uncertainty of teaching. Feiman-Nemser et al. (1989: 7) found that trainees entered the course believing that teaching is straightforward; teaching is telling and that 'to be a teacher, one need only *act* like a teacher'. However, trainees did begin to appreciate the complexity of teaching towards the end of the course. A study by Lappan and Ruhama (1989) reported similar findings. A different picture however is painted by a more recent study of 36 PGCE teachers which found that even in the early stages of the course, trainees had an awareness of the complexity of teaching and 'a capacity to take into account a wide range of impinging conditions in deciding what to do' (Burn, Hagger, Mutton & Everton, 2000).

Another major influence, besides the apprenticeship of observation, on the formation of beliefs and preconceptions about teaching and learning which preservice teachers bring with them to their courses, can be grouped under the heading 'personal experience' and includes: informal learning experiences and life experiences, such as raising children, previous work experience, and cultural, religious, and socio-economic upbringing (Richardson, 1996). Interest in and knowledge of the subject has also been noted as a major influence on prospective teachers (Virta, 2002).

An example of a study which illuminates this area is Powell (1992), who looked at traditional and non-traditional preservice teachers in the USA ('non-traditional' trainees are defined here as career changers). His findings support those of the previous

section in that the primary influence on traditional students' (those straight from university) conceptions of teaching was schooling, that is the apprenticeship of observation. Another major influence was having relatives who are educators (Powell, 1992). The importance attributed to these sources contrasts with that of trainees from a non-traditional background who referred to a variety of influences on their education-related constructs, chiefly those from their previous career which included dealing with clients, non-classroom teaching and raising children. Non-traditional trainees also made more references to information gained through the teacher education course as a source of influence on their beliefs.

#### **4.1.3.2 Beliefs formed through personal experiences**

We have seen how teachers' beliefs are formed as a result of their experience of schooling, culture and life experiences. One further study of interest here is of four PGCE students in foreign languages in the UK (Almarza, 1996). This study looks at the major influences on these student teachers' beliefs and concepts, arguing that alongside their formal schooling in modern languages, these student teachers sometimes have considerable experience of language learning in informal contexts. Drawing on and referring to both their informal and formal learning experiences, the student teachers understood and reacted differently to the model prescribed on the teacher education course. These two distinct situations provide a powerful if sometimes conflicting knowledge and belief base for trainees (Almarza, 1996).

The influence of teaching experience on the formation of beliefs is unquestionably important although this is not usually a major element in *preservice* teacher education. This teaching experience could however take one of two forms:

- i. non-classroom teaching – examples of this include Sunday School teaching (Powell, 1992); teaching younger siblings or friends (Feiman-Nemser & Buchman, 1986); training / mentoring new employees at work; and doing voluntary work in the community;
- ii pre-qualification teaching – unlike in UK mainstream education, it is possible to work in ELT as an unqualified teacher. Trainees on a course who have pre-course teaching experience will bring beliefs to their teacher education programme which

owe their origins to their classroom experience. These beliefs are likely to include ideas about what works in the classroom and may in part have been influenced by the established practices of their previous place of work (Richards & Lockhart, 1994; Roberts, 1998).

The next section will turn now to studies which specifically set out to examine *change* on teacher education courses. As was outlined in the introduction, the concept of ‘belief’ is often used in order to measure the change which has or has not taken place.

#### 4.1.4 Studies which explored change on teacher education courses

There are a number of studies in which researchers found only limited change in the beliefs of student teachers (Cronin-Jones & Shaw, 1992; McDiarmid, 1993; Rodriguez, 1993). These three studies used different methodologies; McDiarmid (1993) used questionnaires from 700 teacher education students in addition to conducting interviews and observations with groups of 12 to 16 individuals on each of several programmes over a 2-3 year period. He found that changes in beliefs and knowledge were not dramatic and that by the end of the course preservice teachers had become more or less convinced of the beliefs they held at the beginning (McDiarmid, 1993). Cronin-Jones and Shaw (1992) used repertory grids to look for changes in the beliefs and organisation of the belief systems of 24 elementary and secondary science trainee teachers. They found that whilst student teachers’ focus and concerns changed over the duration of the course, the overall organisation of their beliefs did not. Rodriguez (1993) undertook an ethnographic study of 6 science student teachers’ experiences of a 13-week practicum in which he incorporated the use of metaphors in addition to interview and observation. At the end of their practicum experience all of the student teachers emerged with their original beliefs about teaching and learning, and the metaphor they chose, intact. Although they had to adjust their beliefs to the reality of the classroom ‘they did not seem to lose the essence of their prior beliefs’ (Rodriguez, 1993: 220).

A questionnaire survey of 79 primary student teachers in Australia by Nettle (1998) found that individual differences between student teachers led him to conclude that, although overall the practicum had a limited impact, in that the beliefs of the

majority of student teachers remained unchanged, a smaller number of trainees report significant change. This is important because it emphasises the idea that the beliefs and character of the individual trainees will have an effect on the extent to which studies find trainees change their beliefs.

Two studies which examined change in beliefs both at the group level, that is as reflected by mean scores, as well as at the individual level, found that the limited changes reported at group level masked findings of sometimes quite substantial changes at the individual level (Bramald, Hardman & Leat, 1995; Dunne, 1993). Further points of interest in Dunne's study are: many of the beliefs (defined as both 'everyday philosophy' and 'general pedagogical knowledge') held by student teachers at the beginning of their PGCE were in line with those expressed on the course; and although beliefs themselves changed little, there was a considerable increase of understanding of how their beliefs related to their teaching practice (Dunne, 1993). Dunne elaborates on the importance of this latter point by contending that small changes in belief could bring about large changes in teaching practice, concluding that 'change is not necessarily a prerequisite for improving practice, whereas understanding of the role of beliefs may be crucial' (Dunne, 1993: 87).

Bramald et al.'s (1995) study of 162 secondary PGCE student teachers found differences between the changes in beliefs of different curriculum groups, and they urged researchers to bear in mind that in studies of change on preservice courses, the course itself should be regarded not as a constant but as a variable. The authors suggest that some of the findings reporting no impact may be due to individual courses and course components and not necessarily the nature of learning to teach (Bramald et al., 1995).

A further study which rejected the no-impact result of teacher education courses was undertaken by Cabaroglu and Roberts on PGCE Modern Language teachers. Their study, which used repertory grid data, found that of the 20 student teachers involved in the study only one teacher's beliefs appeared to remain unchanged (Cabaroglu & Roberts, 2000). The study is of interest as it puts forward a category of belief change in terms of the processes which occur. The categories of change they identified were: awareness/realisation; consolidation/confirmation; elaboration/polishing; addition; re-ordering; re-labelling; linking up; disagreement; reversal; pseudo change; and no change (Cabaroglu & Roberts, 2000: 393).

### 4.1.5 Studies which explored the CELTA

Although not specifically setting out to measure change on their course, there are three studies of the CELTA which can be included in this section as their results can shed some light on this area. These are a doctoral thesis by Barduhn (1998), a small-scale questionnaire study by Ferguson and Donno (1999) and a study by Richards, Ho and Giblin (1996). These will be discussed in turn.

Barduhn (1998) looked at 44 trainees on three CTEFLA courses, with a focus on 6 individuals. In addition to the beginning and end-course repertory grids, reflective dialogue journals, a questionnaire on learning styles and an assignment on the same topic were used to gather data on her research questions. Her questions reflect her primary aim which was to investigate the differences between those trainees with no teaching experience who achieved 'B' grades and those who received a 'C' grade:

1. Why do some trainees on the CELTA do well and others not?
2. What are the characteristics of the learning that take place?
3. What is it about the course that usually makes it so effective?
4. Are the factors which characterise people who do well on the CELTA causes or symptoms?
5. Are teachers born or made? (Barduhn, 1998: 94)

Barduhn's work with repertory grids, using elements such as 'self as learner' 'self as teacher' and constructs such as 'leader/follower' and 'independent/dependent', indicated that 'B' grade trainees became, over the duration of the course, more aware of their role in the group and tended to become more 'proactive' generally in groupwork (Barduhn, 1998).

Another aspect of professional growth which was documented by Barduhn related to trainee motivation. She found that although the majority of trainees arrived on the course with instrumental motivation, for example wanting to work abroad, a number of students reported a transition to or addition of a more intrinsic motivation, that is finding the course motivating in its own right. This seemed to be particularly the case for those who attained higher final grades but it was found in most trainees to varying degrees. According to data collected from the reflection books one of the key factors in this change was working with real students (Barduhn, 1998).

One of the most interesting aspects of the thesis, from my standpoint, are two conclusions regarding the effectiveness of the course:

the bulk of my findings point to the fact that, although the CELTA is effective, the trainees who did well on the course did so largely because of their pre-dispositions (Barduhn, 1998: 180)

The second point of interest is the reason cited to substantiate her claim that the course is effective (an assumption implicitly made for her third research question). She states that in order to pass the course trainees must accept the challenging notion that a teachers' role in communicative language teaching is not the 'chalk and talk' model they may have experienced at school but rather a more facilitative role. She concludes that as approximately 92% of individuals do indeed pass, then 'the CELTA is not a low-impact experience' (Barduhn, 1998: 180). Clearly this argument is a non-sequitur and the effectiveness of the course is something which remains to be checked independently.

In a small scale project, Ferguson and Donno (1999) set out specifically to measure the impact of the CELTA course on trainees, through the use of questionnaires. Three areas of potential change were chosen as a focus: changes in trainees' beliefs and attitudes about language teaching and about themselves as teachers; changes in trainees' knowledge of the English language; changes in trainees' views of teaching methodology.

According to the authors, a 'great deal' of change or professional growth was found in these areas. With regard to the first point, pre-course questionnaires indicated a reasonably widespread belief that EFL is a 'soft-option' and that being a native speaker gave trainees a huge advantage and almost ensured that they would be able to teach. Ferguson and Donno cite increased awareness of the difficulties faced by the majority of native speakers who have not studied their own language, that is poor language knowledge / awareness which impacts on their development as EFL professionals. They also mention the growing realisation of trainees that the Certificate is merely the first step in an EFL teachers' professional development in terms both of their knowledge of teaching and also their language knowledge / awareness. The authors report changes in trainees' views of methodology, with students becoming more aware of the need to move away from a 'chalk and talk' approach to a more student-centred teaching style.

The value of the research findings reported by Ferguson and Donno (1999) were limited by lack of rigour in methodology: use of a single research instrument, neglecting

to specifically define concepts and a failure to report the questions used in the questionnaire being particular weaknesses.

The study of five trainees on a CTEFLA course in Hong Kong by Richards, Ho and Giblin (1996), aimed to:

examine how the trainees responded to the practice teaching experiences provided in the program, which aspects of teaching they found problematic, and how their ideas and beliefs about teaching developed during the program' (Richards et al., 1996: 242)

The study, which used audio-recorded discussions between tutors and trainees in addition to trainees' post-teaching self-report forms as data, focused on the experiences of five part-time trainees on a CTEFLA course in Hong Kong. The researchers found that trainees' focuses in TP shifted from a concern early in the course with whether the trainee looked like a teacher, with comments relating to their voice and confidence, to a concern with the teaching itself towards the end of the course. This latter focus was reflected in comments relating to elements such as the role of the teacher. Richards et al. (1996) describe how the trainees' concerns evolved as they became more comfortable using teaching strategies such as presentation and elicitation, allowing them to focus on other aspects. The researchers commented that to some degree the focuses of concern of the trainees differed according to their different perspectives on teaching, which they distinguished as concerned with a 'teacher-centred focus', a 'curriculum-centred' focus and a 'learner-centred focus' (Richards et al., 1996: 253). One further concrete change was the rapid adoption and use of EFL / teaching terminology such as 'sequencing', 'stress' and 'target language'. The authors describe how by the end of the programme the trainees had 'completely internalized the discourse and metalanguage' (Richards et al., 1996: 247). They conclude by saying that by the end of the course all of the trainees had learnt and were applying the PPP approach although with varying degrees of success (*op cit*).

These sections have explored the change or lack of change in the beliefs of student teachers on various teacher education courses in various countries. The next section will look at some of the reasons that researchers and practitioners have offered as to why some courses may have been effective or ineffective in influencing trainees' beliefs.



#### 4.1.6 Studies which explored reasons for change

A number of researchers, for example Holt-Reynolds (1992) and Hollingsworth (1989), have linked the reasons for a lack of change in student teachers' beliefs with the beliefs that these trainees enter with. However, it is worth briefly considering studies which suggest why courses may have been effective in changing trainees' beliefs.

Gupta and Saravanan (1995), using concept maps, found that although certain beliefs persisted to the end of the course under investigation, trainees were more open to change in areas in which they perceived their schooling had been inadequate, for example strategies for teaching vocabulary, as this was where they felt they had a gap in their knowledge (Gupta & Saravanan, 1995).

By contrast Tatto (1998) focused on the teacher educators in a study which explored firstly the extent to which they shared a set of beliefs (not defined) about the purposes of education, teacher roles and practices and secondly the degree to which the student teachers' beliefs changed in the direction of greater agreement. She found that internally coherent programmes tended to have a greater influence on the beliefs of their student teachers, and these programmes graduated teachers with similar beliefs to those expressed by faculty members (Tatto, 1998).

Freeman also wrote about the 'minimal impact' of teacher education courses, although he felt that this was best viewed as a challenge to teacher educators to 'rethink what we do and how we do it' (Freeman, 1992: 4). He suggested four characteristics which would increase the likelihood of a teacher education course influencing student teachers. These characteristics were: a course should have a 'unified discourse' which he explained involved not only 'talking the same language' but also explicitly sharing views of teaching and learning; the student teachers should be taught in the way they are expected to teach and the course should be based on experience and reflection; student teachers should teach in 'different contexts of teaching practice' by which Freeman meant including situations of various risk levels and some which were situated in the real world of the school; finally he suggested that the course should be based on constructivist principles of allowing student teachers to build on their own understandings and construct their own knowledge rather than a course which focuses on knowledge transmission (Freeman, 1992: 16; 1993).

#### 4.1.7 Critical overview of studies using a constructivist / individual framework

The studies in this section span a range of topics within the area of learning to teach. Some of them were concerned with the apprenticeship of observation which Lortie claimed was so influential in teachers' lives. Research in this area tended to confirm his proposition that trainees starting out on teacher education courses brought many beliefs and implicit theories formed during their long apprenticeship of observation. These beliefs related to how to behave or not to behave as a teacher and were important influences on trainees' reactions to the input and experiences provided on their initial teacher education course. Other studies noted that despite many trainees' rejection of the teaching approaches used in their own schooling experience, there was a tendency to fall back on this default model, often for lack of an alternative model to aspire to. Also relating to the apprenticeship of observation were findings which indicated that trainees on the whole underestimated the complexity of teaching and tended to see teaching as the carrying out of 'frontstage' behaviours.

The studies reported which dealt with the presence or absence of change on teacher education courses, on the whole confirmed Lortie's assertion of a limited impact. Some found no impact at all but it is likely that they masked the changes which did occur through their treatment of the scores. More common were studies which showed a limited impact on trainees. Reasons for this limited impact included a reported tendency for people to seek out evidence which confirms their beliefs and reject evidence which does not. Suggestions for increasing the likelihood of impact were having a unified voice, providing supervising teachers who challenged their supervisees, using a constructivist approach on the teacher education course and teaching trainees as the trainees are expected to teach.

There are however a number of problems associated with studies of change on teacher education courses and some of these relate to the reliability with which studies can be compared. Difficulties include lack of definition and consistency of key concepts used, an over-reliance on single tools or survey methods for concepts as complex as 'belief', a tendency to measure only self-reported data and not gather observational 'teaching' data, and a concern that measuring across a group may mask individual change. These points will be briefly discussed here but the reader's attention

is drawn to two relevant chapters, Chapter 3, section 2 on defining beliefs and their major characteristics and Chapter 5 on methodology.

There are a number of issues which relate to the defining of terms used. One revolves around the variety of constructs used in different studies which makes comparability difficult. Many of the terms chosen are similar but often researchers do not satisfactorily explain their reasons for choosing one term over another. Review articles often avoid the issue by grouping studies together regardless of differences in terminology, for example Nettle (1998) reviews twenty studies that he states looked for change in preservice teachers' beliefs; however following investigation I found that this group includes studies which used 'well-remembered events', 'perspectives', 'personal practical knowledge', 'images', and 'attitudes' in addition to 'beliefs'. A related issue is that concepts are often used without definition. In the studies which used 'belief', reviewed in this chapter, a clear majority failed to state the definition being used. Whilst general comprehension of the term guides the reader to an approximate understanding, differences inherent in its definition such as whether or not it includes unconscious representations in addition to conscious, or if it is considered to be solely cognitive or also affective are just some of the nuances which make the lack of explicit definition a major hindrance.

The second point mentioned above is the over-reliance of many studies on a single research method. However 'belief' is defined, it is complex and multifaceted. A range of tools used to achieve triangulation is likely to far better and more accurately measure teachers' beliefs. An interesting study by Foss and Kleinsasser (2001) of student teachers' beliefs about mathematics teaching found inconsistencies in data from different sources, most particularly between interviews with student teachers and the observation of their teaching practice. The authors found that by examining the consistencies and inconsistencies a richer picture of the trainees' learning could be seen. They therefore advocate the use of multiple data sources in order to facilitate this understanding.

In addition to this, I would question the appropriateness of the use of questionnaires and inventories as the sole method used to collect data on beliefs. Questionnaires and inventories have many well-documented problems centering around the imposition of researchers framing of respondents' thinking, which, when dealing with a concept such as belief would be exacerbated.

Besides the over-reliance on a single research method mentioned in the above paragraph, of particular concern is a common tendency to collect only self-reported data such as interviews and questionnaires and not to gather observational 'teaching' data. Whilst this may be understandable in that many teacher education courses span several years and will include different elements which may not be closely tied to teaching practice, it is dangerous when dealing with 'belief'. The notion that people may say one thing and yet do another for reasons of deceit or simple lack of self-awareness is well known. This distinction of 'espoused beliefs' and 'beliefs-in-action' may be extremely important in understanding and framing the research.

A further concern in studies that look for change on teacher education courses is that some researchers who use large scale questionnaire or inventory style data (for example Diakidoy & Kanari, 1999; Klein, 1996; Nettle, 1998; Vacc & Bright, 1999) may be masking individual changes in beliefs within their general results. If individuals move in different directions on a scale the collected mean scores will cancel each other out and suggest no movement (Bramald et al., 1995; Cabaroglu & Roberts, 2000). Several groups of student teachers exhibit notable differences in beliefs, and although not all of these groups have been covered in this review, the main differences are between elementary and secondary student teachers, traditional and non-traditional trainees and males and females (Richardson, 1996).

In summary, it should also be noted that, amongst the many studies reported in the section above, the focus seems to be on the presence of change, development or growth, but despite the fact that these studies are concerned with people who are learning to teach, very few studies focus on this process. The detailed examination of the nature of the learning process that student teachers go through is often left unexplored. Also often absent is comment on the contextual and social elements which influence student teachers' participation and learning. The conditions which influence learning and in which learning takes place are thus ignored in many studies. Instead the researchers focus on how beliefs and preconceptions, for example, hinder the successful learning of course content, and, whilst researchers have begun to question whether more determined interventions are needed to get trainees to learn, for example, the creation of dissonant experiences, few studies consider the role of the learning environment and context. Exceptions to this would include Hollingsworth (1989) and Tatto (1998). In summary, Carter's observation that: 'more discussion needs to be directed to what it

means to learn to teach, rather than simply to what is learned in which settings' is an appropriate one (Carter, 1990: 307).

## 4.2 Studies Adopting a Social Approach to Learning to Teach

This approach has been used far less than individual approaches in the study of formal learning such as is found on a teacher education course. Much of the work carried out by researchers such as Lave and Wenger, Hutchins, and Rogoff amongst others, as was outlined in the previous chapter, has been carried out in informal learning environments such as sailors learning to navigate (Hutchins, 1993), little league players learning the language of baseball (Heath, 1991) and the apprenticeship of Alcoholics Anonymous members (Lave, 1991). A small number of studies have been carried out on teacher education programmes, however, and these will be reviewed here.

Edwards (1997), working with Lave and Wenger's notion of legitimate peripheral participation, sought to examine how student teachers working with their mentors would position themselves in conversation with these mentors. She hypothesised that trainee teachers would strive to position themselves as legitimate participants in the conversations, attempting to present themselves as teachers in the classroom rather than as learners. The pre- or post-teaching conversations of a number of student teachers at primary level in the first year of their course were recorded and analysed. The researcher found that trainees did in fact strive to achieve this aim by offering activities which could be used in the lesson, thus focusing the conversations on these tasks and their implementation rather than on the learning of the student teachers themselves. As Edwards states 'the students appear to be presenting themselves as competent actors who through that mode of self-presentation render their own learning needs invisible' (Edwards, 1997: 34). In a different slant on this 'positionality' (Edwards & Collinson, 1996), Edwards refers to a conference presentation about Norwegian student teachers (Klages, 1995 cited in Edwards, 1997), pointing out that in that setting, novice teachers were permitted to observe the community of practice in classrooms and this 'allowed them to stay at the periphery of the action until it was appropriate for them to engage in scaffolded teaching activities' (Edwards, 1997: 35). Thus the Norwegian student

teachers, in their peripheral role, were allowed legitimate access to conversations with teachers and were allowed to engage in these conversations as listeners and learners. In her conclusion, Edwards suggests that student teachers and their mentors (in the UK) should be made more aware of the need for this early school-based experience to be a learning opportunity for the trainees. This would involve both parties viewing the student teachers as learners rather than 'competent performers' and allowing for guided observations and discussion, free from the fear of making errors (Edwards, 1997). Observation would also need to be legitimized in the eyes of the student teachers (Edwards & Collinson, 1996).

Lave and Wenger's notion of learning as participation was central to another study of teacher education, where it was employed in order to explore and understand the processes by which trainee teachers learn the culture of practice in their school and how they construct their new identities as members of that community (Maynard, 2001). The study, a re-analysis of data conducted within an approach which sought to investigate the developmental stages of learning to teach, was carried out on eighteen student teachers engaged in both PGCE and BEd courses in the UK, utilising recordings of planning and teaching sessions and in-depth interviews with trainees and mentors. As in studies in the constructivist approach, they found that trainees began the course with 'idealistic images' of the teacher they wanted to be or to avoid being. Similarly trainees also felt that teaching was 'easy' and essentially involved developing personal relationships with students. As with the student teachers reported in Edwards' study, trainees were keen to be seen as teachers in their own right and in this case they did this by adopting the behaviour patterns of teachers around them which allowed them to: 'obtain some measure of class control, to disguise their own lack of knowledge and understanding and also to gain the support of, and possibly to impress, the class teacher and the pupils' (Maynard, 2001: 45). In addition to the 'conscious survival' strategy of emulating the teachers around them, trainees also appropriated the discourse of their community although the author notes that their understanding of some terms they were using such as 'active learning' was much narrower than the understanding of the experienced teachers, something Maynard, borrowing from Vygotsky, referred to as a 'pseudoconcept'. The use of pseudoconcepts, terms used which are only partly understood and partly formed, however allowed trainees to function within their community and assisted them in their goal of fitting in (Maynard, 2001). The author concludes that the concept of 'learning as participation' was a useful means for

exploring the pressures on student teachers as they moved from peripheral to full participation in their community of practice (Maynard, 2001). Maynard notes the pressure to conform to an expected teaching approach came not only from class teachers and tutors but also from the children themselves:

It was important to students that the children liked them as a person and accepted and approved of them as a teacher. As the children responded best to known ways of working this must also have pulled students towards adopting the class teacher's patterns of behaviour and approaches to teaching. (Maynard, 2001: 50)

In a small study of an unspecified number of CELTA trainees, Murray (2000) focused on the development of a professional discourse by trainees as part of their socialisation into a new community. Murray commented on one trainee, whom she chose as a focus, who appeared to acquire ELT concepts before acquiring the relevant term and contrasted this approach with other trainees who used the terms before seeming to fully understand the concepts. The researcher saw this desire to speak like a teacher, that is to use a professional discourse, as helping to drive a novice teachers' conceptual development as well as easing their acceptance into a new community (Murray, 2000).

A trial of placing student teachers in partnership placements in school rather than the more traditional single placement for teaching practice was carried out in the United States recently by Bullough Jr. et al. (2002). Although this study did not overtly adopt a sociocultural perspective of learning, the results, which deal with learning with peers in a teacher education context, are of interest and can be accommodated in this section. Participants in the scheme were 21 preservice teachers, some in single placements and others in paired placements. The data collected consisted of two interviews with student teachers (beginning and end of the semester), and their supervising teachers, logs completed by teachers and the recording of a single planning session of the trainees and their mentors. Results indicate that trainees in paired placements felt more supported and also developed a sense of responsibility for helping their partners both in and out of the classroom (Bullough Jr. et al., 2002). Further, paired students commented on the opportunities this arrangement gave them to observe someone else teaching, someone who was on their own level and to observe the learners in the classroom more easily. They also commented on the increased degree of reflection and conversation which occurred surrounding the teaching practice. In interaction with the supervising teachers, the paired arrangement also had an effect. On the whole, when two trainees were

involved the episodes they were 'more collaborative' and planning was 'more flexible' (Bullough Jr. et al., 2002: 78). This contrasted with a tendency for supervising teachers with single trainees to be more directive and to dominate the discourse. The authors of the research suggest that two trainees brought more experience and knowledge to the interaction, and, because they helped each other, they tended to benefit from being more trusted. In the classroom, supervising teachers adapted to paired placements by taking on roles which were more like a team member rather than a supervisor or advisor. Another advantage of the paired placements was that, whilst all trainees felt that they did not receive as much feedback on their teaching as they needed or would have liked, those working in pairs were able to turn to each other for discussions about their teaching (Bullough Jr. et al., 2002). Unsurprisingly, the researchers are keen to recommend multiple placement of student teachers within a single mentor teacher's classroom.

In another study, which looked at collaborative learning of student teachers, a case study of two mathematics student teachers on a practicum was carried out using a social constructivist perspective (Manouchehri, 2002). The study required student teachers to jointly observe and then discuss their mentor's lessons in addition to each other's. Recordings of the discussions and journal data revealed that this peer interaction was highly influential in promoting development (Manouchehri, 2002). Issues were problematised and the discussions:

were the medium through which the participants confronted each other's thinking and forced one another to defend their interpretations of the classroom events, and to extend their local knowledge to a theoretical level (Manouchehri, 2002: 734)

The peer interactions also motivated the student teachers to review their understandings of mathematics and turn to the literature on learning and pedagogy. Although all of these strategies were reinforced on the university courses, 'it was the participants' need to regulate and coordinate their understandings so as to sustain their interactions that helped them accomplish these outcomes' (Manouchehri, 2002: 734). The author added that other student teachers on the same practicum who were not required to be involved in this form of peer interaction did not engage in these actions.



## 4.3 Chapter Summary

From the literature reviewed in this chapter it seems evident that:

- Trainees arrive on teacher education courses with beliefs about teaching and learning which have been formed during their lengthy apprenticeship of observation, in addition to later learning experiences, job experience and general life experience.
- The beliefs gained from the apprenticeship of observation are likely to be limited due to the restrictions of this period, that is, trainees are likely to conceive of teaching as consisting of frontstage behaviours such as classroom management and student activity but lack the backstage knowledge, for example, planning and the choice of aims.
- These beliefs influence the interaction of student teachers and serve to filter course content, leading to a rejection of input which conflicts with their initial beliefs.
- Beliefs are difficult to change and due to the filter effect, may survive despite clear evidence against them.
- Teacher education courses do have an impact on trainees but this is limited and may serve largely to strengthen those beliefs which were held at the start.
- When novice teachers enter the classroom they are likely to fall back on the models of teaching that they experienced during the apprenticeship of observation, even if they explicitly reject these models.

The information above, garnered from the studies which utilise an individual framework to understand the process of learning to teach, gives us a great deal of insight into the role of beliefs and trainees' individual orientations. However, many of the studies which are reported assume that the course itself is a constant, something which I am sure is far from true. Also, the focus on the individuals and their change or lack of change in beliefs does not provide us with information on how these individuals actually learn to teach.

The few studies which used a sociocultural perspective provided an interesting insight into the role of the community in the socialisation of the student teachers. Although few in number, these studies indicate that the social approaches to learning

can usefully be employed to further our understanding of the processes involved in learning to teach. The study by Edwards (1997) showed that the concept of peripheral participation is useful. However, in her study it was more noticeable by its absence, as trainees in their impatience to be accepted as teachers attempted to place themselves, from the outset, at the centre rather than the periphery of the action. Both Maynard (2001) and Murray (2000), studying trainees in very different contexts, noted the importance of learning and using the discourse of the target community. Both studies noted the tendency for student teachers to appropriate and use terms before they have a fully formed understanding of them, and how this allowed the trainees to function as members of the community. By gaining access to the community, they were able to continue to develop their concepts and discourse. The study by Bullough et al. (2002), was included because it was a trial involving the multiple placement of trainees and as such was interesting in illuminating a major element of social learning, that is learning with peers. The findings of this study fit with those of the social constructivist case study by Manouchehri (2002), again reflecting the importance of learning from peer interaction.

There does appear to be a lack of studies which take a multi-layered approach to studying learning to teach, and this is mostly due to a focus on one particular way of understanding the process. In order to understand the complexity of the situation we need to look not just at what trainees are saying and doing but also at what is happening around them. We need to focus on the process of learning to teach in all its richness, both the more individually centred processes and the social and cultural factors which are as much a part of the picture. In order to do this we need to take an eclectic view of learning theories which accepts ideas both from more constructivist approaches and from sociocultural perspectives. This is what my study sets out to do.

It should be noted that in this review of the relevant literature there are very few studies of the CELTA course or its predecessor the CTEFLA. Many of the publications which relate to the CELTA focus on practical techniques to use or discussions of whether a PPP method is appropriate. It may be felt that a discussion of the effectiveness of a four-week course is a moot point when so much research points to the limited effectiveness of courses of one-year or more in duration. Writers on the CELTA however do claim that the course is effective in its impact on trainees, although they largely draw on personal experience rather than independent studies for confirmation. Whilst I am less interested in assessing the effectiveness of the CELTA, I think there is

a great deal to recommend a study which focuses on the process of learning to teach which occurs on a course of this kind.

In summary, I feel that an eclectic approach, outlined in chapter 3.1, in which elements of both an individual framework and a contextual / cultural framework are employed in order to understand and investigate the complexity of the process of learning to teach, is preferable to the narrower focuses offered by the studies reviewed in this chapter. In the next chapter I will discuss the impact and implications that this eclectic approach has on the methodology of the study and I will outline the research questions which guided the study.

# Chapter 5: Aims, Design, and Implementation of the Study

This chapter is divided into two main sections. The first part (5.1) deals with the aims and design of the study. This section outlines the research questions that informed the study and gives an overview of the approach to the research methodology. The second part (5.2) deals with the implementation of the chosen methodology. It reviews major considerations that influenced the methodology, in addition to outlining the theory and practical implementation of the research tools.

## 5.1 Aims and Design of the Study

### 5.1.1 The research aims

The main aim of this study is to investigate the process of learning to teach which occurs on a CELTA course. I felt that many of the studies of trainees learning to teach rely on a framework which is too narrow. They either focus on individual learning to the exclusion of the social and community-level learning which occurred, or, more rarely, focus on the social elements with little effort made to investigate the beliefs and concepts of the trainees themselves.

What is needed is a study which draws on multiple theories and brings them together into an eclectic framework in order to provide a richer understanding of the process of learning to teach. Such a study therefore needs to be able to shift the focus of attention between the individuals and their learning, and the community and interactional level of learning. In this study neither element will be considered as merely background; rather both are considered an integral part of the whole picture.

The specific questions which drove this investigation forward were:

### 1. *Beliefs*

What is the impact of the CELTA course on the pedagogical beliefs of trainee teachers?

- a) What are the beliefs of the trainees at the start of the course with regard to teaching / learning, language and learning to teach?
- b) Are the trainees' early course beliefs modified during training?
- c) What is the nature of these modifications?

### 2. *Experiences*

How do the trainees experience the CELTA course?

What role do their beliefs about teaching and learning play in this?

### 3. *Reflections*

What are the trainees' immediate reflections on the course as evidenced in the final week of the course?

What are their reflections on the course as evidenced in a post-course questionnaire?

### 4. *The Course*

What learning conditions and learning opportunities does the course provide?

What role does social interaction play in their learning?

**Table 5.1: Research questions informing the study**

The study focuses on six trainee teachers on a full-time Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults course (in the UK).

## 5.1.2 The research design

The core of the study is the utilisation of theories from constructivist, skill and sociocultural approaches, and this, combined with the concern to have a shifting focus on both the individual trainees and the community, had a major impact on the choice of methodology and decisions in implementing that methodology.

The first major impact on methodology is due to the fact that these theories draw on quite different constructs. Chapter 3.1 explained the choice of 'tools' and 'participation' as major constructs of sociocultural theory whilst Chapter 3.2 outlined the reasons for the choice of 'belief' as a central concept of individual or constructivist approaches to learning. As it was necessary to consider all of these constructs, the methodology had therefore to involve multiple data sources and multiple perspectives.

To facilitate a focus on the individual trainees, interviews and questionnaires were chosen to investigate their beliefs about teaching and learning. Due to the complexity of my chosen concept – 'belief' – it was also necessary and desirable to observe the

course in its entirety. This allowed me to gather data on how people acted rather than simply relying on self-reported data. The observation data shed light on data obtained from the interviews and the questionnaire. It thus served to increase the validity of the data in addition to providing more in-depth detail of the trainees and the context as a whole.

Due to an interest in looking at change over the duration of the course and beyond, it was decided to conduct an interview at the beginning and again at the end of the course. Both interviews were intended to gather data on trainees' beliefs about teaching, learning and learning to teach. In addition to this background data, information would also be obtained on, for example, reasons for taking the course. It was intended that the interview at the end of the course would also tap into trainees' reflections on the course. It was anticipated that opportunities would arise in the middle of the course for less formal interviews of the 'how are you getting on?' kind and I decided, for the sake of maintaining relationships with participants, to allow these to remain spontaneous and free-flowing.

The course questionnaire was administered within the first days of the course in order to immediately gather data on trainees, thus compensating for any delays in interview which might have occurred due to the logistics of interviewing six people on an intensive course.

The post-course questionnaire was intended for distribution approximately one year after the end of the course. It was anticipated that this would provide a picture of what had happened to trainees upon completion and gather some of their considered reflections on the programme.

Some of the data gathered for the beliefs was also suitable for investigation of the community and interactional level. Observation of all elements of the course would provide information on the teaching and use of tools and on the participation of trainees. It was intended that part of the observational data would be transcribed in order to facilitate more detailed investigation. It was anticipated that the most useful data in terms of the trainees' freer expression of their beliefs and concerns would be the teaching practice and the teaching practice feedback sessions.

This interactional data would provide information on their experiences of the course and was also very valuable, in that it was less likely to be effected by interaction with myself. Further data in the form of trainees' assignments, lesson plans and the written feedback provided by the trainer after each teaching practice would also be

collected. This data would provide additional perspectives on the individuals' experiences, beliefs and reflections.

## 5.2: Methodology: Implementation

This part of the chapter will give a description of the methodology which was employed in my study of trainees learning to teach on the CELTA course. It begins with an overview of the methodology, which outlines the main tools used and the timeframe in which data was collected. This is followed by a discussion of major considerations for the research methodology: the need for multiple sources of data and multiple methods; the collection of thick description; the desire for an emic perspective; ethical issues which needed to be considered; and, finally, the question of selection of a site to carry out the study. Interviews, observation, questionnaires and the collection of documentary data are then described both in terms of their background and in their use in this study. An outline of the pilot study and its value completes this chapter.

### 5.2.1 Overview of the methodology: data collected and timeframe

The actual data collection period of the study was preceded by a pilot study in the same school, which was carried out in September 1999. The pilot study involved the observation of the first week of a course, together with the testing of interview questions and procedures (See section 5.2.7 for further details).

The data collection for the main study was carried out in the period from Monday 15<sup>th</sup> November to Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> December 1999. This corresponded to the full four-week period of the CELTA course at the school. The following forms of data gathering were involved:

- Interviews with the trainees
- Observation (and recording) of TP preparation, input sessions, TP, and TP feedback; this includes fieldnotes taken
- Questionnaires
- Documentary data:
  - i. Data which were produced independent of the research process:



- Lesson plans, assignments and self-feedback sheets written by trainees
  - TP points and TP feedback written by tutors
  - Progress records jointly constructed by tutor and trainees
  - Materials handed out to trainees in the input sessions
  - Publicity materials relating to the school and its CELTA course
- ii. Data sources which were produced as a result of the research process:
- Research journals – one written in the field and one written in the evening

Observation was an on-going process which was carried out daily, involved all sessions, with the exception of the observation of experienced teachers and the personal tutorials which the school requested I omit. The timing and organisation of the interviews and the administration of the questionnaire are outlined in Table 5.2 below; and the timing of the collection of documentary evidence in Table 5.3, also below:

<b>Trainee</b>	<b>Beginning Interview</b>	<b>Course Questionnaire</b>	<b>End Interview</b>
<b>Penny</b>	Monday, Week 1	Saturday, End of Week 4	Saturday, End of Week 4
<b>Theo</b>	Tuesday, Week 1	Not returned	Thursday, Week 4
<b>Helen</b>	Tuesday, Week 1	Friday, Week 1	Friday, Week 4
<b>David</b>	Wednesday, Week 1	Friday, Week 1	Wednesday, Week 4
<b>Angela</b>	Friday, Week 1	Friday, Week 1	Monday, Week 4
<b>Jeff</b>	Wednesday, Week 2	Thursday, Week 1	Wednesday, Week 4

**Table 5.2: Timetable – interviews and the administration of the course questionnaire**

<b>Documents collected:</b>	<b>When collected:</b>
Lesson plans, assignments and self-feedback sheets written by trainees	Final day of course
TP points and TP feedback written by tutors	Daily, after TP
Progress record jointly constructed by tutor and trainees	Final day of course
Materials handed out to trainees in the input sessions	Daily, in each session
Publicity materials relating to the school and its CELTA course	Opportunistic and prior to course
Fieldnotes written as part of the observation process (Alexander et al., 1991)	Daily
Journals – one written in the field and one written in the evening [Researcher]	Daily in breaks and evening

**Table 5.3: Timetable – the collection of various types of documentary evidence**

A second questionnaire, henceforth referred to as the ‘post-course questionnaire’, was administered one year following the completion of the course, that is in December 2000.

## 5.2.2 Important methodological considerations

In Section 5.1, I outlined some of the methodological implications of the eclectic view of learning which I maintain. The importance of taking into account the individual elements of learning by the trainees, their interactions with the group and their classroom culture, as well as the broader social and cultural context in which they are situated will have a significant impact on the design of the study. This will be discussed in the sections which follow.

### 5.2.2.1 Multiple sources and multiple methods

As was outlined in the previous section, 5.1, the use of multiple methods for data collection was considered to be not only desirable but necessary for this study. The investigation of trainees and the processes by which they learn to teach involves the collection of data on the trainees individually, in addition to data on their learning through participation at the community level. This multi-focus study thus necessitated a multiple methodological approach. This would allow different kinds of data to provide different information and it would also allow the building up of a rich picture of the context and the processes.

The use of multiple methods is commonly considered under the heading of triangulation where it is used in order to enhance the internal validity or credibility of a study (Bassegy, 1999; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Orum, Feagin & Sjoberg, 1991; Silverman, 2000; Snow & Anderson, 1991; Sturman, 1997; Yin, 1994). Triangulation is the process of bringing multiple perspectives to bear on a phenomenon and can take several forms:

1. Data or source triangulation: of people, situation or context and time (Denzin, 1989). In this study there was triangulation of *people* – the perspectives of the focus trainees, other trainees and particularly the teacher trainers were noted. There was triangulation of *situation* or *context* – in that data was gathered on the whole group in the input sessions, in the teaching practice with students, in the

teaching practice feedback group with the other focus trainees and the teacher trainer, one to one with the researcher, and during breaks and informal periods. Denzin (1970) wrote of triangulation of levels of *interaction* or *groupings* in social science research, which involves the individual level, the interactive level (the group), and the collective level (institutions, cultures). This study involved the collection of data on all three levels. Finally, there was also *time* triangulation in that the course was observed in its entirety, consistent with a longitudinal design.

2. Methodological triangulation: This study utilised a ‘between methods triangulation’, that is the use of different methods to collect data on the same phenomenon, as opposed to using the same method on different phenomena – ‘within methods triangulation’ (Denzin, 1989). Methods used were observation, interviews, a questionnaire and the collection of various types of documentary evidence. In addition to the oral data outlined above, written data was gathered – teaching practice (TP) feedback from tutors, trainees’ assignments, lesson plans, etc.

3. Theoretical triangulation (Denzin, 1989). This research project drew on several major theories of learning in order to interpret and understand the data produced. This eclectic approach fits with the notion of the triangulation of theories.

Despite the obvious usefulness of triangulation there is one major caveat: the recording of one phenomenon from multiple perspectives is likely to access different elements or interpretations of the phenomenon, rather than simply providing a single unalienable truth (Stake, 1995). The use of multiple methods or triangulation in this study is thus not simply intended as a check on the validity of the tools used, but rather as an opportunity to gather data which can be used to provide a picture of the process of learning to teach which is richer and more multi-dimensional than is normally the case.

### **5.2.2.2 Thick description**

In order to facilitate the incorporation of ‘thick description’ (Geertz, 1973) into this study, it was necessary to pursue a research strategy of ‘thick collection’. By ‘thick collection’ I mean the collection of all data which may have a bearing on the phenomena which is being investigated. The notion of ‘thick description’, or ‘thick

collection', is not unproblematic, primarily because there are no accepted criteria for deciding what is relevant to the case and what is not relevant (Gomm, Hammersley & Foster, 2000). However a decision was made to collect all the information which seemed relevant to the study, for example, literature relating to the school, fieldnotes on what happened in the classroom, feedback sheets and assignments, as well as sketches and description of the physical spaces in the school, and information on the learners of English who were engaged in the classes. In this way it was hoped that this data could be incorporated into the thesis in order to provide thick description.

In addition to its usefulness in a study involving a complex construct, thick description has been described as one of the most important strategies for the enhancement of the reliability or dependability of a study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

### **5.2.2.3 The emic – etic issue**

Another major issue which influenced the choices made concerning the methodology of this study was the matter of *emic* and *etic* perspectives. Much has been written in the literature of naturalistic inquiry about the importance of obtaining an *emic* perspective if one is to understand the participants and events. This insider perspective has been contrasted favourably in such literature with an *etic* or more distant approach of the kind pursued by a researcher working within more traditional approaches. The notion of an *emic* perspective is not simply a choice at the data collection stage, for example whether the researcher opts for a participant observation role or not, but is actually also a real issue in the data analysis and the writing up stages. Despite my outsider and hence partial *etic* role, I have attempted to maintain a perspective which is primarily *emic* in nature.

### **5.2.2.4 Ethical considerations**

Issues relating to research ethics can be divided into several kinds: those relating to the trustworthiness of the research and those relating to the treatment of participants and the researcher's behaviour in the field. It is this latter element that will be discussed here.

The ethical issues involved in a project such the present one, which focuses on detailed investigation of a small group of participants, require much deliberation and

planning. As Stake (1998: 103) writes: ‘qualitative researchers are guests in the private spaces of the world. Their manners should be good and their code of ethics strict’.

Issues of ethical conduct in research can be loosely divided into those relating to consent, participation and protection (BERA, 2000; TESOL, 2002). As a researcher in the group, my status and role was initially unclear to many students. From the start, I emphasised to all involved with the course that I was independent from both UCLES (the course examiners) and the teacher training institution. It was made clear that anonymity would be maintained at all times and no information provided by trainees would be passed on to assessors of any kind. Further it was emphasised that participation was entirely voluntary, trainees who chose not to participate would not be judged negatively by anyone associated with the course and further that any trainees who opted to participate could withdraw at any time. The aims of the study were explained briefly to all involved and participants were asked to sign informed consent slips. In the event no-one opted for non-participation and none of the trainees seemed confused by the fact that my work was unrelated to the Centre or to the examining body UCLES.

In terms of the protection referred to above I avoided situations in which trainees may be brought face to face with differences between their espoused theories and their actions in the classroom, such as asking trainees why they did something in TP after saying something different in an interview. Any such discrepancies were regarded as the domain of the teacher trainers to be dealt with as they saw fit.

It should be noted that pseudonyms have been used throughout this thesis for all who were involved in the study.

### **5.2.2.5 Sampling**

A number of researchers working within naturalistic research recommend the use of ‘purposive sampling’ which involves the careful consideration of the parameters of the population with the decision on the sample based on a consideration of which case is most likely to present the phenomenon being studied (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998a, 1998b; Silverman, 2000; Stake, 1995). Schofield (1990) proposes sampling as a method of site selection, suggesting that choosing a site on the basis of typicality may be more useful than on the grounds of convenience or ease of access, although she does stress that this

in itself is not a ‘quick fix’ strategy because it is not possible to achieve typicality in all dimensions which may be relevant (Schofield, 1990).

Following Schofield (1990) and Silverman (2000), matrices (Table 5.4 below), were created to facilitate the selection of a site based on factors which were considered important, namely whether the course was part or full-time and the type of institution which was providing the course.

The matrices (Table 1) which were compiled for this study relate to two factors: courses are held in three main types of institutions, FE colleges, Universities and private language schools; and courses can be full-time (4 weeks) or part-time (extremely variable – between 8 weeks and a year in length). It should be noted that figures are only approximate, based on my calculations using data provided by centres and the UCLES website<sup>9</sup>, rather than data supplied by UCLES. The figures are liable to change from year to year, according to demand and staffing levels.

<b>Programme type (UK only)</b>	<b>Number of courses (N= 366)</b>
Full time courses	293 courses – 80% of the total
Part time courses	73 courses – 20% of the total

<b>Type of institution running full time courses (UK only)</b>	<b>Percentages of total full time courses (N=63 centres)</b>
Private language school	54%
University	16%
Further education colleges	30%

**Table 5.4: Matrices of Programme types and Types of Institutions offering CELTA programmes (1999, estimated).**

The issue of whether to focus on a full-time or a part-time course was decided on the basis of the numbers of students who attended such course types. As can be seen from the matrices, the majority are overwhelmingly full-time. This issue was important because it would be directly related to the experience of the course which, in its full-time format, is known to be intensive. One website equated the difference between full time and part time courses with choosing between a ‘short sharp shock’ and a ‘long gruelling marathon’ (TEFLNetNation, 2000).

Similarly, as is clear from the chart, it was found that of full-time students, most attended private language schools. The number of courses held at both universities and FE colleges were far fewer. One factor which mitigated against the selection of an

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.cambridge-efl.org/teaching/centres/uk.cfm>

institution being a major variable in the selection process was the fact that all centres had to be validated by UCLES, that they all followed the same basic syllabus, and all centres were required to have an external examiner who visits the centre for a day during each course. Despite this, it was decided to focus on a private language school, as this is the most common experience for students.

Having come to the decision to focus on private language schools and full-time courses, various centres were contacted by telephone, beginning with local courses before moving further afield. A language school in the south of England agreed to my attendance for the first week on one of their courses in order to pilot my study. Towards the end of the pilot I negotiated access to the entire course (later in the year) in the same centre.

I have discussed at some length the importance of using multiple tools to gather data and in the next section I will outline the advantages and disadvantages of the tools which were selected – interview, observation, questionnaire, and the collection of documents, in addition to the rationale for choosing them. Each part will include an outline on the field experience of using the tools.

## 5.2.3 Interviews

### 5.2.3.1 Interviews as a research tool

The interview is one of the most important techniques in methodologies that study people and social processes (Dyer, 1995; Fontana & Frey, 1998; Kvale, 1996; Rubin & Rubin, 1995; Yin, 1994). It has been used extensively for a wide range of purposes in various disciplines from sociology to education. This is largely due to the flexibility it offers researchers as a result of the different types of interview technique available. This section will briefly outline the main advantages of interviews as a research tool before moving on to consider the different types of interview available: from structured to semi-structured or unstructured interviews.

The element of structure in the interview relates to how much of the interview is specified in advance of the interview itself, with *structured interviews* involving the pre-planning of both content and sequence. This kind of interview allows less room for the interviewer to modify or change the questions or the schedule whilst in the field and

stands in contrast to the *unstructured interview* where the content, wording of the questions and their sequencing is left to emerge from the discussion in the setting (Cohen & Manion, 1994; Dyer, 1995; Fontana & Frey, 1998). The structured interview has the advantage of reducing the risk of the interview going off on a tangent or of questions being left out. However it has a major disadvantage insofar as the interview questions and direction having been pre-determined in advance, that is, it is inflexible in not giving the interviewer the freedom to follow emergent leads and issues (Fontana & Frey, 1998). The structured interview may also seem to the interviewee more like an interrogation than an interview, with the possible result that respondents may not be as open as they might otherwise have been (Dyer, 1995). The *semi-structured interview*, a type favoured by many naturalistic researchers, combines the pre-planning of some questions and their wording with the flexibility of being able to follow leads and generally allowing the interviewer to be more responsive in the interview process (Dyer, 1995; Mason, 1996; Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Mason refers to the in-depth, semi-structured interview as ‘qualitative interviewing’, again emphasising its importance and adoption by many researchers working in more naturalistic settings (Mason, 1996).

Some writers distinguish another kind of interview, the *non-directive* or *client-centred interview* which has come from counselling and the psychiatric tradition. It is based on the interviewer taking the role of guide, working without a pre-specified framework or set of questions, and encouraging and probing through the use of ‘reflecting and rephrasing’ the respondent’s statements in order to bring them to a point of understanding (Cohen & Manion, 1994; Kvale, 1996). In this type of exchange the interviewee may actually direct the topic and course of the interview (Kvale, 1996) and hence the appropriateness of this kind of interview in research terms is questionable. The non-directive interview is contrasted with a *focused interview* in which the interviewer takes more control in the process, and is likely to have an agenda achieved through the ‘prior analysis by the researcher of the situation in which subjects have been involved’ (Cohen & Manion, 1994: 289). This form of interview may be used to corroborate facts gathered elsewhere and is, in many ways, similar to the structured interview referred to earlier.

The advantages of interview are numerous and well-documented, as are the reasons why it is so often chosen as a research tool, although clearly they vary according to the type of interview chosen. In brief, the interaction with individuals allows the researcher to gain some degree of access to the participants’ perspectives and



understandings, 'to understand the world from the subjects' point of view' (Kvale, 1996: 1). On the whole, interviews allow a flexibility and responsiveness not found in many other research techniques, giving researchers the opportunity to pursue issues and ideas as they emerge in the interactional process.

The interaction between the researcher and the participants in the study which forms the basis of the interview has been described as the mainstay of its advantages as well as its disadvantages, that is, the depth and focus it allows versus the potential for interviewer subjectivity and bias (Cohen & Manion, 1994).

Despite the potential for interviews to serve as a 'construction site of knowledge' (Kvale, 1996: 2) they have frequently been viewed as a tool for information transfer or 'a pipeline for transmitting knowledge' rather than as 'meaning-making occasions' (Holstein & Gubrium, 1997: 113-4).

Kitwood (1977 cited in Cohen and Manion, 1994: 274-5) in an unpublished study, divided the ways in which theoreticians and researchers view interviews into three major conceptions. These different conceptions of interview will have an influence on the problems or potential issues which can be seen as arising from the use of the technique. The three conceptions are:

- the interview as 'information transfer' – bias and inaccurate information can be eliminated from the process given the right conditions;
- interview as 'transaction' – bias exists although it can be controlled, for example, by having multiple researchers with differing biases;
- interview as 'an encounter' which is similar to those interactions in everyday life with all of the issues such as social distance and opaque meanings which occur in social interaction (Kitwood, 1977, cited in Cohen and Manion, 1994).

Clearly the researchers and theoreticians in the final category above are less concerned with the notion of bias than the first and second groups. However, the first and second conceptions represent the large number of researchers who feel that bias can render interview data invalid and hence is a major threat to its use as a research technique (Cohen & Manion, 1994). The potential for bias is considered to be broad and includes interviewers' pre-conceptions, interviewees misunderstanding the questions or interviewers misunderstanding the responses, as well as background features such as social class and age (Cohen & Manion, 1994). Yin (1994) warns that

researchers must view the data arising from the interview as a 'verbal report' only and must be aware that the problems of bias, poor recall, difficulties of articulation and possibly even of respondents supplying deliberately misleading information are potential pitfalls. He advises that interview data be corroborated by other means to reduce these problems (*op cit*). Another means of reducing bias would include the careful formulation of the questions used in order to enhance clarity. One more area of potential difficulty for validity exists, and that is the often assumed point that participants have a good insight into their own behaviour, something which cannot necessarily be taken for granted (Cohen & Manion, 1994).

Interviews have been used extensively in research on teachers' beliefs and in studies which examine change on preservice courses. Several writers, for example, Tomlinson (1989) and Woods (1997), discuss the need for questions about beliefs to be based on concrete personal experience. An interview which focuses on content of personal significance to interviewees will clearly hold an advantage in the elicitation of meaningful data and is more likely to avoid several problems: beliefs being 'thought-up' in the interview situation; or people talking in an abstract sense which may lead them into a need to maintain consistency. Woods (1996; 1997) writes of the need to question interviewees indirectly about their beliefs, asking teachers about such things as their learning experiences rather than posing a request such as 'tell me your beliefs about ...'. This again is due to a desire to use an interview technique which capitalises on personally significant, concrete, contextualised experience. Other researchers who have used interviews to investigate changes in beliefs on preservice teacher education courses include: Anderson and Bird (1995), Bramald et al. (1995), Foss and Kleinsasser (1996) and Ross and Smith (1992).

The use of scenarios in an interview situation is one way in which to approach the collection of concrete context-specific data. Scenarios could be characterised as the presentation of an imaginary, although realistic, situation, in which interviewees are asked to make a decision in a dilemma with justifications or explain how they would deal with a problem or situation which was presented to them. They have been used in interviews by several researchers, for example, Dunne (1993) who incorporated a fixed-response scenario into a questionnaire and McDiarmid (McDiarmid, 1993; McDiarmid & Ball, 1989) who used scenarios of typical tasks in teaching such as asking student teachers to plan a class, appraise materials and tasks, and grade pupils work. Clearly in

these examples the scenario has been used as a form of written task rather than being conducted as part of the interview procedure per se.

### **5.2.3.2 Rationale for choosing interview for this study**

For this study it was decided that the most appropriate interview type would be a semi-structured interview, which offered the best trade-off between having questions organised in advance and allowing flexibility to the setting and to the individual interviewees. The pre-planning of some questions reduces the possibility of misunderstanding due to ‘on the spot’ articulation and also ensures that all of the main issues under investigation are covered to some degree. The semi-structured interview also allows for emergent themes to be followed up and other questions to be posed in the field. Its use would also be likely to be acceptable to trainees who would anticipate a more formal conversation than in everyday life whilst not seeming like an unresponsive interrogation.

While the alternatives of non-directive interview or the focused interview were considered, neither extreme was chosen. Although the interviews could not be mistaken for conversations due to the need to ask certain questions within a tight time-frame, a relatively informal conversational style was adopted as far as possible. This was not simply a technique to gain the trust of the trainees and hence increase the likelihood of open and honest responses, but primarily as a mark of respect for trainees as equals and a style of interaction which goes beyond methodological appropriateness.

Whilst offering many advantages, the interview was conceived as being only one element in the data gathering process, albeit a major one. It would allow me to gather data on the understandings and concepts of the individuals regarding their ideas about teaching and learning. It was expected that the interview data would not be a *full* articulation of trainees’ beliefs and understandings but it was expected that, when combined with data from other sources, a fuller picture would be produced.

### **5.2.3.3 In the field**

It should be noted that all twelve of the trainees on the CELTA course were interviewed over the duration of the programme, however, due to the time constraints only the focus trainees were interviewed at the beginning and the end of the course. It should further

be noted that only the data for the focus trainees will be reported in this thesis due to the chosen focus.

After each interview was carried out, audio cassettes were marked and dated. That evening, a reference was made to the tape in a log. The content and date of the tape were recorded, and then the cassettes were safely stored.

A copy of the interview schedule is available in Appendix A.

#### **5.2.3.3.1 The beginning course interview [referred to as Interview 1]**

The semi-structured interview which was carried out at the beginning of the course was intended to collect background data on the beliefs of the trainees. It consisted of three main sections:

- a personal history section with questions on effective and ineffective learning experiences, language learning experiences and questions about what makes a good teacher;
- the second section had questions about the process of learning to teach (expectations, reasons for doing the course etc);
- the final section was a teaching scenario.

This latter section involved presenting the trainees with a scenario in which they were required to talk about what they would teach a class:

You're going to teach a group of students, any level you feel comfortable with. Any topic you want. You've been teaching them for several weeks and feel comfortable with them. If I were to watch your lesson for a full period, of say 45 minutes, what would I see? What would you be doing and what would the students be doing? Why would you / they be doing those things?

The scenario chosen for my data collection was relatively straightforward and was intended to elicit trainees' beliefs about what is important in teaching and why. It was of course a hypothetical scenario but it was known to be very similar in content to the kind of activity that trainees would be doing on the course. It was expected that the information gained here would be of value in understanding the observation of the trainees' teaching practice, and thus served to add an extra dimension to the observation and other interview components.

The interviews with trainees were organised and carried out as soon as possible with priority being given to those trainees in the focus group (see Table 6.6). Once

these were completed I set about interviewing other trainees on the course. The order of interviews largely reflects the organisation of the teaching practice, as I quickly learnt that asking for an interview on a day when people were teaching was unlikely to be successful. The interviews were carried out in one of the teaching rooms which was vacant. I did not carry out any interviews in front of other trainees, staff, or students with the exception of the mid-course interview with Helen.

#### **5.2.3.3.2 The end of course interview [referred to as Interview 2]**

The end of course interview was essentially a repetition of the semi-structured beginning course interview with a few modifications to allow for additional questions concerning how the course had gone and trainees' reflections. It was intended that repeating the questions would allow for comparability between answers given at the beginning of the course and those given at the end.

As with the first interviews, the order of interviewing reflects the organisation and timetabling of the teaching practice (see Table 6.1). Also similar to the beginning course interviews, the end of course interviews took place in empty rooms with no-one else present.

#### **5.2.3.3.3 The mid-course interview**

The mid-course interview was different from the other interviews; it was considered secondary in importance and due to the pressure of the course it was maximally flexible in approach and timing. Thus an unstructured approach was adopted, that is it did not involve the pre-planning of questions to any great degree. This interview consisted of asking trainees how the course was going and following up any emergent themes of interest.

The interview was largely carried out wherever I found the trainees and whenever they had time to talk to me, which meant that sometimes it was in the teaching room and sometimes in the common room with other trainees present. Interviews were never carried out if any members of staff were present and were terminated or at least halted by me if any staff members entered the room. This was for ethical reasons in that I wanted the trainees to feel that they could speak freely and without any danger of prejudicing their success on the course (this was not a reflection in any way on the

attitudes of staff who I always found to be open and very fair-minded). It was also important for trainees to feel they could speak freely in order to maximise the validity of the interview data gathered.

## 5.2.4 Observation

### 5.2.4.1 Observation as a research tool

Observation, commonly divided between the extremes of participant observation and formal or non-participant observation, has been used extensively in educational research. The role of the observer will differ considerably depending on which form of observation the researcher chooses, from the dual role of participant-observer, fully involved in the events occurring while recording what is happening, to, at the other end of the scale, the outsider role of someone who is not involved in any way with the events which unfold. These two forms of observation will now be looked at in more detail, although fuller attention will be given to the participant form as this is of more relevance to this study.

*Participant observation:* This approach requires the researcher to occupy two roles simultaneously: that of participant, taking part in the event, interacting with other participants and building relationships; and the other role is that of researcher, watching the scene and making notes on what is observed.

The focus of this kind of research is often the social processes at work in a setting, and the researcher strives to build an account of the event, or phenomenon, from the perspective of the participants (Cohen & Manion, 1994; Dyer, 1995; Yin, 1994). Thus participant observation provides an insider's perspective on what is essentially a natural situation and the researcher is actually a part of the picture they are recording. This approach to observation is often characterised as 'unstructured observation', meaning the researcher does not set out with a pre-designed checklist, and, although there may be a focus, such as on a specific kind of behaviour etc, all relevant behaviour may be recorded. This approach allows for maximum flexibility in dealing with potentially unpredictable events (Dyer, 1995).

There are a number of disadvantages associated with participant observation. They include: as a primarily descriptive technique it is often rejected by researchers searching for causality; the building of relationships can make it a time-consuming

method; it blurs the distinction between researcher and researched, leading to potential problems with subjectivity and reliability of the data (Dyer, 1995; Yin, 1994); and the fear of a researcher 'going native' due to the participatory nature of this approach (Cohen & Manion, 1994; Yin, 1994).

*Non-participant observation:* The researcher watches and records what is happening in the scene, without interacting with the participants. This approach, which may be covert or overt, allows the researcher to observe behaviour without the knowledge of the participants and therefore allows the claim that the behaviour is not modified for the observer. Non-participant observation often involves a structured approach although this is not a defining characteristic. A structured approach would involve the collecting of data on pre-specified behaviours only, usually using a checklist of sorts. The flexibility of this kind of structured approach is variable, depending on what is desired by the researcher, although on the whole it is less flexible than an unstructured approach. Non-participant systematic observation may involve the use of time-sampling or continuous observation (Dyer, 1995).

Some of the disadvantages of structured observation have already been touched upon, chiefly its lack of flexibility and the possibility that a relatively tight focus could lead to useful data being missed because it does not conform to the behaviour specified in advance of entering the field. It is thus thought less appropriate for studying the complexity and unpredictability of social interaction. The non-participant approach has primarily been criticised for failing to take into account the meanings, understandings and perspectives of the participants due to its rejection of interaction with participants (Dyer, 1995).

In actual fact these two approaches – participant observation and non-participant observation – are on a cline with other positions between. Gold (1958) suggests two further positions: 'participant-as-observer' and 'observer-as-participant' which lie between the end points of the complete observer and the complete participant. More recent conceptions of these mid-point roles have been defined as the 'complete-member-researcher', the 'active-member-researcher' and the 'peripheral-member-researcher' (Adler & Adler, 1998: 84).

Many writers describing naturalistic research have worked more towards the participant end of the scale for example, Foss and Kleinsasser (1996), Rovegno (1992) and Woods (1996).

Two major strategies associated with observation have been put forward as important in helping to increase the credibility or internal validity of a study. They are ‘prolonged engagement’ and ‘persistent observation’ (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These strategies are suggested in order to help the researcher learn about the culture under investigation and of course to learn about the participants and the influences on them. They also help to build trust and reduce the risk of distortion due to the presence of the researcher or due to respondents providing misinformation or misunderstandings (*op cit*).

#### **5.2.4.2 Rationale for choosing observation for this study**

Observation was considered crucial for this study in order to avoid, or at least become aware of, potential differences between a participant’s espoused theories, expressed during, for example, an interview, and their theories in action, seen, for example, in their teaching. It was intended therefore that observation data in the form of field notes should serve as a supplementary technique to substantiate or corroborate information obtained by interview (Robson, 1993). Of course it was recognised that the trainees are on an assessed course in which they are not necessarily free to act as they choose. However in order to gain a understanding of a concept as complex as ‘belief’ it is necessary to view it in more than one dimension; observation was expected to assist in this process. Further, observation offered the opportunity to collect ‘situationally-generated data’ which could add to and enhance the picture produced by more artificial or manipulated contexts such as the interview or questionnaire (Adler & Adler, 1998; Mason, 1996).

A further reason to involve the use of observation was in order to gather data within the frame of ‘learning as participation’ and of tool use. The observation and subsequent transcription of some of the data would provide useful information for the investigation of these focuses.

The observation technique employed in this study can be described as being towards the participant end of the cline. To elaborate on this, as an EFL teacher, I am a member of the ELT culture, understanding the language and concerns of the group and I have what Woods (1996) labels ‘member’s competence’. Therefore, to some extent, I am a participant. As an experienced teacher, however, who completed my CELTA (then known as the CTEFLA) course over ten years ago and now involved in research, I



could not participate in the activities of the course without having a major impact. My role would therefore be more akin to what has been described as that of a 'marginal participant' (Robson, 1993), 'observer-as-participant' (Gold, 1958), or 'peripheral-member-researcher' (Adler & Adler, 1998). This role involves a much lower degree of participation but is still distinct from a 'complete observer' role, in that it involves establishing a relationship with the group, getting to know trainees individually and giving priority to the participants' own meanings and perspectives (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983; Robson, 1993). As with participant observation generally, the study also involves the collection of relatively unstructured data which serves to provide relative freedom in the information or field notes recorded. Although this necessitates the recording of large amounts of data, it allows for the detailing of more holistic and meaningful information.

One more element which needs to be considered in this section is the potential for the observer's paradox (Hawthorne Effect) that is, that the events observed will be changed by the presence of the observer and the fact that the event is being observed. I do not think this proved to be a major influence, largely because one extra observer who offered no criticism or comment would not have led to a considerable change in the behaviour of the participants. The trainees on the course were under a great deal of pressure, much of which came from the element of being observed during teaching by their fellow trainees and more importantly by the tutor. This was a natural part of the process. A further aspect which reduces the impact of the observer on this study is the fact that both the observer and the participants all arrived onto the scene at the same time, the participants had to adjust to the new course and the people with whom they had to interact, so my presence was not something the trainees had to get used to, rather it was another element in a new environment. One further aspect is the fact that the study was longitudinal, so any initial change in behaviour caused by my presence would likely have been overcome due to the sheer pressure and stress of the course. A fuller discussion of the interaction between course participants and myself with regard to this important matter is to be found in the next section 'in the field'.

The elements of 'prolonged engagement' and 'persistent observation' were incorporated into the observational element of the study. I was in the field for the entire duration of the course, from the first session of the first day to the finishing party held at the end of the last day. I was present throughout the day, both in the sessions and in the

breaks. This served to establish relationships with the group and also increased my knowledge and understanding of the setting and of the whole programme.

#### **5.2.4.3 In the field**

All of the sessions, with the exception of the lessons taught by the experienced teachers (and observed by the trainees), were audio recorded and observation notes were made. At the end of the day each tape was carefully logged for date and content, and then stored. Trainees were asked permission to record their TP classes and feedback sessions and written consent was obtained. The teacher trainers were also consulted prior to recording the sessions.

A major element of the observation part of the methodology can be summarised under the heading of the role of the researcher. As explained earlier my role was one of a marginal participant, observing the scene and interacting with trainees whilst not taking part in the course per se.

From the start I attempted to maintain a balance between the degree of distance required in order to minimise my influence and the fact that as an outsider I needed to some extent to behave like an insider and this required me to fulfil certain social norms, for example the reciprocation of assistance. My influence on the scene and on the trainees, was something which concerned me greatly and the discomfort I felt was due in no small part to the dual role I played, that of researcher and that of co-participant in the shared event. With respect to the trainees my interaction with them could roughly be divided into three main types: the interaction of a co-participant; the interaction of a more experienced colleague; and the interaction of a researcher. These distinctions are explored below:

1. The interaction of a co-participant: many of my interactions fell into this category, for example trainees asking me questions such as ‘Does this piece of paper go into my portfolio?’ or asking me to read over their assignments before handing it in. This latter request was also made of other members of the group. Most of the trainees were very active in offering and receiving help with assignments, teaching practice materials amongst other things. Of course, as an experienced teacher my words or judgments may have carried

more weight; however, on the whole I did feel that many of the things I was asked would have been asked of anyone else who was present at the time.

2. The interaction of a more experienced colleague: there were however, despite my best intentions, examples which would fall more easily into this category. They included questions about working in EFL or requests to help trainees in ways which went beyond simply reading through something. An example of this occurred in Week 2 as a result of the trainer being late for the guided preparation session. David, who was teaching that day, asked me to review his lesson with him. In this example and others, I tried as much as possible to help the trainees find their own answers rather than telling them. Wherever possible I referred trainees to the tutors, Jim or Robert, but, in the name of maintaining good relationships with the trainees, this was not always possible. Another example of my experience being called upon was in a session on jobs, (Wednesday, Week 4) when I was asked by the trainer to answer trainees' questions about my first teaching job.
3. The interaction of a researcher: my presence on the course would also have had the effect of changing some trainees' expectations of ELT as a profession. On contact with me they would have realised that far from being solely a quick and easy way to see the world, ELT was a university discipline with its own research.

With regard to my role in the eyes of the tutors on the course and the other teachers who were working there, I was treated largely as a colleague. I was made welcome in the staff-room and allowed to use the staff facilities. I was also asked to provide feedback for the teacher trainers at the end of the course.

## 5.2.5 Questionnaire

### 5.2.5.1 Questionnaires as a research tool

Although a questionnaire falls under the heading of a kind of document generated for the research purpose (see section 5.2.6), it will be examined separately here, partly due to the distinct literature surrounding the use of the tool.

Questionnaires are not a major tool used in a case study approach. They have a number of disadvantages which mean they are more likely to be rejected in favour of interviews and observation in case study or studies dealing with small numbers. Questionnaires tend to be incorporated into more survey-based research which aims to cover a much larger sample in as convenient and cost effective a way as possible. Here, their disadvantages may be considered to be outweighed by their usefulness. Also, with case study research, the researcher is in the field so observation and interview data is more readily accessible and both of these approaches allow a more in-depth, focused investigation of the phenomenon in question than questionnaires. Before looking at why questionnaires were used in this study, the advantages and disadvantages of the use of questionnaires as a research tool will be examined.

Questionnaires are a popular research tools generally for gathering data on trainees' beliefs and attitudes, amongst other constructs, largely because they lend themselves to both cross-sectional, and longitudinal, large scale surveys looking for change. They are simple to administer and may provide the researcher with quantitative data if this is desired. It has been claimed that a self-administered questionnaire is more reliable than a interview as the respondent has no reason to lie or exaggerate due to the anonymity involved and may therefore be more open (Cohen & Manion, 1994).

There are numerous problems associated with their use, however, particularly relating to interpretation, for example individuals may not recognise belief statements as their own if they are framed in unfamiliar language. Of course this also can lead to respondents being shoe-horned into the responses of the question-setter, to the detriment of open, honest answers. Another issue is that, if it is accepted that some beliefs may be held unconsciously, then the extent to which an individual can articulate these beliefs is debatable. Questionnaires can also often be somewhat hurriedly completed, and, if open questions are used, people can sometimes be reluctant to write extensive answers. Another major issue for questionnaires relates to the low rates of return which often plague the use of the tool (Cohen & Manion, 1994).

Despite these drawbacks, as mentioned above, questionnaires, sometimes in the form of attitudinal scales, have been used by a number of researchers in the area of course impact: as the sole research tool, for example, Dunne (1993), Hoy and Woolfolk (1990), Joram and Gabriele (1998), Kalaian and Freeman (1994), Lonka et al. (1996), Nettle (1998), Peacock (1999), Skipper and Quantz (1987), Zeichner and Grant (1981); and as one of a group of tools by for example, Aitken and Mildon (1991), Bramald et al.

(1995), Foss and Kleinsasser (1996), Gupta and Saravanan (1995), Kyriacou and Cheng (1993), McDiarmid (1993), Rust (1994), Tabachnick and Zeichner (1986), Tatto (1998), and Wilcox et al. (1992).

### **5.2.5.2 Rationale for choosing a questionnaire for this study**

It was not intended that a questionnaire would be the main tool used in this study, however, as one of multiple tools used it had several advantages. It would be fast to administer and could be handed out and collected in more quickly than it would take to interview the entire group. As such it could provide useful back-up data with which to view the interview data. The immediacy and simplicity of administering the questionnaire was its most salient benefit.

Two questionnaires were used, the first was administered during the early stages of the course in order to obtain background data about training in addition to information about their beliefs about teaching and learning. The second questionnaire was administered a year after completion of the course in order to enquire about trainees' reflections on the course, in addition to gathering data concerning their (then) current work situations.

### **5.2.5.3 In the field**

As with the interviews, both of the questionnaires were administered to all trainees on the course but similarly, only the questionnaires filled out by focus trainees will be reported on in this thesis.

#### **5.2.5.3.1 The course questionnaire (Appendix B)**

The design of the questions was problematic as they needed to elicit information on trainees' beliefs about teaching and learning whilst not requiring a group of busy people beginning an intensive course to spend hours completing them. A compromise was reached, and trainees were asked about their backgrounds and then asked to complete some sentences, for example 'A good teacher should never ...'. The remaining two sections asked trainees to choose how they would describe their relationship with learners from a list, and then finally to list the characteristics of a good teacher and a

good learner. These questions were adapted from research carried out by Meighan and Meighan (1990 reported in Williams and Burden, 1997) and by Williams and Burden (1997). Throughout, the need to strike a balance between what I wanted to learn and what I felt the trainees could do relatively quickly was paramount.

Despite having attended an earlier course in order to pilot the study, I was surprised by how overwhelmed the trainees were by paper and information on their first day at the centre. In addition to the paper for the regular classes of the day they had to deal with a questionnaire from UCLES, numerous timetables and schedules and lists of requirements for the course. I made a decision to hand out the questionnaire on the second day rather than the first because I was concerned that it would get buried with the other paperwork they received.

This strategy worked reasonably well as most trainees returned the questionnaire at the end of the first week. There were two exceptions, Theo who did not return his at all, and Penny who returned the questionnaire to me when I interviewed her for the second time at the end of the course. In both cases I felt that this was a result of their being overwhelmed and disorganised rather than any ill-feeling towards me or my methods.

When the questionnaires were returned by trainees, I noted down the trainee's name and the date on the reverse of the questionnaire. That evening, questionnaires were filed and logged.

#### **5.2.5.3.2 The post-course questionnaire (Appendix C)**

This was devised in order to cover several areas: firstly, to discover the post-course work experience that trainees had. The questionnaire therefore asked trainees about where they had obtained work and what that work involved. Secondly, the questionnaire asked about the kind of learners they had and the differences between these learners and learning situation and those on the CELTA. Trainees were also asked if they had adapted or abandoned any of the techniques they had learnt on the CELTA course. Finally trainees were asked for their reflections on the course, framed by questions which asked what was useful to them, or less useful and what they would suggest to improve the CELTA course.

Three trainees, Helen, Angela and Penny returned the questionnaire.

## 5.2.6 Documents

### 5.2.6.1 Documentary data as a research tool

The analysis of documents and texts is an important part of research, often seen as presenting more concrete ‘factual’ evidence than data collected in an oral tradition such as through interview or observation (Hodder, 1998; Mason, 1996; Yin, 1994). This section will look at the division of documents for research purposes and the main problems incurred in using them as a source of data.

Many writers on research methodology seem to regard the collection of documentary data as essentially unproblematic and few devote more than a page or so to a discussion of issues and methods. The documents or texts under discussion are usually viewed as those which are produced separately from the research process, documents such as letters, agendas, minutes of meetings and newspaper clippings to name but a few (Silverman, 2000; Yin, 1994). Silverman uses the overarching term ‘texts’ as a ‘heuristic device to identify data consisting of words and images which have become recorded without the intervention of a researcher’ (Silverman, 2000: 40). Mason, however, writes of a second category of documents, those which are ‘generated for or through the research process’ such as research journals, fieldnotes, transcriptions and questionnaires (Mason, 1996: 71). Another distinction commonly made in this area is between documents and records, with records being texts which serve a formal purpose, for example assignments and contracts etc and documents being those texts which are written more for personal reasons such as diaries and field notes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In order to maintain clarity on the issue of definitions, I shall use the term ‘documents’ in Silverman’s text sense.

Documents are usually collected for use as supplementary artefacts, to augment data collected in other ways such as interviews and observation (Mason, 1996; Yin, 1994). Atkinson and Coffey however, dismiss this approach as ‘inappropriate and unhelpful’ and advise researchers instead to treat documents as ‘data in their own right’ (Atkinson & Coffey, 1997: 47). They describe how documents have their own rendering of social reality which is informed by a set of conventions affecting their framing and use (*op cit*).

There are several dangers associated with the use of documentary data in research studies, particularly case studies: an over-reliance on them; an uncritical trust in their

accuracy and honesty; potential bias in the selection if the collection is incomplete, and problems with access (Mason, 1996; Yin, 1994). Both Mason and Yin point out that documents have been written for a specific purpose and audience and that this may be very different to those of the case study. As emphasised by one writer:

As the text is reread in different contexts it is given new meanings, often contradictory and always socially embedded. Thus there is no 'original' or 'true' meaning of a text outside specific historical contexts [...] Text and context are in a continual state of tension, each defining and redefining the other, saying and doing things differently through time. (Hodder, 1998: 111-2)

They go on to advise researchers using such documentary evidence of the need to be aware of these factors and to seek to identify them in order to reduce the likelihood of being misled and in order to maintain criticality in the acceptance and interpretation of documentary evidence (Mason, 1996; Yin, 1994).

The collection of documentary data can serve to enhance the dependability or reliability of the data as well as increasing the credibility or internal validity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Sturman, 1997). Both are served by the collection of information on decisions made, thoughts and plans. Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Sturman (1997) suggest the maintaining of a field notebook in addition to a journal in which at least three kinds of data are recorded: a daily schedule; a personal diary, recording reflections on the researcher's own values and insights; and a methodological log, detailing decisions and rationales made during the course of the study.

Documentary textual evidence has been collected by researchers seeking to build up a rich picture of the research context, for example Graber (1996) collected course syllabuses amongst other documents in order to look for explicit programme expectations. Grossman (1991), looking at the effectiveness of an intervention-type teacher education course, collected syllabuses, handouts and readings; and Foss and Kleinsasser (1996) collected trainees' lesson plans amongst other sources of data to examine trainees' changing views of Maths over the course of their practicum experience. A number of researchers have used trainees' written work, both essays and reflective journals, as additional sources of information about their beliefs – amongst other constructs – for example Anderson and Bird (1995); Barduhn (1998); Civil (1993); Kettle and Sellars (1996); Ross and Smith (1992); Rovegno (1992); Wilcox, Schram, Lappan and Lanier (1991).



### **5.2.6.2 Rationale for choosing documentary analysis for this study**

For this study, the collection of documentary evidence was a major part of the methodological triangulation of data sources, which it was hoped would serve to augment the other data. The documents collected were also intended to fill out the thick description of the context and situation of the research. Dividing the documentary data into the two kinds mentioned by Mason (1996), it can be seen that there was considerable evidence:

1. Data sources which were produced independent of the research process:

Lesson plans, assignments and self-feedback sheets written by trainees

TP points and TP feedback written by tutors

Progress record jointly constructed by tutor and trainees

Materials handed out to trainees in the input sessions

Publicity materials relating to the school and its CELTA course

Various UCLES documents, for example syllabuses and reports

2. Data sources which were produced as a result of the research process:

fieldnotes written as part of the observation process [Researcher]

journals – one written in the field and one written in the evening [Researcher]

questionnaire – completed by trainees in the first week

As was discussed earlier, the required written work (item 1, above) was produced to satisfy a particular purpose, that of fulfilling the criteria for assessment of the CELTA course. Therefore there exists the possibility that trainees wrote what they thought CELTA trainers wanted them to, rather than what they might have believed. This data has therefore been treated with an additional degree of caution.

### **5.2.6.3 In the field**

At the end of the course the trainees' files were photocopied and some of the aforementioned documentary evidence was gathered in this way. Permission had been obtained for this in advance from both the school and the trainees themselves. The files were photocopied at the end of the course due to the fact that on the penultimate day the course was inspected by the external examiner who used the files as a major factor in

making a decision on the schools recommendations for trainees' grades. I felt it was too big a risk to take away and photocopy sections of the portfolio in advance of the assessor's visit as any omissions or mis-filing on my part could have such major consequences for the trainees.

The written TP feedback was obtained from the teacher trainers at the end of each of the TP sessions. Materials and handouts from the input sessions on the course were collected in the sessions themselves as I attended all of them. Publicity material for the course was collected from the school administrator. All of this data was logged in the evenings and filed.

Trainees were required to write and submit six assignments during the course (see Table 6.5), and these were photocopied as part of the trainees' portfolios.

Two field journals were maintained by myself, one was used for elements such as decisions and plans made in the field and the second was used for recording thoughts and in order to maintain a log of tapes and documents collected.

### 5.2.7 The pilot study

The pilot study which was conducted in September 1999, 2 months prior to the actual study which was carried out in the same centre. The pilot proved useful for a number of reasons, which are discussed below.

1. Gaining access, getting to know some of the key players at the school, finding somewhere to stay: A language school in the South of England agreed to allow me access to their course in order to carry out a pilot for one week. The pilot study allowed me to meet trainers and the Directors of Studies and explain in person what my work involved. It also allowed them to see that my research would not intrude on their delivery of the course. Towards the end of the pilot therefore I approached the Director of Studies for permission to return for the full study; he agreed. As the fieldwork was to be carried out far from home, the pilot also allowed me to arrange accommodation for the month.
2. Seeing how the course was set out: Although there is a degree of similarity in course organisation between centres, there are, of course, some differences in

the day-to-day running of the programme. The pilot allowed me to get a picture of how the course was laid out and what sessions there were, which had practical implications for buying sufficient cassettes for recording amongst other things.

3. The testing and refining of field procedures – including the development of recording sheets, filing, buying a stopwatch for recording. There were a number of practical considerations which were aided by carrying out the pilot in the same centre as the full study. For example, I learnt that when tape recording the sessions, it helped to have a stopwatch so that I could be prepared when the tape was due to run out, and have the next tape ready. It also helped with practical considerations such as how many tapes were needed and when it was best to change tapes in order to maximise recording time and minimise potential disruption. The need for organising the handouts and notes made in the field was made clear in the pilot, as I realised that the intensity of the course could lead to the notes and tapes becoming mixed up unless I had a system for filing and documenting what I was collecting. This was developed on the pilot, where I used several different sheets for various purposes such as recoding observations and writing up interview notes – these were all subject to revisions following the pilot. A particularly useful example is the sheet I developed before going into the field for recording observation notes – it was found to be far too unwieldy for recording notes at speed – what was needed was not a series of labelled boxes which required me to think through entries but rather a simpler system which facilitated note-making at speed.
4. The testing and development of tools – creation of questionnaire; refinement of other tools. Of course, the main reason for carrying out a pilot is to test the tools and this was a major part of the pilot. As part of this, trainees were interviewed and observation of the various sessions was carried out. Amendments were made to the interview schedule. The observation was different in nature from the final completed study, as the pilot was intended to follow a very open unstructured form of observation, simply observing what went on. This was useful experience, and allowed the observation on the actual study to be more focused.

Of course in much research one of the key tools is the researchers themselves, and in this case I felt I gained considerably from the very real experience of being in the field. It was very different to the theorising that I had engaged in during the period leading up to the research, and, despite having done a CELTA myself a number of years earlier, my own development from that of a participant to that of a researcher and experienced teacher meant that the whole experience was a useful learning opportunity.

## 5.2.8 Summary

This chapter has shown how the literature on learning theories and on other studies of learning to teach has influenced the methodology. In general this influence has been to push the methodology in the direction of multiple methods in order to collect data in as rich and as multi-dimensional a way as possible. Thus thick description and triangulation have been major elements of the research approach adopted.

The chapter has outlined the use of interviews, questionnaires and observation, in addition to the collection of documents in this study. I have explained how, when combined these tools will provide data which sheds light on trainees' individual conceptions and beliefs, both in terms of their verbal as well as their physical behaviour. I have also outlined how the use of these tools will facilitate the study of the processes of learning to teach such as the trainees' participation in the programme and their adoption of tools. This data will thus allow me to move between the individual and the community level learning which is taking place.

The next section, Section 2, begins with an outline of the approach taken to data analysis and an explanation of how the findings are reported. The findings are then presented, organised first by course, and then by individual trainee.

# **SECTION II: CONTEXT AND FINDINGS**

## Introduction to Section 2

As outlined in the previous chapter on methodology, multiple sources of data were used in order to obtain a rich and detailed description of the trainees' beliefs, experiences and reflections on the course, in addition to the course and the school context itself. This detailed account was necessary in order to work towards answering the research questions. In the chapters which follow, the individuals who were the focus of my research are presented along with the data which illuminates their experiences of the four week CELTA course. First a description of the course itself is provided, giving contextual and community level detail of all aspects (Chapter 6). This is followed by the six case studies of trainees. The cases are presented in the order in which individuals were interviewed: Penny (Chapter 7), Theo (Chapter 8), Helen (Chapter 9), David (Chapter 10), Angela (Chapter 11) and Jeff (Chapter 12). In each case the data is presented historically, beginning with the interview carried out at the start of the course; this is then followed by the data which sheds light on the process itself, such as the observation and recording of sessions – particularly the TP and TP-related sessions; and then the final interview data at the end of the course; and, where relevant, the post-course questionnaire which was completed at a later date following the end of the course.

Following the individual chapters on the cases (Chapter 13) is a discussion of the data across the individuals.

## Data Analysis

Prior to reading the summary of findings on each individual, it is necessary to outline the procedures which were followed in data analysis. The data gathered over the course of the study consisted of:

Source	Form of raw data
Interviews with trainees – beginning and end	Audio recordings
TP and TP feedback sessions	Audio recordings, TT written feedback, trainees' lesson plans and TP points, observation notes
Input sessions	Audio recordings, observation notes
Assignments	Written
Progress records	Written
Questionnaires	Written
Field journal	Written

**Table 5.5: Data collected in the study**

Data analysis began with the preparation of interview data. Both beginning and end-course interviews for all trainees were transcribed before the analysis itself began. Once all of the interviews were transcribed, each case was dealt with separately and in turn. Following this I immersed myself in the data by reading it through, often whilst listening to the audio recordings of the interviews concurrently. This allowed time for 'analysis and contemplation of the data' (Janesick, 1998).

Taking each interview in turn, beginning then end-course, I developed a broad set of categories which allowed a form of data reduction to be carried out (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Huberman & Miles, 1998). These broad categories were overarching and reflected the research questions and interview protocol. As such, it was intended that they would be useful later for moving between cases. The categories developed were 'beliefs about teachers and teaching', 'beliefs about language and language learning' and 'beliefs about learning to teach'. The end-course interview had the additional category of 'self-reported changes in belief'.

Following this, I developed a group of more detailed categories according to the trainees' quite specific beliefs and concerns. Using the trainees' terms therefore was an important part of this process. In order to develop these categories I attempted to work in a dialectical process between theory and data analysis (Mason, 1996; Rubin & Rubin, 1995). This involved moving between the theory and research questions and the data. In this way I sought to acknowledge the influence of my research questions and my own focus, whilst attempting to work in a grounded way which would allow me to generate ideas from the data.

A further important element of my analysis which requires mention here is the question of literal and interpretive readings of the data (Mason, 1996). The interviews often contained references to specific incidents or person-specific experiences. The generation of categories which was described above involved largely inferring from these specific incidents what the trainees' beliefs were. An example (reported in Chapter 9) is Helen's description of her experience of learning Dari in Afghanistan. Her discussion concerned feelings that her experience of formal language learning which centred on rote learning was less effective than when she took language learning matters into her own hands and began practising her language whilst in the market amongst other places, relying on local people to correct her pronunciation. This quite specific and literal reading was tentatively generalised to indicate beliefs at more general levels about the importance of real world usage, and of the role of communication in language learning, together with a belief that rote learning is not useful for learning languages. Thus an interpretive idea has developed from a literal one. A further example (reported in Chapter 7) involved Penny's description of her teacher's critical feedback on a story she wrote in primary school, how this upset her and how she felt that teachers should be more careful when giving feedback and be discrete and sensitive. Her already quite generalised conclusions were extended beyond her discussion of children to a more interpretive reading which related this to a belief in sensitive, discrete feedback for all learners. Rubin and Rubin refer to these narrative events as 'stories' and advise researchers that when interviewees use these stories in response to a question, they should 'pay attention because stories often communicate significant themes' (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). They add that as stories are usually indirect, researchers will need to work out why the story was told and what its key messages were (*op cit*).

At times further evidence which related to my tentative interpretive readings of trainees' beliefs was found in the interviews themselves. More commonly I considered these as tentative and looked for evidence beyond the interviews themselves to other data.

I decided having observed the input sessions that these would not play a major part in my data analysis. Due to the difficulty of not being able to move around the classroom during group or pairwork I felt that the discussions which took place were of less value to me than the TP elements of the course. I chose to focus on TP feedback because it was in these sessions that the trainees were relatively free to discuss things



that concerned them or raise issues in a less controlled way. The TP feedback sessions, as opposed to the TP sessions themselves, also permitted me as the observer to gather data which was based less on my interpretations of what trainees were doing and why, and more on the trainees' views themselves. The voiced observations of their peers and the teacher trainer also meant that observations were less dependent on my judgement.

The TP feedback sessions were prepared by transcription. Because of the multiple participants, this was a somewhat lengthy process but I felt that it would greatly aid analysis of this rich data. Following this I immersed myself in the TP feedback, reading through the transcripts repeatedly. In terms of analysis, the sessions were examined at two levels – at the individual level I looked for support or disconfirming evidence which related to the beliefs which had been brought out of the interview data. I also looked for other beliefs which had not been expressed or suggested in the interview data. The second way in which the transcripts were analysed was at the social interactional level. This involved reading and re-reading the data and coding relevant aspects. As with the interview data, I worked in a dialectical process: as I found aspects of interest I consulted theory, which suggested further points that I then looked for. In this way, I coded the data for interactional elements such as 'learning from peers' and 'learning terminology', the latter point of which involved several sub-categories – for example 'naming' by the teacher trainer, 'negotiating the meaning', and 'awkwardness with terminology'.

The guided preparation for TP sessions were not transcribed. Due to time limits and the largely procedural approach taken in these classes, this data was listened to and notes made on issues which supported or disconfirmed data from the interviews. As with the TP, any data which was not covered in the interview was noted separately.

The data which was in written form (the questionnaire, assignments, and progress records) was first typed out in order to standardise the access. Errors where they occurred were left in the work. These data forms were then read for each individual in turn. They were coded in relation to supporting or disconfirming evidence from the interview data. Notes were also made of any new data which was not dealt with in the interviews.

The written data from the field journal (completed by myself in the field) was partially typed out, focusing on comments and secondarily on procedural decisions, for example relating to timing of interviews etc. The data from this source was then

separated into that relating to the individuals involved. Comments were then grouped according to topic.

# Chapter 6: The CELTA Course Under Investigation

This chapter of the thesis provides some of the thick description which is required to understand the context of the study. The various elements of the course, for example the teaching practice, and input, are described both in general and with specific examples. Also in this section is a brief introduction to the participants in this study, the trainees, the teacher trainers, and the learners of English.

## 6.1 The School

The school is a private language school in the South of England. It has two teacher trainers, Robert and Jim (the former of whom is a director of the school) who have been successfully running the CELTA programme, eight courses per year, for eight years. They employ two permanent members of staff, with three others on shorter contracts and hourly paid teachers who are brought in as required.

The cost of the CELTA course at the school is £795, reduced to £620 by EU funding if trainees are self-financing, and then reduced still further to £447.40 by a government re-training grant for trainees who are over 30. These reductions for trainees, which are of course available to all CELTA centres if they wish to apply on the students' behalf, are actively promoted and encouraged by the school, making the course at this centre one of the cheapest in the country.

## 6.2 The Course

The course consists of several components, with the number of hours for some components being specified by UCLES. The components are described below and are listed in the order in which they were arranged in the timetable. Briefly, the course, which lasted four weeks for five days a week (not including preparation and assignments) consisted on a daily basis of:

- guided preparation for teaching practice;

- a mid-morning break;
- an input session;
- lunch;
- a second input session;
- a mid-afternoon break;
- teaching practice;
- teaching practice feedback.

The course timetable is to be found in Appendix D. Where the group was together, that is, for the input sessions only, then the tutor has been indicated: Robert (R), Jim (J). For the remainder (and majority) of the sessions the group of twelve were split into two groups of six, and they remained in these groups for the duration of the course.

In addition to the daily programme above, trainees also had 8 hours of observation of experienced teachers. These took place twice a week, on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

### 6.2.1 Observation of experienced teachers

According to CELTA regulations, trainees are required to observe 8 hours of teaching by experienced practitioners over the 4-week course. This observation was organised on a twice-weekly basis and was the one section of the course which I did not observe – this was at the request of the teacher trainers. Trainees had the chance to observe classes by three different teachers, all of whom were experienced practitioners. Trainees were given an observation sheet for the sessions. The sheet, which can be seen in Appendix E, indicates that the trainees were asked to look out for a number of points in these sessions, although it was pointed out that some may be more applicable to one style of lesson than to another. These points included: the teacher's use of gestures, instruction-giving and correction techniques, use of the whiteboard and of materials or course books, and learner interaction and independence.

On the whole, trainees reacted positively to these observation episodes, being impressed by the different styles of teaching they saw and the fact that they saw the teachers using many of the techniques that they were learning in the input sessions. The following are a couple of examples of statements by trainees in discussions about the

observation. The first two are overheard conversations in the coffee room and the third is from an interview:

Students observed experienced teachers. Shirley & Natalie [were] very impressed, 'teacher had great stage presence – probably was on the stage'. Richard [said] 'the teacher interacted constantly with the students', Natalie [said] 'he never said more than a few things at any one time', Shirley [said] 'had a great sense of humour'. [FJ 1-4-2, overheard conversation in coffee room, notes, but using trainees' words]

Penny & David discussed how all teachers good but different. Penny – 'I suppose you develop different teaching styles' [FJ 2-4-1]

it was good to look at experienced teachers because they were obviously flowing in their lessons and they they all did the erm they all followed the guidelines of CELTA they were all you know eliciting things they didn't really give much away it was all coming from the students and and erm they were all different styles just like the trainees all different styles [Penny, Interview 2]

Negative reactions to the observation centred on the tiring nature of observation and the trainees' lack of engagement in the classes, although it must be said that these negative comments were far outweighed by positive comments about teachers' styles and their effectiveness. The two examples below are again taken from an interview and a reported conversation, respectively:

I mean some of the observations are a bit hard but erm it's very it gets very sort of you're very passive aren't you you're not involved in anything you're just observing you're not allowed to feedback in right then you have to wait until the end all that sort of thing [Helen, Mid-course interview]

Pre-day: Shirley came in saying that she was in a panic because after complaining that there was nothing to do in the observations & they were boring, had been planning on organising & planning her lesson in the one this morning. Of course they were very involved & she didn't get a break! She laughed & said how typical that was. [FJ 4-4-1]

It should be noted that trainees did not discuss the observations that they had seen in any organised way. In terms of the course, the only 'official' use made of the observations was in the Reflection assignment completed in the final week of the course. Otherwise trainees' reactions to and feelings about the observations were only discussed informally in conversation with other trainees.

## 6.2.2 Guided preparation for teaching practice

As mentioned earlier, the trainees were divided into two groups of six for the TP, that is, the preparation, TP itself, and the feedback. Group one consisted of: Theo, Angela,

Penny, David, Helen, and Jeff; Group Two of: Samantha, Sarinder, Natalie, Richard, Shirley, and James. The way this was arranged is indicated below for Group 1 only (the focus group). The organisation for Group 2 is identical, with different names in place.

The teaching practice slot is two hours long and this is divided into either 30-minute or 60-minute classes. The classes that trainees taught were, for Weeks 1 and 2 at Elementary level and for Weeks 3 and 4, Upper Intermediate level (Group 2 had the reverse). The order of teaching and the duration of lessons (30 minutes or 60 minutes) are shown in the table below:

Week 1	Monday	Meet Students			
	Tuesday	Theo	Angela	Penny	David
	Wednesday	Helen	Jeff	Theo	Angela
	Thursday	Penny	David	Helen	Jeff
	Friday	Theo	Angela	Penny	David
Week 2	Monday	Helen	Jeff	Theo	Angela
	Tuesday	Penny	David	Helen	Jeff
	Wednesday	Theo		Angela	
	Thursday	Penny		David	
	Friday	Helen		Jeff	
Week 3	Monday	Theo	Angela	Penny	David
	Tuesday	Helen	Jeff	Angela	
	Wednesday	Penny		Helen	
	Thursday	Theo		David	
	Friday	Jeff		Theo	Angela
Week 4	Monday	Penny		David	
	Tuesday	Helen		Jeff	
	Wednesday	Theo		Angela	
	Thursday	Penny	David	Helen	Jeff
	Friday	No Teaching			

**Table 6.1: Timetable for teaching practice (Group 1)**

The guided preparation for TP sessions were relatively relaxed affairs. They also changed very quickly as the trainees became more independent, and the teacher trainers' support decreased. The sessions began with the handing out of the TP points for the following session to each trainee. They received their own and the TP points for their classmates. The trainees would always have their notes for the TP of the day and the ones for the following day. The session would begin with that day's teaching and then move on to discuss the points for the following day.

The TP points consisted of a list of exercises or things that they needed to do in the class. They sometimes suggested techniques to use but otherwise they were not lesson plans. The TP points were given to trainees for the first three weeks, with the trainees having to select their own material, exercises and aims for the final week. Some examples of TP points can be seen in Appendix F.

The guided preparation sessions involved the trainees asking questions about how to do things and the tutor offering advice and pointing out pitfalls or dangers they needed to be aware of. The tutor often took the opportunity to clarify and give some input on the grammatical unit being taught, as the trainees usually had to learn this before being able to teach it. In addition to the opportunity the session provided for trainees to ask about the grammar or pronunciation they were going to teach, they were also able to check out their materials or questions they intended to use, ask about things they found confusing – either exercises or points in the TP points – and ask for suggestions for things such as a good warmer to go with a class. The tutors used the time to teach trainees about grammar and pronunciation, and to teach them techniques such as how to organise a jigsaw listening, or how to drill stress.

In order to explain what occurred more comprehensively we can take a trainee in the first two sessions of the course as an example. On Day 1 (Monday), trainees were given the points for the teaching on the following day. The TP points for Penny's class can be seen in Appendix F.

After listening to the other trainees talking about their class, attention turned to Penny's TP points. Penny's first question was to ask if students had difficulty with the pronunciation of 'often'. This was followed by a discussion of the differences in its pronunciation. The tutor, Jim in this case, went through the TP points advising Penny, to get an example from the students for the matching exercise before letting them loose. He showed Penny the exercises in the practice book that supplemented the course book. The conversation then moved onto other students' classes for Wednesday.

The following day's session – Tuesday – began with an opportunity for each trainee teaching that day to ask questions about their TP. This time Penny's questions were more specific: 'Do I assume they know the terminology?' 'Is drilling just for pronunciation?' 'Do I write the questions on the board?' The tutor also initiated a discussion of the rules of adverbial positions in sentences, pointing out that in questions the rule is broken. He advised Penny to anticipate this as a problem but not to raise it.

In the same guided preparation session, Theo received his TP points (for Tuesday), however, in Theo's case he also received his points for Wednesday's class too (see Appendix F for both sheets). On Monday, the tutor first went through Tuesday's class. Appendix G contains an extract (1) from the Guided Preparation session where the teacher trainer dealt with Theo's first class. It can be seen that the interaction is entirely dominated by the teacher trainer who moves through the lesson pointing out important points and explaining both the point on the sheet and some of the techniques Theo should use. Theo's role is simply to acknowledge that he has understood (lines 54 and 81).

A little later in the same session, the attention turned to Theo's second class on Wednesday. To explain Theo's task, the tutor pointed to the phonemic chart on the wall and exemplified the sounds that Theo had to deal with. He explained the use of slashes to indicate the phonemic alphabet. The tutor then wrote up the phonemic endings, read out some verbs and got the trainees to shout 1, 2 or 3 according to the end sound. He emphasised the TP point that Theo should be prepared to play the tape a second time if students felt that they needed it. Theo asked about word stress. He worried that he would 'make a mess' of the lesson, to which the tutor replied that that would be a part of learning. In Wednesday's Guided Preparation, Theo stated that he had no questions about that day's class and the session moved on to the other trainees.

Although at first the Guided Preparation for TP tended to follow the pattern of the tutor explaining with the trainees writing notes as seen in extract 1 (Appendix G), once they had learnt some of the basic techniques that they needed, the sessions became much more interactive and less like the lengthy trainer-dominated extract of Appendix G. Trainees arrived with clear questions and things they wanted to talk or ask about. Trainees also started to help each other with suggestions for the TP, such as in the example below taken from my observation notes of a session in Week 4, which shows the other trainees taking part in making suggestions for activities for Jeff's lesson:

Jeff: revision (Angela – vocab revision?) – wants it to be a fun lesson. Theo: role play of wedding, TT likes the idea. Helen suggests quiz. Angela – game, or auction. Blockbusters – vocab. Get list of vocab covered during the week. Jeff wants to involve the trainees. [Observation notes, Guided Preparation for TP, Week 4, Tuesday]

Appendix G contains a second example of one of the later and hence more interactive sessions (Extract 2). The nature of the interaction could not be more



different from the one recorded three weeks earlier. This time, the more interactive and emergent qualities of the planning which occurred in the later stages of the course can be clearly seen. The teacher trainer serves both as resource and a more experienced colleague and, rather than describing and explaining the lesson to Theo, largely probes and questions Theo's plan, helping him to clarify and refine it (for example lines 14 and 32). Theo asks about correction and how to deal with it in his lesson. The answer can be seen to emerge from the collaboration, particularly between Theo and the tutor. Unlike the first extract, the willingness and ability of trainees to help out their peers can also be seen (for example lines 36-8 and 78-80), and the opportunities for them to learn from this joint planning are clear. The second extract also includes the encouragement of the trainees to learn to use the technologies of teaching, in this case the overhead projector. Unlike the first extract where the tutor works to eliminate the use of the tape recorder in order to make the lesson more straightforward, in the second extract Theo is keen to try out the tool, and it is clear that his experience will be a novel one as he is unsure of how to use it (lines 69, 71 and 92).

From the start the trainers encouraged trainees to think about and adapt the materials they were using. On Day 1 of the course, when the teacher trainer Jim was showing them the course book they would be using, the trainees were told:

it has ideas and suggestions but er treat them with er a pinch of salt because it's just one person's ideas and those ideas may not fit us or the students in the group so don't think oh it's in the teachers book it must be a good idea, think is it a good idea? Don't just take these ideas as er as er final ...so treat the book with some suspicion when it comes to er suggestions ok? [TT, Guided Preparation for TP – cassette recording, Week 1, Monday]

### 6.2.3 Input sessions

There were two input sessions on most days, one before lunch and one after. In terms of the breakdown of hours of input on the course, the classes were divided up by the trainers according to content area:

- Language Awareness: (Seven and a quarter hours) on tense / time, structure and function; present simple and continuous; future forms; present perfect; modals; conditionals; articles.
- Language Learning: (Eight hours) on teacher and learner roles, learners' styles and motivation; ARC; clarification and focus on form and meaning in a

picture context; checking concepts; restricted use; clarification and focus on form and meaning in a text; restricted use and authentic use – role plays and information gaps.

- Skills Lessons: (four hours) on reading, listening, speaking and writing.
- Phonology: (Four and a quarter hours) on word stress; sentence stress; sounds: intonation.
- Professional Development: (Two and a half hours).
- Other content areas, including: error analysis and correction, course books – syllabus and approach, lesson and course planning, evaluation and testing, task-based learning and lexis.

As would be expected in a course in which trainees need to survive in the classroom from day 2, most of the Language Learning classes came early in the course, whilst with the exception of the Introduction to Tenses and Structure and Function, the Language Awareness classes all fell in Week 2 onwards. Phonology also did not start until the middle of Week 2, and the two Professional Development classes were both in the final few days of the course. The exact timing of the course can be seen in Appendix D.

The input sessions were the only sessions where all of the twelve trainees were together in one group. The teaching of the input sessions was divided between the tutors, Robert and Jim.

As can be seen from the summary of classes above and the order in which they were placed, the course is very practical in nature. As the input sessions cover such a range of content, this section will describe a typical class in terms of its organisation and activities, followed by two examples to illustrate this element of the CELTA course.

In general, most input sessions began with a warmer and these were very popular with the trainees. The classes were very trainee-focused with trainees being required to play an active role in much of the classroom activity, which usually utilised pair or small groupwork. The teacher trainers provided demonstrations of various activities such as drilling. They also used techniques that the trainees were expected to learn and use in the lessons, for example, brainstorming and eliciting responses from trainees. There were many practical exercises, for example, where trainees had to analyse activities to ascertain their structure or write concept questions for words or sentences. The latter kind of activity often involved trying them out on other members of the

group, although not usually in full plenary. Occasionally trainees watched a video demonstration, for example, on techniques for dealing with word stress in a vocabulary lesson. In these cases trainees were kept active and involved by being asked to observe various elements of the lesson, again in small groups. Revision was built into the course and many sessions contained an activity to review previously taught material.

Trainees were given some information of a more theoretical nature, such as a brief introduction to L1 language learning which focused on over-generalisation of grammar rules (Error Analysis and Correction, Week 2, Tuesday), and a class on task-based learning which outlined the pros and cons of using a PPP lesson before presenting TBL as the modern approach (Task-Based Learning, Week 3, Monday). This kind of theory however was kept to a minimum.

Turning now to two examples of input sessions, the first, example 1 is a language learning session which took place on Wednesday of Week 1; the second is a language awareness session from Thursday of Week 3. Both are representative in organisation and activity types used, as outlined in the previous section.

Example 1: Language Learning III: Clarification and Focus on Form / Meaning in a Picture Context (Week 1, Wednesday, 14.30-15.30; Robert)

- TT explains how the session is organised: warmer, revision, demo, trainees do exercise
- Warmer: trainees in threes brainstorm British prime ministers since WW2
- Feedback to group and discussion of cultural situatedness of activity, trainees offer alternative topics
- Revision: explanation of rationale for revision in general. Trainees in threes have one minute to prepare one of the following revision topics: difference between structure and function; stages of a vocabulary lesson; and the ARC model of analysing tasks. TT monitors and helps. Trainees explain to group.
- TT demonstration of presentation of structure through a picture story: elicits information from trainees about a man in a picture using questions eg name, job; elicits target structure 'I used to be ...'; individual drilling of structure; choral drilling of target structure; TT (using re-elicitation) tabulates target structure and clarifies meaning.

- Trainees in threes discuss: how did TT get from picture to structure and why did he use a picture; TT monitors and helps;
- Feedback to the group, TT explains and elicits actions and thinking behind them, consider alternatives to presentation with picture, alternatives to drawing eg finding and using pictures
- Trainees in pairs given sentence, for example: ‘I was having a shower when the phone rang’, told to draw a picture to elicit the structure, and write questions they would use to guide the elicitation
- Pairs try to elicit target structure from other pairs, using picture and questions
- Feedback to the group, consider whether elicited sentences are acceptable for example: ‘I was in the shower when the phone rang’ – consider grammar
- Trainees in pairs discuss how elicitation went, was the time reference clear enough?, how could they improve it?
- Feedback to the group, discussion of difficulties and changes they would make to pictures
- TT hands out summary sheet, takes questions

Example 2: Language Awareness IV: Future Forms (Week 3, Thursday, 14.30-15.30; Jim)

- Warmer: trainees in pairs have to both hold one pen and draw their ideal house in silence
- Discussion: what could they do next with drawing? For example they could label the rooms
- Revision: TT elicits different meanings of present simple and continuous, gives out sheet with sentences – tick correct time reference for each, write function – they are stuck around the walls on cards; trainees complete and wander around
- Feedback – checks answers
- TT asks trainees individually to list future forms eg ‘going to’, ‘will’ etc
- Feedback: trainees list forms, TT writes up on whiteboard, elicits labels
- TT explanation of variability of future in English

- TT hands out sheet with exercises from various books on future forms. trainees told to underline future in the texts provided and answer the questions; trainees mostly work in pairs
- TT feedback to the whiteboard, matching between forms and function / use. for example ‘will’ for ‘prediction’ and for ‘future as fact’
- Handout of ‘ready-made contexts’ for future presentations

It can be seen from the above points for the two sessions that the input part of the course was very interactive with students participating fully in classes. The trainees could also be seen to be learning from each other as in the following example which involved a discussion between trainees of whether or not students should be allowed to use bilingual dictionaries in the classroom:

- T look it up in the dictionary and see what it says ‘what’s your word then?’ ok  
 A but why would we want to know what their word is we don’t know whether it’s right or not so we can’t correct them?  
 T yeah but you’re reinforcing it so if they look it up in the dictionary right ‘what is it in your language?’ then it just reinforces the whole thing  
 A yeah yeah no I agree that  
 T still use the dictionary yeah so we could do that  
 P it’s a form of concept checking  
 T it is yeah ok  
 P it’s an easy way for them to do it [Input session: 3,2]

The practical nature of the course is also clear from the outlines of typical lessons above. These two points were emphasised earlier in the chapter.

When asked about the input sessions, trainees tended to focus on two quite distinct elements: the overwhelming flood of information that they need to take on board and the interlinked nature of the sessions in which the input informs their practice:

- H: yes it’s erm still very intensive erm a challenge fun erm I find it erm almost too much information to take in erm for such a short space of time  
 J: no I I I think there’s too much information coming up as I’ve already said to Robert and to Jim what I would like to do now would just be to go away for about two weeks and then come back in two weeks and do it again as it is it’s like trying to run a four minute mile in 3 1/2 minutes [Helen and James, Mid-course interview]

I think it’s hard to actually assimilate what the what we’re what we’re being told in sessions and then put that into practice in lessons because erm you know very often you you will have a session on something and erm you will be teaching that afternoon and it’s really too late to re-examine what you’ve done and and sort of rehash it erm

which is a shame because if you had more time you could you could actually sit back and change things [Samantha, Mid-course interview]

I feel like you know erm I'm getting better every single time I teach but all like the lessons that we get taught interlink with that because if we weren't taught those lessons then I wouldn't be able to get better erm because I'm learning things in the lessons like new techniques and that and then using them in the lessons and then like the feedback [Angela, Interview 2]

what we were asking the students to do especially in the participation thing we were also asked to do in our tuition so that's where you could see it does work it is fun [...] and that was exactly the way it was in the teaching practice and and in the experienced teachers' lessons as well it was just the way it was the way we were taught was the way we were going to teach [Penny, Interview 2]

## 6.2.4 Teaching practice

The section on Guided Preparation for TP outlined the organisation of the TP in terms of length of classes and order of teaching. To recap, the trainees began teaching for 30 minutes and continued this for several days before moving onto one hour classes. When they changed from Pre-Intermediate students to Upper Intermediate, they initially returned to a 30-minute teaching practice in order to fulfil the requirement of 6 hours of teaching practice at two distinct levels as specified by UCLES. Another feature of the organisation relates to the order of teaching which allowed people the experience of starting the class, as well as finishing it. Further, the timetable was arranged such that trainees were given the opportunity to teach different kinds of classes, for example, skills lessons, grammar presentation, grammar practice. An example of the teaching practice for one trainee, Helen, is presented below:

TP No.	Week, Day	Student Level	Length of Lesson	Type of Lesson	Teaching Order	Is Lesson Plan Required?
1	1,3	Pre-Int	30 mins	Grammar	4 <sup>th</sup> of 4	No
2	1,4	Pre-Int	30 mins	Reading / Lexis	2 <sup>nd</sup> of 4	No
3	2,1	Pre-Int	30 mins	Grammar	3 <sup>rd</sup> of 4	No
4	2,2	Pre-Int	30 mins	Lstg / Grammar	1 <sup>st</sup> of 4	Yes
5	2,5	Pre-Int	60 mins	Grammar	2 <sup>nd</sup> of 2	Yes
6	3,2	Upper Int	30 mins	Reading	1 <sup>st</sup> of 3	Yes
7	3,3	Upper Int	60 mins	Spkg / Grammar	2 <sup>nd</sup> of 2	Yes
8	4,2	Upper Int	60 mins	Grammar	1 <sup>st</sup> of 2	Yes
9	4,4	Upper Int	30 mins	Revision (Grammar/ Lexis)	4 <sup>th</sup> of 4	Yes

**Table 6.2: Teaching schedule for Helen**

Student numbers for the classes were extremely variable with class sizes for both levels from 3 up to 12 with most classes having around 6-8 students. Nationalities were mixed, with the lower-level group comprised mainly of Eastern European refugees taking advantage of the opportunity for free English lessons. This group in particular were of very mixed ability and the label of Pre-Intermediate covered absolute beginner (a couple of students were not literate in their L1) to Pre-Intermediate level. The higher level group were mostly the school's fee-paying day students who opted to come to extra free classes in the evening. They were Western Europeans and South Americans mostly and the level of the class was more uniform (see section 6.3.5 for further details of the learners of English).

All of the TP was observed by everyone in the group who sat at the back of the classroom, along with the teacher trainer and myself. The trainees who were not teaching that day and those who had already taught were given observation tasks to complete. These basically consisted of looking out chiefly for the points raised in the previous feedback session that were seen as requiring some attention, for example, the use of ungraded language or addressing the learners whilst facing the whiteboard. Trainees who had yet to teach on that day tended to spend the time reading over their lesson plans.

A fear that all trainees had concerning the TP was of being asked a question that they could not answer. Prior to the first TP, Angela asked how they should deal with this asking 'can we look to you to answer it?' The teacher trainer responded that they could ask him, or they could tell students that they will deal with the question after the break.

### 6.2.5 Teaching practice feedback

The TP feedback sessions followed immediately on from the TP. Trainees received feedback in the order in which they had taught. Trainees were invited to speak about their lessons before anyone else gave feedback, and they were encouraged to list the good things about their lesson and the improvements on the previous lesson before outlining where they thought they could improve. This section was then followed by the people who had been asked to observe that individual on specific areas. This tended to open out to trainees critiquing the class as a whole, before the teacher trainer joined in. The teacher trainers then would go through their notes, dealing specifically with

issues or points not dealt with by the trainee or their peers. At the end of the session the teacher trainer would hand trainees the written feedback he had produced. They were required to sign this and then place it in their portfolio.

Appendix H has an extract of one of the TP feedback sessions, for David's lesson on Thursday of Week 1. It was chosen because it illustrated the typical pattern of the interaction outlined above: trainee self-evaluation (positive 2-10, then points to work on 12-24), peer evaluation (lines 47-57, 60-65, 82-6), then tutor evaluation (lines 89-130). As it is a session early in the course, the tutor's role in this extract is more noticeable than in later sessions where the trainees are much more vocal, although the tutor maintained the summing up role throughout the duration of the course. The extract also illustrates another feature of the TP feedback sessions and that is the opportunities the teacher trainer takes to revise previous teaching or introduce something. This can be seen several times here, for example: in lines 25-45 where the tutor picks up David's reference to concept checking and uses it to involve the group in revising this concept in a very situated way; lines 66-81 where he picks up on Jeff's point about David's visuals; correcting pronunciation and stress, line 100-115; and then again in lines 117-124 on randomising the drilling. Clearly this offered opportunities not only for the trainee under scrutiny to be helped, but also for other members of the group. It can be seen that both Angela and Helen who despite having no observation role in this part of the feedback session became involved in the tutor's explanations, for example lines 28, 30, and 33-5. Yet another feature in this extract which is typical of the feedback sessions was the drive to put theory learnt earlier, often that day, into practice. This is something which is recognised both by trainers and trainees alike. For example in lines 23-6 when David indicated that he was aware that he should have checked students' understanding, this is followed by the trainer's encouragement of this idea. The trainer, Jim, did not express this in a negative way as he states that they had only just covered the concept, but he indicates at the same time that from the following day all trainees should try to incorporate it into their vocabulary teaching (lines 38-45). The pattern of picking trainees up for things that had been covered on the course, and teaching or assisting trainees with techniques not yet covered in a non-critical way was typical of the TP feedback sessions. Theo's contribution to the feedback indicates the value of trainees watching each other in a structured way. He comments on improvements since the previous TP (line 47-8) and indicates his own learning through the process when he states that he learnt the value of using visual aids from David (lines 48-9).



An example where one trainee learnt from the feedback to another trainee is clear from the TP feedback session on Day 2. In this session the teacher trainer offers feedback to Angela concerning her tendency to focus on only part of the group when addressing the full class:

often when you were doing a whole class activity you tend to be facing the what you are doing very often is you are standing here [TT demonstrates] and you'll be kind of addressing these people and ignoring those people sometimes [...] so try to keep the whole class in view when you doing the whole class giving instructions or giving feedback ^ and obviously with more confidence it's easier to be aware of what you're doing [TPF 1,2]

A short while later in the same session while giving self-feedback, Penny, unprompted by anyone, offers:

and just concentrate a bit more on the students which is what you were saying because I was turning that way I know I was and it was only after a few minutes that I realised but that was coz you're lost in the room [TPF 1,2]

It is clear that not only has Penny been listening to the feedback to Angela but she has also related it to her own behaviour in the classroom. She has also sought to understand the cause of this behaviour.

A sheet on the trainees' own reflections on their class was another document which was intended to go into their portfolio along with their lesson plans and tutors' feedback. Trainees were asked to review their lesson under the headings: 'Main positive points about my lesson today'; 'Improvements since my last lesson / consolidation of good points'; and 'Points I need to work on'. Trainees were supposed to write this in the period between teaching and the feedback. In reality they tended to note down what the tutor and others said and hence were very brief. An exception to this was Penny who took her sheet home, explaining to me that she needed time to think over her lesson in order to complete the sheet properly. Her sheets were therefore far more reflective than those of the other trainees.

Like most of the course, the trainees' personalities had an impact on their participation in the feedback session. The quieter trainees – Helen and David – tended to give feedback only when it was their responsibility; more talkative individuals, like Angela and Penny, tended to contribute significantly to the feedback session, regardless of whether they were given the task or not.

Almost without exception, the trainees indicated that they felt uncomfortable when giving positive feedback about themselves. This point did not surface in the TP feedback sessions, rather it was mentioned in interviews. A couple of examples are below:

Example 1:

- RR: *so you find a self-evaluation part OK?*  
N: yeah I I hate having to say positive things I because I can either say well I thought it went OK or it didn't and it's not me being falsely modest or being completely down on myself it's just I don't know it's just a feeling you get or and I don't I just don't like blowing my own trumpet and say in a yeah that was fantastic I did that really well in case someone turns round says actually no it wasn't it was appalling [laughs] [...] I think it's quite a forced atmosphere in a way you know 'come on talk to me tell me something good' [Natalie, Mid-Course interview]

Example 2:

- Jm: I've already dropped behind on two of my sort of appreciational papers [laughs] I don't like writing about myself anyway I don't really see the value of it quite honestly it's erm I see the value of it if you're incredibly complacent and just put I did this very well I did that very well I did the other very well then the tutors can see that they've got a complacent person [...] otherwise all I'm really interested in is their opinion I'm not interested in my own opinion of myself I don't quite see what this exercise serves [...]  
H: I suppose it's...  
J: are you interested in your opinion of yourself?  
H: well well I'm not but I I mean I'm interested in erm comparing my own assessment to somebody else's you know I think that's what that's what I find helpful that I assess myself and then I get feedback from you know my colleagues and they they put in things that I didn't even think about erm  
Jm: yes well I think views from ones colleagues are worth hearing [...] the Tutor or the examiner of Cambridge is it necessary for him to know my opinions about myself what he should be interested in is Jim and Robert's opinion about my teaching  
H: but then that's very narrow minded isn't it because you are only getting one opinion and yet  
J: I don't mind other people's opinions I don't mind that at all but I just kind of this self self-evaluation  
T: James it's really important self-evaluation it's really important <H: yes yes I think it is> I didn't used think it's important but it is  
Jm: why is it important?  
T: you have to be able are to look yourself you have to look at yourself and say what are my weaknesses <H: that's right> what my strengths <H: yeah> one of the hardest things I have found to do is self-evaluation it's a hard thing to do and I have to work on it yes yes and I have to look myself and say what am I doing right and what am I doing wrong I know exactly where I stand and what my weaknesses are and what my strengths are you know erm  
H: but to actually put it down on paper is..you know

- T: fine that you've got to do it is be completely objective about it <H: yes yes> completely objective <H: yes> I'm a complete tosser when it comes to writing on the board but like James I can perform I know that you know you've got to brag about yourself a bit but at the same time put yourself down and be totally realistic people find it very hard to do
- H: yes they do yes [Mid-Course interview with Helen, James and Theo]

As can be seen from the second example, being positive about oneself and one's teaching may have been disliked, but it was not rejected by any of the trainees with the exception of James. Helen's response to James' point about only needing the tutor's feedback is interesting, after telling him he was being narrow-minded she says 'and yet' before tailing off. Like Theo, she accepts that she needs to be positive but neither trainee indicated they understand why it might be important. Angela and David are clearer on this issue:

I still try and see like concentrate on negative points but sometimes yeah sometimes I think something went really well and you know erm and I can see like the good points of it but I mean you don't need to do anything with the good points so much it's like you have to improve the bad points so concentrate a bit more on them [Angela, End interview]

I can't concentrate on on improving everything all at once because otherwise I think I just totally totally erm muck it up and get it worse so concentrate on two or three points erm and then work on those and hopefully they get sorted out and then move on to the next points [David, Mid-course interview]

Returning to the TP feedback extract (Appendix H), one of the strategies which the trainees seemed to employ to distance themselves from 'blowing their own trumpet' was to preface their remarks with words to the effect of 'I've got the the positive points I put down first....' (line 2) which seems to have served to emphasise the requirement to fulfil course procedure.

There were differences in how the two teacher trainers organised and carried out the feedback sessions. The major differences were: Robert tended to talk for longer and control the interaction more than Jim; Robert focused more on improvements than Jim and hence spent less time going over what the trainees did well; Robert spent a considerable amount of time recalling and narrating the events of the class whereas Jim did this very little in terms of the structure of his feedback. There were also differences in how the trainees responded to the two trainers, with relationships between the group and Robert less easy-going than between Jim and the group; and that between Robert and Penny and Angela strained in particular. Although it was rare, there were

occasional comments to the effect that having two trainers could be confusing, especially when one was involved in the preparation stages and the other in the TP and feedback stages, as the extract below indicates:

I think it's erm a few a few people have mentioned it's quite tricky when you have actually one person going through the lessons with you the lesson plan so you get their thoughts and comments on it then you go and do the lesson and it's judged by the other tutor [...] it can lead to a bit of confusion as to how you should do it 'oh well so and so has told me to do it this way' or 'well I did that because I thought that's that was you know that was what was expected of me sort of thing' [Samantha, Mid-course interview]

It should be emphasised though that the trainers were in constant communication over the planning and the progress of trainees, and that as an experienced teacher I felt that the differences were rather minor. The situation of two trainers for TP arose in Weeks 2 and 3 (see table below) because each trainer wrote TP points for one of the two levels, Jim for the Pre-Intermediates and Robert for the Upper Intermediates (see Table 6.3 below). This ensured some degree of continuity for learners of English and for the course. It was however necessary for both trainers to view trainees teach at both levels in order to facilitate grading of the trainees. There was therefore no easy way round this issue.

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Pre-Int	Gp 1, Plan – J Gp 1, TP/Fdbk – J	Gp 1, Plan – J Gp 1, TP/Fdbk – R	Gp 2, Plan – J Gp 2, TP/Fdbk – R	Gp 2, Plan – J Gp 2, TP/Fdbk – J
Upper Int	Gp 2, Plan – R Gp 2, TP/Fdbk –R	Gp 2, Plan – R Gp 2, TP/Fdbk – J	Gp 1, Plan – R Gp 1, TP/Fdbk – J	Gp 1, Plan – R Gp 1, TP/Fdbk – R

**Table 6.3: Organisation of trainers' supervision for Guided Preparation and Teaching Practice / Teaching Practice Feedback**

There was a change over the duration of the course in the general focus of feedback given to trainees. In the first week there was a considerable amount of feedback on several key points: trainees' use of the whiteboard and specifically their writing; their use of ungraded language, that is, language pitched at the appropriate level for the group; and their use of too much teacher talk, especially when giving instructions. In the second and third weeks feedback on these issues decreased

(although some points were still raised in specific cases) and was replaced by a concern for concept checking, the lesson plan and whether the aims of the lesson had been achieved. In the final week, the chief concerns were the structuring of the class and a continuing concern with lesson aims.

## 6.2.6 Other elements of the course: portfolios and assignments

The portfolio had a crucial role to play on the course in terms of the assessment of the trainees. Although the teacher trainers, Robert and Jim, decided the grade for trainees, this was subject to the approval of the external assessor who visited the school. In this case, the visit was on the penultimate day of the course. The external observed some of the teaching practice (in this case TP Group 1) and looked at the portfolios in order to ascertain the appropriateness of the grade being awarded to the trainees.

At the beginning of the course, all trainees were assigned a ring binder. These were kept on a shelf in the main classroom, accessible to all trainees. The trainees were given the following written information about the portfolio, specifying both content and organisation:

### **Cambridge / RSA CELTA**

#### **Candidate Profile**

The contents of the file are the property of Cambridge / RSA. It represents the work on the course which will be assessed in order for your final course grade to be awarded.

It is a requirement that you keep a complete and up-to-date portfolio of your work. The file contents are kept at the centre for one year. If you want copies of your work, you will need to make photocopies as you go along. The originals of your work must remain in the file.

The portfolio must be organised in the following way:

**Section I: Weekly Participation Records** in chronological order

**Section II: Weekly Progress Records / Tutorial Forms** in chronological order

**Section III: Teaching Practice** – for each lesson that you teach you must include:

- 1 The lesson plan (from Week 2), copies of all materials including lesson handouts and worksheets given to learners.
- 2 Self Evaluation Sheet
- 3 Tutor Feedback Sheet

The records of TP should be in chronological order – most recent on the bottom

#### **Section IV: Written Assignments plus feedback sheets**

**Table 6.4: Handout for trainees concerning the content and organisation of their portfolio**

With reference to the assignments, UCLES specifies that trainees on the CELTA course are required to write at least four assignments on various topics with further details being left to individual centres to decide. The written assignment topic areas are: the language system of English; adult learners and learning contexts; reflection on classroom teaching; and the analysis of teaching and learning materials (UCLES/RSA, 1998a).

These areas were dealt with by the following six assignments at the school in question:

1. Learner Profile 1: Trainees were required to interview a language learner at the school ‘to investigate how their expectations of learning English here have been shaped by their previous learning experiences’ and then use that information to ‘explore how your own teaching approach in the classroom may be influenced from now on’
2. Analysing Structure and Function: Trainees were asked to analyse a series of sentences for their grammatical structure and another set for the function they served.
3. Teaching a skills lesson – Reading: trainees were asked to match the sub-skill to its definition: scanning, prediction, skimming and intensive reading; identify which skills were being practised by the set of exercises; then, using a text which was supplied, they were asked to select which vocabulary items they would pre-teach and think up an exercise to practice each of the sub-skills for the passage: prediction, skimming, and scanning.
4. Learner Profile 2: This was a complex and multi-sectioned piece of writing which required trainees to identify a student, read up on the potential L1 interference using a reference book made available, and choose two common errors to focus on – one grammatical and one phonetic. They then had to plan how to elicit these areas in the interview and design a writing task for the same purpose; interview their student and ask them to write a short passage. The interview needed to be recorded and along with text, subsequently analysed for the two errors. The trainees then had to create an exercise to help the problem and administer it before writing up the results.

5. Coursebook Evaluation: Trainees had to evaluate a coursebook they had used according to a number of criteria such as how the content was selected and organised, and whether the material facilitated real communication.
6. Reflection Project: This final project asked trainees to write up what they had learned from the observation they had done of experienced teachers and their fellow trainees and identify their own strengths and weaknesses along with areas of progress and future strategies for improvements.

**Table 6.5: List of assignments required by the school for CELTA trainees**

Trainees were told that if they failed an assignment they were allowed to re-submit, although this would mean that the highest grade they could achieve would be a Pass or grade 'C'. Three trainees that I am aware of were required to re-submit at least one assignment (David, Penny and Jeff).

## 6.3 The People

There were several groups of people involved in the learning community at the school. These consisted of: the teacher trainers; the experienced teachers; the trainees who were the focus of the research; the other trainees on the course; and the learners of English at the school. These groups will be described in turn.

### 6.3.1 The teacher trainers

There were two teacher trainers involved on the CELTA course: Robert, who was the Director of Studies, in charge of the day to day running of the school as well as being on the Board of Directors for the school; and Jim, an experienced teacher trainer on both CELTA and DELTA courses who has written and co-written a number of resource books for teachers. Both trainers had over twenty years experience in ELT in the UK and abroad and both were assessors for the CELTA course.

The two trainers were quite different in style. Jim had a very easy-going style, and he was very extroverted and charismatic, often using humour to keep the trainees' attention or to make a point. He was very popular with trainees. Robert was much quieter, less sociable and had a tendency to come across as a little abrupt. Several of

the trainees were nervous of him and one trainee in particular had a real character clash with him.

### 6.3.2 The experienced teachers

There were a number of teachers working at the school who taught the language learners and were observed doing so by the trainees. The teachers included two Diploma-qualified staff on permanent contracts, Mike and Janet, and three or four others who were employed on a more temporary basis, including Mark and Nigel.

Mike was undergoing training in order to be able to teach on the CELTA course in the future. He sat in on one class as part of this process.

### 6.3.3 The focus trainees

There were six trainees who were in TP Group 1 and hence formed the focus of my study:

Penny	Legal secretary	Mid 30s
Theo	Tour guide	Early 40s
Helen	Midwife	Mid 30s
David	Owns and manages bar, Barcelona, Spain	Mid 30s
Angela	Fashion designer	Late 20s

**Table 6.6: Focus trainees: jobs and ages**

The focus trainees will be introduced in more detail in the chapters which follow dealing with each of them in turn. Briefly, Penny was interested in learning more about English grammar and was only secondarily contemplating a job in EFL. She enjoyed the course although she was quite insecure about her teaching. She worked hard on learning the grammar for her presentations. Theo was a real extrovert, who was friends with both trainers prior to the start of the course. He was unfazed by the performance element of teaching, and trainees in Group 1 viewed him as being the one who set the standards for the group. Helen was one of the most down-to-earth members of the group, quiet but supportive and group-oriented. She worked hard and brought a great deal of learning-awareness to the course. David was another quiet member of the group. He was most worried about standing up in front of people. He was extremely organised and worked ahead of most of the other trainees, with the result that he often



appeared to be taking things easy, having days off at the weekend and reading the newspaper in the breaks when everyone else was busy with preparation and assignments. Angela was extremely focused and an active member of the group. She worked hard and was organised. She was also very independent and was the first to start changing her TP points and adapting materials for her classes. Jeff ran his own business and he struggled to juggle his outside work demands and the course requirements. He worked hard and was always cheerful, getting on well with staff and students alike.

### 6.3.4 The other trainees

There were six other trainees on this CELTA course, and they formed TP Group 2. Although quotations from these trainees will be used to illustrate this chapter concerning the course, the trainees themselves are not described further due to limitations on word numbers.

Samantha	Secondary school teacher – Modern languages	Late 30s
Sarinder	Kindergarten teacher	Late 20s
Shirley	Retired civil servant	Late 50s
Natalie	Recent graduate, Theology	Early 20s
Richard	Unemployed engineer	Mid 50s
James	Retired FE lecturer	Late 50s

**Table 6.7: Non-focus trainees: jobs and ages**

### 6.3.5 The learners of English

Unlike the language classes during the day which were taught by the school's experienced teachers, the evening classes were provided for free. It was these evening classes which were used by the school for the TP practice for trainees. Students who enrolled for a free class were placed into one of two groups, Pre-Intermediate and Upper Intermediate.

The group of students who took part in the CELTA TP sessions, particularly at the lower Pre-Intermediate level, were mostly refugees funded by the government, including a large number of Kosovans and Albanians. This group included local workers, for example, a couple of French waiters and a chef. Local workers also were

present in the higher level group, for example, a Spanish girl working locally for a travel agent's, although on the whole this group tended to be full-time students of English. Altogether the most common nationalities that the trainees taught were: Albanian, Brazilian, Czech, French, Japanese, Kosovan, and Spanish with most students in their late teens and early 20s.

## 6.4 Chapter summary

The following table contains a summary of the main points related to the course (of relevance to this investigation). For ease of comparison to the text of Chapter 6, it is divided according to these different elements:

<b>Element of the course</b>	<b>Main points</b>
The organisation of the course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning is situated in a working school</li> <li>• Intensive course</li> <li>• The trainers in constant communication</li> </ul>
Observation of experienced teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation focused – related to input and TP</li> <li>• Different styles of teaching</li> <li>• Continuity and coherence of experienced teachers' teaching methodology with course ethos and teaching strategies</li> </ul>
Guided preparation for TP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initially lessons organised for trainees, support decreases to trainees choosing focus</li> <li>• Trainees' assume more control of discussion as course proceeds; change from trainer-directed to ideas emerging from interaction</li> <li>• Trainees offer of advice and suggestions to each other</li> <li>• All trainees party to each others' preparation and plan</li> <li>• Trainers give options for activities; encouragement to experiment and become independent</li> <li>• Supportive and relaxed; support adjusted according to needs of individual trainees</li> </ul>
Input sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staging of input according to need, eg language learning early in course and professional development late</li> <li>• Input has largely practical focus</li> <li>• Trainee-centred and interactive, pair and group work</li> <li>• Demonstrations of activities such as warmers, drilling, brainstorming, importance of revision etc</li> <li>• Trainees learn from each other</li> <li>• Interlinked nature of input and TP</li> </ul>

Teaching practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in time of teaching from 30 minutes to 60</li> <li>• Trainees do different kinds of lessons eg grammar or reading etc</li> <li>• Trainees observe each other and have focused observation tasks often related to own weaknesses</li> <li>• Trainees tried to put into practice the input of the day</li> <li>• Teacher trainer was point of reference in emergency</li> </ul>
Teaching practice feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Followed immediately from TP and involved all trainees</li> <li>• Supportive and non-critical</li> <li>• Trainees feedback on self, then receive feedback from peers and then from trainer</li> <li>• Trainee discomfort with feedback on self, especially positive points</li> <li>• Focus on good point and improvements since last lesson and on points to work on</li> <li>• Sessions initially trainer-dominated, became more interactive and trainee-centred as course progressed</li> <li>• Learning from peers and from feedback to peers</li> <li>• Increasing use of terminology although individual differences (trainees and terms)</li> <li>• Trainer took opportunities to revise or to give focused input eg concept checking – all trainees involved</li> <li>• Feedback on elements covered on the course thus far</li> <li>• Some difference in trainer organisation of feedback and on trainer style</li> <li>• Change in focus of feedback during course eg early focus on use of whiteboard and teacher talk, later focus on concept checking, lesson planning and achievement of aims</li> </ul>
Other elements of the course - portfolios - assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practical nature of assignments eg interviewing and working with students, evaluation of a coursebook</li> </ul>

**Table 6.8: Summary of the CELTA course - major points of relevance to this study**

# Chapter 7: Penny

## 7.1. Introduction

Penny, who was in her early to mid-thirties, began the course as a legal secretary who had been working as a temp for a considerable period. She was bored with her job. She chose the intensive course in the South of England rather than a part-time course nearer her home in the North because she said that wanted to get it over with, and, due to the nature of her job, she was able to take a month off work. She felt it would provide a break before Christmas and an opportunity to learn something new.

Penny received a grade ‘C’ pass for the course, although it should be noted that as she had to re-submit one of her assignments, that grade ‘C’ was the highest grade she could receive regardless of her performance on the course.

## 7.2. Interview 1

The first interview provided more information on Penny’s motivation for the course. She stated that she wanted to pass the course and then if it went well she would consider going abroad to teach. She also talked about her desire to learn more about ‘English and grammar’, and the whole experience of doing ‘something different’ and ‘mixing with different people’.

### 7.2.1 Beliefs about teachers and teaching

In Interview 1, Penny talked about how important and influential a teacher is in a student’s life: they are ‘a figurehead [...] of a child’s life’. Therefore she thought it important for the teacher to have a ‘positive attitude’ and be respectful towards students. The teacher she felt should also have positive expectations of the students and further, should know what is needed to help them to ‘succeed’. This cluster of beliefs appear to

be drawn from her own experiences as a child in school as she related the story of two different teachers, one who was positive and one who was not:

she just just seemed to trust us and she seemed to [...] understand [...] we needed to succeed and she just seemed to have a better approach towards us and she treated us as adults instead of treating us as children [...] one teacher had a positive attitude towards us even if we did the wrong thing or or if we didn't perform very well in a lesson or in an exercise whereas the other teacher found the negative side of everything we did even if it was good so even so with the other teacher if we were bad she would find the good side of it and the other teacher if we were good she'd find the bad side of it

Related to this feeling that the teacher needs to be respectful towards students was Penny's belief that a good teacher should be interested in and care about their students. She felt that if the teacher was not interested, then the students would 'sense' this: 'they know when they see a teacher who is just not interested in either them or the subject'. The teacher should be 'patient especially with children', 'understanding' and 'sympathetic' in their treatment of their learners. Penny indicated that she thought children who have 'got to be there' will be more difficult to motivate than adults who 'want to be there'. Penny also expected her own experience as a child in school to help her in this way as she became a teacher 'I think that's what makes you a richer person anyway isn't it and a little more understanding and more sympathetic in different ways'.

Penny specifically identified one key area where the qualities listed above of respect, positive and understanding should be brought to bear, and that was when the teacher gives learners feedback. In an extract in which Penny seemed to move between seeing herself in the learner and in the teacher role she emphasised the need for understanding and discretion:

I just think patience understanding and and discretion especially if you do something wrong DON'T tell the whole class you know [laughs] and make sure you do it in a way that doesn't embarrass the child and make them worse you know you've got to have a certain amount of discretion haven't you if it just involves the one child don't involve all your friends as well

Again, drawing on her own experience as a school child she recalled the effect of feedback from a teacher who focused on the negative, in this case the shortness of Penny's story:

so I wrote this ghost story and erm she came after you know she handed them and after all that she said was [...] 'that was very good but could've been longer' and the story was a good story but it was only a page or two well and to me that was really bad instead of just saying that was really good expand on what you've done in there but instead I dwelled on that I instead of thinking that was good I'll I was thinking it

could've been longer and it was just er to me that was it's the wrong approach to teach people to I think it should be the other way round I think it should be 'oh yes that was very good expand on such a thing in that story expand on improve on' instead of saying 'good' and then immediately knocking it down

Penny believed that teachers should behave in a 'professional manner' and she talked of the need for teachers to know their subject – or to admit if they don't – and the need for teachers to be able to think on their feet. Penny seemed to be drawing on her life experiences for these points, possibly in her work as a secretary and applying these to the classroom:

it's ok to plan something isn't it and then the next thing you're thrown something and you're and hopefully you're quick enough to to think of an answer and if not have the grace to say 'well I'll have to look that one up and get back to you' coz sometimes you just can't come up with an answer I don't know whether that works in teaching but that's in generally in life anyway isn't it

Other elements Penny felt were needed for a good teacher was the need for the teacher to be 'relaxed', with 'a sense of humour' and not 'too strict' with the students. She also felt that it was important for the teacher to be responsive and 'attentive' to 'each student' and 'the way they're responding'.

Focusing on the classroom and teaching, as opposed to qualities of the teacher, Penny highlighted the need to keep students' attention in a lesson. She identified keeping students actively involved as important for this, rather than the teacher assuming a more didactic role.

active students I think meaning that they are responding to you because it's no good just standing there talking or whatever and the students are just you know losing attention asleep at the back or something like that

Penny saw class size as being a factor which would affect the teacher's ability to keep students' attention, 'it's easier to keep the attention span of a small group isn't it than it is 30 or 40 so active students or attentive students'. She also mentioned the teacher's manner as being important for keeping students' attention, saying that teachers needed to make themselves 'a bit more a bit more attractive to them'. She thought that this could be done by ensuring that the teacher's voice should not be 'too monotonous or too low or too quiet' and that the teacher should use the 'expressions on your face as well' in order to keep the students' attention.

In addition to the point made above about the need for teachers to know their subject matter, Penny added that the teacher should be interested in the subject otherwise this would be apparent to the students:

so just choose a subject that YOU are interested in and not get too fed up with it and that's what many teachers are aren't they some teachers don't like the subject that they teach they're just doing it and it comes through and that's even to children children can sense things like that

Penny indicated that she felt that the teacher needed to get to know the students in their class, and take into account the learners' interests and ages when teaching. She felt that this was especially important for teaching children 'they have got to be here' unlike adults who 'learn the subject by choice'.

## 7.2.2 Beliefs about language and language learning

Penny's beliefs about language were clearly split into her beliefs about L2 and L1. With the former she associated communication and culture, and with the latter she associated grammar and spelling.

When asked what she thought was important for learning a language, Penny listed 'tolerance' as a major factor. She felt this was important because her notion of language was that it was part of a culture and hence was social and cultural in nature. She felt that students needed to be aware of the 'social living' use of the language and shouldn't simply try to learn it in a 'clinical way'. She seemed to equate grammar teaching with a 'clinical way':

I don't know tolerance I think you know to understand because it's not just a language it's a cultural thing as well isn't it so you've got to think in context you can't just you know assume that the language is you know take it just for itself because it's a it's it's a social and cultural thing as well isn't it so you've got to understand ^ that it fits into a place [...] whereas you learn the language in you know their language in a clinical way whereas they know it in a social living way [...] it's like communicating or learning grammar

Penny also indicated that she thought that learning a language involves 'find[ing] comparisons' with the L1.

Penny talked at length about how essential a knowledge of grammar is. She felt that it helped people to write and spell better and in general was an important part of communication, both 'verbal and written'. It needs to be borne in mind that when

Penny was discussing grammar, she seems to have been thinking entirely of L1 users and not L2 learners.

Penny talked at length about her belief that grammar was not valued in education today, 'I think it's the education system that's let people people down in that way because grammar IS important it is and that's just in communication'. She also blamed teachers themselves who, she felt, didn't teach grammar because they didn't 'know it well enough to teach it'. She stated that grammar teaching needed to be introduced early for L1 learners, in primary school. To illustrate her point she chose the story of Jack and Jill, although as the extract seems to indicate she was uncertain about whether this would be appropriate for children:

if you're taught little things when you're a child at primary school it does stay with you and to break down a story as well as reading a story you can still get a short story 'Jack and Jill' and break it down for a child it wouldn't be you know it wouldn't be that difficult but then it's boring to the child isn't it so you've got to you know the child could get fed up

Penny's concern about the need to teach grammar to English L1 users seemed to stem from feeling that she was not taught grammar, and she suggested that it was because her teachers didn't think she was 'capable':

we weren't taught grammar in the sense that we weren't given names of names of the parts of a sentence to think about we were just taught the very very basic probably because they thought we weren't capable of learning such a huge such a huge aspect of English

As the extract above seems to indicate, Penny seemed to regard an important part of learning about grammar to be learning grammatical terminology. She indicated that this knowledge of grammar 'names' was needed in addition to knowing 'how it's applied to the sentence'. She said that grammar was difficult and that the names used were complex:

it's quite hard isn't it especially some some of the names as well I mean you have to understand 'auxiliary' don't you itself you know never mind how it's applied to the sentence



### 7.2.3 Beliefs about learning to teach

There were two main beliefs that emerged from the interview with Penny regarding learning to teach. The first was the idea that ‘it’s not easy is it to teach’, which arose when she talked about things that she was worried about in terms of the course.

The other main point which Penny raised is the idea that the teacher can learn from the students. She mentioned that she felt that there were ‘tricks’ and ‘quick ways’ to learn things and indicated that she felt that she might learn some of these from students themselves:

maybe they had a better education than I have and they could teach me something and someway round a quick way how to get to somewhere [...] it’s just that people just have little ways to remember things don’t they you know so little tricks the way they do it

Penny was also concerned about her experience on the course, and she hoped that the trainers would be ‘understanding’ and approachable ‘because there’s nothing worse than not being able to approach someone and even if you are having difficulty for them to help you’.

## 7.3 Guided Preparation

*NB: in the extracts from GP and TP feedback sessions the numbering system indicates week then day ie [1,3] indicates that the session took place in Week 1 and on Day 3 – ie Wednesday.*

The guided preparation for teaching practice was heavily scaffolded at the beginning of the course. Much of the discourse therefore was dominated by the teacher trainer explaining how to carry out the points listed on the TP points sheet. Although these sessions became less teacher trainer dominated as the course moved on, trainees tended to use the sessions to ask questions rather than to explain or rationalise their plans.

In the second guided preparation session (GP 1,2) Penny was concerned with the labels used for grammatical features and also she asked a number of questions concerning the structure that she was teaching. The questions she raised indicated a certain degree of knowledge about it, in this case adverbs of frequency.

In GP 1,3 Penny raised the issue of rambling which she had been told to avoid the previous evening. Her reference to the issue and the prominence which she gave to it, raising it as the first point in her section of the session, would suggest that this was a major issue for her and one that she felt the need to deal with:

TT erm Penny is there anything you want to check?

P yeah I don't want to ramble again so

TT no that's right [laughs] we don't want you to either [laughs]

The teacher trainer advised her not to explain grammar and to 'just start straight away'.

In GP 1,4 when Penny checked whether or not to adapt an exercise from the coursebook she was using, the tutor advised her to adapt the exercise, stating that it was 'badly designed'. They also discussed cutting down on the number of questions used.

In GP 1,5 Penny asked if she should put the questions on the board in a listening exercise or do you do 'as little as possible on the board?'. She inquired how she should manage the questions. She also asked if she could discuss her lesson plan with Helen because she was worried about overlapping with her lesson. The tutor encouraged her to do so.

Week 2 GP 2,1, saw Penny confused over the differences and similarities of reading and listening lessons. She asked a number of questions about when to give out particular questions and got the tutor to check through her questions for her.

In GP 2,2 Penny told the tutor she had adapted the TP points to move from students asking each other questions about their family backgrounds to the students asking her about her own family. She talked about how this might make students 'feel more comfortable' if they could ask her, and she rejected Angela's point that the students are 'ok' talking about their family.

GP 2,3 was the first discussion of the map lesson and Penny was very concerned that the map was wrong and that this could lead to students becoming confused, which she said she wanted to avoid. She explained that the language on the tape and the target language for the presentation stage of the lesson appeared to be different but when the trainer suggested she could change the language and record her own listening exercise, she resisted saying that she had done too much work on it to change it.

A lesson on military service which Penny was intending to do in Week 3 with the higher level group, was discussed over several GP sessions, GP 2,4, 2,5, and 3.1. In

the first of these sessions the tutor ran through the TP points, explaining items such as how to design a 'one to five proposition sheet'. Subsequent classes indicated that Penny was rather confused about the proposition sheet and how to design and use it in the classroom.

In GP 3,4 there were indications that Penny had too much material for her lesson although she resisted the idea of reducing the material as suggested by Angela. She also evidenced considerable confusion over the grammar points that she was teaching, in this case the future simple and future continuous. The tutor told her that he hadn't intended that she would do the function of 'arrangement', but she said that she needed to be prepared for this because students might get confused.

GP 3,5 and GP 4,1 involved a discussion of a one hour lesson on law and order which Penny taught at the beginning of Week 4. In the first discussion of this lesson, Penny expressed uncertainty over whether to get students to read the text and whether to use the role play from the book. The tutor advised her to organise her stages and lesson carefully and think about activities to use. In the second session (GP 4,1) Penny had a very different idea about the lesson which revolved around the notions of receptive and active vocabulary which she had read about in Scrivner (1994) over the intervening weekend. She outlined how the topic, which she felt was not very interesting, could be enlivened by teaching students about dictionary use:

- P so I'm a bit and Scrivner [laughs] I was going to erm separate the erm the vocabulary into what he calls productive and receptive in other words what they need that's useful and what they just need to recognise
- TT right ok
- P which is like 'diminished responsibility' and I was going to erm bring in well ask if they use dictionaries at all and you know try and give them some you know =
- TT = guidance
- P guidance and although I don't know it myself so I'll probably need a quick lesson on how to do it

What followed was a lengthy discussion in which the tutor made it clear that Penny needed to plan the lesson more clearly according to her aims and he attempted to help her organise what he pointed out was a 'complex idea'.

The other guided preparation sessions of the final week were not of particular note. Penny asked for and received help with the grammar element of her class (GP 4,2) and then in the final session (GP 4,4) Penny told the group before the trainer arrived that she wanted to get the session over with as quickly as possible so that she

could use the time to plan her lesson. Following Angela's suggestion, the trainees accomplished this by not raising any issues for discussion.

## 7.4 TP and TP Feedback

In the first TP feedback session (TPF 1,2) Penny seconded Theo's concern, although not the trainer's, over his voice being too 'loud'. When all the other trainees were praising him, Penny told the group that she thought that 'there was more talking than what you're supposed to'. Penny also taught in this first session. This example is taken from this first TP feedback when the tutor started by asking her to comment on some positive features of her lesson; her concern with student learning is evident:

- P aha ^ then there's only 2 positive points I can think of ok  
TT we can help you out with that  
P I'm not completely disheartened and then I I think the students seemed to grasp what was going on so

This was followed by some questions from the trainer which helped her to find more positive points in the fact that she completed a task, that she 'did a bit of drilling' and that she did some work on stress. The trainer suggested she add 'involving them all in the task' to her list. Her response to the tutor's comment on her boardwork indicated her general lack of confidence:

- TT yeah I think the boardwork was good <P: no> hmm I thought it was very clear  
<P: what mine?> it was the best best boardwork so far  
P oh I thought it was just scribble

When the tutor told her she did well with an activity in which students were required to ask questions, she replied that the book had caused both a student and herself to become confused.

Referring to things she needed to work on, Penny's first point was 'confidence', which the tutor told her would 'come with experience'. She then talked about 'keeping the attention of the class', explaining that she had needed 'to ask them at one stage to pay attention' because one of the students 'had his back to me and they were talking'. She added that she needed better 'concentration on the board' and to 'concentrate a bit more on the students', saying that she was aware of focusing too much on some students

and not others, ‘coz you’re lost in the room’, something the tutor explained was due to inexperience:

it’s like it’s like when you first start to learn to learn how to drive and you know you’re looking you’re looking down here oh there’s some cars out there by the way oh there’s a road out there so obviously there’s students out there but I think that comes with more with more experience

Penny added that she needed ‘better drilling all the way through’. The tutor suggested that she could do ‘individual drilling’ in addition to the choral work that she did. The tutor’s summary followed and focused on two points not previously raised: the grading of her language, which he said was ‘pitched very high’, and secondly her tendency to lecture the students. He suggested that instead of giving ‘a little lecture on what an adverb is’ that she should just ‘go straight into it’ and that this would avoid lots of ‘purposeless teacher talk that they don’t understand anyway’. Penny did not really respond to the point about lecturing, focusing instead on the practical implications of this in terms of labeling the grammar under consideration:

P so don’t ask them if they know what an adverb is? <TT: no> and if they say ‘no’ then explain

TT no don’t even go there don’t don’t just start start start which means write the adverbs up put the percentages up say ok ‘always which one is it?’

P and do you tell them that it’s an adverb no?

[...]

TT you have a tendency I want to nip in the bud here of lecturing and explaining <P: yeah> I don’t want you to go down that road <P: yeah> because it’s it’s not useful especially at this level so just start with the first task go straight in

Although not teaching the following day (TPF 1,3) Penny was involved in giving feedback to other trainees who were. First was Jeff, and Penny praised his ‘clear voice’ and his use of ‘props’. She pointed out that he tended to write on the whiteboard and give instructions at the same time and also criticised him for putting ‘mixed capitals and small letters’ on the board which she felt ‘wasn’t standard’. Penny had also been asked to listen out for ungraded language. When Angela and the tutor discussed whether Jeff should have put the times on the whiteboard, Penny suggested an approach in which Jeff ‘split the clock as a like a cake’ to teach the time, although the tutor concluded that this would have been too time consuming.

Later in the same session (TPF 1,3) Penny was involved in an exchange which suggested that her grasp of grammar and terminology was somewhat weak:

P is it's just that what Theo did today did you do '-ing' today  
 T did I do '-ing' no I didn't that was erm  
 P oh coz I'm doing the spelling on the '-ing'  
 TT yeah that's right

When Angela and the tutor were discussing why the students began the exercise without listening to Angela's instructions, Penny's suggestion indicated that she had been paying a great deal of attention to what was happening in the TP and was thinking about what she saw:

P Angela do you think that was because Angela asked them to pass pass the handouts around rather than taking them at the same time  
 TT could have been yeah  
 P and the ones they started to work on it before and that's what you asked them to do you asked them to pass the handouts around [inaudible] whereas Jeff did hand things out  
 TT yes yes  
 A yeah but =  
 P =I know it's time consuming but =  
 A =no but I didn't wanna =  
 P and that's why they might have started

In the session TPF 1,4, Penny was positive in her feedback on Helen, praising her 'good diction' and, when Angela suggested it was unnaturally slow, proposed that this was simply due to stress: 'that's true of my suggestion so to be less serious which comes with relaxation and a voice becomes more natural then if you're sort of more relaxed'. However she then told the group that she thought Helen's 'facial expressions are serious', saying that 'maybe that's tension'. When the tutor disagreed, Penny persisted in the face of laughter from other trainees. She compared Helen to one of the experienced teachers, Mike, who she said was 'humorous but he was firm in voice'. This extract was the first and only time that a trainee brought in a comparison with the experienced teachers into the feedback sessions.

During a trainer's explanation to Helen of the need to exemplify, Penny picked up the trainer's point and explained that she had misunderstood the concept:

P so that's what you mean by exemplify get THEM to give YOU an example?  
 <TT: yeah yeah> I I was completely now that's where I went wrong=  
 TT =it's get rather than=  
 P =so I was giving them some examples myself

Later in session TPF 1,4 the feedback moved on to Penny's teaching. Penny's first comments concerned the lecturing style of her previous TP. This time, with the

exception of Penny herself, the other trainees and the tutor all felt that she had made a vast improvement in this area:

- P ^ ok erm I didn't thing I rambled as much but I still rambled [P laughs] I think  
A no you were much better  
P do you think?  
TT huge huge huge difference  
A / yeah a real improvement \  
P / I still had to explain the infinitive \ [...] so I knew more or less straight away that there they wouldn't know what the infinitive was so I tried to explain that so I didn't ramble as much but I still had to explain  
TT well explaining isn't rambling is it?

The tutor continued, telling her she had made a 'tremendous improvement in ungraded and unnecessary teacher talk' and an 'overnight transformation' in this area.

Penny also returned to the topic raised in feedback to Helen, that of exemplification as she told the tutor:

- P I was confused by what's meant by exemplify <TT: ok right> which I know now it means to elicit from them  
TT / get them to do an example yes \  
P / whereas I wanted to give them an example \ but obviously in the context of teaching it doesn't mean that <TT: sure> so I know that

In a short exchange Penny's knowledge of both teaching and grammatical terminology is shown to be weak, as she searches for words to explain which task she was talking about and then which tense she was referring to:

- P I didn't do the present continuous tense in in exercise 2 I didn't work on the tenses which I I forgot as well but=  
TT =you mean in the last activity?  
P in the in the=  
TT =the gapfill=  
P =second one=  
TT / the gapfill \  
P / in the gaps \ the gaps the gaps  
TT what you say you didn't work on it what do you mean?  
P I didn't do the verb I don't know whether you noticed  
TT you didn't write up the verb 'to be' you mean?  
P yeah in in 'am' or 'is'  
TT no you just wrote the '-ing form' yeah that's just the verb 'to be' yes

After mentioning that the 'small class' that she taught made it 'easy', Penny went on to outline the things she felt she needed to work on which included 'improve the lesson plan' and 'don't concentrate on one part too much'. With regard to this latter point, she felt that she had focused too much on one section 'at the expense of others'

and that she needed to ‘pay attention to the aims’. She also felt that her boardwork needed improving:

- P dot the i’s cross the t’s less proofwork pro..proof-reading because that’s what I do I write and proof-read <TT: uhu> you see whereas I’ve I’ve got to get out of the habit ^ but that’s my job you know so it it’s a habit isn’t it if you just write and then you I I I I always read things again <TT: hmm yeah> and check
- TT yeah you have to go for the first draft
- P so you have to practice / making it ready first time
- TT / first draft’s got to be the final draft yeah

When the other trainees were invited to give their feedback, Angela, backed by the trainer, suggested that Penny needed to ‘get clear in your mind about what you’re doing’ in terms of understanding the grammar point that she was teaching. Penny chose however, not to address this but focused on whether she could use grammar terms with the students:

so what sort of word would you use for that level? For erm you know instead of saying consonant? Or should they know consonant because if if if to me that it’s sim..it’s something they should know I mean there’s only 26 letters and that should be the start

When Angela praised Penny for ‘good individual help’ during groupwork, Penny responded that the students were meant to be working in groups, leading the tutor to step in and explain Angela’s point ‘yeah but the point is you were monitoring and then making yourself available there’. Angela also praised Penny’s use of the whiteboard, before suggesting that she needed to avoid explaining to students at the same time as handing out her sheets and that she needed to get answers from all students rather than ‘getting all the answers off this lot coz they all know it’.

The tutor’s summary mentioned her ability to ‘involve students in the tasks’ and that she ‘got good feedback [...] from around the class’. He suggested that she should not ‘hand out materials while you give instructions’ and that she should ‘know exactly what the rules are before you go in there’. The tutor also talked about the need for Penny to slow down when she spoke, particularly when giving instructions:

I think you speak very quickly when you are giving instructions so they don’t pick up on what you are saying so you just slow right down do more of a Helen so if you go in that direction because that’s an object lesson in ^ enunciating so you’re not enunciating it’s it’s blalalalala and they don’t they haven’t picked enough they haven’t heard it so you need to project and enunciate more



The session ended with a discussion of the problems of using a coursebook, with the trainer encouraging Penny to adapt materials for the class:

- TT you did an example for them [...] get them to do it  
P well it was in the er it was in the book anyway I had to tippex that out  
TT yeah good / good to do that tippex them out \  
P / you know you had to tippex it out \ because it had answers in but  
TT the book just gives the examples / just tippex them out \  
P / yeah it does confuse you \ that book it's got it's got errors in it  
TT oh yeah all books are confusing this is no exception you get used to it it's just one person's version of how to teach it doesn't actually fit the class

The final teaching practice of the week was run by the second tutor, Robert, for the first time. Penny taught first. She began the feedback session (TPF 1,5) by describing the class as 'better' before elaborating that she thought she 'gave instructions more clearly', which she said Jim had told her to do in the previous feedback session. She said that this was her only positive point and that her instructions 'still need more work'. The tutor pointed out that she had achieved her aims. He commented there was 'plenty of student involvement', something which Penny said she had tried to do. Angela said that Penny's 'instructions were clearer' and that she had elicited well.

Angela then suggested that, as the level of the group was higher than expected, that Penny could have given the two pre-set questions at the same time and the students could have listened to the tape once rather than twice. Penny's response was to point out that she followed instructions: 'I followed my instructions [...] I did think that but I followed what Jim said'. A little later, Angela suggested that Penny should have identified parts of speech for the vocabulary she taught. Penny rejected the idea, again referring to the TP points she had been given for the lesson: 'my instructions were just do lexis do vocabulary not use it'. In the tutor's summary, he said that her strengths were 'the fact that you used very controlled graded language and you prompted very minimally [...] introducing a lot from them with not very much coming from you'. He suggested that her rapport needed work:

- TT rapport was ok er you got sunnier as the lesson went on but you looked a little bit sort of downcast at the beginning perhaps so try a little bit more of a TEFL smile  
P I know like David's smile like David's smile [all laugh]

The tutor then talked about what he thought were the major elements that Penny needed to work on, clearer instructions and feedback. With regard to instructions he

told her that she needed to make these ‘stand out from the rest of what you are saying’.

He then demonstrated how this could be done:

TT yeah you need to=

P =change the tone of the voice=

TT =change the tone make it higher a bit louder hit the wall with your instructions and have a pause between what you were saying

The tutor told Penny to make her instructions more concise, although he was clear that ‘it’s always a slow process it’s not something that you can change from one thing from one way of doing it to another’.

The tutor then went on to the issue of giving feedback to students, raising two issues: firstly he pointed out that when she was checking the comprehension questions she corrected the students’ grammar which led to confusion; and secondly, she also said ‘no’ to students’ responses:

TT but the thing is not to say ‘no’ you’ll very often in reading and listening=

P =just say ‘think of another word ^ say think of another word rather than ^

TT yeah something sort of on target but not exactly what you want you say ‘yeah good could be no it wasn’t exactly tablet it was?’ yeah so give the students something to build up on and very often the right answer comes out of two or three students contributing you know helping each other ‘oh what is it so and so oh yeah’

P so as long as they are on the right line don’t say ‘no’ just say ‘think of another think of another word’

TT yeah in comprehension questions just stick to comprehension

Penny did not teach on Monday of Week 2 although she was involved in giving feedback to other trainees (TPF 2,1). In response to Helen’s teaching, Penny praised the varied way in which she used teacher and student questions. Later when the group were discussing Theo’s difficulties with boardwriting, Penny suggested that he should put across more information orally in order to avoid the students becoming bored or confused whilst trying to read his writing.

In a final comment in the lesson, the tutor pointed out how the students have a good knowledge of the language and the difficulty they face is in using it. The extract indicates Penny’s sympathy and knowledge of this problem:

TT interest point amazing how many past tenses and infinitives from past tenses the students were able to actually supply wasn’t it? mm when compared with their almost total inability to produce the language they act..they have an awful lot of knowledge of the language / what they can’t do is use it \

P / it’s putting it together is the problem \ putting it together is the problem

TT it’s practice

Penny's own evaluation of her teaching in the next session (TPF 2.2) was quite negative as she talked about feeling 'muddled and confused'. She told the group that she didn't have any good points, saying points she needed to work on were 'to give instructions clearly and enunciation' and drilling and 'don't say no'. She added that, besides saying 'no' in the lesson and not anticipating problems of tenses, she had also been confused by the similarities and differences in reading and listening lessons, and the difficulty of putting into practice the things she had been learning in the input sessions and the assignments:

P it just showed a confusion because erm I did listening last Friday in class and I read up listening but I also used what we what we learnt ourselves in our lessons but we did reading last week and today we did a listening so then and both are similar approaches aren't they <TT: yeah> so I was I was confused trying to sort out our own tuition and then and our our assignment was also a reading task wasn't it which we did the other day and <TT: yeah yeah> so there was all of that trying to erm / sort it all out \

TT / assimilate it \

P yeah and to put it into a lesson

The tutor agreed with Penny that she needed work on her instructions which 'need to be clearer'. Angela felt that Penny needed to use a 'strong voice' and said that she felt that when students answered questions, Penny failed to indicate whether their responses were correct or not, 'because your expression's the same whether it was right or wrong'. She added that Penny's 'unsure facial expression' confused students. Penny defended herself by saying that she had been trying to get students to 'speak really confidently'. Angela moved the feedback on and commented that Penny had 'obviously listened to all the lessons' because she used several techniques for the first time 'an example of finger use [...] for error correction' and the use of 'open pairs'. She concluded 'we saw loads of new approaches today yeah I thought that was really good'.

The tutor then began to summarise his notes, telling Penny that she needed 'bigger instructions', something he demonstrated and he advised her to 'ham it up a bit they won't mind'. Penny told the tutor that she did 'have a TEFL smile' and 'everybody smiled back'. He continued saying that she had nice generation of interest, her lesson stages were 'in shape' and her questions worked well. Penny told him that she had had to write them herself because 'again they weren't suitable in the book'.

The tutor then raised a point about Penny's method of feedback, particularly with students who were quiet. He suggested backing away rather than getting closer to the students:

if you approach them too closely they'll talk to you and if the problem is if they're talking too softly they'll talk even softer they'll ca..and even if they don't you're cutting off them from the rest of the class they can't participate coz they can't hear what's going on

The teacher trainer then told Penny that she had made progress on 'awareness of correctness and correction tactics'.

In TP 2,3 Penny observed the Upper Intermediate students and the trainees from TP Group 2. TP 2,4 involved David and Penny teaching for an hour each, observed by trainees from TP Group 2: Shirley, Samantha, James and Sarinder.

Whilst the tutor was giving feedback to David on his handling of a listening comprehension, Penny joined in to talk about how she had managed a listening exercise. She focused on how she encouraged the students and how she avoided saying 'no' when they struggled to find the correct answer:

that's what I tried to do that's why I said yes you're nearly there [...] I tried to point out that that they were nearly there and I didn't say no you're wrong I just said 'yes you're nearly there and I'll play it again for you'

Shirley and Samantha been assigned to give feedback to Penny and had written three positive and three negative points on the whiteboard:

<p>+ authentic visual (using known environment) sensitive to needs clear lead-in</p> <p>- wo maybe use of board for further clarification more exemplification</p>
--

Feedback began with Shirley describing Penny's use of a map as an 'interest-grabber' which was 'meaningful' for students. Penny told the group about her advance plan for the pairwork and indicated her knowledge of the individual students in the process:

I did intend if I had a bigger class to erm to put them into the pairs and if I had Maria I would have put Maria with Megawati and erm you know a student A and Megawati and Sinedu as B so that Megawati could have helped Sinedu and that was what my..I was thinking ‘ooh god that’s good Maria’s here’ so that she could help

When Shirley suggested that Penny could have put the vocabulary on the whiteboard to help students, she resisted saying ‘I couldn't have put them on the board because then they wouldn't have listened’. The discussion continued as the trainer advised Penny that she should have put the vocabulary on the board for the pre-teaching, in advance of playing the tape. At this point Penny told the group that there was no point in that because ‘the tape didn't have any of those words in it’. Shirley asked her if she had simply followed the book and not checked the tape in advance. Penny responded that she was aware that she was pre-teaching vocabulary that was not used in the tape but that the book was wrong. She had been told to do this and that she had put too much work into the lesson to change it:

- P it was from the book and I had to adapt the map anyway because er the map was wrong [...] and I felt that it didn't ha..it had ‘behind’ it didn't have ‘between’ it had ‘straight ahead’ you know ‘straight down’ it had that you know
- TT so why not teach them that then?
- P well I did what Jim what Jim er out of the book which was prepositions of it was in the box in the functions box on page whatever [...] so I did what Jim did and it was only after doing it that you realise and it's you know I
- TT so it didn't relate to the words on the board
- P it didn't relate and <TT: uhu> then you know when yourself if you put a lot of work into the likes of you see [...]
- TT well yeah I understand that you you're rather confused about what were the priorities er for the lesson yeah

Following this the tutor told Penny that she needed ‘more focus on what you want them to notice and learn about’ and he demonstrated with the map, telling her she needed to ‘specify and focus on it a little bit more in planning your language’:

with lesson planning in general you can do that you can work out what you want students to be able to do and work backwards from and think about ok ho..what do they need to know to be exposed to in order to get to here

The tutor then summarised his feedback for her, telling her ‘you spent a long time helping people you were very patient and very erm sensitive to their needs’ but he then qualified this by warning her that she needed to remember it was a class and ‘you can't have a series of one to one dia..dialogues with students that's gonna take all day’. He then suggested that she used other students to help weaker ones which would be

'quicker' and would help the 'class dynamic'. He then told the group that there was a common misperception over the concept of monitoring:

there's a general kind of idea among the group er erm about monitoring monitoring is not to go round and do the activity for the students it's only to go and to find out er if they are actually doing it and doing that not something else like and to erm ^ that they understand the task and are getting reasonably forward with it yeah the ability to do it will come from your teaching which happens before that

The tutor told Penny that she was 'sensitive' and 'patient' and 'very well motivated to teach people'. He said that she used 'good visuals' and her 'language is graded' but that as was mentioned earlier 'what you really need is to focus on what's important in your lesson for you and then you get out what isn't'.

TP session 3,1 saw Penny teaching the Upper Intermediate level for the first time. She taught for half an hour and was on third of four. During the feedback to Theo, she told the group that she thought he 'talked quite a lot' and used 'lots of ungraded language' such as 'do you reckon'. Later on in Theo's feedback, Penny talked at great length about something that one of the students had told her in the break. It seemed that the student had not understood a gesture that Theo had used to try to get the student to correct herself. In this exchange in which Penny focused on the student's confusion, she mentioned that she had been made aware of this when the student in question was talking to her prior to her teaching 'telling me not to worry' and being 'supportive'.

Penny's feedback on her own teaching began with her comment that she was short of time, something which forced her to leave out the 'post-correction' phase at the end of her lesson. She said that she was not 'formal and direct when introducing the topic' and that her aim had been to be 'better with instructions'. She then started an exchange about the make-up of the students in the group:

- P I lost a valuable student didn't I you know I lost a boy didn't I? [...]  
TT why do you feel you need a boy?  
P well I don't it's just it just adds more to a a a a debate [inaudible]  
[...]  
TT you don't need any men in the classroom do you?  
P you know but they add a little bit  
A they still talked about it fine so  
P oh yeah they do talk about it which was quite happy about it  
TT [inaudible] [laughs]  
P no but it just adds to <TT: boy girl> it adds to authentic speaking doesn't it you know we're not all girls are we? You know  
A yeah but we still know about military service <TT: yeah> just like / guys do\  
TT / yeah I \ don't think you need men or women in the class to talk about military service you didn't and they talked about it fine

Despite this discussion, Penny seemed unconvinced, explaining that she was thrown at the beginning of the lesson by the absence of men in the group but ‘then I realised that they’re quite good speakers’, even commenting that ‘it turned out quite interesting in the end’. She then expressed her concern that she was not knowledgeable enough about the topic in question: ‘I don’t know anything about the military service’. Penny then told the group that the students ‘didn’t end up having a proper proper discussion’, in that they initially worked individually. Despite her misgivings, the tutor felt that her activity ‘was very productive’ and that she ‘got lots of lots of talk from them’. The tutor did suggest that Penny should have split up students of the same nationality to maximise student interaction. Penny’s response indicated the difficulty she found in making interactive decisions, ‘it’s hard isn’t it you don’t know what to do’, adding that she was also ‘unsure whether to interrupt the class’ and as a result ran ‘short on time to do the correction. She added that she felt she learned ‘something about the military in different countries’ from the students.

Penny was clear that she thought that the students’ fluency was good, something the tutor agreed with but he was keen to emphasise that accuracy was also important:

- P it was fine except for the correction there were a few erm but only a few coz they’re really good aren't they?  
TT yeah they make a lot of errors though in their production  
P yeah they make errors but you do understand what they say <T: oh yeah> you know there’s no need to ask them to repeat

Penny seemed happy with her lesson, saying that the class discussion was ‘a nice [...] way to meet them’ and that there was ‘really good participation’ by the students in the lesson. Following a discussion of the way in which the error correction was carried out, Penny asked the trainer how corrections should be done:

- P so so so do you ask somebody else in the class to say the word to see if they know it or do you say it?  
TT er I I would get self correction as priority  
P self correction / [inaudible] \  
TT er student student and / then a do it yourself if all else fails \

At this point Theo stepped in to give his feedback on Penny’s performance. He praised her lead-in as it got the students interested but corrected her use of the term ‘military service’, saying that she had actually been talking about ‘national service’. A debate ensued as to which was the correct term before Penny told them that she had

been told to use 'military service'. Both Theo and the tutor, Jim, made a joke about this:

- P well I didn't know myself what it was <T: right> on my instructions it was er military service as as [inaudible] so I assumed that that it's called that [...]  
T right you didn't know so right ok so that was Robert made you do that was it?  
TT it was the book [H laughs]  
P no no it was just that my it was my [inaudible] of it and I just assumed by the instructions

Theo then told Penny that he thought she should have used more exemplification and clarification of the topic. The tutor agreed. Penny's response was that she wanted to see what help the higher level group needed:

- P it was good to find out if that's what you need to do as well and it is something that needs to be  
TT what's that?  
P explain it even more you know just as much as you did to the  
TT exemplify yeah I have to do it with you guys don't I if I have to do it with you so it's not a language thing [...] so you have to exemplify regardless of the level

In TP feedback session 3,2 Penny was involved in giving feedback to the trainees who had taught. She praised Helen's lead-in but said that she 'didn't drill enough'. She also told the group that at one point a student had turned and asked her what she was supposed to do. Penny added that this was probably because the student was 'not confident at speaking'. In feedback to Angela, Penny suggested a change to the instructions of one of the tasks in order to help students 'to understand a little better'.

During feedback to David on his full hour lesson in TPF 3,3 Penny interrupted to tell the tutor that she was concerned that, in terms of the grammar point of the lesson, David had 'passed it all onto me'. David, who had diverted a question on grammar from one of the students to Penny who was teaching the following day, claimed this was because he did not want to 'poach onto [Penny's] territory'. Penny talked at length about her concerns that she would need to 'try and explain the vague differences' between the functions of future tenses. In a confusing, and confused, exchange the tutor attempted to understand which functions and tenses Penny was teaching the following day. Checking with the coursebook, the tutor warned Penny to 'be alert' to two different functions being introduced in the same text. He told her to 'make your mind up and stick to one' function and advised her to be careful because this was a 'central confusion' of the book and as such the book was 'fairly useless'.



The following day Penny taught for a full-hour class (3,4). David and Angela had assessed her lesson and had written her feedback, four positive points and three negative points, on the whiteboard:

aims achieved elicited meaning of tenses monitored well student correction  voice projection 1 <sup>st</sup> instructions emphasis for correct pronunciation
---

David started by reading through the points above, pausing at voice projection which they felt was her most important point to work on. He said that ‘there was times when we were having problems picking up’ what she was saying. The tutor then asked her about this issue:

- TT yeah how do you feel about your voice projection?  
 P I know that but I know I'm not going to get it in four weeks so I can / only try \  
 TT / is that because \ having observers do you think or?^  
 P no just I think it's because it's such an intensive course and / because it's a voice it's something you need to practice \  
 T / I'm thinking about er speaking more loudly \  
 P yeah it's something that you need to practice <TT: oh yeah> and it's not what I'm used to whereas Theo's <TT: hmm> in that kind of business whereas I'm not you see <TT: yeah it's true that's right> so it's hard <TT: yeah> for me to erm concentrate on that coz I'm not I I'm used to speaking softly but firmly you know I do speak firmly <TT: yeah [laughs]> but you you know at work you know you have to speak erm firmly but I don't speak loudly I speak firmly  
 [...]  
 TT so you you're you're projecting now you see  
 P yeah yeah because I'm not concentrating on other things <TT: oh right> yeah you understand it it's two it's putting the two together <TT: yeah yeah yeah that's right yeah> I can do it but not in erm it's when I've got other things to do and this because it's so intense <TT: yeah> you know we're learning as well so=  
 TT =yeah so your attention is taken up=  
 P =and it's taken up with concentrating on what's / going on around me \  
 TT / what activity am I doing now yeah sure \  
 P yeah so that's you know <TT: yes> whereas you can do that anyway can't you because that's what you're pr..you've had practice at that <T: yeah> so it comes naturally to you more naturally whereas to me to combine the two is more it's more difficult to do so

The topic of the exchange ended as Penny told the group, to much laughter. that unlike Theo who has ‘a strong voice’ her voice ‘would weaken’ and she would ‘get hoarse’ if she ‘carried on the way Theo does’.

When the feedback moved on to one of the other negative points, the '1<sup>st</sup> instructions' the teacher trainer stepped in, advising Penny to 'go back to that old chestnut of exemplifying' in order to 'kick-start' the activity. Penny responded that 'I didn't like the lead-in anyway'. The tutor advised her to make her instructions 'more deliberate' saying that she had a tendency 'to give instructions in a throw-away style' which many students didn't pick up on.

The tutor then began his summary, saying that she had 'nice feedback around the class' but that she needed to do more concept checking. He quoted Penny saying to the students: 'you said "well do you understand the difference between the present continuous?" yeah so you need to have concept questions it's the only way to check'. The tutor told Penny that she had 'confusion' in her lesson and on her worksheet about the functions of the future tense that she was teaching. Penny commented that planning was difficult:

- P it's hard work  
TT well teaching is hard work  
P no I mean the it's just I don't mean that side of it it's just the  
TT what's the hard work?  
P just the all the tasks and everything and trying to work out how to fit them into it <TT: oh yeah> to make them flow you know  
TT that's that's the hard work of teaching

Later in the session Penny commented positively on Theo's writing activity which involved students standing and reading out their stories to the group. Penny said she thought the activity was good, in that it helped to 'create confidence' and 'each one of the group doing it around just creates confidence in in the whole class'. She continued, saying that it was a 'confidence booster' and that 'if they see others do it I think that's when they then develop the confidence'.

Week 4 started with Penny teaching a full hour (TPF 4,1). The feedback, written by Theo and Jeff was put up on the whiteboard again:

<p>+ good continuity clear voice, lively flowed well</p> <p>- teacher talk concept checking, drill clarification, word stress needed</p>
--

Jeff and Theo commented that she ‘linked to other lessons’ and that she ‘spoke clearly’. Penny’s response to this indicated that this was her main concern going into the lesson:

- P so are you sure about that because that was one of my aims specifically because that’s been quite critical?  
A I thought you were a lot livelier today than you have been  
P yeah well that was my aim to deal with to get my voice sorted

She told the group that she had ‘tried to make it flow more’ and so was ‘trying to do the instructions in a clear voice’.

Jeff then went on to say that they were concerned about graded language because many of her words were ‘highbrow legal terms’. Theo took up the discussion, telling Penny that he and Jeff felt ‘very strongly on teacher talk’, saying that there was ‘maybe a little too much teacher talk’ and that it needed to be ‘tightened up’. He added that she had made some serious errors in her definitions of some of the vocabulary and that he ‘didn’t see any evidence of actual concept checking and certainly it was actually needed’.

After telling her that she should have drilled more of the vocabulary, Theo praised Penny’s ability to teach phonemics, although her lack of understanding seemed to be due to her not knowing the term:

- T one of the positive things I put down here is you are the most confident most confident person in the class using phonemics you know you just put them up as though you knew them for a hundred years  
P which one?  
T sorry? what all phonemics you’re very good at phonemics you know and you to the board you’re good at doing that so if you were as good at drilling to the board as you are=  
P =what say that again phon..  
TT phonemics  
T phonemics I was I phonemics I was saying your one of your great strengths here is phonemics  
P what does that mean I don’t know them  
A these these [laughs, pointing at the phonemic chart next to the whiteboard]  
J these things  
P oh those things do you think?

Penny’s responded to the feedback saying that she had to deal with many ‘hard words’ and she could not have concept checked them all. Theo stepped in at this point to say that she was the first in the group to do a ‘full hour’s vocab lesson’ and ‘everyone thinks vocab is dead easy and it wasn’t it was very difficult’. He told her that he would

have struggled in the same way as she did and so ‘my criticism coming at you is I’m actually saying this so I can hear it myself and when I do a vocab lesson then I’ll remember what I said to you’. Jeff told her that the vocabulary ‘went on a bit too long’ and that one student ‘was absolutely dead’ and another ‘switched off’. Penny’s response was that she was aware that the lesson was boring but that she had tried to change it:

I know I said that this morning it’s not a very I said it was a boring lesson [...] I know it was and that’s why I didn’t want to erm I didn’t want them to sit in silence underlining that’s why I wanted them to do the board and make it a bit lively

When Angela suggested that she could have cut down on the amount of vocabulary that was introduced Penny said ‘that was the task was to ask them to underline so I did what they wanted me to do’. Following the other trainees suggestion that she could have adapted the text, the tutor stepped in to say that she should have maintained a focus on what she was actually teaching, telling her ‘you really opened a Pandora’s box for yourself’. Theo twice entered the discussion to tell her ‘you have to remember all this is hindsight’. Penny’s questions focused on the practical issue of what to say to students in the circumstance that they ask for a definition of a word which was not in her ‘law and order’ brief:

- TT    yeah then you’d say ‘well yeah ok but that’s not really relevant to this law and order  
P     and don’t answer them / or just say another lesson \  
TT    / yeah just say another lesson \  
P     it’s knowing what to say

The tutor pointed out that Penny did not have the experience to deal with simply any vocabulary which came up in a lesson ‘not until you have about four years of experience anyway’, to which Penny responded ‘and not four weeks or three weeks [P laughs]’. The tutor then told her that some of the techniques she had used were ‘reasonably good’ but that she was had a ‘high motivation to help the students’ and that ‘they liked you they take to you reasonable rapport’. He said that it was ‘a question of focus’ ‘full stop nothing else [...] the rest of it is pure technique’. Penny blamed her lesson on the fact that she had read a chapter on vocabulary teaching (Scrivner, 1994):

- P     I think it was reading the Scrivner [laughs] I shouldn’t have I shouldn’t have read Scrivner  
T     thanks for letting us know  
P     no read it and that’s what he it’s more or less he what he you know antonyms synonyms and all of this you know [laughs]

In the following feedback session, TPF 4,2, Penny raised her concern that Helen had taught past tense verbs but that ‘not once did you say that they were irregular’. When Angela suggested that Helen could have only used regular verbs in her task, Penny was again concerned that whatever the case they should be clearly named saying: ‘but it’s worth explaining that they are irregular’.

TPF session 4,3 saw Penny and Helen giving feedback to Angela. Helen was concerned because she felt that the role play Angela used was too personal for the students to be comfortable. Penny initially seemed to agree, telling the group that ‘Carmen turned to us and said “ooh this is a nightmare” and I thought she wasn’t going to do it but then she was ok once she was in the role and realised that it was ok’. When Angela explained that she thought Carmen lacked confidence and needed ‘forcing [...] not forcing but you know encouraging’ to speak, Penny reacted: ‘she needs that confidence and to be forced doesn’t really give you the confidence’. The exchange ended somewhat angrily with Angela snapping at Penny for talking over her.

The final session of TP and TP feedback (4,4) was observed by the external examiner. Penny was first, and feedback on her lesson was given by Theo as Angela had quietly swapped with him in order to avoid giving feedback to Penny. Penny felt that she was ‘more aware on the language’ in this session but felt that she should have used ‘coloured card to do the structures’ on the board. When asked to name some ‘good things’ about her lesson she answered ‘I can never think of good things’. On prompting from the tutor, Penny said that she ‘tried to make them [the students] active’ and ‘tried to involve them in building up the task rather than just giving them giving them the task’. She said that she had tried to make the lesson ‘a bit more fun’.

Theo then gave his feedback. He started positively, emphasising her ‘happiness’ and her rapport with students:

there was er great progress today [...] this is your happiest lesson [...] the students related to you and the interaction was better much better than in any of your other lessons you were happier you were laughing more relaxed and they were er coming with you

Theo felt that Penny achieved her aim, and she clarified and checked her target language, the passive. He said that she had drilled well and that she had done some work on stress – ‘stress-krieg’. He said that the lesson was ‘well-planned er lesson well-structured er and achieved the er the aims’. He felt that she needed to do more drilling.

The tutor agreed that the lesson ‘showed a lot of progress’, especially in how she guided and elicited from students and in concept checking ‘good checking ^ concept that you weren’t doing in class before’. He told her that ‘you’re getting it into your mind that you use what the students give you profitably as long as you do something with them’. When he told her that she had spent too long on the lead-in activity and hence ran out of time for the main grammar focus, Penny said that she was aware that she only had half an hour, ‘the lessons are normally an hour and it just shows a half an hour is very short whereas at first you think it’s nice’. In his summary the tutor said that Penny had never ‘got to grips’ with the target structure and hence the lesson ‘didn’t achieve the aims that you had set out’. He described it as ‘a very pleasant lesson’ which he ‘enjoyed’. He said that the students were ‘quite active’ and that there was ‘lots of variety’ and ‘some good checking’. He concluded that her ‘voice still needs a bit more work’. Penny added that she did have one positive point: ‘I survived’.

## 7.5 Assignments

The assignments which will be included in this section are (in the order in which they were handed out on the course): ‘Learner Profile 1’, ‘Coursebook Evaluation’ and ‘Reflection’. All of Penny’s assignments were typed.

### 7.5.1 Learner Profile 1

Whilst much of the assignment is given over to reporting how the learner who was interviewed by Penny answered her questions, the final paragraph dealt with the assignment sub-question: ‘How will your findings influence your future approach to teaching?’. Penny wrote:

I realise that as a teacher of the English language I must know my subject but to make the lesson interesting with an element of humour. It is also important for the students to communicate in English when learning the language so it is vital to have as less [sic.] teacher talking time as possible. For this reason it is essential to give the students clear instructions, set interesting tasks and encourage them to communicate in English. It is important to know the reason why the students want to learn English as this would not only help when setting tasks but also generate involvement in the lesson from the students.

Clearly the themes of teacher knowledge, and interesting, fun lessons are present. Penny also indicates a concern to minimise teacher talk and maximise student talking time. She sees clear instructions, the harnessing of student interest and motivation, and the need for the teacher to be encouraging as important in this.

## 7.5.2 Coursebook Evaluation

The trainees were given a detailed outline of how to organise this assignment and which elements to comment on. Written under the headings of ‘Syllabus’, ‘Approach’ and ‘Adaptation’ the assignment is largely descriptive although judgement is called for.

Under the section on ‘Syllabus’ Penny wrote a paragraph where she seems to be thinking of the students and their interests and needs:

The listening material for tasks is specifically designed with the student in mind.

The syllabus content is balanced and a different levels of skill are interspersed throughout the lessons. In this way the tasks and content of the syllabus cater for the individual needs of the student whilst allowing language skills to develop gradually.

The section entitled ‘Adaptations’ described two lessons in which Penny had adapted material from the book. In the first lesson she explained that she wrote questions in order to focus on the skills of gist and intensive reading. The second incident that she reported of adapting material was more detailed:

In lesson 14 for listening and grammar I altered the map of Dublin to accommodate the listening task as the key to buildings did not correspond to the tapescript. The grammar lesson to teach seven prepositions of place for location came before the listening task. The listening task included only one of the prepositions which made the listening task for location difficult for some students. In hindsight, I should have adapted the lesson to include some of the prepositions of place on the tape although this would have taken up a lot of time.[...]

*Reward Pre-Intermediate* has many qualities but lesson 14 showed that the textbook lacked the proper testing of the tasks, proof-reading and editing necessary for the tasks to be carried out successfully.

She highlighted in these two paragraphs that she had learnt from the mistake of using the material with only minor adaptation. Her final paragraph is more critical of the book for its failures.

## 7.5.3 Reflection

The instructions for this assignment informed trainees that they needed to organise the assignment into two main sections: the first was to deal with observation of experienced teachers and of colleagues under the headings of: what she liked or thought effective: class management; correction; learner differences; and the use of coursebook and published materials. The second section was to focus on their own teaching, listing some of their main strengths and weaknesses. As this assignment is rich in information concerning Penny's beliefs about teaching and learning, this section will use the headings listed to illuminate her responses.

### 7.5.3.1 Observation of experienced teachers and colleagues: What did you like? What was effective / ineffective?

All teachers conducted lessons according to the Cambridge/RSA guidelines whilst at the same time incorporating their own personality into teaching. This appealed to me as it makes teaching less uniform for the students and allows for a relaxing classroom environment. By developing an individual style for teaching I feel that the teacher is able to maintain a sense of freedom which helps all students engaged in the learning process.

In this paragraph, Penny recognised commonality between how the trainees are taught to teach and how the experienced teachers work. She did not see these 'guidelines' as restrictive however, commenting that they have been merged with teachers' personalities. She stated that this allowed for individual style and freedom, and variety of teaching, and contributed towards a relaxed learning environment.

Penny further emphasised the importance of the relationship between the teacher and students and the need for a relaxed atmosphere with her next comment: 'all teachers were humorous in the classroom and openly friendly with students'.

At this point Penny brought in her 'colleagues', the other trainees, and, again she commented on individual style. She made the point that although trainees needed to develop, they have positive points:

The trainee teachers also have individual style [sic.] but it needs to be refined and developed in order to fit the requirements of teaching. However, the trainee teachers have certain qualities that need little adjustment such as Helen's clear voice and diction and Theo's ability to enliven the students.



Her conclusion about what she learnt from the observation of her peers focused on seeing them using the techniques taught on the course and noting how they worked:

For me, learning from the trainees was to observe how they put into practice each new tool of teaching and after teaching practice finding out whether it worked well or could have been improved. In this way, the recommendations are a reminder to myself on how the lesson should be taught.

### **7.5.3.2 Class management**

Key elements that Penny chose to mention in this section was the ‘unthreatening’ classrooms where the teacher was ‘able to sit at the same level as the students which is a very effective way of teaching’. She also commented on the use of background music which ‘enhanced the relaxed atmosphere’. Penny commented on one class she observed where the teacher was using role play and she noted:

Student participation in role playing not only reinforces what is being taught but also helps to develop the confidence of a student and provides the lessons with an element of fun.

### **7.5.3.3 Correction**

The experienced teachers used various ways to correct errors and whenever a correction was made the student who made the error was always included in the process. The errors a student made were self corrected with the help of the teacher who prompted the student and the correction was elicited. Fellow students were also asked to help with correction either before or instead of the intervention of the teacher. The method of correction used by the experienced teachers is obviously better for the student whereas the trainee teachers often make the mistake of making the correction for the student.

It seems that by the point in the course at which Penny wrote this assignment, she regarded teacher correction of student errors as a mistake, viewing student self-correction and student – student correction as preferable methods of dealing with errors in class.

### **7.5.3.4 Learner differences**

Penny’s description of learner differences was brief and mainly focused on the point that, despite different cultures, ages and gender, all benefited from the use of tasks and all students were enthusiastic.

### **7.5.3.5 The use of materials**

Both experienced and trainee teachers adapted coursebooks to fit the level of the students although the experienced teachers used more of their own material.

Penny also made a note of the fact that learners in the higher level groups tended to use their own monolingual dictionaries more.

### **7.5.3.6 Reflection on her own teaching**

I am motivated to help and I feel that this comes across to the students during the teaching practice. I am able to deal with the skills task and authentic speaking fairly well although all areas of teaching need improvement. I am aware of my weaknesses although the main areas of concern are language awareness, focus and lesson planning and voice projection and intonation. Voice projection and intonation will come with effort, practice and exercising the voice. Focus and lesson planning will come with experience. Language awareness will improve with self study but also, and I think primarily, from working with students. I found the Profile II assignment very useful in becoming more of [sic.] the difficulties in explaining a language to others as opposed to learning it for myself.

Although all areas of teaching will improve with experience and effort I feel that a better awareness of the language will improve focus and lesson planning which in turn will improve voice projection and intonation. The confidence gained for a better understanding of language awareness will lead to thorough lesson planning and the delivery and explanation of instructions will be carried out confidently.

This section of her assignment made clear Penny's sense of her strengths – highly motivated, able to deal with skills tasks and authentic speaking; and her weaknesses – language awareness, focus and lesson planning, voice projection and intonation. On the whole she seemed to see these as being things which will improve with experience, practice, and confidence. She also seemed to view the area of language awareness as underlying many of the other problems she was having.

## **7.6 Progress Records**

Progress records were completed at the ends of Week 1, 2 and 3. The sheets which were given to trainees mid-week were first written on by trainees, and then the tutors added their comments.

## 7.6.1 End of Week 1

In the section which was entitled ‘Overall Progress’ Penny had written ‘less rambling. more focus’. Under the heading ‘Next week I need to work on...’ Penny listed: ‘Lesson plan; time organisation; speaking / diction when giving instructions; concentration’.

Next to the speaking / diction comment the teacher trainer had put a tick. The final section of the form was a more detailed summary of Penny’s progress so far as seen by the teacher trainer:

You have a pleasant settled rapport. You are able to involve the students in tasks and encourage them well. Your use of the board is effective. Clear progress on unnecessary and ungraded teacher talk. Work on your voice / delivery, instructions, and language awareness.

## 7.6.2 End of Week 2

Penny indicated that she thought she had made improvements in both voice projection and lesson planning when she listed them under the heading ‘Overall Progress’. In the section ‘Next week I need to work on...’ Penny listed:

Pre-teaching vocab	Lesson planning
voice projection	
Instructions – exemplification – explain task	
drilling / phonology	

The tutors summary followed:

You need to work on your voice; class address style and to separate your questions and instructions from the rest of what you are saying. Planning in general and planning your teacher language in particular is the way forward. You have a good rapport and a supportive manner, keep your motivation to teach high, this communicates itself to the Sts. Remember though you can’t help all individuals with the task. Use class checking for this.

Again the themes of voice and projection are uppermost in the feedback. Penny’s relationship with students and her supportiveness are mentioned as well as her tendency to focus on individuals.

### 7.6.3 End of Week 3

The final progress form required notes to be made on 'effective areas' and 'areas which needed attention' under the headings of 'Planning' 'Classroom skill and awareness' and 'Professional development'.

In the section on planning, Penny wrote that her presentation of materials and her stages and timing were satisfactory but that, although she felt she needed attention in all areas, 'particular attention [was] needed on aims, exemplification, language awareness, lesson planning, drilling, phonology.'

Her point about aims is repeated in the following section although this time she comments on it positively, along with her handling of skills lessons. She also writes:

I am sensitive to the students needs [sic].  
Rapport is good although improvement needed

In the section on 'Areas which need attention', her focus is on:

Instructions – delivery.  
Voice (slow down, louder when giving instructions)  
Language awareness – meaning of language.  
Error correction, practice.  
The presence of a 'teacher'.

The teacher trainer ticked each of the points Penny wrote.

In the final section – Professional development – Penny wrote that she was effective in 'Good self assessment. I liase with colleagues.' The comment she wrote in the 'areas which need attention' section is interesting in that it touches upon her need for more distanced, considered reflection rather than the immediate reflection which was called for on the course:

Many things in place but need to be 'polished'. I need to think about feedback and the lesson privately so initial feedback not always good.

Under the tutor's summary there were comments on her well-organised lessons and on her self-awareness of her faults:

You have been effective in eliciting talk from students. You are able to engage the class in production and authentic spoken use of language. You are effective in skills work. Your lessons are clearly planned and clearly staged. You are aware of areas which need attention – a significant improvement needs to take place in instructions use of voice delivery. You need to research language areas and work on the clarification and checking of meaning.

## 7.7 Course Questionnaire

The questionnaire is included here as, although it was handed out on the second day of the course, it was not returned until the day of the final interview.

The questionnaire provided some background detail for Penny which back up data collected in the interviews. For example, she listed the main reason for doing the CELTA course as ‘to change career’ and stated that the concerns she had about the course were:

Whether or not I like teaching.  
Grammar knowledge.

In the section of the questionnaire which asked for sentence completions, Penny raised issues of the need for teachers to be knowledgeable, the importance of interesting and fun lessons, and the need for teachers to be aware of student needs and be supportive and non-judgemental:

*The best way to learn a language is ...* to study and to practice.

*A good teacher should always...* be aware of student needs.  
Up-to-date

*A good teacher should never...* ‘put down’, ie humiliate or embarrass, the student.  
Do not be judgemental.

*When teaching English it is important to...* know your subject.

*The key to a good language lesson is...* to make it interesting with an element of fun.

In a question which was intended to tap trainees’ beliefs about learners, the questionnaire presented six terms and asked trainees to choose which view they agreed with most. The terms offered were: resisters, explorers, raw materials, partners, receptacles, clients. Learners were invited to offer alternatives if desired. Penny used all of the terms except for ‘raw materials’, and she explained why she thought each was relevant:

The client relationship is important for professionalism. The relationship between teacher and student would not be successful if it wasn’t a partnership. The teacher and the student are both receptacles, learning from each other. Everyone has a ‘story’ and a history. So learners bring something to a classroom. Learners who resist will achieve very little – learners must be open to the known and the unknown.

These answers made in the sentence completion exercise above were reinforced in response to a question which asked Penny to list up to five factors which make an effective teacher. She wrote:

Sense of humour  
knowledgeable  
empathy  
professionalism  
open to student ideas

Her response to the question about effective learners also tied in to her ideas about lessons built on fun and participation. It also brought in notions of motivation:

Wanting to learn the language for personal satisfaction as well as for practical reasons.  
Willing and happy to participate in class activities.

## 7.8 Interview 2

At the beginning of the interview Penny was asked how she had found the course, she replied: ‘very intensive [...] it was very intensive very tiring’.

### 7.8.1 Beliefs about teachers and teaching

A cluster of beliefs which were not in evidence in the first interview relate to Penny’s point that the experienced teachers that she observed all taught according to CELTA ‘guidelines’. She felt that within this, each had their own style, which was ‘flowing’ and had a sense of ‘freedom’. She did not feel that the CELTA ‘guidelines’ hindered the teachers; rather that they had grown into them naturally. Two of the points she mentioned as being important in terms of the CELTA ‘guidelines’ were getting students to relax and smile and eliciting from students rather than giving things away.

it was good to look at experienced teachers because they were obviously flowing in their lessons and they they all did the erm they all followed the guidelines of CELTA they were all you know eliciting things they didn't really give much away it was all coming from the students and and erm they were all different styles just like the trainees all different styles so that was a common thing was that they were all different styles and it didn't hinder anything [...] it was good to see how how they erm how the experienced teachers have grown into the guidelines naturally you know they've just but still kept their own individual style and freedom about the classroom they still just had this sense of freedom

A point which was raised in the first interview is the need for teachers to have a good knowledge of English grammar so that they will be able to teach it, 'it's the hub of it [...] you can't teach anything without a full knowledge of the grammar'.

Penny emphasised that teachers also need to have a good knowledge of their learners in order to judge if activities will work with them. This knowledge is also important because teachers need to be sensitive when using tasks. Teachers need to be sensitive to students' background experiences and to the fact that adults may not want to discuss certain issues or may be shy. She believed that the teacher also needs to be careful in case tasks become 'too serious or too personal'.

you have to be careful with the tasks especially with adults which is what you find you know sometimes they can be very personal because [...] as an adult you become more experienced and you might not want to talk about certain things or you know and you're hoping in the class that it doesn't get too serious or too personal you know and some people are very shy aren't they and some people are not so shy so I think you have to judge a class as well on you know try and get to know them a little bit just to see if something will work or not otherwise you're wasting your time and you not going to achieve very much

Although Penny expressed concern about the need to be sensitive when using tasks with adult learners, she did seem to believe that they were an important part of language learning. She described tasks as 'fun' and felt that they helped by encouraging students to concentrate.

Penny felt that it was important for students to be interested in the topic as this also helped their concentration. She indicated that the teacher needed to make the class interesting and light-hearted and to help the students have fun. She contrasted this with school learning where fun is seen as disruptive, unlike the constructive way it is viewed on the CELTA programme. She described how school involved a considerable amount of 'sitting at the desk [...] bored with the subject' and she contrasted this with the CELTA course:

it was good in the way it was participation because that's what we didn't get at school we didn't participate like that we didn't do tasks and things we were just sat at the desk and we wrote and sat at the table and we had to sit there that was it couldn't move there was no fun involved otherwise it was seen as disruptive or or whatever whereas here it's not seen it's seen as constructive isn't it

[...]

I'd like to see you saw a bit of fun you know basically because er there's nothing worse than you know a miserable class and that goes from my schooldays as well you know coz there's nothing worse than just sitting at the desk you know just sitting at the desk you know being bored with your subject

[...]

I think fun generally and to make it interesting and to make it a bit light hearted erm and that's just to make them concentrate because you know you just know yourself that if something's boring you drift off [...] that's where the tasks hav..there not only good they also encourage people to concentrate you've got to concentrate you're forced to concentrate in a way on what you've got to do so so I think tasks I think tasks are quite good

A point which was mentioned in interview 1 was the need to be careful when giving feedback to students. Penny talked about how people can be upset by feedback and how it can be 'confusing', especially for learners at lower levels. She illustrated her ideas by referring to a specific incident in which she was told by the trainer that she should have brought in help from other students because it 'is a class situation remember you can't concentrate on just one student coz it blocks out the others'. She accepted this, adding that she felt that student-to-student correction was useful because 'it takes the pressure and the load off' the teacher. However, her acceptance of the idea seemed cautious as she talked about the need for student-to-student correction to be controlled for use at lower levels – limited to the teacher and one student only – in order to avoid confusion. She felt that at higher levels student-to-student correction would work fine, but at lower levels the teacher knew best:

with someone whose language isn't as strong as others to have say four other students helping her who also are better at the language but not as good can be a bit you know too much for her to take in [...] I can't have four people talking all at once you know it's just not I just don't think it's good and that's from experience again I just think no I don't want four people just one of you speak just one of you speak [laughs] and the person knows which is yo..really should be the teacher although I I was training but with the person who knows is the teacher properly whereas I whereas at the higher level I think one student probably can because they've got more knowledge of the language

Penny also retold the story which had illustrated her points about feedback in the first interview. This time, rather than focus on the affective results of the teacher's comments, Penny talked about why the teacher's feedback 'wasn't a good approach':

I wrote a story a ghost story and the teacher said instead of saying 'oh that was really good you know that's a good style it's good the way you've done that you know carry on next time' instead she it was just erm 'TICK but could've been longer' and and that plays on your mind you think oh next time I've got to make it longer in other words I'm not thinking it's gotta be interesting it's gotta be grammatically correct I'm just thinking it's got to be longer and that doesn't make it any better it can be quite bad actually if you're just rambling on about something and it's all over the place so it wasn't a good way to teach it wasn't a good approach [...] so to say something should be longer it's like saying how long is a piece of string how much longer you know it's



just not the right approach whereas at least if someone says 70 words then you then write as much as you can in 70 words and you are trying to convey a message across aren't you

In the second interview Penny also talked about the need to be cautious in using coursebooks because she believed that there are 'so few coursebooks that are any good'. She talked about the need to adapt materials and her feeling that in order to do this that you need experience:

adapting the course books which really we don't have the the erm experience to do properly er you just erm adapt a certain a certain amount of it just to get you through those in hindsight after you've done the lesson you think 'god I could've adapted that that much better and focused more in certain ways'

## 7.8.2 Beliefs about language and language learning

There were indications that Penny had been reflecting on her language learning experience and, unlike the first interview where she had little to say about it, this time was quick to talk about it and compare it to the CELTA way of teaching:

I liked Spanish yeah I liked learning another language it was just interesting because that's when you get to know about another country it's a bit it's it's not just the language is it they actually teach you the erm I think more or less the way it's taught the way TEFL is probably taught you know they talk about erm you know it's in topics isn't it it's in topics [...] that was conversation wasn't it so it was more or less erm very similar to or the way I was taught Spanish and she was from Gibraltar so she was a native she was a native erm speaker as well

As the extract above suggests, in the second interview Penny referred again to the idea that learning a foreign language was not just about the language but also involved learning about the culture. She concluded that because of this cultural element it was important that teachers need to be 'understanding and non-judgemental'. She outlined her belief that learning a language makes people more tolerant of other cultures and gives them 'extra knowledge' and 'extra understanding' of people. She believed that as language is concerned with communication, it has a 'moral side'. She also talked about English as a world language and hinted at notions of linguistic imperialism when she talked about being 'nationalistic' about 'empire' and 'empire-building':

it gives people an extra extra knowledge an extra understanding it makes you more human doesn't it instead of the way people do make fun don't they yeah they make fun of the way they speak and really it's not fair is it and that would give a tolerance

then I just think it's a moral thing as well in language it is a moral it is a moral thing it's how we communicate so it's quite important isn't it it's got lots of connotations to it it's not just an academic thing it's got like the moral the moral side on it you know

Penny's discussion of grammar in the second interview also dealt with the importance of grammar in UK education. She explained that she felt that grammar was undervalued and thought to be unimportant and that the failure to teach grammar in school has resulted in a society in which people have poor grammar and spelling. She felt that children were not taught grammar in school – neither tenses nor terminology for referring to grammar:

I don't think grammar's sort of very important [inaudible] in the sense that you don't hear them coming home from school talking about 'we did the present tense today we did the future simple today' you just don't hear them say that

She stated that it tends to be assumed that people know their grammar and can use it to write 'proper sentences'. She felt that people don't write much in their jobs but that if you read a lot then grammar can 'infiltrate itself into your mind' although only if books are 'edited well':

you do speak and write better if you read well if you read lots of books and read lots of good writing then that's how you it just it infiltrates itself into your mind and eventually you do erm you do use it

Penny was clear however that she felt that newspapers were edited badly and this was having a negative impact on grammar in our society:

if you look at erm newspaper articles especially you know it's such they can't spell the grammar is it's just they can't spell they can't the apostrophe is all over the place erm it's just so badly written and you know that's what everybody reads

Unlike the first interview Penny did refer to grammar in relation to L2 learning. She indicated her belief that grammar is 'the hub' of language learning and that it is therefore essential. She discussed how the grammar knowledge needed for L1 users is different from that needed by L2 users. She talked about how some L1 grammar knowledge is 'inbuilt' in us.

I don't suppose that we would have to know time references the way we have to teach it in TEFL because we know er that's an awareness then of the language isn't it and that's how we feel it so it's just that we more or less know time references don't we we know what we mean by 'I went' and 'I was going' and we know the time references but we don't know the tense and we don't know how best to write

something you know er where to put an adverb for instance you know the best place for it to go to make it read well the best place for it to go so I just think that we don't need to know all of it the way a foreign student would have to because of the tenses the time references because that's inbuilt in us anyway

Penny also talked in the second interview about the differences between a teacher's knowledge of grammar and a student's. She talked about how the teacher has a different perspective to students and how the teacher needs to 'convert' this knowledge for students. She stated that the teacher speaks the language 'naturally' and that this is what the teacher is trying to teach the students. She indicated that she had reflected on whether this difference in grammatical knowledge between teacher and student was also found in other areas of language such as in knowledge of words or of dictionary use:

I liked the 'Profile 2' [...] it was finding out how a student learns so in that way because I was learning the grammar myself and I would look at the books and I was learning the grammar the way I was learning it so that when I was going to lessons it was the way I needed to learn it whereas when I did the 'Profile 2' I was learning it as well but then I had to try and teach it to someone who was learning it so in that way it changed the way I was looking at grammar coz I re..that's when you realise that I was learning it for me but then I was learning instead of just learning it for me I was then trying to convert that to for someone else to learn but me to show them [...] whereas before I was learning the grammar as a student whereas after that I was trying to learn the grammar as a student and as a teacher and try to think about it in another way although I still couldn't do it properly [...] that's when I thought about the dictionaries that they use erm especially when I did the vocab lesson I wanted to see how they looked at words instead of the way I was looking at words through my dictionary that I use whereas they wouldn't use those dictionaries would they they would have a translation dictionary

Penny also talked about how English is different to other languages. She cited differences in pronunciation and grammar. She also talked about how these differences are due to a different way of seeing the world, concluding that although we can teach students about English we shouldn't 'expect them to know it'.

### 7.8.3 Beliefs about learning to teach

In the second interview Penny talked about a number of beliefs about learning to teach which were not mentioned in the first interview. Several of them relate to the experience of the input sessions and the observation on the course, for example Penny talked about her sense that the CELTA course provided a good model of teaching for trainees. She talked about how the trainees themselves were taught in a similar way to

how they were expected to teach the learners of English and that this method of teaching was also seen in the lessons of the experienced teachers:

what we were asking the students to do especially in the participation thing we were also asked to do in our tuition so that's where you could see it does work it is fun so I think that it it got down to the more serious stuff and we all sat there and so and that was exactly the way it was in the teaching practice and and in the experienced teachers' lessons as well it was just the way it was the way we were taught was the way we were going to teach [...] but I think that was good the way that we did in the teaching we did in our tuition lessons the same as what we asked the students to do

Penny discussed the development of an individual style which she felt the trainees on the course would do in time. She talked about how she felt it was important not to copy or try to mimic the teaching of others as she felt that this wouldn't work:

that's what I think the trainees will do you know the trainees once they master it will just have this guideline of how to do things and then they'll just go off and do it with their own style [...] as much as erm I liked Helen's voice and she had lovely diction but I'd never have a voice like that I'll never have a voice like that so there's no point in thinking 'I must be like Helen' 'I must have a voice like Helen' it's not going to happen coz I don't have a voice like that and [...] you could see how how Theo's liveliness made the class fun so you can still make the class fun but using your own personality and character and using you know the qualities that you have [...] so so I don't I don't think you have to copy anyone you don't think I'm going to be just like whoever I'm going to be just the way they do it is really good I'm going to do that because it just won't work if you try to mimic anyway so but at least you could see how how it can be done

Whatever the different individual approaches to teaching, Penny seemed to feel that one thing which was important was the ability to get the students to relax and to smile:

you can still make the class fun but using your own personality and character and using you know the qualities that you have [...] everybody did have the ability to make the students at least smile you know so so that was a good a good thing and that was the same with the erm experienced teachers as well some were more flamboyant some were very gentle some were in between some were you know they were just different but you know they were just different but all of them at some point made the students relax and smile

Penny talked about how the intensive nature of the course tended to force people to sacrifice some things as not all the material could be adapted. She specifically mentioned that in order to adapt the coursebook properly you need experience. She also felt that as she learnt more about grammar she would have more success at putting ideas into practice. She talked about the importance of learning from making mistakes and

from hindsight. She felt that getting mixed up and confused were a part of learning, and appreciated that on the CELTA course, unlike at school, mistakes were not seen as failure:

the more you try to work on something the more confusing it gets doesn't it and the more mixed up it gets in your head and that's part of it isn't it [...] because it is mixed up until it eventually sorts itself out

[...]

they don't see errors as failure whereas generally I think people still do see you know if you get something wrong it's a failure

[...]

things had to be sacrificed you know certain you know the grammar had to be sacrificed or then the [inaudible] had to be sacrificed coz it just seemed to be but then that came to adapting the books wasn't it adapting the course books which really we don't have the the erm experience to do properly er you just erm adapt a certain a certain amount of it just to get you through those in hindsight after you've done the lesson you think 'god I could've adapted that that much better and focused more in certain ways' so but that's because with it being an intensive course isn't it [...] and the point of the fact that you make mistakes is part of the learning anyway isn't it

Penny also talked about her feeling that the focus of her TP sessions were 'unbalanced', with too many classes centred around grammar. She talked about how time consuming it was and how having a break from grammar to do skills lessons would have been easier:

if you're just doing complete grammar for a lesson you're just concentrating on that if you don't as as a trainee you don't know the language so you end up concentrating on and whereas in some lessons I found myself concentrating just on the la..just on the tasks in that erm I was trying to work out the tasks and then then the grammar was erm sort of secondary and then I didn't get a proper grasp on the grammar so it seemed to be not really balanced in that way

Penny's comments on the usefulness of the assignments for learning to teach on the course can be seen in the section earlier where she talked about her realisation that students learn grammar differently to teachers:

because I was learning the grammar myself and I would look at the books and I was learning the grammar the way I was learning it so that when I was going to lessons it was the way I needed to learn it whereas when I did the 'Profile 2' I I was learning it as well but then I had to try and teach it to someone who was learning it so in that way it changed the way I was looking at grammar

#### 7.8.4 Penny's self-reported changes in beliefs

Although Penny was unclear about whether she thought her ideas and beliefs about teaching had changed over the duration of the course, it is possible to extricate two major changes. The first was her response to the direct question on this issue. Immediately prior to the question Penny had been discussing her feeling that a teacher needed to be careful with their use of tasks because students could be shy or the exercise could become too personal or serious. It is possible that this train of thought was continued as she answered the question which followed.

*do you think your ideas about teaching have changed since you started the course?*  
yeah because they don't see errors as failure whereas generally I think people still do see you know if you get something wrong it's a failure [RR: *did you think that though?*] oh no oh no I don't think that at all I never have thought that even at school I never thought that I never thought which is why people tend to get upset if an error is pointed out and they think it is a failure that's why people do get upset because really deep down although they might not realise it they know it's not a failure but it's only someone else telling them that so

Penny seems to be indicating that she feels the CELTA is more in line with her feelings about the need to learn from mistakes and from hindsight and she seems to contrast this with her schooling where errors were equated with failure. The question which interrupted her statement came as a response to my confusion over how her answer dealt with my question.

The question above was followed by a further attempt to get Penny to deal with the question which I was interested in. This time, the result was more successful as Penny talked about her expectation of a more didactic approach, something she is clear that would have been unacceptable to her. Her point about errors seems to confirm the conclusions drawn above, and that she saw this as an important issue:

*but do you think there were any ideas that you arrived with which changed over the course?* [P: *about teaching?*] *about teaching*  
erm no not really because I was hoping it would be it would be erm more open so in that way it was quite pleasant to find that it was like that so although I came with the..ooh if it's like that you know if it's such a way but then I would've left I wouldn't have stayed at it I would've thought I'm not getting involved in this I wouldn't have stayed for that reason if I'd've thought it was you know ba..you know errors and the teacher standing in front of the class and the teacher is there and you are there [gesture indicating separation] whereas it wasn't like that it was quite er it was open wasn't it there wasn't really this demarcation of you know a line you can't cross

## 7.9 Post-Course Questionnaire

Contact following the end of the course consisted of a questionnaire which Penny returned in January 2001. In addition, she sent two e-mails to me, in March and June of 2001.

### 7.9.1 Questionnaire

Following the end of the course Penny returned to secretarial work temporarily before taking up a post teaching EFL to children and adults in a private language school Greece. She began this contract in September 2000. Attached to the questionnaire when it was returned in January 2001 was a note explaining her reasons for taking the job and indicating that even at this early stage, all was not well:

Dear Michaela

It was nice to hear from you. After my spell down south I'm now in Greece. One reason for being here is that I didn't want to waste the money I spent on the course. A poor reason I know but it's a little better than office life. I do have an e-mail address if you would like to know more about 'teaching' in Greece. Happy New Year.

Penny

#### 7.9.1.1 Experience of teaching in Greece

Her experience in Greece, as reflected in the questionnaire, seemed to be that students on the whole were unmotivated and lacked interest in learning English:

*How similar/different have the kinds of students and the kinds of lessons you've taught been to those you were prepared for on the CELTA?*

*(a) Have the students been different in any respect?*

Less disciplined (ie, classroom).

*(b) Have the lessons been different in any respect?*

Yes. No lesson planning but some preparation is needed.

Children not very interested therefore they do not pay attention and enthusiasm for English is low although many like the language. In spite of this English is considered important.

She also indicated that her planning had been reduced to preparation before teaching and that this reality was lacking on the CELTA. Further, she stated that she had stopped using 'many' of the teaching techniques taught on the CELTA, although she did not specify which:

*Have any differences you mention above led you to change your teaching approach?*  
The environment is more realistic than the environment of the CELTA course so being able to adapt and think is a necessary skill.

*Can you think of any other influences besides the CELTA course on your teaching eg reading, workshops or conferences? What effects did they have?*

I attended a conference in Athens organised by the British Council and UCLES which was useful but to apply UCLES standards in Greece is difficult. Many of the teaching methods laid down in the CELTA are more or less abandoned.

### **7.9.1.2 Reflections on the CELTA course**

On the whole Penny was positive about the CELTA course, describing it as providing 'a good model' and a 'high standard of teaching'. The difficulty she faced in her teaching was ascribed to her Greek context and not to her CELTA preparation:

*How useful do you think your CELTA course has been to you in your EFL teaching?*

*(a) Useful aspects:*

Some preparation towards what is involved in teaching generally but little help towards teaching EFL in Greece. If I were to continue teaching EFL and move to another country maybe the CELTA would be more useful.

*How far do you think that the techniques and approach(es) you learnt on the CELTA were adequate preparation for your subsequent teaching?*

A good model and the high standard of teaching is worthwhile but it does not prepare for the education system of another country and the system takes precedence. Of course, a training course cannot encompass such matters. In fact, the CELTA is not useful in Greece even though employers do appreciate the certificate and Cambridge exams are big business. Teaching in Greece may have been more of a shock and more difficult without it but I'm not sure.

One of the difficulties facing Penny in her Greek teaching context seemed to be in the application of teaching techniques and skills to a context which differs from that of the CELTA course. These differences were focused around the students' lack of awareness of the techniques she was using and, as suggested in her response to the question above, to the pressure of teaching in a different school system:

*How useful do you think your CELTA course has been to you in your EFL teaching?*

*(b) Less useful aspects:*

Concept checking. More often than not patronising and a waste of time. Easier and quicker to use a dictionary although Greek students don't carry Greek - English dictionaries. Using the fingers for contractions, etc. – the students do not know the CELTA teaching techniques and there's no time to explain.

When asked what she would suggest to improve the CELTA course, Penny included helping trainees with note taking skills so that, when they consulted their notes



at a later date, they made sense. She felt that the course should include information on major ELT exams. Penny suggested that they should 'look into concept checking and other techniques' which, when read in the light of her comment in the question above, suggests that she felt some of the techniques taught were not useful.

She also made the point that trainees should be allowed to feedback to the course without fear of 'reprisals'. She added that the course tutors should provide 'sympathetic support'.

In response to the question concerning what advice she would give to someone about to start the course she indicated that they should 'concentrate on the grammar sessions', and seek out constructive criticism.

## 7.9.2 E-mails

Since the questionnaire was completed I have had two e-mails from Penny, the first in March 2001 and then again in June. Both indicated a desire to remain in EFL at least for a short time, although both also indicated that even after a year of work, she did not identify herself as an EFL teacher:

E-mail, March 2001:

Taking the plunge is an underestimation. CELTA, although Cambridge exams are widespread here in Greece, is not really welcome. You have to do what the owners of the school say which is fair enough but the education system here is more or less corrupt and screaming at the children in order to get classroom discipline is not my idea of fun (me not shouting causes a problem but unfortunately I'm not going to conform to their way of 'teaching').

Being here I've also discovered that teaching is not the career for me but at the moment it's better than 'office life'. I don't know what I'm doing next. I need a job that pays enough so that I can live comfortably and I can save.

E-mail, June 2001:

I am now back in the UK. My time in Greece was traumatic – not teaching the children but the relationship with the owner of the school. As a result I don't know whether to continue with TEFL. Of course, I'm not a teacher but if the circumstances were right TEFL-ing could prove useful for a while.

## 7.10 Summary

This chapter has introduced and profiled Penny, one of the trainees on the course. The data which was collected through multiple sources is both complementary and consistent. The data sources when combined give a rich picture of Penny, her beliefs, concerns, and experiences of the course.

Some of the key beliefs which Penny holds involve the need for a sensitive, encouraging teacher who uses humour and fun in the classroom both to create a relaxing environment and to involve students in the learning process. Penny expressed concerns that the teacher should not dominate the class or lecture students but should help individuals, working to keep their attention and build their confidence.

Penny felt that teachers needed to be knowledgeable about their subject, which she interpreted as English grammar and it was seen that over the duration of the course her understanding of grammar, which was initially very narrow, broadened, and she showed signs of reflection on the differences between L1 and L2 grammar needs and of the development of an understanding of pedagogic grammar.

With regard to teaching, Penny talked of the development of an individual style which did not involve mimicry but developed with experience. She talked of the importance of learning from mistakes. Despite this, indications were that she did not see herself as a teacher even after teaching post-course. She also seemed reluctant even at the end of the course to accept responsibility for her teaching.

The other point which needs mention here because it was a major focus of TP feedback was Penny's voice. Despite her belief in the importance of good voice projection, she did not seem to believe it was possible to change this feature on such a short course, and she ended her final TP session with feedback still relating to the need for improvement on this aspect.

These major findings related to Penny and her beliefs are summarised in the table which follows:

	<b>Main points</b>
Individual elements	<p><i>Early in the course:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of beliefs which seem to come from schooling eg the importance of sensitive feedback</li> <li>• Number of beliefs which seem to come from work experience eg the importance of being professional</li> <li>• Many beliefs related to desirability of non-didactic teaching eg the need for learners to be actively involved in lessons</li> <li>• Desire to learn from the students; fear of not knowing eg the lesson on military service</li> <li>• Held a number of beliefs which relate to the importance of affective factors in the classroom eg treat students as equals and respect them</li> <li>• Cluster of beliefs relating to the importance of learning grammar in L1, especially the need for labelling; feeling that she had been taught grammar badly</li> <li>• Beliefs about importance of grammar in L1 learning of English seemingly unrelated to L2 learning of language</li> <li>• Language learning seen as learning about culture</li> </ul>
	<p><i>Late in the course:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Similarities in many beliefs from early course eg belief in importance of sensitivity to learners, the need for learner involvement in the lesson and the role of grammar</li> <li>• Developing concept of grammar: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- difference between L1 grammar and L2 grammar</li> <li>- difference between teacher's grammar and students' grammar</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Reinforcement of beliefs eg related to need to avoid didactic teaching</li> <li>• Habits which influence teaching eg writing in draft form (from work experience)</li> <li>• Identifies 'guidelines' which teachers use ie strategies and techniques from course as commonalities alongside individual teaching style</li> <li>• Difficulty in seeing herself as a teacher, both during and post-course</li> </ul>
	<p><i>Post-course teaching:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty in teaching children where classroom discipline is an issue</li> <li>• Difficulty in teaching students with lower motivation</li> <li>• Abandoned 'many of the teaching methods laid down in the CELTA' as teaching system was different and 'takes precedence' and learners were not trained in CELTA techniques and 'there's no time to explain'</li> <li>• Would have liked help with her own study skills</li> <li>• Would have liked more information on ELT exams</li> </ul>
Social elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments on being taught as she was required to teach and as she saw in the lessons of experienced teachers</li> <li>• Awareness of learners and their feelings</li> <li>• Learning from peers in feedback eg from feedback to Angela and in</li> </ul>

	<p>input</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sees teaching as classroom performance and not planning or preparation</li> <li>• Problems dealing with feedback in terms of some areas she was able to correct, eg teacher talk, and other areas seemingly unable or unwilling to correct eg issue of voice</li> <li>• Difficulty putting into practice some of her beliefs, at least initially. eg sensitive feedback and lecturing</li> <li>• Resistance to taking responsibility for her teaching and materials</li> </ul>
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**Table 7.1: Summary of the major findings – Penny**

# Chapter 8: Theo

## 8.1. Introduction

Theo, aged 43, has worked as a guide on historical tours around Britain and Ireland. His work is done in intensive bursts over 6 months or so of the year, leaving the rest of his time free. For the remainder of the year – he ‘dabbles’ in buying and selling antiques. Theo’s younger brother is a Director of the language school studied in this thesis meaning that Theo began the course well aware of EFL as a career and probably of the opportunities available.

Theo came across as a very confident, intelligent individual, who was well read and very interested in history and current affairs. He was very sociable and spent much of the free-time interacting with the other trainees, experienced teachers and tutors.

Being accustomed to working in an intensive manner in his job as a tour guide, Theo took this aspect of the course in his stride. He arrived at the school at nine or so in the morning, well before other trainees, and worked for several hours there before classes started.

Theo received a grade ‘B’ pass for the course.

## 8.2. Interview 1

### 8.2.1 Beliefs about teachers and teaching

At the beginning of the course, Theo talked about the need for a good teacher to be ‘confident’, ‘enthusiastic’ and to enjoy ‘imparting knowledge’ to others. He described the ‘great satisfaction’ he received from ‘seeing people suddenly finding their awareness [...] or learning something that they didn't know about’. Theo also described a good teacher as someone who is ‘very animated’ and uses ‘expression in [their] voice’ in order to keep people’s attention. Other characteristics he viewed as important were ‘tolerance’, ‘patience’ and ‘understanding’.

Theo also ascribed importance to the use of humour in the classroom, seeing this as something that the teacher should deliberately try to introduce. He talked about how

humour assisted both in motivation – ‘if people are enjoying it then they are actually sort of more willing to learn’ – and in memory – ‘if you laugh at something you’re more likely to remember something’.

Theo mentioned the need for the teacher to take into account ‘kinaesthetic learners’, a learning style with which he strongly identified. He stated firmly that he felt people learned by doing and in language learning that meant learning by speaking: ‘I need to say it to learn it’. Theo talked about the need therefore for teachers to give learners the opportunity to practice speaking rather than limiting them to listening to the teacher talking. The result was that in class ‘there would be an emphasis on doing erm and listening er and er then perhaps sort of writing later’. He drew on his own experience at school and he contrasted this early experience unfavourably with that of the CELTA course:

I’m a I think they call it er er kinaesthetic learner a mover and a doer and er my kinaesthetic needs weren’t they weren’t seen to I I felt they looked after the visual and the auditory learners erm whereas I found working with er Jim at [this] school [...] he does very little talking indeed and we do most of the talking erm which is which is what I like coz I need to say it to learn it

Theo also talked about keeping learners active by bringing them up to the front of the class and by getting them to repeat after the teacher. This latter activity also served to help students remember things.

Theo emphasised the important role played by group dynamics and how ‘interaction is very important’. He felt that pair and group work offered opportunities for making students ‘feel more part of the group’ and gave learners the opportunities for ‘bouncing [ideas] off each other’. He indicated that pair and group work also ensured that students ‘don’t feel quite so alone’ and that they could ‘share [their] fears about the class’ and about ‘failure’. He felt that the teacher could ‘make the group connect by swapping around partners on a regular basis’.

Theo talked about how a teacher’s use of questions was necessary in order to ensure that students understood. He said that a teacher can never assume students understand and should use questions to check. He related this not only to his work experience but also to his experience at school when teachers would assume everyone understood and would move on, leaving him lost:

I’ve made the mistake of assuming in the past when I’m talking about a piece of history that people know that that’s the situation

[...]

I remember this from my own experience that from schooling that things weren't clarified and they would just assume 'everybody ok right ok fine we'll move on' and I'm lost and so there's no point in moving on because I've lost erm the last lesson and I've found myself sort of falling back because of that because things weren't clarified when I wanted them to be and I was sort of too scared to actually to put my hand up and ask you know because everyone else seemed confident that they knew

As the extract indicates, Theo saw the need for the teacher to be prepared to 'go back' and 'clarify' until students are 'absolutely sure' before moving on. Elsewhere, Theo also talked about how he would keep students on their toes 'you'd see the students erm er being pounced upon'.

Theo talked at length about his early schooling, in a somewhat brutal regime, but he remained positive, feeling that good learning experiences can emerge from quite bad situations. He also believed that it was less important *how* you learnt, than *that* you learnt:

because they WERE bad I still actually learnt something from them [...] I remember he came and hit me round the head very hard indeed I remember seeing stars and I remember hearing a ringing in my ears and er this was a bad teaching experience and it was the same time that I remember every word he said er after that you know because I was even sort of more attentive so the corporal sort of er punishment erm worked in some ways so it was a good and a bad [...] erm the good learning experiences as I say really stem from the bad

Despite this educational environment, Theo was a firm believer in strict discipline and a strong, even authoritative, teacher role. He felt this maintained clear roles for teachers and students, 'I liked the authority I knew where I stood I knew what I had to do'. He did however distinguish between adults as learners and children as learners. He felt the latter benefited from 'direction' and 'discipline' whereas adults are 'here because they want to learn not because they have to [be here]'. He added that adults 'have their own discipline':

I'm talking about my formative years which er when I think people need direction and er they learn discipline [...] the people that I'm going to be teaching are well past their formative years and they'll have their own discipline they're here because they want to learn not because they have to

## 8.2.2 Beliefs about language and language learning

When discussing languages and language learning Theo focused on the element of speaking and communication, something he felt was missing in his own schooling which was more traditional:

erm I enjoy languages one because I like to er communicate I just enjoy er er the art of the language

[...]

we weren't given that much opportunity to talk I always wanted to talk I remember sitting in my sitting in the classroom thinking 'come on let me say something let me talk stop you doing the talking I wanna say that I know that I want to practice it' [...] I found that frustrating

Theo compared language to both an art and a science:

I just enjoy er er the art of the language er I think language is a fascinating thing that's one of the reasons I'm doing this course erm not primarily so I can teach so I can learn more about my own language because it's er it's like a science and er that's why I'm doing it er not primarily to teach primarily so I can learn more about my language

When prompted, Theo talked about grammar, saying that he was a 'great believer in grammar' and that he thought it was 'incredibly important' in language learning. He did however express reservations about its use. He felt that grammar needed to be 'introduced slowly but surely' and that the level of the students was an important factor in when this introduction would take place because 'grammar analysis might be wasted on a beginners group'. He stated that he thought that grammar was 'hard to introduce [...] in its strongest form' and that he felt:

I probably wouldn't give a whole analysis I'd give a very simplistic analysis and start off with something perhaps a little more complicated later on

## 8.2.3 Beliefs about learning to teach

Theo was quite clear on the fact that he thought his past learning experiences would not influence his own teaching due to the fact that the teaching on the CELTA was very different to his schooling. He said that he would teach 'completely differently' to the way he was taught:

I don't think when I'm teaching I don't think I'll have any flashbacks as to how it was when I was being taught erm I really don't I'll do it I'll do it in my own way erm er which would really be completely different from the way I was taught completely



Theo also seemed to believe that he could teach EFL by learning more about the language rather than by learning to teach: 'I think language is a fascinating thing that's one of the reasons I'm doing this course erm not primarily so I can teach so I can learn more about my own language'.

### 8.3 Course Questionnaire

This was never returned by Theo.

### 8.4 Guided Preparation

As was discussed in the case on Penny, the guided preparation for teaching practice involved a considerable amount of help and scaffolding by the tutors, particularly at the beginning of the course. Much of the discourse therefore was dominated by the teacher trainer explaining how to carry out the points listed on the TP points sheet. Although these sessions became less teacher trainer dominated as the course moved on, trainees tended to use the sessions to ask questions rather than to explain or rationalise their plans.

In GP 1,1 and 1,2 the teacher trainer worked through Theo's TP points with minimal interaction from Theo who largely confined himself to writing notes.

In GP 1,4 Theo referred to feeling 'a little traumatised' by the previous class in which he had misread the lesson aims. Theo explained that he had written a true story which he intended to read and 'get students to copy'. The trainer checked 'you're going to do a reading lesson now?'. Theo read out lesson aims. The trainer suggested he should read it to the group, he did. The trainer then asked Theo to put the story away and tell the trainees the story again, he then asked the group which they found more interesting and which was easier. Theo told them that that would have been his 'natural way' and that he 'was going against the grain' in writing it. Angela suggested that Theo do the lesson as if the trainees were the students. The trainer told him that the activity he planned was a memory test, that the exercise was 'slightly off the aim' and there would be a problem with time. He suggested how the story could be adapted to fit the aims more appropriately.

In the first GP session of Week 2 (GP 2,1) Theo told the trainer 'I'm fine as long as I read the instructions I don't think I'll have any problems with the lesson my key word my key word for the week Jim is read instructions properly'. He said that the lesson was 'reasonably straightforward', something the trainer agreed with. In the following session (GP 2,2) Theo said he only had a couple of questions regarding the adapting of a coursebook exercise because his class was 'reasonably straightforward'. GP 2,3 saw Theo telling the tutor that he did not need any help with that day's teaching as it too was 'straightforward'.

In GP 3,2 the group discussed Theo's class on aliens and the tutor ran through how jigsaw activities worked. He also advised Theo on how to carry out the correction phase. Theo's questions were very practical, clarifying what his aims were, and asking about whether he should record the listening exercise himself.

GP 3,4 saw Theo talking about his lesson for Friday which was entirely planned by himself with no TP points provided. The tutor asked Theo to 'take them through' what he was planning. Theo explained he was doing the third conditional in his session. He told them he would be starting using a 'pictorial context' to focus students and then he would use a gapfill. He wanted to write his own text as he 'wasn't wholly happy' with the text in the book. He said he thought the topic was 'a bit of a minefield' but he planned to do the 'bare bones plus er concept checking and [...] a gapfill'.

In GP 4,1 Theo talked about his lesson on Wednesday. He told the group that he would not be using the book at all and that he was going to write his own script. He said the core of the lesson was that he would write a lot of sentences and students would write responses which when combined would produce a story. He rejected the book because he thought there was too much pre-teaching. The trainees then discussed how to handle the students' writing with Angela suggesting that students write on a large piece of paper. Theo rejected this because he felt it would involve taking students' work home to correct. Angela suggested that he got students to read their stories out and he could then make notes for a post-correction phase. Theo told the group that this seemed like a good idea saying 'it'll do me good to have a sort of passive role'. Together they decide to use the overhead projector to write which would allow students to correct in class. Theo was happy with this idea 'I think I should use the overhead projector anyway coz no-one has'. Theo returned to the subject of this lesson in GP 4,3. He said that he had gone 'back to the drawing board' and abandoned any reference to the book, just doing the lesson 'off [his] own back'. He ran through the lesson he

intended, explaining how he would elicit the stories for students to write and how he would deal with student errors. He told them he felt he ‘went off the track because he didn’t like the book’.

## 8.5 TP and TP Feedback

Theo was the first trainee to teach in the group.

In the first TP feedback session (TPF 1,2) Theo gave feedback on his own teaching and his positive points were clearly concerned with affective elements of the lesson, rapport and enjoyment. On the negative side he suggested his board writing, elicitation and loudness were points he needed to work on:

I thought I managed to build some rapport with the students quite quickly and after a period of stage fright I slowed down to strengths I enjoyed the lesson and I’m certainly looking forward to the next one that basically summarises exactly my strengths points that need working on are board writing [inaudible] er more elicitation of structure and being a little less bombastic because I think I was too loud and you don’t need to be loud alright I still had their attention but a little less a little less loud

Following this, the teacher trainer asked the group if they thought Theo was too loud. Other trainees, Angela, Helen and David commented that he was ‘encouraging’, ‘positive’, ‘lively’ and ‘enthusiastic’. Penny was the only trainee who felt Theo talked too much. Theo concurred, adding that he felt he talked ‘to fill in gaps’, and to ‘fill this void’. The teacher trainer entered the discussion at this point commenting that he didn’t think that Theo was ‘too bombastic’:

just enthusiastic lively committed great pace yes and er instant rapport you from the first half a second you had a rapport with the group [...] very effective good erm yes a very strong start very confident very lively very committed really involved the students well

He added that Theo could have used students to ask questions at the end but he did not seem to view this as a serious problem. The tutor commented that Theo’s drilling was very good and the others ‘could follow Theo’s lead here and start to drill the way Theo drills’. He advised Theo to work on his board writing and on grading his language to the level of the students.

The following day (1,3) Theo taught again, and once more he began the feedback session with affective concerns:

erm right well I felt more comfortable with the students this lesson because I had some idea of their level I felt there was good interaction today and I felt I made some useful progress in putting across the points of the lesson erm the improvements I slowed down a bit I elicited elicited [sic] more er it comes from feeling more relaxed

Following this contribution Theo moved onto talking about his board writing, explaining to the group that:

I I actually had to think about the writing I I had two tasks that I had to teach them and to teach myself I cannot I didn't learn lower case as I say my generation didn't learn short or joined up writing and they both look crap on the board and so I say I'm literally going to have to learn lower case

The other trainees and the tutor indicated that they felt that Theo had made progress on his writing, the tutor commenting that there was a 'huge huge huge improvement'. Theo added some further comments on his teaching:

I felt I actually learned something from the task I felt that the erm the lesson was actually quite well constructed it all tied in well together and I felt it went very well and I learnt that today I learnt that today and so I was relatively pleased with it

At this point other trainees joined in to give their feedback on Theo's teaching. David commented that he 'liked the way there was interacting from the very first moment' and that it was 'energetic', 'light-humoured' and that 'the students knew what [he] was talking about'. David added that he felt he had learnt from Theo's lesson that:

it's so much easier to teach them if you get them REALLY involved with it and that's what you do you get them involved in it and they respond and it just makes it seem easier

Waiting until all trainees had given feedback to Theo, the tutor then commented that Theo had not followed the TP points, 'the TP points disappeared into the Bermuda Triangle':

TT there's one thing I'm baffled about I have to say this you didn't do the lesson that we discussed in TP points and I'd like to know why ^ you kind of kind of abandoned the TP points and did a stunning lesson so it's either my fault or ^ [TT laughs] coz the idea was well there were two things there was doing the gist and the gist listening and the intensive listening using the conversation on the tape talking about what they did at the time of day you you abandoned that completely

T right ok ah I must have I read it through two or three times I must have misunderstood that I actually Jim

Later in the same session (TPF 1,3) Theo was called upon to give feedback on Helen's class and his comments were concise, in contrast to the feedback often offered by other trainees, and they were typically humorous:

right there's a lot more positivity [sic.] I really had to dig in the dirt for anything negative about Helen right I thought she was very well organised er good er boardwork very good diction clear and economical and well-graded generally except for using the word 'exercise' I expected them to get down and give you 50 [all laugh] that was the only piece of un- er er graded language at all that I could find and erm and as I said I had to dig to find points to observe maybe drill a little bit more and one or two points weren't wholly clarified some were left a little misunderstood I think

Although not teaching on Thursday of Week 1, Theo was required to provide feedback for David and for Jeff. His feedback for David appears confident, except for the struggle with the term 'concept checking', and again, relatively concise:

- T er a very innovative er lesson good use of visual aids and well organised boardwork er improved attention to struggling individuals and I learnt the importance of visual aids when used well mm yeah very good ok on the downside erm perhaps I I agree with David actually perhaps it would have been er there should have been more examples er I would have used perhaps more examples like when you were doing the house er saying this is the first one now you can do the rest and put up a little=
- TT =yes so getting them to do an example of the activity with you as part of the instructions so it's all look at that one then they'd be clearer for example
- T yes coz I I agree with you on the concheck on the concept checking I er but I found that very good very impressive

Unlike the other trainees who tended to offer shorter comments relatively frequently, Theo does not really speak again in the session until invited by the tutor to comment on Jeff's lesson. His feedback on Jeff's teaching focused on affective issues at first before moving on to some of the concepts dealt with on the course. It should be noted that although Theo seems to use terms like context, exemplification and clarification easily, he did not really deal well when asked by the tutor to give specific examples, suggesting his understanding of these concepts was still developing:

- T er well yes Jeff definitely built up a better rapport I felt this time with er his students and even though he reckoned he lost the plot which I think he probably did er it's being quite er quite honest his actual flow was better today than it was the first time I felt he gained some confidence I think more relaxed with the students and he was doing a touchy feely thing which is good and they related more to him but erm er of the er things to look out for really context context very much so very much lacking there and exemplification and clarification those three things erm I felt were reasonably weak er but especially context er a lot of people were left without a clue about what you were going on with

TT can you say more about about the context or give him an example as it were  
T of of what Jeff was what Jeff's case erm er I think your context you with regard to er mm er er the continuous and erm and the simple and this is where I think you lost the plot as you say because as I say there no no there wasn't really any exemplification and there was no context whatsoever er you weren't you didn't put the continuous into context or the present into context and make examples and drill it with people and I think I think that was the glearing [sic] example there for me on context

The final teaching practice feedback session of the first week (TPF 1,5) saw Theo working in the role of both providing feedback on others and feedback on himself. His feedback to David was very positive, he praised David's visual aids, commenting that they could all learn from David. He also focused on the emergence of David's presence as a teacher:

today for the first time this week David looked like a proper teacher this was the first time he was standing up there oh it's David and he's a teacher not one of the students [inaudible] he was a proper student proper teacher

Theo also praised David's interaction with students and the structure of his class, concluding that 'I think you did a really a really good lesson definitely the best one this week and improvement's what it's all about'.

Later, in the feedback on his own teaching, Theo returned to the issue raised in the previous session of not reading his lesson plan. He also returned to the points about board writing, explaining to the tutor Robert, who was leading the class for the first time:

T yesterday I I had a erm sort of a revelation today that my main problem was that I wasn't actually following instructions or reading instructions properly I know its one of my weaknesses so today I had to try and do it completely by the board coz I missed out a whole chunk yesterday as I was saying only coz I wasn't reading properly and erm so this time I really concentrated on it I went and tried to do a, b, c of all the various TP points erm so I followed the instructions and I th..I think I probably achieved the aim [...] so I was quite pleased coz I think there's some improvement there but as I said [inaudible] work on board writing went to pot because I am still practising I mean you don't know this Robert but I was saying to Jim that I've never learnt lower case at school I don't know I went to that sort of school I'd either do joined up writing [inaudible] or I I'd do block capitals so I'm learning lower case this week so erm this is

TT you've plenty of spare time yeah

T I know I'm sitting here going a a a like I used to at school its very I I I [inaudible] on the board I know its extraordinary but it was that generation coz of the type of schooling that I had prep school and then public school you that was the way I was taught it was done you know whereas the other schools a great gap in my education

[...]

TT so having stuck to the plan a bit more rigorously today er were you happy that you did?

T er yes <TT: it helps?> yes I was I actually I actually went through it one two three four five and then I think I was leaving a little too poetic license over the last sort of couple of lessons and I've actually decided what I actually learn this week its not its not an art course this is a science course and I've actually changed my mode of thinking completely and utterly so I was actually more nervous about today than I was the last two days coz I was doing something that isn't so natural to me sort of actually going I've actually got out of that mode and got into a new mental mode today which is the scientific approach and the analytic analytical approach to erm to the whole process which is how it has to be done I think erm so yes so I I I was reas..I think there was too much teacher talk today in fact

The teacher trainer followed this by adding a rationale as to why following a plan was desirable, that was, when working with other teachers they know what you have covered. The tutor then described Theo's class as 'brilliant' with 'an upbeat positive start' which 'grabbed the students' attention'. He suggested that Theo needed to give clearer instructions, exemplify more and should try to avoid echoing students' responses.

Theo focused on board writing and planning in his feedback on his next class (TPF 2,1):

I think I went a terrifically long way to achieving my aims er I enjoyed it today and the students seemed to enjoy it and that's good points I went over time which is down to bad planning got a little muddled the lot went pear-shaped for a while and I started to work on my board writing I've got to sort of slow down there really I've actually mastered erm my erm my writing actually actually on paper but on the board I'm still having a slight problem but I just need to slow down I think and take and just sort of just sort of take my time you know so though looking at it now I mean it's appalling I look about six

Following a discussion of which letters (of the alphabet) Theo needed to work on further, the teacher trainer offered feedback which was highly favourable, listing a 'brilliant pace' and enthusiasm as positive features. The areas he raised for Theo to work on included the need to avoid echoing and to randomise drilling.

In TP feedback session 2,2 Theo praised Helen because she 'instantly put into practice exactly what we learnt this afternoon about student correction'. His questioning of Helen's correction of a student error with an apostrophe indicated that this was an area of grammar that he was quite unsure of 'it's really highlighting my ignorance I'm very pleased about that'. The only other feedback he gave was for Jeff. Following Helen's criticism of Jeff for using French in his instructions, Theo joined in.

arguing that its use served to alienate other students. He justified his point by reference to the interview he carried out with a student for the Learner Profile 1 assignment which he had handed in the previous day:

when I interviewed a student last week this is one of the points he made exactly he doesn't want anybody else to speak another language he specifically said that he didn't want the teacher to speak any other languages specifically I mean that's why he was over here learning it here rather than in Switzerland coz they all had a common language over here don't he wants to hear only English nothing else and he wouldn't have liked being spoken to in his language even if he didn't understand what the teacher was trying to explain he'd rather it was elicited from him or he had student help so I agree I think er alienation point there

Theo then turned the feedback positive and praised Jeff for achieving his aims.

The third feedback session of Week 2, ie TPF 2,3, involved feedback on a one hour class. Theo began his feedback by explaining that due to not getting his photocopying ready on time he felt he 'balled up' the beginning of the class. He explained that his intention had been to go into the class and 'grab their attention', that he 'enjoyed the lesson' and that the hour class made him 'feel a bit more relaxed'. He discussed his desire to ensure that the learners understood his teaching point:

on the whole I thought it went well I really tried I was really trying to put across the concept..the concept and the aims today I was putting concept question after concept question and trying to er trying to get it even at the end there were still one or t..one person who wasn't 100% sure you know I really tried to hammer it home er I wondered if I could do everything I could have done coz there was still Megawati who was still wasn't sure

The teacher trainer summed up 'loads of pace as usual er loads of student involvement also as usual' before commenting that Theo should have spent more time clarifying the form of the grammar and that his understanding of the grammar he was teaching was not completely accurate.

The beginning of the third week saw the group change to teaching the higher level students and a return, at least initially, to half hour classes. Again, Theo taught first. He began his feedback (TPF 3,1) by saying that he wasn't happy with the lesson because of 'bad preparation' which he said he hadn't had the time to do. He also felt unhappy because he 'was trying to find the meat on the bones' in the lesson and due to the fact that he had a 'block' on the target grammatical structure. He added that despite some 'good interaction' he did the class 'on a wing and a prayer':



I did it on a wing and a prayer so erm as I learnt last week it's all about er preparation and this is just gonna drill me to prepare even more because I wasn't properly prepared prepared I didn't wholly understand something

Following a dialogue in which the teacher trainer pushed Theo to explain the 'meat on the bones' comment and when he felt that he was 'winging it', Theo returned to the issue of his lesson plan:

what I mean by winging it is is that erm I I explained to you that I didn't erm I suffered a mental block erm about what was erm past perfect and present perfect I should have had it written down have and I didn't have I didn't have a plan if I'd written out my lesson plan properly it would have been there everything would have been there

Theo's uncertainty and feeling of discomfort with the lesson continued until the trainer confirmed that Theo had not achieved the aims of the lesson which were to present the grammar to the students. Helen suggested that Theo could learn from David and use prepared visual material to help avoid the panic of a block on the grammar, Theo responded:

yeah I think I think what I'm going to do is actually sort of learn things I could actually rely or start working on more visually or something I may do earlier rather than actually putting it simultaneously on the board because I think that's the way I'm going to have to do it so it's still it's a learning process yeah I'm learning from David I'm learning from everybody everybody has their sort of good point you know

Penny suggested that Theo actually talked too much in the lesson and used a large amount of ungraded language. His response 'ungraded language oh that's unusual for me' indicated his awareness of having a style of teaching. Following a discussion of the need to pre-set listening tasks carefully, something Theo didn't do, the tutor summarised, telling Theo that his rapport and engagement with the students was strong.

Later in the same session, Theo gave feedback on Penny's teaching. He praised her lead in but criticised her for not using concept questions to check the meaning of certain words. He also returned to the need for more exemplification and clarification of focus:

The following session (TPF 3,2) saw Theo giving feedback on Jeff's lesson delivered with his usual humour:

- T right first of all I'd like er a vote for all the aye's to actually nominate Jeff as the attention-grabber king [all laugh]  
J no David David David is the star

- T David is the director but er yeah ok you are the official attention-grabber king now Jeff I think without a doubt
- P take over from you [all laugh]
- T we can have a little crowning but er I I think it's erm I enjoyed Jeff's lesson actually because erm er apart from the attention-grabbing event ultimately you achieved your game [sic] it it was really a vocab lesson more than anything and er you got off to a good start there was good pace in your your lesson the pace was was good and er they enjoyed it and you achieved your aim if the vocab was the aim on that one erm a couple of er things er er just just to take up on er a couple of general things and a couple of couple of pinpointing things erm I would have liked to have seen better exemplification well better instruction for the task and exemplification I found it a little bit confusing I must admit

Theo continued with more points which he called 'pinpoint things' and then ended with a final 'microscope point' which dealt with the lack of concept checking done by Jeff. One of his points, delivered with characteristic conciseness, resembles the feedback given by the teacher trainer:

and the the other thing on the task I think you're actually HARD on yourself the task was actually quite complicated there was a lot of things you could have done with that task but I think you made it quite confusing erm not only for them but for maybe made it harder for yourself

At the end of this session, an example of the light-hearted but competitive relationship which had developed between Angela and Theo is evident:

- A Jorge said I had bad writing I said it's not as bad as Theo's though and he said 'no Theo's is terrible' [all laugh] coz he couldn't get the word 'sleep' and I went 'I've just taught you that'
- T ^ I tell you what it's better than being the class swot [all laugh]
- A you're just jealous coz I'm better than you

In TP 3,3 Theo was not teaching and his focus in the feedback session was David, this time he worked in collaboration with Jeff. His feedback was delivered in a single lengthy turn:

er the first thing I noticed was that it was obviously well-planned that's why I underland..underlined the word obviously <TT: yeah> I mean coz it really showed you know and er I think this was the erm best lesson that David's done erm and it was down to his planning that was the first thing he said to me when he said when I asked him what he thought of it he said well I planned this one and I planned it really well so that and that came across so that was interesting <TT: yeah> er he thought very well on his feet I thought it was a difficult lesson <TT: yeah> you know I I I would have had trouble doing that spontaneously or and erm I would have had trouble doing it even even sort of erm practising it erm I think he did well I say he thought on his feet well coz they put him in a difficult situation a couple of situations and I was squirming and thinking oh my god and I couldn't I couldn't have got out of some of those situations there and I think he did very well I was saying I wasn't sure whether he

actually told the truth [laughs] about about some of the things whether it was actually correct erm but but I think it probably was it probably was erm er good peripheral work er you let the students er get on hung around in the peripherals <TT: yeah> and er then monitored well when it was necessary it was nice and relaxed <TT: hmm> well timed and erm very good group interaction er I think it was er I think it was er a very good lesson a very good lesson indeed very well done er I did find it hard to find three er bad things but erm we decided could have varied the student to student tasks pairwork etc <TT: sure> make it more exciting <TT: yeah>

Theo's feedback focused on preparation and planning and is also interesting in that he compared how David reacted to students questions to how he thought he could have handled the situation. Theo also introduced a new term 'peripheral work'. The lack of interruptions in this turn is interesting as is the teacher trainers assumed role of backing up and confirming Theo's points.

In TP feedback session 3,4, Penny discussed the need for her to adopt a stronger voice with more projection. She compared her voice and work experience to Theo's, explaining that Theo was in a job where voice projection was needed. Theo commented that she shouldn't compare herself with him, 'do it your own way you know don't compare with me do it your own way'. To the amusement of the other trainees, Penny told the group that 'I'd get hoarse if I carried on the way Theo does'. Later in the session, Angela and Helen gave feedback on Theo's lesson, this time before he did himself. Angela began 'we're trying not to give him a big head coz he's got a big one already'. They praised his classroom management, monitoring and feedback to students, and criticised him for not concept checking some of the words he was pre-teaching. Theo rejected this final point, responding:

I think my concept checking of 'wrinkled' was good smooth with whatever I think I can do that pretty well actually and if people didn't get it well that was their fault [all laugh] 'has Jorge got a smooth face? no' 'is is he going to be smooth fifty years from now? No he's going to be wrinkled' so I think I concept checked that well you know so I [inaudible] sorry I'm taking the criticism here sorry ^ like a man [laughs]

Responding to comments from other trainees that he wasted time drilling the pronunciation of 'UFO' and that he could have told students what the letters stood for, Theo emphasised the thought and planning behind his decisions:

I actually I probably I thought long and hard about UFO whether I ought to check it and I thought yes because I know they call it ufo and they they will if they go if they walk around here going 'I saw a ufo' they're gonna say 'well what's that?' and I thought long and hard about not explaining unidentified flying object which is a waste of time but it was worth while explaining ufo

[NB: 'UFO' pronounced as normal; 'ufo' pronounced as in yoo-foe]

The tutor summarised the strengths of Theo's teaching:

I thought it was a very successful lesson wasn't it and <T: mm> er what what Theo's really good at is creating a momentum so that the students are really enthusiastic and they really go for spoken tasks or written tasks er very good pace really involved them well er gave them responsibility for the tape recorders also and let them sort it out for themselves

The tutor also commented that Theo was inconsistent with his drilling and his concept questions and that his boardwork still needed work. Theo then talked about a strategy he had decided to adopt of working on his weaknesses and leaving his strengths alone:

- T yeah I I I was actually trying a different mode today completely because Robert said to me er stop focusing on yourself and focus on the students which is basically a way of saying stop being so self-centred although
- TT the lesson was very student-centred wasn't it
- T yeah which is what I tried to do I tried erm=
- TT =the jigsaw listening <T: yeah> the writing the works yeah
- T yeah so I tried to sort of step back
- TT get them to pen the [inaudible] examples the students' examples
- T I know if there was only enough time I I I cut out a lot of things things like drilling I didn't do so much drilling coz I know I can do that I know but I know I'm happy with that <TT: yeah> I'm happy with concept checking and erm happy with erm er correction for example <TT: mm> erm so I tended to I dotted all the i's but I didn't dot all the t's which I can do later on only coz time was a bit short here

Obviously, there is a question which could have been asked of this strategy which concerned the degree to which Theo was focusing on his students rather than on himself if his strategy led him to select only those elements which *he* needed to practice and not those which suited the pedagogical task at hand or indeed the learners' needs. The lesson ended with the trainer and other trainees complimenting Theo on his final activity which involved students reading out their stories to the group. This activity was described as an 'energy rush' and a 'confidence booster' by his fellow trainees.

The final week of the course saw Theo teaching only once, for an hour on the Wednesday. The other days involved feedback to others.

On Monday (TPF 4,1), Theo and Jeff collaborated to give feedback to Penny who had taught a class on legal vocabulary. Theo criticised Penny for the quantity and grading of her teacher talk and for errors in her definitions. He added that he 'didn't see any evidence of actual concept checking and certainly it was actually needed'. Theo then told Penny supportively:

I saw you struggling in some areas where I would have struggled as well ok so my criticism coming at you is I'm actually saying this so I can hear it myself and when I do a vocab lesson <P: yeah> then I'll remember what I said to you

Theo then suggested that Penny could have adapted the text she used, although again he emphasised that he and Jeff were saying this with the benefit of hindsight. He repeated this point later, after a barrage of criticism from the tutor and the other trainees towards Penny 'and you have to remember all this is hindsight'.

In Tuesday's class (TPF 4,2) Theo worked with David to write feedback on Helen. Theo led the oral feedback to her and focused on achievement of aims and on the issue of concept checking which he said should be 'second nature' by this point in the course:

T it was clear what her aim was it was being reinforced over and over again and I thought the continuity for me was the erm er the most highlighted for er Helen I think er she kept the whole thing going it was nice and flowing there was never any lack of interest and at the end of the day she achieved the aims correction was extremely good as well erm this time on-going correction good correction to the board she actually applied all her informed correction and er used great initiative when she er when she did that er

TT categorisation <T: sorry?> categorising errors too

T absolutely yeah I mean I I thought it was er a very good lesson indeed couldn't find much wrong with it the only thing erm that we found David and I agree erm that maybe concept checking was erm erm a little lax but then we all do that it should be sort of second nature now I feel perhaps the concept checking was erm everybody's into doing it generally but no it was a really good lesson

The teaching practice on Wednesday of Week 4 was the final one for Theo and involved an hour-long session. Theo's feedback on his own class was quite positive:

erm well the I found out sort of last night that actually sort of a writing lesson was actually harder than I thought it was gonna be er the one thing I was mainly worried about was the correction and it was actually quite a task to do coz you're thinking on feet you know which is not that hard generally you know but under these sort of circumstances it's quite hard and so I was a bit I was a bit sort of worried about that I must admit erm and I think I think er I think it well went reasonably well like it was ok using the overhead projector I'd never used that before ^ wanted to try something you know different and that was er successful everything flowed into each other pretty well

He went on to say that although the lesson was 'a little ragged in some places' that on the whole, '[his] usual strengths were there and [his] usual weaknesses were there'. David praised him for running a 'lively lesson as always' and for how well he set up and

monitored the task. Theo received criticism from David for not picking up many of the corrections and for going off at a tangent in teaching words unnecessarily.

The tutor pointed out that Theo had irritated one of the learners in the group by not allowing him to finish what he was saying:

- TT and er yeah Stefano was trying to explain to me what 'robbed' meant and you didn't really let him did you  
T no no I must have missed that yeah I'm sometimes not very observant you know I miss it  
TT yeah you have to be careful of interrupting students coz he said to me well he said 'oh let me finish'

The tutor then praised Theo's class, saying that he 'dealt exceptionally well' with vocabulary 'created and maintained interest' and used 'very nicely aimed concept questions'. He commended Theo's rapport and pace and his talent for thinking on his feet:

what you've got is a very very good er way of thinking on your feet the unexpected situations and defining the problem or outlining succinctly the conceptual problem that is going on and you seem to be able to do this whenever you need

In the final teaching practice and feedback of the course (TPF 4,4), observed by the external examiner, Theo offered feedback on Penny. Angela had actually been asked to give feedback on Penny but arranged to swap with Theo. Theo's feedback was positive and focused on affective elements of her teaching:

well I think the the emphasis was on happy I think yeah there was er great progress today erm coz you were you this is your happiest lesson you see [...] the students related to you and the interaction was better much better than in any of your other lessons you were happier you were laughing more relaxed and they were er coming with you

Theo followed this by praising Penny for clarifying her target language and for achieving her aims. He then praised her work on stress, her 'stress-krieg' and her 'well-planned' lesson.

## 8.6 Assignments

The assignments which will be included in this section are (in the order in which they were handed out on the course): ‘Coursebook Evaluation’ and ‘Reflection’ (see page 173-4 for details). Both of Theo’s assignments were handwritten.

### 8.6.1 Coursebook Evaluation

Theo followed the recommended structure for the assignment, although he chose to divide the assignment into two sections rather than three: the first focusing on the coursebook and the second on his adaptations of the book. On the whole he was very positive about the book, referring to the listening tasks as ‘clear and topical’ in content and ‘universally interesting’. In terms of the tasks set in the book he is equally clear in his opinion of their value, stating that:

The material does encourage and facilitate real communication. The course book would be a waste of time if it didn't. The texts [...] are specially selected to be of universal interest. The students should find it easy to relate to them and in most cases to have an opinion. This obviously encourages real communication, when speaking tasks are set.

In terms of the adaptation of the material, Theo is clear that although the book ‘gently led [the students] through an educational minefield’ it was basically a ‘nucleus’ for the teacher which could be adapted relatively easily. He described how the blandness of the book actually helped the teacher in the process of adaptation:

The course book is an excellent ~~nucleous~~ nucleus [sic] for a teacher. On the whole the approach to the syllabus is not overly creative. in fact it is quite bland. These works to the teachers advantage [sic] as adaption [sic] if and when neccessary [sic] is relatively simple.

To start with I made no changes to the material, clinging to it for security. Eventually as confidence progressed, I began to see some shortcomings of the course book. In most cases, all that was needed was some adaption [sic], but sometimes writing my own material was better.

His discussion of his increasing confidence and his developing awareness of the shortcomings of the book are framed by a sense that the book provided him with ‘guidance’ which enabled him to adapt. He described how one of the major reasons for rewriting or adapting material was due to overly long texts which he adapted in order to fit better with the focus of his classes.

## 8.6.2 Reflection

Theo approached the reflection assignment by taking the experienced teachers as the focus and then pulling out which elements he liked in their teaching. With one teacher he praised his ‘quiet command’ and the way in which he sat close to students and didn’t move around the room too much, commenting that, ‘his class management and was [sic] almost unnoticeable, but highly effective’.

The second teacher that Theo discussed was placed in contrast to the first although Theo emphasised that he was ‘completely different but equally effective’. With this teacher it was the energy and motion that Theo enjoyed and admired:

His ~~class~~ [sic] lesson was dynamic. He bounced around the classroom like a demented 'Tigger', firing off instructions to the students. With his energy he kept the class on a high and the 60 mins flew by.

Throughout all this he was firmly in control and never wandered off track. His ability to elicit was excellent. He indulged in very little teacher talk, and everything seemed to be coming magically from the students, who didn't dare relax their minds for a second.

The learners enjoyed the lesson because it was exhilarating and challenging.

In his discussion of the third teacher that he observed, Theo commented on how she ‘showed complete confidence and oozed competence’ and how this was matched by the students confidence in her. He also praised the fact that her lessons were ‘perfectly planned and executed’.

Theo concluded from these different experiences that ‘there is not just one way to teach’ and that:

Every teacher must find their own comfort zone in the classroom, and teach in a way they are happy. Learners respond to different styles in different ways, and my observation showed me they can be equally effective.

He commended the teachers’ ‘economy’ and noted that although seemingly ‘effortless’, in fact it:

obviously takes a lot of experience to really know how to take the focus off yourself and onto the students.

Theo then turned his attention in the assignment to the other trainees saying that he learned various things from them:



In the first two weeks all our weaknesses were exposed and the next two were spent trying to strengthen them. It was a metamorphic process, and it was very interesting to watch, how each of us overcame [...] our problems.

From every one of my colleagues I gained something. From David: the importance of good graphics. From Angela, the importance of precision planning: And so on.

In the final section in which Theo was required to address his reflections on his own teaching, he seemed certain and confident. He highlighted his planning as being a significant weakness in the early part of the course before explaining how he dealt with this by adopting a strategy which focused on identifying his strengths and then focusing on his weaknesses:

I wasn't sure what kind of teacher I would be, but my style was firmly established after one week. I feel my main directive is to motivate and inspire students to want to learn and enjoy it.

To start with this model was quite successful, the learners' seemed to enjoy the energy I put into the lesson. It wasn't long though before I realised teaching, was not just a case of throwing a few words on the board and drilling, but an exact science. I was lacking aim because I think I wasn't really sure what they were, half the time. Secondly my planning was appalling. I just thought I could get through, without a plan, as long as every body had a good time. Less importantly, because its cosmetic my board writing was virtually unreadable.

The way I tackled these weaknesses was to first recognise my strengths; presentation, drilling, concept checking. I now put these to the back of my mind, and started to concentrate on things I wasn't so good at. Gradually I ~~saw~~ [sic] have seen this strategy working, it's just a question of focusing. I certainly haven't cracked it, and it's going to be an ongoing fight, because I know I still lack the self-discipline required to do the job properly.

The feedback that Theo received from the tutor on this assignment is interesting. The tutor identified Theo's individual approach and the apparent success of his strategy of focusing on his weaknesses.

Very interesting, if idiosyncratic approach to the topic. You're right in isolating dramatically the difference between different teaching styles. We all know where the pianist hits a wrong note but to appreciate that the Pastoral Symphony can be played equally well but differently by different musicians takes knowledge and objectivity.

It is certainly a useful strategy to assume that your natural strengths will be in play while concentrating on your weaknesses.

## 8.7 Progress Records

### 8.7.1 End of Week 1

In the section of the form entitled 'Overall Progress' Theo wrote 'boardwork, organisation'; and under the heading 'Next week I need to work on...' he wrote 'Classroom organisation, timing'. Next to this the teacher trainer wrote 'eg?'.

The teacher trainer's written comments at the end of the first week were:

You have made a good beginning. You have a confident, lively classroom presence. Your approach is systematic and thorough. You're able to involve the students well. Clear progress on boardwork. Now keep lesson aims firmly in mind and use exemplification.

### 8.7.2 End of Week 2

At the end of Week 2, Theo's comments on his overall progress were somewhat vague, stating that his progress was 'quite good' and commenting that to see 'real progress' he needed to work hard for the remainder of the course. He identified the areas he felt required attention in the next section ('Next week I need to work on...'):

Specific aspects of grammar, that I don't understand. My timing, and lesson planning.

The tutor's summary was very positive, praising Theo's effective teaching in the one hour class and stating that he had 'very good potential'. The tutor then highlighted something he felt Theo needed to work on in the coming weeks:

Try to do a few more activities which de-focus attention from yourself for longer periods.

### 8.7.3 End of Week 3

A number of the points raised at the end of the second week are repeated here, notably the need to work on planning and awareness of lesson aims. In the first section of the

form, Theo wrote at length on the topic of planning, reporting that although he had made progress overall, more work was needed:

#### PLANNING

##### Effective Areas:

Planning has been my weak point. In the past, I've concentrated on my strong points, in the belief I could get by without too much planning. I've altered this mental state, and planning has been much more effective this week.

##### Areas which still need attention:

Still rather a lax attitude to detail, when planning I must remember to dot the i's as well as cross the t's

Next to the latter section, the tutor wrote 'awareness of aims here' and 'Yes' was written next to both sections. The next section on the form 'Classroom Skill and Awareness' also had a comment on planning in the effective section where Theo wrote 'I enjoy the teaching when I'm well prepared (hate it when I'm not)'. In this section he identified his 'ability to stimulate and motivate' in addition to 'getting the student's attention' and 'building rapport' as his particular strengths. He also mentioned being effective at 'creating context and checking concept'. The 'areas which need attention' section of this part contained reference to planning and to focusing on students:

I have focused on my weak points this week. Most importantly planning and preparation. Being prepared has given me space in my lessons for more creativity. This still needs work – but I have seen the fruits of my labour, and I'm inspired.

I have also made a concerted effort to shift the focus from myself to the students. I have to learn when to shut up and let the learners do the talking.

In the final section that he was required to complete, on professional development, Theo indicated that he felt he had made progress over the duration of the course, stating that this had led to him having 'a more rounded approach to teaching as a profession'. In the section on areas which need attention he focused on the need for long term development as a teacher:

Professionality [sic], comes with knowledge, confidence, and an array of other skills. I think it will be years rather than weeks. I must be patient, and allow myself to develop, rather than rush things which is my natural instinct.

The form was completed by the tutor's summary which praised Theo's 'motivating rapport' before returning to the issue of focusing on the students and the lesson aims:

You are able to elicit talk and set up productive involvement by generating momentum and interest. You have adapted appropriately to the new level and evolved a more student-centred approach. You have made progress on planning, echo and concept checking. You now need to work on awareness of the aims of each lesson stage to ensure these are achieved. To ensure a 'B' pass you need to be convincing and consistent in this. Work on drilling, checking instructions.

## 8.8 Mid-course interview

This interview which was intended to be an interview with Helen was carried out in the third week of the course. At the time the only room available was the input room where James and Theo were working. After checking this situation was acceptable to all trainees, we started. Within minutes James and Theo joined in, effectively hijacking the interview. The interview is reported here however as the results were interesting.

Theo entered the conversation when James started to complain about having to fill in his post-teaching practice self-evaluation forms or, as he referred to them, 'appreciation papers'. James stated that he did not see the value of his own opinion on his teaching, nor why the external examiner would be interested in anyone's opinion, except for the trainers. Theo took up the point:

- T: you have to be able are to look yourself you have to look at yourself and say what are my weaknesses <H: that's right> what my strengths <H: yeah> one of the hardest things I have found to do is self-evaluation it's a hard thing to do and I have to work on it yes yes and I have to look at myself and say what am I doing right and what am I doing wrong I know exactly where I stand and what my weaknesses are and what my strengths are you know erm
- H: but to actually put it down on paper is ^ you know
- T: fine that you've got to do it is be completely objective about it <H: yes yes> completely objective <H: yes> I'm a complete tosser when it comes to writing on the board but like James I can perform I know that you know you've got to brag about yourself a bit but at the same time put yourself down and be totally realistic people find it very hard to do

Theo's contribution here illustrates his understanding of the processes and requirements of the course. It also reaffirms the sense that he had clearly identified, by this stage, both his strengths and his weaknesses in teaching.

## 8.9 Interview 2

Theo was extremely positive about his experience on the CELTA course, crediting it with effects which went far beyond the actual content and purpose of the course:

it's the first time I've focused on something for a long long time and erm you don't realise how exhilarating it is to focus on something and I'd forgotten just how exciting education was it was I've been really inspired by it completely inspired by it and motivated motivated by it and I didn't realise I was missing it until I did it

Theo went on to say that the course had inspired him to take other courses in the future. He added that in many ways 'the actual learning the actual content of the course was in some ways secondary to me it was just the whole process which was primary'.

Later in the interview, Theo returned to this topic, explaining that his girlfriend had commented that she couldn't believe how much he had changed whilst doing the course. Theo said that his social life had gone 'completely flat' over the four weeks but that he had become extremely close to the people on the course, saying that the experience was 'incredibly tense and incredibly close'. He then explained the feeling that the course had left him with:

it's been [...] incredible it really has it's been erm it's been like I've been on drugs I've never been on drugs before but I feel I've been on drugs for the last month I've had an incredible high [...] it's just been electric really electric and it's my mind it's made me erm it's made me worse than I was before you know how high I am how very hyperactive I am I'm over-hyperactive now coz all of a sudden the energy has just flowed into my brain sort of opened up a few more brain cells I feel as though I'm using more of my brain I feel cleverer now [laughs] I feel like the straw-man who has just been given a brain by the Wizard of Oz you know that's how I feel and I feel I feel really lively intelligent and ready to do anything basically an incredible experience

In this interview Theo also talked about his motivation for taking the course, explaining that he and his brother (a Director at the language school) were planning to open up a sister school in Japan and planned to teach content courses through English. He gave the example of 'English plus antiques' and 'English plus how to mend a car'. He elaborated further on his plans for the new school:

when I've got it up and running then we'll send perhaps some of our newly trained teachers from here to go over there and run them [...] I'm a an *ajii ajii* [antiques] expert and so this'll be the first course that we set up and I shall control that which is which'll be the 'learning English plus antiques'

He added that the plan was that he would also play a larger role in this (UK) school, offering cover as a 'fill-in man'. He then explained:

so I've done the course really to give me the confidence to teach to know how to teach and erm if I'm going to take a bigger role in the school then I have to have I have to have that qualification

## 8.9.1 Beliefs about teachers and teaching

In the second interview, influenced by the experienced teachers that he had observed as part of the CELTA course, Theo talked about how the characteristics of good teaching were hard to define; commenting that ‘there’s a hundred ways to skin a cat’. He talked about how a teacher’s ‘method [...] or particular style is actually a very individual thing’ although he felt that there are certain skills ‘on the technical side’ which good teachers have. He discussed two contrasting styles, teachers who are ‘very controlled’ and ‘patient’ and those who are ‘ebullient’ and ‘jumping around’:

I saw how the various students reacted to the er to their various styles of teachers you’ve got Mark who was very ebullient jumping around all over the place and sort of people didn’t dare relax their minds for a minute coz they didn’t know whether he was going to jump on them and ask them a question whereas Janet and Mike very controlled and you know very patient very slow and everyone was just very well behaved and enraptured with what was going on

Regardless of different teaching styles, characteristics that Theo seemed to think were important for an effective teacher included having ‘confidence’ and being ‘in control’. He also talked about the importance of ‘self-control’ and ‘discipline’ along with ‘patience’, ‘enthusiasm’, a ‘sense of humour’ and a ‘lot of energy’:

[Janet] just had incredible confidence and all the students had complete confidence in her and erm that showed me how important it is how what how important it is that you are actually in control and that the students respect you you know coz that way you get from them through that and you can get it in various ways you can get it through sort of quiet command or you can get it through erm acting the fool you know

I have very little self-discipline and one thing I’ve now got to train is my self-discipline and you’ll find a lot of self-discipline in the classroom

when I er start teaching then I won’t teach quite so much I shall still maintain my energy and my sort of sense of humour but it’ll be a little more controlled

Theo indicated that he felt that it was important for the teacher to have the students’ respect and as the first extract above indicates, he saw this as being compatible with both styles, the ‘quiet command’ and the ‘acting the fool’ approach.

Theo talked at length about the need to keep students awake, largely through the use of energy and movement, ‘a lot of action a lot of go go go’. He mentioned keeping students on their toes by using ‘quick fire stuff’ and he felt that a teacher’s energy could transfer to the students and vice versa, ‘I feed off the students and I feel that the students

feed off me'; something he identified as part of his 'particular style'. Theo talked about how sitting still tended to reduce energy and therefore 'breaks' or 'time outs' which involved 'physically exercising...or mentally exercising' were needed. Theo stated that in order to avoid being 'disruptive' that these breaks needed to be well-timed but that they could help by leaving students feeling 'refreshed' and 'invigorated'. Theo also felt that warmers could serve to keep people awake in class. With all of these activities Theo emphasised that he felt that there should be 'a learning process behind it':

I've seen this in the observations I've seen this people do sit for too long they start to yawn a little and the energy levels tend to go down [...] I've been up at half past 6 every morning for the last month and er doing work and then coming in and doing a full day until seven o'clock it's tough and so I know when we got up and danced a round a bit I was invigorated

It can be seen from the extract above that Theo drew on both his own experience as a student on the CELTA course and his observations of students in the lessons of experienced teachers with regard to the need for refreshing breaks in teaching.

As with the discussion above, Theo, when talking about the need for things to be 'continually recycled', drew on notions of movement and action:

I'd sort of bring them back into a new lesson just to keep them going almost a subliminal thing flash in there and flash out again you know flash in there and flash out of there

Theo also talked in the second interview about the need for teachers to follow a lesson plan. He felt that a lesson plan gave a lesson order and that teachers needed to have the self-discipline to write and 'stick to' them. In talking about the need for a lesson plan, Theo clearly drew on his experience on the course:

you would find me very much following erm closely following er a lesson plan because er er throughout the last four weeks when we've been doing teaching practice there was one day that I didn't do a lesson plan and it scared the crap out of me [laughs] so and I it did it was er a it was a bad it was a bad lesson that it wasn't that bad but I felt bad because I wasn't confident doing it I wanna know what I'm doing I'm very bad at sort of writing things down I have very little self-discipline and one thing I've now got to train is my self-discipline and you'll find a lot of self-discipline in the classroom everything's gotta be in order I know it's there in me to do that [...] so yeah that's what you would see you'd see a lot of sticking to a plan going through it

The use of concept questions, which were taught on the course, was also mentioned in the interview. Theo described how the technique was not used when he was at school and wondered if it would have helped him to understand better. He

described how he really took the technique ‘to heart’, feeling that it was useful for checking comprehension and that it was applicable to all sorts of teaching, not just language teaching:

I love erm the idea of erm concept I really like I really like the idea of concept and played games with myself trying to think of a concept about I’ll pick on something really difficult and see if I can find a concept check for it just as a game and erm I like that when and you don’t just have to apply that to language teaching you can apply it to all sorts of teaching it’s a great way of checking understanding and I was thinking if they’d had this sort of concept checking in my day perhaps I would’ve understood coz I was just told something and told to write it down and just left to to erm deduce it myself which I never could there was no such thing as sort of concept checking

Despite indicating that he had experienced a lack of understanding during his schooldays, Theo stated that he thought learning was always positive and that learning could arise out of even negative learning experiences. He related his experience of teacher violence in his early schooling but concluded that ‘I learnt you know coz the discipline was so strong’.

## 8.9.2 Beliefs about language and language learning

In the second interview Theo was clear that he felt that communication was the most important aspect of language learning. Unsurprisingly, therefore he felt ‘fluency’ was more important than ‘accuracy’ and as a result:

the most important thing would then be vocabulary coz fluency comes from just sort of stringing a whole load of words together really doesn't it and someone at the end receiving it and basically understanding it

Theo also stated that he thought the ability to ‘parrot’ was an important skill in language learning. Theo ascribed his own interest in languages to the influence of his parents who encouraged him to begin learning languages when he was very young, and also to the fact that he liked his French teacher whilst at school.

## 8.9.3 Beliefs about learning to teach

By the second interview Theo concluded that ‘there’s no right or wrong way to teach’ and therefore that people should ‘teach how you want to teach how you enjoy it’. He talked about how each individual needed to teach in a way that made them comfortable.



and he termed this their 'comfort zone'. He stated that teachers needed to find their own comfort zone because if they were not comfortable then they wouldn't be effective teachers: 'if you try and be something else then you'll never be a good teacher'. Theo talked about how very different teachers can be equally effective, commenting on how the teachers he observed 'were all incredibly different but they were all equally effective'. He concluded that teachers shouldn't try and copy someone with a different style. He talked about other trainees saying to him:

people have said to me all this week 'oh Theo I wish I was like you so erm you know full of life jumping round all the students love you' yeah ok that's true and I I know my strengths there

Theo said that although he would keep his sense of humour and his energy when teaching post-course, he felt that his teaching would be more controlled. He maintained however that this would be dependent upon the country he was teaching in, citing Brazilian students as people who liked a 'party teacher' whereas Japanese students would be 'very scared of me'.

Theo talked specifically about how he approached his learning on the course. He compared the course to a 'boot camp' where 'they take you and they tear you down to the bare bones show exactly what you don't know then they rebuild you'. He talked about how he tried to get rid of his 'preconceptions' and present as a 'blank page', willing to follow any instructions or advice the teacher trainers offered him:

I tried to leave some of myself a blank page coz I knew I had to be I knew that there would be a problem with preconceived ideas I knew I had to dispose of those and I did [...] trying to clear my brain out of any sort of preconceptions and just allowing myself to be sort of bent and turned and twisted in any way that the tutors wanted to do so I just totally lay them er lay myself at their door erm and said right do with me what you will

Theo described how he felt that the preconceptions he brought to the course about the nature of teaching and the teaching profession caused an 'interruption' in his learning:

I've become cynical about the sort of teaching profession because one of my bugbears today in Great Britain is erm the teaching profession I think it stinks [...] I think I allowed that to interrupt my er perhaps my first thoughts maybe for the first couple of days and er then all my my sort of interruption if you want to call it was sort of taken away and I certainly understood the methodology of teaching was incredibly important and there was a lot more to it and perhaps I ought to rethink my prejudices against the er the teaching styles of er of England

Theo also talked about the assignments which were part of the course requirements. He said that he ‘hated all the assignments apart from the last one’ (the reflection assignment) and felt that they were ‘not relevant’ to the process of learning to teach. He explained that at first he struggled with the assignments because ‘I’d forgotten how to read questions and I’d forgotten how to answer them’. Theo stated that once he realised this he understood the purpose of the assignments:

what they wanted you to do was to be able to read those questions and then they wanted you to use everything that you had learned they wanted you sort of shove in big words you know you had learned they wanted to to become familiar and comfortable with using teacher teacher jargon

#### 8.9.4 Theo’s self-reported changes in beliefs

As touched upon earlier, Theo felt that he had changed his way of thinking about teaching or as he stated, the course had ‘turned me inside out completely’. He said that he had begun the course with a view that ‘teaching was straightforward’, fed in a large part by his belief that the teaching profession ‘stinks’. He thought teacher training was unnecessary. He indicated that these ‘preconceptions’ had interrupted his learning on the course at least initially until they were taken away and he realised that you did need the methodology.

Theo stated that at the beginning of the course he was too teacher-centred or self-centred, an approach he called his ‘natural way’. He said he did this because he thought that if he was teaching then he needed to be doing all the talking and that he felt uncomfortable if the students were working and he wasn’t involved. He said that he didn’t like ‘uncomfortable silences’ when the students were talking to each other. He also said that he also wanted to ‘be there all the time for them’ and this led to him doing too much of the work.

Theo contrasted this early approach with the one he was currently using. He said that he had ‘physically changed’ his ‘natural way of going about the teaching’ and he was taking a much more ‘peripheral role’. He said that this also involved letting the students do all the work. He said he felt more comfortable with this approach now:

my biggest problem when I first came here was because I was too self-centred and er I was focusing on myself rather than on the er on the er children the students erm and so I had to get away but I was only being sort of self-centred because I was trying to kill time I wasn’t trying to kill time I was trying to be there all the time for them you know

not because it wasn't so egocentric to think that I was the one that had to be sort of attended to it was because I thought well I'm teaching so I'm going to talk to them erm so the one thing I've actually sort of I have actually learnt to do I've physically changed er my natural way of going about the teaching and now taking a more peripheral role and letting the er students do all the work I'm doing far less and I'm much more comfortable doing that now than I was at the beginning so I don't like uncomfortable silences when the students students are talking to themselves and I just have to pace the room er I wasn't comfortable with that but now I am

## 8.10 Post-Course Questionnaire

This was never returned by Theo.

## 8.11 Summary

Chapter 8 has focused on the beliefs and experiences of Theo, and, as with Penny the data across the sources presents a coherent and complementary picture.

From the start Theo impressed with his energy and pace. He talked and wrote of the importance of building rapport with students and of the need for the teacher to be enthusiastic and animated in order to motivate students and keep their attention. He started the course with a belief in the need for a strong, even authoritative, teacher role, although this changed as he began to refer to the need to focus on his students and adopt a more passive role for himself.

Several times he spoke of his belief in the need for a confident energetic teacher who 'pounced' on students but by the end Theo was additionally referring to the role and importance of lesson aims and planning.

In terms of language learning, Theo believed in communication and fluency as suitable targets and spoke of the need for teachers to allow students to talk. He also was clear in his interest in the use of teacher questions, and more specifically concept questions. He was proficient at, and concerned with, drilling.

With regard to learning to teach, Theo believed in the need for a teacher to develop their own style, working in their own 'comfort zone'. He also referred to his approach of presenting himself as a 'blank page' and to following the advice of the trainers to the letter. His experiences on the course made him aware of the need for teacher training, and he was very aware of his strengths and his weaknesses both as a teacher and as a person, working systematically on those weaknesses.

Theo's enthusiasm for the course and for teaching was clear, and his sense of being invigorated by the whole experience was palpable.

	<b>Main points</b>
Individual elements	<p><i>Early in the course:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of beliefs which seem to come from schooling eg belief in strong and clear teacher role</li> <li>• Number of beliefs which seem to come from work experience eg need to keep people's attention, need to use questions to check students understand</li> <li>• Concern with learners' enjoyment of the lesson, energy and activity and the need for teachers to be 'animated'</li> <li>• Language learning seen as learning to communicate</li> <li>• Can learn to teach by learning more about English language</li> <li>• Focus on a perceived gap eg concept questions</li> <li>• Beliefs which met with course input eg taking into account students' learning styles</li> <li>• Sense of self as a teacher developed early in the course</li> </ul>
	<p><i>Late in the course:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Similarities in many beliefs from early course eg focus on humour and energy but awareness of need for 'learning process' to underlie activity</li> <li>• Reinforcement of beliefs eg use of questions, focus on fluency and communication</li> <li>• Some stated changes in beliefs and practices eg focus on students and not on self, take a more passive teacher role; increased awareness of the importance of a lesson plan, aims and preparation</li> <li>• Increased understanding of methodology and preparation behind teaching; began course with the idea that teaching is 'straightforward'</li> <li>• Individual teaching style dependent upon 'comfort zone'</li> <li>• Desire to experiment in teaching practice eg use of the overhead projector</li> <li>• Habits which influence teaching eg voice projection (work experience) and problem with writing lower case (schooling)</li> <li>• Related qualities of self as a teacher to previous work experience – performance aspects of being a tour guide</li> <li>• Presented himself as a 'blank page' and tried to follow advice and rid himself of pre-conceptions about teaching and teachers</li> </ul>
Social elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning from peers in feedback and in guided preparation sessions eg value of visuals from David</li> <li>• Friendly competition between Theo and Angela</li> <li>• Sense of course expectations and norms eg comments on concept questions and censure of Jeff's use of L1 in the classroom; positive feedback to trainees who put course input into practice</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desire to be independent from the start of the course in terms of planning and preparation of materials but held back by trainers due to tendency to not fulfil aims</li> <li>• Sense of personal development from course went beyond teaching into life; exhilaration from course</li> <li>• Struggle with, yet desire to use, teaching terminology; use before full understanding</li> <li>• Uncomfortable with silence in the classroom</li> <li>• Learning to teach involves selective focus on weaknesses; aware of strengths and weaknesses</li> <li>• Seeming difficulty in putting some elements into practice eg focusing on students and not on self</li> </ul>
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**Table 8.1: Summary of the major findings – Theo**

# Chapter 9: Helen

## 9.1 Introduction

Helen, in her mid-thirties, has worked as a midwife for a number of years and has been responsible for training other midwives. She worked for 3 years, in Afghanistan for a church group as a midwife and left after finding it increasingly difficult to work under the Taliban regime. She has recently left the profession, feeling disillusioned with the NHS and the state of the profession although she planned to continue to work a small number of days each year in order to keep her 'licence'.

Helen was a caring and considerate member of the group, always happy to help others – both learners in class and trainees on the course. She got on well with everyone and her laughter could frequently be heard in sessions as she seemed to enjoy the whole course.

Helen received a grade 'C' pass for the course.

## 9.2 Interview 1

### 9.2.1 Beliefs about teachers and teaching

One belief which Helen seemed to hold is that teachers can learn from their students. This came from her sense that teachers are themselves learners and don't have all the answers.

Helen also indicated that she believed that teachers should not dominate the class but rather they should serve as a 'resource' or 'answer person' for learners. Helen stated that she thought that the learners should be involved in the learning process and that this should not simply be teacher-directed:

I think it's always quite effective not for me just to be the sole person doing all the teaching but to get others involved in the learning process [...] I hope I wouldn't be dominating the lesson to start with [...] I would only be there as a sort of resource or a erm you know erm like an answer person 'what do I do in this situation'

Helen believed that learners needed to be involved in the learning, to be active and doing things in lessons rather than being 'passive' and having information 'thrown' at them. She also felt that learners could learn from each other and not just from the teachers. Helen drew on contrasting learning experiences for these beliefs. Referring to, on the one hand, her experience of schooling where 'everything was just thrown at me and I wasn't involved in you know partaking of the lessons' and then on the other hand to her later-life experience of training to be a midwife which she describes as 'practical training' with 'hands-on experience'.

Helen talked about what she thought the teacher should do in order to involve students in the lessons. She felt that what were needed, in addition to avoiding a teacher-dominated classroom, were a number of activities in the class and that these activities needed to be varied and interesting for the students. Helen talked about the need to adapt lessons to suit all learning styles – visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learners. She also mentioned the need for the teacher to be aware of the 'type of learner' that they were teaching in order to be able to make this kind of adaptation. Helen probably learnt about learning styles from the course where it was dealt with on the first day:

I realise that all of us learn by different methods erm whether we're auditory visual [or] kinaesthetic whatever type of learner we are I would hope that erm people learning English from me would be able to integrate that into the type of learner that they are [...] in order for me to erm adapt my subject lessons to you know suit them

Helen believed that a good teacher needs to be 'sensitive enough to pick up when somebody was struggling or [...] had problems with the language'. She felt that teachers needed to be available after class for students who hadn't 'grasped' a point in the lesson. In this case the teacher needed to be able to go over difficulties again and offer students guidance:

I'd also want to be able to erm be available for a student that felt that they hadn't grasped or picked up on that particular lesson so be available afterwards for them to so that I could go through with them what their difficulties were and just guide them in the right direction I think that would be quite a big erm issue for me coz I never had it when I was at school and I struggled with a lot of things and I wished I had that extra help and erm I would like to make that available ev..every class that I do to say to my students 'I'm here afterwards if you've got any questions please come to me please talk to me you know we can go through it we can go over it again whatever your needs are it's what I'm here for' so to be available for the student

This issue of being available after class for struggling students appears to be something that Helen is taking from her schooldays. It is clear that she felt that this kind of availability and help was missing from her own educational experience.

With regard to her discussion of the need for a teacher to be sensitive and aware of students and their needs, Helen, when talking about the differences between teaching English and teaching midwifery, seemed to feel that one of the differences between the two lay in the subject of the teaching – language versus a person. She indicated that she felt the need to be extra vigilant that this difference did not lead her to be insensitive to her learners:

midwifery is different in a way and you're dealing with another person it's not just about words or sentence structures you're you're actually de..dealing with another person and you have to be sensitive to the person you're looking after and also to your student so in a te..in a language setting I'm only dealing with my student and therefore I'm not dealing with a third person and erm in view of that I think I could get become quite callous and forget my student [...] so I would have to rethink and be aware of that

Along with the need for a teacher to be sensitive and aware of students, Helen also thought that a good teacher should have a 'sense of humour'.

A final consideration for good teaching is the need to keep lessons short and the need for a teacher to 'keep to the point'. She indicated that this was because 'most people['s] attention span is about a half hour' and therefore teachers should 'keep it straight and to the point' and avoid the situation of having to say to students 'oh well I've run out of time I've got to do this another time'.

## 9.2.2 Beliefs about language and language learning

In discussing her beliefs about language learning, Helen drew on her experience of learning Dari in Afghanistan when she was working there for a church group. This experience seemed to have had a great influence on Helen as she talked about the effectiveness of learning in a real setting. She indicated that she saw this real world work as a possible strategy in her future teaching, giving an example:

getting the students out of the classroom and into say if I had kind of prepared a lesson on er you know the supermarket or food or something I could take them to the supermarket situation and say 'right go and find x y and z' and they'd be able to go and look for it and come back and you know tell me what they've found



Helen talked of the value of being ‘immersed’ in the language and ‘having no-one talk to you in English’. Helen was very clear in her belief that learning ‘by rote’ was not an effective way to learn a language. She seemed to feel that listening to the language, getting practice in speaking, and learning from your mistakes were of vital importance for learning:

listening to how they say it rote and then going out and about and having no-one talk to you in English just listening to the language and pick it up and make a total fool of yourself was a method in which I could learn the language and because I had nobody to erm correct me in English or say ‘oh no that’s not what it means’ erm I often did make a big fool of myself quite a lot of the time

### 9.2.3 Beliefs about learning to teach

As an earlier extract about her learning of midwifery indicated, Helen had a belief in the importance of ‘hands on experience’ and ‘practical training’. This fitted with her sense that you could ‘pick up’ a way of doing something by seeing it done and that although the theory was important, that doing the activity was the key to learning:

I’m a midwife and all my training was practical training that is I learnt hands on experience I didn’t go to a university and therefore what I learnt is what I saw you could actually see the mechanism say for instance how a baby was being born actually see that happening and then pick up how that should be done from the teacher and that was quite a lot different to what I had learned in a classroom situation you know I had to have the theory behind it but actually the hands on experience of doing it is what finally clinched it for me

## 9.3 Course Questionnaire

The questionnaire was returned on Friday at the end of Week 1.

In the first part of the questionnaire Helen listed her experience of midwifery working in both the UK and in Afghanistan, which included teaching of midwifery. She described the languages she spoke as, semi-fluent in Dari (Afghanistan), fluent in Malay and ‘studied German at school but don’t speak it’. She indicated that she had learnt Malay and Dari whilst ‘immersed in the country’.

Helen described her main reason for doing the CELTA course as ‘to teach english [sic.] cross culturally’. She listed ‘learning new teaching styles’, ‘learning how to teach a language’ and ‘meeting new people’ as elements of the course she was looking forward to and ‘assignments’ and the ‘intensity of course’ as elements she was worried

about. Finally, with regard to the course she described her experience up to that point as ‘an assault course but also a good learning curve’.

The sentence completion section of the questionnaire indicated a belief in student-centred teaching:

*The best way to learn a language is ... immerse yourself in the language.*

*A good teacher should always... allow the student to take part*

*A good teacher should never... dominate the class*

*When teaching English, it is important to... allow everyone to be involved.*

*The key to a good language lesson is... involving the students, using variation*

In a question which was intended to tap into trainees’ beliefs about learners, the questionnaire presented six terms and asked trainees to choose which view they agreed with most. The terms offered were: resisters, explorers, raw materials, partners, receptacles, clients. Trainees were invited to offer alternatives if desired. Helen used two of the terms ‘explorers’ and ‘clients’. She then explained her choice:

They are finding out something new about themselves and going into the unknown if they’ve never studied the topic / area before.

Clients – because they are expecting a service from those who are teaching them.

The final two questions which asked Helen to list five factors which make an effective teacher (a); and, up to three factors which make an effective language learner (b) were answered as follows:

(a)

Patience

Good humour

Humility (not just a teacher but learns from the students)

Available for the student

Knowledge of the subject matter

(b)

Motivation to learn language

Willing to make mistakes so that you can learn from mistakes.

Able to respond to correction

## 9.4 Guided Preparation

The first guided preparation session involved minimal interaction from Helen who wrote notes on how to conduct drills etc.

In GP 1,2, Helen told the tutor that she was confused about whether to use the practice book. She explained to the tutor what she was going to do, and he was happy.

She also asked if she could make up her own sentences and about how she should handle the open pairs exercise. The tutor demonstrated. The tutor then went through the TP points for the following class, Helen did not ask many questions, but made notes on what the trainer was suggesting.

Helen wanted to check the grammar for her exercise, as to whether certain structures would be acceptable responses from students (GP 1,3). She showed the tutor her grid exercise. Helen told the tutor that she was ‘completely stuck’ on how to pre-teach ‘confusing’, and the tutor asked if anyone had any ideas. The tutor advised her to ‘draw on their experience [...] something practical and concrete’. She asked about ‘countryside’ and told the group how she intended to teach ‘litter’. They ran through the vocabulary that she needed to cover and then Helen went through her plan, with the tutor advising on things such as to ask students for examples rather than give them the ones that Helen had prepared.

In GP 1,5 Helen told the group that she had brought a number of catalogues and tourist brochures which the group would be welcome to use. In her discussion of Monday’s lesson, she questioned the phrase ‘you’ll need to demonstrate this at the board’ from her TP points, and the tutor explained how she could handle the activity. She also checked how she should do the feedback part of the lesson.

In the first GP session of Week 2, Helen asked how to concept check the students’ understanding of one of the tasks. She then asked if they could talk about the following day’s teaching, and asked the tutor about her family tree visual and how to elicit relationships from students. She also asked about how to concept check the family relationships, the tutor advised her to simply check on gender. The following day in GP 2,2, Helen checked again on her family tree lesson, this time asking the tutor about her concept questions and again explaining the way she was going to do the lesson.

GP 2,3 saw the tutor going through Helen’s TP points for the Friday class. The tutor was brief and suggested alternatives for her to choose. He alerted her to the pronunciation of ‘can’. Helen did not ask any questions but did write notes. The final session of the week (GP 2,5) involved the discussion of Helen’s Tuesday lesson and the tutor went through the reading task and told Helen that she was responsible for thinking up some tasks on the reading. Again she wrote notes and did not ask any questions.

GP 3,1 began with the tutor explaining the grammar and pronunciation of comparatives, and what a ranking activity was. He then explained the TP points to Helen who made notes on what she had to do. She asked about how she should deal

with some of her more unusual vocabulary for that day's teaching, for example the use of 'winker' rather than 'indicator' in an authentic text on driving.

Session 3,2 did not really involve Helen. She asked a couple of questions about the grammar in session GP 3,3. She was concerned about the comparative forms that she had to make and as to how to fill in her lesson plan. In GP 3,5, Helen talked about her plan for Tuesday's lesson, saying that she had looked at the book and 'wasn't very impressed with it'. She explained her lesson, and her intention to 'get students talking'. The trainer pointed out that the students might not know the grammar that she had intended that they practice, and hence needed a presentation of the target language or 'some kind of input' first. Angela suggested a picture story she had come across in one of the books which would be suitable for the presentation. They then talked about the option of using 'scenarios' or 'mini-situations' to get students talking and the tutor suggested Helen could write 8 or so for the students to use.

GP 4,1 saw Helen talking further about her lesson for Tuesday. She went through her lesson plan, explaining the activities she was going to use. The teacher trainer stepped in to explain the different stages of the lesson and how certain stages and activities went before or after others, for example restricted use before free-er practice and drilling before a restricted use activity. The tutor suggested an alternative final activity as he felt her intended one was too restricted. Helen went through her lesson plan in GP 4,2. She also took the opportunity to check the grammar of her lesson with the tutor. Helen raised the topic of her lesson on Thursday, telling the group that she didn't have a clue about what to do. The trainees and the tutor then tried to think of what she could do, with the tutor suggesting a dialogue writing game that he had done with trainees. Helen clarified her lesson for Thursday in GP 4,3. She told the group her story and explained her intended procedure. The tutor advised her on dividing students into two equal teams and how to speed up the lesson by giving prompts if students struggled.

## 9.5 TP and TP Feedback

Helen did not teach on the first day of teaching practice. She made two contributions to the TP feedback session (1,2); the first was when the loudness of Theo's voice was called into question, and Helen stepped in to praise Theo's enthusiasm for his subject.

Her second contribution was at the end of the session when she commented to the group that she liked the way that they, as teachers, were able to sit next to, rather than stand over learners in the class:

- H I think it's nice that you can come and sit next to a student I mean I know it's such a small room and there's so many people in it but that just adds that little bit extra
- TT yeah it really helped didn't it
- H yeah rather than talking down sitting alongside
- TT yeah get on the same level
- H yes and I think that's really nice
- TT yes that was brought out very very well

In TPF 1,3 Helen is supportive in her feedback to Theo when she praised him for making improvements in his boardwriting and again for making 'a real effort' not to talk whilst facing the whiteboard. Later in the same session when giving feedback on her own teaching, Helen included so few positive points that the teacher trainer turned immediately to the other trainees for positive points. Helen's initial concerns for her own teaching were:

I put down that I tried to include everyone in the lesson I gave encouragement to students points I need to work on was to allow the students to speak more

Theo immediately took up the case, reporting that he thought Helen was 'very well organised' with 'good boardwork', 'good diction clear and economical' and that her language was well graded. He suggested that she needed to drill a little more. When Jeff suggested that she should have explained the phrase 'don't mind' Helen explained why she didn't:

you see I didn't know it so I thought I'm not going down that road and make you know get into a total coz then I would have abandoned the rest of the lesson

[...]

so I then decided ok I don't understand it they don't understand it and I picked that up [all laugh] and I thought go onto the next thing

Following this exchange, Helen asked the group 'so ok finished?' however both David and the teacher trainer had yet to give feedback. David praised her 'clear instructions' and for 'helping the students like you said you would do yesterday you got down on their level and encouraging clear and precise'. The teacher trainer described her lesson as 'very organised', 'very effective' and praised the way that she dealt with alternative answers from students. The only other comment made about her first

teaching practice was that David, Angela and Penny agreed that she came across as ‘a little bit patronising’ when she praised the students.

In TPF 1,4 Helen commented that David’s visual presentation had involved students well. In feedback on her own teaching she returned to the previous day’s comment about allowing the students to speak:

I put down that I kept to time erm I had a good use of props something different erm improvement since my last lesson I allowed the students to take part a little bit more rather than me doing all the talking points to work on is checking concept erm because with the vocabulary I could’ve I could’ve done more of that

The teacher trainer felt that she did well in concept checking. Angela, who then gave feedback, said that positive elements were ‘thorough drilling’, she checked the students well and the lesson was interesting. Angela then criticised Helen’s voice which she said seemed ‘too slow’ and ‘unnatural’. Penny added that she thought Helen had good diction and that maybe what she needed was ‘to be less serious which comes with relaxation and a voice becomes more natural then’. Despite Helen pointing out that she tended to be a slow speaker anyway, Angela persisted with her feedback until the teacher trainer stepped in:

- TT I think it is a strength that you have that the rest of us haven’t yet got and I would I’m not I’m not very good at speaking slowly myself and so you are you enunciate so clearly and it produces a very settled confident=  
P =it’s not too loud and it’s not too quiet=  
TT =the students feel very comfortable with it because they know as they can follow it it’s not going to be too quick so in a way it’s a strength

The teacher trainer then suggested that Helen, and the other trainees too, needed to work on getting examples from the students rather than giving them themselves. Penny also had feedback on Helen and she praised the way Helen helped the students but criticised the way her ‘facial expressions are serious’. When the others, including the teacher trainer disagreed, Penny indicated that it was probably down to ‘tension’ and ‘pressure’. Final feedback was given by the tutor who commented that it was ‘a very nice lesson tremendous clarity and clarity of instructions’, ‘excellent’ feedback, and that she had been effective in getting students to correct themselves. He suggested that she needed to work on word stress.

Helen did not teach in the final TP of the week. However, she did give feedback to both David and Penny, both of whom she suggested should use student-to-student correction rather than supplying the answer themselves.

In TPF 2,1, Helen displayed a good knowledge of students and their capabilities when she suggested to Jeff that he would be wiser choosing stronger students to exemplify tasks rather than the weaker ones. She said that he could then move to the weaker students once he had obtained a model. In the feedback on her own teaching she was extremely brief on her positive points, saying that she ‘drilled’ and ‘listened for sounds’. She felt that she needed to work on concept questions and ‘being more varied in class’. The conversation continued:

- TT what what do you mean exactly by varied having different kinds of activity?  
<H: yes> interactions? <H: yes>
- H maybe like instead of I I noticed I I told them to do pairwork that many times  
<TT: right> by which time they were absolutely sick to the back teeth of  
pairwork whereas maybe I could have done it across class or
- TT which you did right at then end in fact but there was only one question and  
answer
- H yes yes I did I cut that
- TT that was a promising idea I thought at that stage <H: mm> ^ coz it's  
communicative then [inaudible] yeah I little bit I suppose a little bit some kind  
of the same kind of thing and activities but that's what you were asked to do  
<H: yes>

Helen then suggested that she could have recycled some of the language from another trainee's lesson. The tutor did not seem unduly concerned with this point, he described her class as ‘extremely clear’:

everything was absolutely checked instructions were simple on target everybody knew exactly what they were doing and why they were doing it er at all stages of the lesson erm any teaching point that came up was clearly exemplified and demonstrated and clarified and then practiced so it was very effective [...] very good clear good language awareness logical sequence set clearly set up activities and good results er good use of gestures for your instructions language is graded and always clear one thing to think about try more student to student correction a bit more

Penny was the only trainee to offer feedback on Helen's lesson and she was positive, focusing on her ‘varied’ approach to questions.

The following day saw Helen teaching again (TPF 2,2) and this time she was very unhappy with her performance, beginning the session by exclaiming ‘I just blew it really’. She explained that she had become increasingly confused as her presentation progressed and she was very aware that the students were confused too. She added ‘I didn't feel right about it at all from start to finish’. The teacher trainer, Angela and Jeff then talked about how she could have avoided the confusion over the grammar and vocabulary of the family tree. When Jeff suggested that Helen left ‘a little bit too long

between the questions and answers if they were not forthcoming', Helen's response displayed her confusion: 'yes because I was muddled I was just the whole thing was a blank to me and I realised that there were long gaps left all over the place'. She then received some praise for her good 'pictorial presentation' and 'clear enunciation' (from Jeff); her 'clear instructions' and examples (from Angela); and from Theo a comment on her correction which the teacher trainer then picked up:

- T you say you didn't have a good start but I was very impressed by your start coz you instantly put into practice exactly what we learnt this afternoon about student correction and you went all through the stages one by one  
[...]
- TT student to student correction was really good categorisation so correction was probably a big step forward it was something we talked about yesterday visual aids were good used effectively instructions generally clear although perhaps you should have thought through what you were asking them to do all at the same time [...] and then when we needed to correct there was clarity and you started to involve the students in helping themselves and each other yeah so er more drilling is needed <H: yeah> especially at the beginning that would have perhaps helped any particular weaker students who er were probably not with it until right at the end

Later in the same teaching practice feedback session, when the tutor criticised Penny for moving too close to learners who speak quietly, Helen stepped in and suggested that she should use Theo's technique of gesturing that he couldn't hear. In her feedback to Jeff, Helen criticised him in one of the more direct confrontations of the feedback sessions. Jeff had translated some of his instructions into French for the benefit of several of the students, one of whom was weaker than many of the others, although by no means the weakest in the class. Helen was the first to raise the issue in feedback and she was quickly backed up by Theo:

- H I I actually put down here that it's quite I think a lot of the other students feel left out when you start speaking a language you know that you were using French
- T alienation
- H yeah yeah and three of them could you know follow you but the rest of them were like [gestures confusion]
- J er but no but I I explained it in English first
- T you may have even so
- J then for the help of the three others I I because they won't understand anything will they I mean like this French fella here <H: yes> er didn't understand anything at all so
- H I I I think I still wouldn't use a language / if I knew it \ coz I'm in an English class and I'm there to teach I I don't know that's just me personally



Helen was clearly concerned with the exclusion of the other members of the class even though the use of French would have assisted a few of the students in their comprehension of the instructions.

The session ends with Helen raising the issue of when to hand in her 'thing' (lesson plan) which was, by this stage of the course, a requirement:

- H     erm I'm sorry I forgot to give you my thing  
TT     everybody forgot [all laugh]  
H     should we give you these ^ before?  
TT     as you start teaching yeah

For the remainder of the week, Helen observed the upper level students being taught by the other group of trainees.

The next TP feedback session for all trainees in this group was in Week 3 with the new higher level 'Upper Intermediate' students. Helen was not involved in teaching on Monday (TPF 3,1), although she did give feedback on Theo's lesson. She praised Theo's 'fun', 'lively' teaching and the fact that he 'had the attention of the students' but expressed concern that he did not achieve his aim. In an exchange which illustrates the empathy and understanding between trainees she advised him that he could use David's visual approach to help him:

- H     no and I thought the way to help you to achieve your aims was you know how David has his erm wonderful bright coloured <T: the visuals> things ready and written erm because I could tell like all your scribbling on the board was like 'don't panic <T: yes> you know [TT laughs] I do know what I'm doing'  
T     no that's how it is normally [all laugh]  
H     and therefore if you if you had had that but that would have come from / your prep <T: / prep exactly \> that's right and that would've helped you <T: yeah> and then you wouldn't have been blblblbl

TP feedback session 3,2 saw Helen teaching the Upper Intermediate students for the first time. Helen's first comments on her lesson indicated the difficulty she faced in thinking on her feet. She stated that the lesson was 'not so brilliant' due to the fact she was 'a bit thrown' to find that there were only three students present and hence her first task which called for groups was in confusion:

- H     I had to rethink in my mind coz I wanted to have groups and I couldn't do that so I had to do open individually  
TT     why couldn't you have had one group of three?  
H     I guess I could have done [TT laughs, <yeah>] I wanted some discussion and if I need =  
TT     =well you can get that with three can't you? You can get it with two

H     yeah I guess so

Helen also felt that the text and its connected vocabulary was difficult for the students and that she had underestimated this, commenting that ‘I realised that they did they didn’t have confidence’ and that she ‘didn’t concept check’ or drill, it ‘all went out the window’. The teacher trainer assured her that this was natural as it takes a few lessons for a teacher to attune to the level of students. Penny reinforced the feedback on the lack of drilling in Helen’s lesson before the tutor summarised with his feedback:

very nice very effective correction

[...]

yeah it it went very well erm especially for the first meeting with the class you know it was very much your your usual clarity was all there so it was really CLEARLY staged <H: yes> and really CLEARLY executed and er yeah very effective skills work the scanning task was nice wasn’t it focusing on three numbers very nice way into the text and then moving on systematically to the the intensive work so effective skills work lovely work on correction and pronunciation there and very clearly done

The next day, TPF 3,3, was one of Helen’s full-hour lessons and coincided with her having a migraine. She had gone home at lunch-time but returned to teach the lesson. The feedback on her session was brief and she only made one comment. The session began with combined feedback from Angela and Penny, delivered by Angela. They commented that she was ‘clear as usual’ with a good lead-in and ‘good monitoring of errors’. They also commented that her drilling was better. On the negative side, the pair of ‘feedbackers’ wrote ‘maybe use a different method of groupwork’ on the whiteboard and elaborated orally that for the sake of variety she could change partners round. The session ended on a humorous note as Helen when teaching had mis-labelled a structure, leading the tutor to laughingly comment ‘present simple continuous a new tense was born’.

The following feedback session (TPF 3,4) which focused on the teaching of Penny and Theo, saw Helen struggle with teacher vocabulary again, this time searching for a term in relation to Theo’s handling of his vocabulary pre-teaching:

H     vocabulary erm he could have erm ^ maybe erm ^ what do you call it ex..erm

T     exemplify?

J     conceptualise?

H     no erm ‘wrinkled’ and <J: yes> and a couple more other words he could have put them yeah ‘floppy’ because nearly everyone

TT    concept checking

H     yes

In TPF 4,1 Helen and Angela praised David's teaching for 'the way he asked students to correct each other'. They also praised his elicitation techniques but criticised him for not drilling enough and, for not working on word stress.

In her penultimate teaching practice which was a one-hour lesson (TPF 4.2), Helen received feedback from Theo and David. The whiteboard, on which it was intended that the trainees should write three positives and three things to work on, had:

√ lead in continuity achieved aims
- concept checking

Theo elaborated on the written feedback, saying that the lesson was 'nice and flowing', that the students were interested in the lesson and that her handling of the correction phases was extremely good:

- T correction was extremely good as well erm this time on-going correction good  
correction to the board she actually applied all her informed correction and er  
used great initiative when she er when she did that er
- TT categorisation <T: sorry?> categorising errors too
- T absolutely yeah

The tutor added his own feedback to the effect that the lesson was 'very clear' and 'well organised' and that 'the focus was with the students'. Helen herself commented that she thought it went 'ok not brilliant the students didn't do a lot of speaking'. The comment seems to indicate the importance Helen ascribed to students speaking in the lesson. The teacher trainer responded to this saying that she made the best of her plan and materials in this sense, that the students did have some speaking and that she 'involved the students well from the onset'.

Helen next commented on the errors students made in their use of the past participle, and felt that clearer boardwork would have eliminated this problem. The trainer responded that students make these errors anyway. When Angela suggested that in addition to writing up the grammar phonetically she could have explained the phonetic alphabet because one of the students looked confused, Helen rejected the idea saying that she had noticed some of the students were ok and that she thought 'I didn't really want to go into it [...] I thought oh no I can't I can't sidetrack I have to keep

going so I didn't'. The trainer then offered a very lengthy summary which praised Helen for student involvement, achievement of aims and suggested that she needed to allow students 'thinking time' and improve her drilling:

good lesson quite pleased erm thought student involvement was good from the outset thought you achieved your aims [...] the first part of the lesson I though was a perhaps a little bit out of place some of the stages weren't quite were I would have put them [...] a good lead-in involving the students [...] drilling full sentences is one thing that wasn't really there you could've drilled 'should have shouldn't have' [...] then you put them you put them into pairs to tell each other about things they regret ^ really they needed some thinking time first [...] error correction I thought you were very aware of it and generally improved performance on that so [...] categorisation was good

In TP feedback 4,3 Helen was responsible for providing feedback to Angela. The first thing she commented on in Angela's lesson was that 'students were given thinking time when the tasks were set up'. Later she added:

H they were given thinking time which is you know what I didn't do yesterday  
TT it pays dividends doesn't it?  
H yeah that's right ^

In Angela's lesson, which involved a role play, one of the students used her own personal experience of a difficult marriage to play out her role. Helen seemed to feel uneasy about this:

I I thought as well when Carmen started talking about her own situation that it was very personal for her and you know that can be a very tough situation to handle because obviously that's something that's very real and very evident in her life and erm you know it it's difficult in a situation like this to talk about you know situations yeah situations like that

[...]

with er the ranking activity because they were talking about the different countries and I felt that was really har..she was really courageous how she said you know my husband refuses to live in Brazil ^ full stop ^ I have to make the sacrifice I have to live here

Unlike Penny however who seemed to feel that the activity shouldn't have been used, Helen seemed to be commenting more on the student's courage than on Angela's handling of the task.

Later in the same TP feedback session Helen raised the issue of thinking on your feet when dealing with correction, saying that she realised from watching Theo that 'you have to be thinking by about not just one thing but two or three or four things all at the same time' adding that this was 'quite taxing on your brain'.

The final TP of the course was observed by the external examiner and involved four of the trainees teaching for half an hour each. Helen taught a revision class and was on third. The teacher trainer opened the discussion by saying that Helen really seemed to enjoy teaching the session. Helen acknowledged that she did but said that she felt that the lesson should have been taught over a longer period because some of the students struggled and she could have dealt with the vocabulary better. Angela felt that the lesson went well, that the students enjoyed it and that it was useful for them. She said that Helen could have had clearer instructions at the beginning of the game. On prompting from the tutor Helen suggested how she could have organised the game differently. When Jeff suggested she could have given them more help initially, Helen responded that 'that's why I gave them thinking time'. The tutor summarised with a comment on the fact that she had achieved her aims although organisation could have been improved. He stated that he thought the class was a 'nice finish' to the course for her.

## 9.6 Assignments

The assignments which will be included in this section are (in the order in which they were handed out on the course): 'Learner Profile 1', 'Coursebook Evaluation' and 'Reflection'. All of Helen's assignments were typed.

### 9.6.1 Learner profile 1

Although much of this assignment is taken up with the reporting of how the learner who was interviewed answered her questions, the final paragraph focused on answering the sub-question: 'How will your findings influence your future approach to teaching?'. Helen wrote:

In order to have effective teaching it is necessary to have a variety of activities so that the student becomes an active learner rather than a passive one. This will mean using creativity and adapting the lesson to meet the needs of all the students. The use of props and other teaching methods can play a vital role in the learning process. It will also involve more time spent on allowing students to speak rather than the teacher doing all the talking. It may also be helpful to have some understanding of the language that the student speaks, so that further explanations can be given to the students. Other areas that will need consideration will be during group and individual task work so that all the students are taking part and also feeding back their responses.

It is also important to allow all students to be involved in the class so that no one feels excluded.

Clear issues which emerge from Helen's paragraph are the need for student-centred teaching in which learners are involved and active. Helen also raised the need for adapting to meet students' needs.

## 9.6.2 Coursebook evaluation

Following the suggested structure for the assignment, Helen began by describing the syllabus of the book. She praised the 'variety of content' and the 'varied' topics used and pointed out that because of the way in which the book recycles previously covered material the language 'keeps going round and round until the student grasps that structure or function'. She pointed out that this led to 'the presentation, practice and production format'.

In the next section on 'Approach' she returned to the PPP issue and indicated her dissatisfaction with this approach to teaching language:

The presentation of new language mainly follows the PPP (presentation, practice, production) sequence. This can pose problems for the learner as it is difficult to gain perfection in an hour. It is also unnatural and starts at accuracy and moves towards fluency.

In the final section which dealt with Helen's own adaptations of the coursebook she documented 'a few adaptations' she had made to the material such as rewriting some questions to suit the students' level, modifying texts, and adapting to introduce more variety in the lessons 'rather than just focusing on a few areas'. In addition to this Helen mentioned the introduction of supplementary material created by the teacher such as 'pictures and mime [...] and drawings'. She explained:

These changes and adaptations were made so that the student would be exposed to a variety of learning. There was also at times insufficient material in the book to fill an hour. Some of the students were able to grasp concepts and meanings quickly but other students had some difficulty. Other students found the adaptations and supplemented materials to difficult probably because it was a different form of learning that they were not familiar with. Those who found the adapted materials easy were probably at a higher level than the class they were attending. The teacher needs to be sensitive and aware of the needs of the students when supplementing and adapting materials.

Helen was clearly focusing on several major issues, the importance of variety and of adapting to the level and needs of the students.

### 9.6.3 Reflection

Helen structured this assignment according to the way that was recommended by the course tutors in the assignment handout, using a series of headings ‘class management’, ‘correction’, ‘learner differences’, ‘use of course books and published materials’ and reflections on own teaching’. This section will follow that organisation.

#### 9.6.3.1 Class management

Helen raised a number of issues which she observed in the experienced teachers’ lessons concerning classroom management. She began by commenting that ‘there was a lot of variety’ with the use of pair, group and individual work. She wrote that some teachers did not split students from the same countries up whereas others did; and that:

When a student did start speaking in his or her mother tongue then the teacher would make a joke out of it and soon the students realised that they had to speak in English.

#### 9.6.3.2 Correction

Helen detailed the various methods and techniques that teachers used in dealing with learners’ errors, such as how they ‘enabled the students to correct themselves’. She wrote about how teachers dealt with written correction at the whiteboard and how ‘all errors were corrected but in a sensitive and discreet way without drawing attention to any particular student’.

#### 9.6.3.3 Learner differences

Helen, like other trainees, noted the differences between different nationalities of students: the ‘quieter’ Japanese students and the European students. However she also noticed and noted the differences that gender made in the classroom and how teachers dealt with this; and she commented on the different types of learning styles:

The boys did most of the talking and the girls only spoke when specifically asked by the teacher. This may be attributed to submission in the Asian culture or to show respect to the teacher. During groupwork it was the boys who mainly did most of the feedback unless asked by a teacher. Some teachers were good at getting everyone in the class involved so that all the students had an input during the class. It was also noted that some students were visual learners and others were auditory or kinaesthetic and the teachers were aware of these differences and had a variety of learning styles in the class so that each learner type was accommodated during the lesson.

#### **9.6.3.4 Use of course books and published materials**

In this section Helen largely described some of the adaptations that she had seen in the classroom, such as teacher-devised or adapted gap-fills and the use of an authentic advertisement to elicit language.

#### **9.6.3.5 Reflections on own teaching**

Helen's summary of her strengths in the classroom focused on her organisation and clarity, the way that she dealt with student correction and phonology. She made interesting comments regarding her attitude towards drilling and seemed to show an awareness of the limitations of being a native speaker teacher of English:

I have learned that I have a lot of clarity during my lessons and I am well organised and confident. I have also learned that it is possible to drill students without feeling that it is a waste of time and effort. Student correction works very well as most students know the mistakes they have made without being told by a teacher and this reduces teacher talking time. I have become more aware of student correction and have made progress in this area as I put into use what I have learned. I'm learning how to listen for sounds that I would take for granted as a native speaker. Pronunciation may not be easy for students to grasp and this can be at any level.

Her discussion of her weaknesses was raised in the frame of areas that she needed to continue working on after the end of the course and she elaborated on this as she outlined a strategy she hoped to use in her future teaching career:

I want to continue working on concept checking, exemplification and drilling of complete sentences as these are new to me and areas that I consider to be a weakness. I hope to continue to use self evaluation as one strategy for improving on my weaknesses and I would also like to ask my colleagues to randomly assess and evaluate me once I am in a teaching position.

The teacher trainer who graded the paper commented that, amongst other things:



Your own performance is evaluated accurately, I think, and you show a laudable attitude to self-improvement.

## 9.7 Progress Records

### 9.7.1 End of Week 1

In the section of the form entitled ‘Overall Progress’, Helen wrote ‘Went better than I expected’; and under the heading ‘Next week I need to work on...’ she wrote ‘Sounds, accurate language models’. Both of these points were ticked by the tutor.

The tutor’s summary of Helen’s first week was very positive:

Good first week – you have an encouraging and supportive rapport. Your teaching is clear and well organised with a systematic approach. You are already getting student self correction and checking meaning. Yes pay attention to accurate phonology.

### 9.7.2 End of Week 2

Next to the grading of ‘language practice activities’, the tutor wrote ‘lots of variety here’. In the summary of her overall progress, Helen wrote:

I’m using more variety in the class, pairs, groups. Asked students to correct, used more drilling.

In the section entitled ‘Next week I need to work on...’ Helen wrote ‘exemplifying tasks, tabulation’.

The tutor’s summary is generally positive, with the only criticism relating to a need to relax more while teaching:

You have made progress in drilling, correction, lesson planning and establishing and maintaining clarity. You are thorough in presentation and practice activities and these have a pleasing variety now. You could now try to relax a bit more and smile, you can come across as rather a technician. Good week for you though.

### 9.7.3 End of Week 3

The thoroughness and variety which was commented on previously is also mentioned in the progress record for the end of the third week. In the section on 'Planning' Helen wrote under the 'effective areas' heading:

Comprehensive, Systematic

Use of a variety of materials – handout, the board, students writing on the board.

Under the same overall heading of planning Helen wrote that she thought the areas which needed attention were 'sticking to time' which she explains is difficult because 'sometimes there too [sic.] much to cover'.

In the next section Helen was required to comment on her 'classroom skill and awareness', under the heading of 'effective areas' she lists:

Drilling, monitoring

Use of appropriate language to the level of the student

Aware that some students are weaker than others – involving all the students

Pair work, group work

Variety of props – drawings, pictures

Maintaining clarity

Paying attention to phonology.

She wrote a single point under the heading of areas to work on, 'exemplification', which was also listed as something to work on in the progress record of Week 2.

In the final section that she is required to complete dealing with 'Professional development', Helen wrote under the heading 'Effective Areas':

Becoming more self aware of my weaknesses and putting in more work to those areas.

Helen did not write anything under the section 'areas to work on'.

The tutor's summary praises Helen's clarity and in particular her work on correction and phonology:

Lesson planning has become more coherent. Your teaching is efficient, full of clarity – you are able to set up production and carry out effective skills work. You are adept at correction and pay good attention to phonology. Now work on general all round thoroughness.

## 9.8 Mid-course Interview

This interview with Helen was carried out in the third week of the course. At the time the only room available was the input room where James and Theo were working. After checking that it was acceptable to all of the trainees, but particularly Helen, to use the room for an informal interview, we started. Within minutes James and then later Theo joined in. The interview moved temporarily out of my control, but the conversation between the three trainees was all the more genuine and hence worth reporting.

When asked how she was finding the course Helen commented that it was ‘still very intensive erm a challenge fun’ although she added that there was ‘almost too much information to take in for such a short space of time’. At this point James joined in the conversation and asked Helen if she had said it was fun, she elaborated:

it is fun and and I just like the challenge of you know listening to other people and seeing how other people learn and how other people ask questions and all that [...] sort of thing and how we’re so varied and we’re so you know we come from all sorts of different backgrounds [...] you see a course like this as well has erm given me an appetite to actually go and study English language do you know what I mean? <Jm: yes yes> because I realise how much of my own mother tongue I don’t know about

Helen then commented that if she did another course she would not do it in such an ‘onslaught fashion’ saying it would be easier to do it at a ‘more leisurely pace’ where she could ‘take the information on process it and then use it rather than blwwwww and churn it out and don’t know what I’m churning out’.

Helen moved onto the topic of a lack of awareness of our mother tongue:

I think it’s brought my attention as well how much sort of jargon I use and lingo and you know phrases that people haven’t got a clue about [...] we take our mother tongues so much for granted that when somebody is trying to learn another language you just expect them to know all the jargon and lingo that you’re using but in actual fact they don’t

They then returned to the topic of the intensity of the course where Helen explained that she ‘went to bed at 8.30’ the previous day because she was so exhausted.

At this point the two other trainees move off to a topic unconnected with the course and Helen and I return to the interview. Helen said that she enjoyed the teaching practice and the preparation although she found the feedback on occasion ‘a waste of time’ and ‘petty’ when it ‘goes on and on and on’. She then began talking about the observation of experienced teachers which she described as ‘a bit hard’ because:

you're very passive aren't you you're not involved in anything you're just observing  
you're not allowed to feed back in right then you have to wait until the end

## 9.9 Interview 2

### 9.9.1 Beliefs about teachers and teaching

In the second interview carried out at the end of the course, Helen talked about her belief that 'the teacher doesn't know everything' and how she saw teaching and learning as a 'two way process':

the teacher doesn't know everything [...] it's a two way process erm its not you're Mr Wonderful or Mrs Wonderful and here I am with a learner who doesn't know anything but in actual fact its a two way process erm that we can both learn from each other yes the teacher does have a qualification and does have a specific erm way or degree I don't know quite how to say this of putting across what they know but equally the student also brings something in to the learning process

Helen also felt that the teacher should have 'some knowledge of how your [...] language works' and that they should be able to 'redirect students' if they don't have the answer or know that subject matter.

In addition to the idea that 'the teacher's a resource person', Helen also talked about the idea that the student also 'brings something in to the learning process'. She said that she felt that the teacher should use students as resources. Although Helen was clear about how she had harnessed this in her clinical teaching experience where the trainee midwives and medical students had a 'very up to date resource', she expressed uncertainty about how this use of the student as a resource could be applied to language teaching:

I don't know how that applies to a language situation where you're teaching somebody to learn or grasp a language erm they I would still keep it in my mind that they are they have resources they have information

Helen was clear about the idea that lessons needed to be 'student-focused' and 'student-centred' rather than teacher dominated. She saw elements of teacher domination to include too much teacher talk and the teacher taking a 'here's me and this is my agenda' approach. She saw a major reason for focusing on students and on reducing teacher talking time as being in order to give students confidence and to show

them that they ‘know quite a lot of stuff’ and can manage without ‘mass input’. She also associated teacher talk with the idea that the teacher doesn’t know everything:

good teaching yeah er the teacher isn’t doing all the talking erm you know that again ties in with the teacher doesn't know everything

Helen expressed her belief that a good teacher adapts their teaching to suit the students and that this willingness or ability to adapt teaching methods is more important than teacher enthusiasm. She viewed the different learning styles – visual, auditory and kinaesthetic – as something to which a teacher needed to adapt their teaching. She defined herself as a visual learner and, drawing on her experiences at school she described how teachers seemed unable to deal with this. She described Maths as a subject in which this was a particular problem. Helen then offered suggestions as to how the teachers could have dealt with specific mathematical problems:

I am a visual learner if I can see something in action then I can I can grasp it erm a lot easier [...] I had a lot of problems with and one of the ways that would’ve helped me I thought was to either get erm some pebbles or you know some matchsticks or an apple or something and say like fractions cut the apple and actually show me ‘this is a quarter this is two quarters and de de de de’ instead of just you know writing it all out in fractions form and saying this is what you get which didn't you know make any sense to me at all but if I could’ve seen you add three matchsticks here and five matchsticks here and you end up with eight then ‘oh yeah right yes ok now I’ve grasped it’ you can actually see the you know number of matchsticks here at the end

She continued by describing how this type of approach was not used and that despite having an enthusiastic Mathematics teacher they were unable to adapt to her ‘visual’ learning style:

the teacher was very enthusiastic about it and was getting into it and was like ‘and do you understand?’ and I’d say ‘no’ and she’d go through the same thing all over again she wouldn’t adopt adapt her method she’d just use the same old bit of paper ‘everyone do this and this and this and you see and this is how it happens’ and I’d go ‘no I still don’t get it’ and she still wouldn’t adapt her method

Helen talked about adapting teaching to suit the students into her own teaching practice. She reported that she would have liked feedback from the learners on the course as to ‘what what helped you? you know what was effective for you? what was a total waste of time?’. However, she expressed uncertainty as to how a teacher could, in a practical sense, adapt their teaching to suit all the learners in the group:

obviously you can’t c.. I couldn't possibly adapt my class to suit everybody because you might have ten students with ten different needs

Interestingly, Helen's choice of effective learning experience changed between Interviews 1 and 2. In the first interview she chose learning to be a midwife with its practical hands-on experience; in Interview 2 it was an experience from her school days. Helen described a Geography teacher who would take students out into the field and show them the things that they had been studying in the class:

say we were studying Geology we would do a cross section in the ground and say 'now look here and do you see this and do you see that' and it made the whole lesson like 'wow this is really exciting' and 'ooh it's not just some nonsense that they talk about in the class it actually this you know it's really real it's really happening' and you can see you know erm things like that and he would have all sorts of different things that he would do with you he'd take you down to the beach but you know coz we had access to those places I suppose it was erm feasible to do that but if he hadn't had access I wonder what he would've done

Helen clearly liked both the visual element of these classes and also the fact that she was getting out of the classroom. However, as can be seen, she appears confused as to how the teacher would have managed if he hadn't had access to the places and settings that he did.

One strategy that Helen thought was involved in good teaching was that of providing students with a variety of learning activities in the classroom. She felt that variety broke up the 'monotonous cycle' of a lesson and that it was especially important if a class had the teacher for a long period of say 'six months twelve months'. Helen indicated that although variety was important, all activities needed to be 'within the learning process' and that the teacher always needed to bear the lesson aims in mind. This need to be aware of lesson aims was also important to the issue of adapting one's teaching:

as long as you stick to your aim you can adapt your teaching very effectively so that you do have variety you do have erm lots of you know different ideas that you can introduce erm into into a class setting

Helen also felt that the activities used should not go on for too long and indicated her sense that 'say in ten minutes on each thing' seemed to be a good guide. Helen suggested that 'doing something totally outrageous' was also useful in providing variety for the lessons.

Helen described her belief that 'learning should be fun' and that teachers should use 'humour' to 'make lessons light-hearted' and not 'pressurised'. She did however offer the caveat that this was as long as the students were 'grasping ideas or concepts'

and ‘showing some kind of progress’. Drawing on her experience of schooling again, Helen described ineffective teaching as involving students ‘sitting [...] down at a table and writing reams of stuff that didn't have any meaning’. She felt that classes should involve lots of student-student interaction and groupwork.

Helen talked about the idea that teaching a lesson did not simply involve dealing with one thing but that a teacher needed to be able to think on their feet and deal with things as they came up. Talking about her experience of watching her fellow trainees on the course, she discussed the need for teachers to be able to decide whether to stick to their aims or to deviate:

were you going to stick to your aim or were you going to deviate on to something totally different so it's all about erm being aware and pulling everything together but not going off sort of at a tangent you know from the subject so yeah it it helped me to see how some of my colleagues in actual fact they could cope very quickly and others just really struggled or totally abandoned things because they just didn't know how to think on their feet as it were

Helen raised a point relating to the need for teachers to give students at the end of the lesson the opportunity to raise issues which they found difficult. She felt that this was important because teachers may not be aware that learners are struggling and also because some students are more comfortable interacting with the teacher in a one-to-one rather than a group situation:

I would always give a student opportunity like at the end of the class erm if there's anything you want to discuss that I haven't covered please talk to me you know please see me coz I can't read your mind you know if there's something that you're struggling with or that you haven't picked up so I'd always like to give that opportunity coz I know some students are more comfortable on a one to one others are fine in a group situation they can talk about everything and anything

In addition to the illustration of her belief in the importance of being available for students, the extract is also interesting because Helen moved to speaking directly to the students rather than to me as the interviewer.

## 9.9.2 Beliefs about language and language learning

Helen's second interview included a discussion of her language learning experience, learning Dari in Afghanistan. She talked about how she learnt the language by talking to people, and how important communication was:

I then opted to listen and just put you know words down that I heard and try and figure out the structure of the the language through the help of other people I just ask other people

She talked about the need for fun and interaction. She described how she learnt from her mistakes, with people around her correcting her, and she gave the example of her pronunciation. Helen described the need to try language out in 'real live situation[s]'. Her experience of learning Dari was important for her beliefs about language learning:

I would go out to the market I'd see different things and I'd I'd be going 'what's this? what's this?' and then they'd I'd listen and they'd say and a lot of people didn't understand English but they knew I was trying to figure out what was you know the vegetable or whatever it was or in somebody's home and I I'd point to something and they'd go 'this is this' I'd go 'oh yes' and I'd always have my little notebook with me and you know I'd write words down and erm I would always get the local people to pronounce things if I I had the wrong pronunciation [...] put it in a real live situation then it became quite fun you know because the local people would just laugh their heads off at the silly things you used to say or you know you'd I'd I'd string a sentence together and then I'd suddenly realise oh no I'd put it back to front you know coz they they'd tell you in a real funny way so I'd learn from my mistakes as well which was you know another way of learning which was great

Helen found her lessons in Afghanistan unhelpful due to the insistence on rote learning. She explained that she had abandoned formal learning because she felt that she could not learn the structure of a language through rote and she thought that you need to work out the structure before you can use a sentence. She found that she could work out the structure of the language by talking to people and by learning from her mistakes.

I could actually use different sentences once I'd figured out structure with talking with other people so that helped me a lot to learn the language [...] I think having some knowledge of how your your language works sort of the language you're teaching works you know actually saying that it does have a structure or it doesn't have a structure whatever the case may be

### 9.9.3 Beliefs about learning to teach

With regard to learning to teach, one of the main feelings Helen had was that more feedback would have been useful for her. She talked about how she would have liked more 'one-to-one' help from the tutors in order to ask about elements that she didn't understand, such as concept checking which she described as 'something [...] I haven't quite processed it in my mind'. Helen also mentioned that she would have liked more



written feedback from the tutors on her assignments, and more exploration of why mistakes were made. She suggested that this could have been done in a class discussion where she could have found out from ‘my other colleagues to see how they had approached a different assignment’. Helen also commented that it would have been useful to have received feedback from the learners in the classes as to what worked, and what was ‘a total waste of time’.

Helen, despite expecting the observations to be a ‘waste of time’, found them to be ‘educational’. She described how observation of the experienced teachers showed her that although ‘everybody’s different’ and ‘everyone has their own style’ they were all effective in teaching and in incorporating the techniques taught on the CELTA into their teaching:

it was very educational because you know everybody's different everyone has their own style I mean they use a lot of things that you learn on the CELTA course but in actual fact everyone adapted it to who they are and what kind of style they use in their teaching setting which was great you know so some were very sort of you know 'wha' [gesture of wide opening of arms in a theatrical manner] you know and others were just quiet and equally both managed to get their class to interact and had good rapport with students so

Helen’s discussion of the observation of her fellow trainees was mentioned earlier when she talked about the importance of being able to ‘think ahead’ and deal with things as they come up in a lesson without ‘going off sort of at a tangent you know from the subject’. She said that this was something that some trainees managed well whilst others ‘struggled’. Helen appreciated being able to observe her peers because they allowed her to see herself.

#### 9.9.4 Helen’s self-reported changes in beliefs

There were two main ideas that Helen identified as being changes in the way that she thought about teaching. The first was the idea that as long as teachers stick to their aims they can adapt their teaching effectively and can introduce variety into the lesson:

*do you think your ideas about teaching have changed since you did the course?*  
hmm they probably have I I I one thing I realised is erm you can adapt your teaching very very effectively erm without erm going away from your aim as long as you stick to your aim you can adapt your teaching very effectively so that you do have variety you do have erm lots of you know different ideas that you can introduce erm into into a class setting or a tea..a student type setting

The second area that she identified as being a change in her ideas was outlined earlier: that students are a resource in themselves and should be used as a resource by the teacher in the classroom. As was pointed out earlier, Helen expressed uncertainty as to how this could be applied to language teaching:

*do you think your ideas about teaching have changed since you did the course?*

[...] I would keep it in the back of my mind that you can always use your student as a resource because erm I've done that I've done that previously that in actual fact when I've taught student midwives or medical students they actually have a very up to date resource probably more up to date than I do and and so that I've found er is good and is useful I don't know how that applies to a language situation where you're teaching somebody to learn or grasp a language erm they I would still keep it in my mind that they are they have resources they have information

## 9.10 Post-Course Questionnaire

Following the end of the course, in September 2000, Helen left Britain and took a job in a nursing school in Kyrgyzstan teaching adults. Her questionnaire was returned in January 2001.

### 9.10.1 Experience of teaching in Kyrgyzstan

Helen indicated that she had had not received any training in-country and that she did not have access to any professional journals or associations.

In terms of differences between teaching on the CELTA and teaching in Kyrgyzstan she commented that all of her current students spoke the same language unlike the CELTA course which had a mix of languages and that the lessons were 'geared at a much lower level' because the students 'have no English at all'.

When asked if the differences had led to her changing her teaching approach at all, Helen replied:

Not really – I try to get the students to do a lot more conversation and student to student correction. The difficulty I see are students switching to their own mother tongue so I have to be very strict about getting them to use English!

## 9.10.2 Reflections on the CELTA course

On the whole, Helen was quite positive about her CELTA preparation, listing the useful aspects as:

Very useful in teaching techniques – use of boards, pictures, more aware of teacher talking time.

She cited the less useful aspects as the ‘in depth preparation’ required on the course, noting that she now only uses ‘a basic outline’ in preparing for classes. She described the CELTA preparation for teaching as ‘very thorough’ and singled out the ‘practical’ teaching practice and the subsequent feedback sessions as being ‘especially helpful’.

When asked what advice she would give to someone starting the course, Helen suggested that they should ‘keep an open mind’ and ‘learn from the practical feedback’ from colleagues. Her response to the question on how she would improve the course included lengthening the course by one week in order to provide more teaching practice and also to give trainees the experience of teaching both monolingual and multilingual classes ‘so that you can see the different approaches used’.

## 9.11 Summary

This chapter reported on findings related to Helen. There were a number of key beliefs which resounded throughout the data sources associated with Helen. Firstly there was her concern with avoiding a teacher-dominated classroom, which showed itself in discussions of the need to involve learners in the process of learning, to keep them active and to have ‘student-centred’, ‘student-focused’ teaching in which the teacher does not do all the talking but rather allows learners to speak. This major concern for Helen also included a belief that the teacher could learn from students, that the teacher didn’t have all the answers, and a belief that the teacher should serve as a resource, along with students, for the classroom. Helen also spoke and wrote of the importance of adapting one’s teaching to the learners’ needs and styles of learning.

Another significant concern for Helen was the need to be sensitive and aware of learners and to make oneself available for them. She also mentioned a sense of humour and the need to keep lessons light-hearted in several places. Whilst variety was a key

concern at the beginning of the course, by the end she realised that variety had to be consistent with lesson aims. Helen's clarity and systematic, well-organised approach to teaching was approvingly commented on over the duration of the course.

Helen was also clearly concerned with the related issues of feedback to students and dealing with errors in the classroom. She spoke of her desire to have more feedback from course tutors, fellow trainees and also from learners of English as to her progress and effectiveness in the classroom.

In terms of language learning, Helen was concerned with communication and fluency, and a real-world learning environment. And, in keeping with her concern with feedback, she spoke of the value of learning from mistakes.

This summary is presented below in table form for ease of reference:

	<b>Main points</b>
Individual elements	<p><i>Early in the course:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of beliefs which seem to come from schooling eg the need for learners to be actively involved in lessons</li> <li>• Number of beliefs which seem to come from work experience eg need to draw on learners' experience and allow learners to learn from each other and the need for active involvement in lessons; teacher learn from students</li> <li>• As above, many beliefs which relate to need to avoid teacher-dominated teaching</li> <li>• Learning involves making and learning from mistakes and hence feedback is important</li> <li>• Beliefs from later-life language learning experience eg belief that rote learning is ineffective</li> <li>• Language learning seen as real world communication and immersion in the language</li> <li>• Learning to teach involves learning by doing and hands-on experience in addition to learning by watching</li> <li>• Focus on a gap eg teacher must be available for students to ask questions after class and teacher must adapt lessons to suit students' individual learning styles</li> </ul>

	<p><i>Late in the course:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Similarities in many beliefs from early course eg need to be available for students, need to adapt teaching to students' learning styles</li> <li>• Reinforcement of beliefs eg need to avoid teacher-centred and teacher-dominated teaching and have student-centred teaching; teacher as a resource</li> <li>• Clear evidence of striving to achieve learner-involvement in lessons, especially speaking, and in her focus on feedback - in keeping with stated belief</li> <li>• Developing awareness that variety can help concentration rather than having short lessons; all activities need to be 'within the learning process'</li> <li>• Self-identified changes in beliefs – rote learning can be effective (behaviour in the classroom did not match this stated change); as long as you stick to your aims you can adapt your teaching to introduce variety into the classroom; students are a resource (uncertainty as to how this applied to language teaching)</li> <li>• Awareness of various factors in the classroom and in teaching – gender, culture and individual learning styles; awareness of English native speaker limitations</li> <li>• Concern not to deviate from lesson aims</li> <li>• Would have liked more feedback from trainers, trainees and students</li> </ul> <p><i>Post-course teaching</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty of dealing with monolingual classes in work situation rather than CELTA multilinguals</li> <li>• Development of planning from 'in-depth' on course to 'basic outline'</li> <li>• Would have liked more teaching practice</li> </ul>
Social elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Despite stated belief in learning by watching, expected observation of experienced teachers to be a waste of time; found her passive role in observations difficult although she said observations were 'educational'</li> <li>• Despite the individual teaching styles of experienced teachers, all were effective</li> <li>• Learning from peers in feedback eg suggests that Theo learn from David re. use of visuals</li> <li>• Some impatience with feedback which 'went on too long'</li> </ul>

**Table 9.1: Summary of the major findings – Helen**

# Chapter 10: David

## 10.1 Introduction

David, in his early thirties, lives and works in Spain where he has a wife and a child. He owns and had been running a bar, however he had recently hired and trained up a manager in order to have more free time. He planned to return to Spain and find a job teaching in a local language school. His teaching experience was restricted to teaching his Spanish wife to speak English.

David is very easy going and took the course in his stride. He commented several times that the course was not as intensive as he expected and seemed able to do the course work sufficiently quickly and efficiently to allow for a social life. He worked on his assignments in his lunch-hours and spent time reading. David was not a very talkative individual tending to say what he thought and then stop. He was however a very considerate member of the group and was particularly concerned about Jeff whom he tried to help several times. David saw the key to the course as – work hard and follow instructions carefully.

David received a grade ‘C’ pass for the course, although it should be noted that as he had to re-submit one of his assignments, that grade ‘C’ was the highest grade he could receive regardless of his performance on the course.

## 10.2 Interview 1

### 10.2.1 Beliefs about teachers and teaching

In the first interview David talked about a learning experience which he saw as very effective. It involved a university lecturer who walked into the room with a firework and placed it on his desk. The students waited ‘listening totally to everything he was saying’, anticipating the reason for the firework until the lecture ended:

someone said ‘what was the firework?’ and he said ‘oh that was just to keep your attention’ and he picked it up and off he went but he but it purpose purpose wise he ke..he had our attention for the full three hours

In this extract and elsewhere in the interview David indicated his belief that good teaching was about ‘how to keep the class’s attention’. He talked about needing to keep students awake and how this could be achieved by being ‘lively’ and ‘using innovative methods of teaching’ within which he included the use of ‘visuals’ and audio-visual equipment:

the teacher would have to be lively keep the keep the class awake so erm and use innovative methods of teaching [...] you have to have things to do to involve the students get them to do activities

As the extract above indicates, David also thought that students should be involved in the lessons and that they needed to be interested and motivated in order to learn effectively. Drawing again on his university learning experiences, he described how he enjoyed getting out of the classroom and how motivating he found this:

I quite like when I was at university and I was giving seminars I liked to use erm er visuals as well er as in video recorders or another one that er I liked when it was taught to me was actually sending the students out onto the street with a Polaroid camera or with a video camera and setting them tasks sort of thing can you go and find this for me and bring back evidence things like this which was I think it motivates them as well [...] I think you’ve gotta keep them interested

David was very clear in his interview that he thought that student involvement was of vital importance for effective teaching and learning and consequently that teachers should avoid using the ‘received method [...] where the teacher stood up at the front with the book and wrote on the blackboard’. His attitude to didactic teaching is unambiguous:

nowadays I would say that that’s what is the point of that you have to have things to do to involve the students get them to do activities and then there’s someone stood there and said ‘ok this is this this is x you copy it down’ [I] say rubbish had enough of it

David was also clear that he regarded ‘large classes’ to be ineffective. He made reference to his schooldays where he felt students did not need to pay attention if the class was large enough. He said that ‘smaller classes are so much more flexible’.

David felt that it was important for teachers to ‘get to know’ the learners ‘on [an] individual basis’ and that as the teacher gets to know students then teaching becomes

easier. David believed that it was important to have ‘some kind of teacher-student interaction’ in the classroom and that although groupwork and pairwork were important this shouldn’t be used ‘all the time’. David felt that teacher-student interaction would help the teacher to get to know students and that this would help teachers to identify weaker students, students who were ‘lacking a little bit or they’re a little slower’. The teacher could then help the weak students ‘on an individual basis’ to ‘catch up’ with the group. He stated that this would be done whilst the rest of the class were working on a task.

I think it’s very important that there there is some kind of teacher student interaction in as individuals groupwork yeah fine but not all the time there’s there’s there’s I think you need to er use time to er er to get to know the students and help them on an individual basis because not everyone's finds it easy to learn languages [...] so you’ve got to spend be prepared to spend more time with with individuals with more difficulties and you have to explain the problems to them er for the for the set some tasks be be whatever they are and let the individuals get on with it [...] and then I I’d go round and help out the ones that I over this previous six or seven weeks that I’d found out that they’re lacking a little bit or they’re a little slower and er use that time to help to help those students specifically so that they could maybe catch up a little bit more with a little bit of help keep everyone on the same level

### 10.2.2 Beliefs about language and language learning

David believed that learning a foreign language involved learning about different cultures. He talked about how, as a child, he was taken on foreign holidays by his parents and enjoyed ‘learning languages and different cultures’.

In terms of the focus he saw as important in language learning, David was quite clear in that he thought that what was taught depended on the needs of the learners. He indicated that he thought the focus should be on vocabulary and conversation and that he would not have a grammar focus unless this was required by a student. David spoke about his anticipated future students in Barcelona where he lived and seemed to already be aware of the market and student demands in this area:

I think it’d be more more vocabulary and conversation [...] I wouldn’t con..concentrate on grammar to start with er only speaking for my where I’m going to be teaching in Spain in the future you’d have to work it out the needs of the students



### 10.2.3 Beliefs about learning to teach

David, at this early stage of the course, told me that he had expected the course to be more intensive than he actually found it. He had expected more homework and more tasks to complete. He felt that if you organised your time well then there was plenty of free time:

you get your [teaching] task two days ahead of time [...] then if you organise your time then you can have it out of the way and every other evening if you're lucky you get to have a bit of a break and relax [...] have a couple of evenings off a week so if I get up early in the morning which I prefer to do and work in the morning and carry out the day with those with those finished

Another element of the teaching practice which was mentioned earlier was that David thought that as you got to know the students in the group then the teaching would become easier.

## 10.3 Course Questionnaire

The course questionnaire was handed back on the Friday of Week 1. The first page of the questionnaire gives some background information about David: he had had no teaching experience when he started the course; he had worked in several jobs including managing a restaurant and working as a chef; he spoke French to a basic level, learnt in school, and Spanish to a 'medium' level, learnt whilst living in the country.

David was motivated to take the course by being aware of the 'demand for native teachers' where he lived and a desire to change his profession. He chose not to answer the question about things he was looking forward to on the course, but did write that he was worried about 'standing up and talking in front of everyone'. He commented that so far the course was 'fairly good' and 'less intensive' than he thought it would be.

The sentence completion section of the questionnaire was concise and covered several points:

*The best way to learn a language is ... speaking it.*

*A good teacher should always... be available.*

*A good teacher should never... come to work unprepared.*

*When teaching English, it is important to... talk clearly*

*The key to a good language lesson is... activities and fun.*

Question 6, which was intended to tap trainees' beliefs about learners, presented David with six terms and asked him to choose which view he agreed with most. The terms offered were: resisters, explorers, raw materials, partners, receptacles. clients. David was invited to offer alternatives if desired. David chose three terms 'explorers', 'partners' and 'clients'. He then explained his choice:

Some learners have decided to explore a new language / culture for themselves, whilst others (clients) need for one reason or another to learn a language (normally work). For whatever reason though, if viewed as friends / partners both teacher and learner can gain experience.

The final two questions which asked David to list up to five factors which make an effective teacher (a) and up to three factors which make an effective language learner (b) were answered as follows:

(a)

- Preparation
- Personal grooming
- Activities in classroom (as opposed to 'I say, you write')
- Allowing time for individual needs
- Approachable

(b)

- Enthusiasm
- Dedication

## 10.4 Guided Preparation

In the guided preparation sessions for the first week, David chose not to ask any questions about his TP. He told the tutor in sessions 1,1 and 1,2 that his plan and lessons were 'straightforward' and only in session 1,4 did he ask the trainer to look over some visual aids he had prepared.

In the second week, GP 2,1 David said that he was fine and didn't have any questions, leading Angela to comment 'he's always fine'. When the tutor asked about how his pictures had gone on Friday the other trainees told him they were great; David added that they 'went ok' and the 'students understood them'. In GP 2,2 David raised a few questions relating to how to teach some of his vocabulary, 'art gallery' 'museum'. He checked that it was acceptable to name specific galleries such as the Louvre. He also told the tutor how he planned to concept check some of the words such as 'cathedral' versus 'church' and 'cafe' versus 'coffee'.

GP 2,3 saw David talking about his lesson for the following day. He checked with the tutor on the grammar point that he was dealing with. David needed help in understanding the various answers to his grammar exercise.

The GP on day 2,4 was organised by the other tutor because the trainees were starting to look at the preparation for teaching the Upper Intermediate students in Week 3. The tutor went through David's TP points, demonstrating and advising him on the lesson, fairly explicitly, explaining how to organise a jigsaw activity.

GP 3,1 started unusually with the trainer giving them a mini-lesson on the future tenses, as this was the grammar focus of David's lesson. Following a discussion of functions such as intention and arrangement, he told David that the plan was 'to get students as involved as we can in eliciting this idea' and that he shouldn't 'just tell them'. The tutor then went through the TP points for the class.

Session 3,3 began with David asking the tutor about the grammar that he had to deal with, explaining how he would set out the board and which examples he would use of the different functions. The tutor suggested how to make his chosen examples clearer for students.

In GP 3,5 David explained his lesson which involved a reading and speaking lesson on the topic of crime. David returned to his lesson in the guided preparation on Monday of Week 4 (GP 4,1). He told the tutor that the reading section of his lesson would only last for half of the lesson and the rest was talking. He said that he 'couldn't spin it out any more than that'. David intended to do a 'you the jury' type activity using the book. The tutor asked him how he would do the correction stage and David told him his aim was to get students to self-correct in a post-correction stage.

In GP 4,2 David talked about his Thursday lesson in which he was teaching 'get something done'. The tutor asked if students would be familiar with the language and David told him he thought they would be. He said he intended to 'follow the book' because a half-hour lesson was 'pretty straightforward'. In GP 4,3 David simply wanted to check his understanding of the structure. In the final guided preparation of the course (GP 4,4) David did not have anything to check, the tutor joked that he had been organised for ages for this lesson.

## 10.5 TP and TP Feedback

On the first day of teaching (TPF 1,2) David was the fourth trainee of the group to teach. His feedback on his first performance was brief and focused on the students' understanding:

- D well I think everybody understood the tasks <TT: yeah> I set them I think they knew what they what I was up to <TT: mm yeah> which I think that probably was because I had the time to prepare for the next stage <TT: yeah> I just kind of let them get on with it and then I was I was getting the next stage set up I had a look round and I don't think they had any they didn't really have any problems you know but I think it helped it helped me putting that Italian next to Jorge
- TT yes that was a a very nice nice idea and you dealt very well with that Italian guy you sat and helped him and you were the first person to get a sentence out of he said 'we eat we eat spaghetti' [laughter] it was the first time he he's produced anything and so well done it's good I think you did him a real favour there very good very sensitive you handled that well
- D I was a bit worried that some of them wouldn't understand the first the word that I just did that four word

David moved on to say that he thought the TP points which he had been given for the lesson made it easy for him, 'it was a very it was er a very structured set that you gave me to do one thing followed on from the other so it was a case of getting it up erm preparing and moving on'. David raised his delivery as an aspect he needed to work on, describing it as 'too fast [...] rambling on'. He said that he felt this was connected with not rushing so much, in his overall timing in the lesson.

David also felt he should have involved the students more by drilling them, something the teacher trainer disagreed with, telling him that 'it wasn't really your brief'. The tutor then emphasised that 'it's not a question of it exists I'll drill it if it moves drill it kind of thing' and that he should only drill where and when necessary.

The tutor did however agree that David needed to work on the delivery of his instructions. He praised David's 'lively easy class presence', 'brilliant' organisation and sensitivity to the students and particularly to the weakest student in the group who David managed to get to produce a sentence.

The following day, David was not teaching but he did take part in providing feedback to other trainees, Theo and Helen. First was feedback to Theo, to whom he was encouraging about improvements in his boardwriting. He also praised Theo's lesson for its humour, interaction and student involvement and commented that he had learnt the value of student involvement from watching Theo:

D I liked it the way there was interacting from the very first moment energetic [...] it kept it light-humoured and the students knew what you were talking about

[...]  
D one thing that I I learnt from that <TT: yes?> is that I got the impression that it's so much easier to teach them if you get them REALLY involved with it and that's what you do you get them involved in it and they respond and it just makes it seem easier

Later in the session David gave feedback on Helen. He praised her for helping and encouraging the students, commenting that it was 'like you said you would do yesterday you got down on their level'.

The following day saw David teaching for the second time (TPF 1,4). His positive points were that he 'managed to get my timing right' which he thought was related to 'a bit better delivery not rushing so much as I did on Tuesday'. The teacher trainer was in agreement with this. David thought his boardwork was clear and that the students understood his 'visual thing'. He also stated that he had tried 'consciously' to avoid giving instructions whilst facing the board something the tutor had told him he needed to work on in TPF session 1,2. He then moved on to talk about drilling, something he was unsure about. He told the tutor he didn't have 'very much confidence in drilling' and suggested this may have been connected to having a small group of students.

Following David's raising of the topic, the tutor took up the opportunity to provide some input on 'concept checking'; a technique trainees had been taught that morning. Feedback was then provided by other members of the group, starting with Theo who praised his use of visual aids:

a very innovative er lesson good use of visual aids and well organised boardwork er improved attention to struggling individuals and I learnt the importance of visual aids when used well

Theo criticised David for not doing enough exemplification. Jeff offered more feedback, listing David's positive points as 'good attention', 'interesting presentation' and 'good involvement'. He suggested that David waited too long when the students could not guess what the visual was; leading to some input from the tutor on the importance of context for visual aids. The tutor then offered his summary of David's class which praised the 'slower' delivery which he described as 'a dimension on from his last teaching', and his 'cool calm and collected [...] smoothly executed very nice

visual approach'. David was praised for involving all the students 'all the way down the line' and for again helping the weakest student in the group to produce a sentence – the only one in the session. The teacher trainer then advised David to focus on drilling for stress and to try and randomise the drilling rather than 'going around one by one by one'. The tutor told David that this would keep the class more lively and keep students on their toes. He also told David not to gesture with a pen or with his finger when nominating students because it could be interpreted as aggressive in some cultures.

Later in the same session (TPF 1,4) David offered feedback on Jeff's lesson. He said that Jeff was 'patient' in his help with students who were struggling and he 'gave them plenty of time before you moved on which is nice'. He also liked the way Jeff 'personalised by getting their ideas'.

The final TP of Week 1 (TPF 1,5) saw David crediting his good TP points for his success in the lesson much as he did in his first TP. This time the teacher trainer (Robert for the first time) suggested that he should take credit for his part in the lesson:

D erm obviously you weren't here but I felt I felt more relaxed today out of the three times this week I think I'm getting a little bit used to standing up in front of people <TT: ok> which at the start of the course I was dreading but er er as for the aim of the of the of the exercise erm I think that was achieved sort of get them in the past simple speaking and and some kind of written work and er that was it really

TT uhu right er had you done a picture story before <D: no> ok comment on how you think you handled it as a lesson style

D I followed the notes that Jim gave me he said you know that was my instructions and so I followed them elicit one get one sentence prompt them if needed erm and then go back from picture two to picture one and get them to go through the four all from memory and it'll stick in their head

TT did you do that?

D yes

TT did it work?

D I think so at the end of the story they they could give tell me the whole story

TT take a bit of credit then <D: oh> its not an accident its something you did Jim didn't do it yeah it worked well it was fine

David's sense that he was more relaxed in that session was mirrored by the glowing feedback he received from Theo who praised his visual approach as being one of his strengths and said that for the first time David looked like 'a proper teacher'.

once again er David showed his strength in the visual arts department [others laugh] [...] we're all beginning to see each others' strengths and so we can learn that from David [...] but today for the first time this week David looked like a proper teacher this was the first time he was standing up there oh it's David and he's a teacher not one of the students [...] there were improvements he was more relaxed you were right in saying that erm better interaction with the students this time round it was extremely

well structured I thought and your grading was better erm er good grading and er you achieved the aim I think you did a really a really good lesson definitely the best one this week and improvement's what it's all about

The teacher trainer was not quite so glowing as he described the lesson as 'pleasant', adding that it achieved the aims. He suggested that David should try to 'start your lesson a bit more dynamically' and involve the students from the start. The tutor praised David's visual presentation and the stage of the lesson where he got the students up to the whiteboard but indicated that he needed to drill more and that he needed to work on error correction:

the thing to work on I think I would say errors error correction you've got a tendency to give the error correction straight back to the student try to go for student self-correction

Later in the same session David was asked to give his feedback on Angela's lesson. David praised Angela's concept checking and her work on stress which he commented was 'the first time that we've seen it this week' and that 'you showed us how to do this'. He also felt that her use of a skimming exercise was new, 'so that was another erm another element of what we've learnt this week so you put that into practice'. David's criticisms were that Angela, when drilling, said to students 'do you want to say this' and he suggested that 'instead of offering the chance to do make their own minds up just drill it'.

The first TP feedback session of Week 2 (2,1) saw David giving feedback on both Angela and Jeff. The feedback to Angela covered just one point – recycling – which David emphasised was something they had just covered in input that day 'I wrote er bringing in a point that we've been doing today er I wrote about the recycling of vocab I thought that went very well'. David's feedback to Jeff also was just a single point, this time it was negative and related to the fact that Jeff had allowed a mispronunciation in the drilling which led to everyone pronouncing a word incorrectly.

In the feedback session TPF 2,2 the feedback for David focused initially on his pre-teaching of some listening vocabulary. Comments included that he didn't drill (Angela) and that his concept questions at the end should have been done earlier, following the pattern of 'context elicit drill concept question if necessary'.

For this presentation, David had avoided using pictures because he felt they would have been too difficult to draw and would have taken up too much of the lesson. The teacher trainer felt that pictures would have been good because the presentation was

‘very samey’. David was praised by some of the trainees for his elicitation and the tutor commented that ‘you didn’t ignore the weaker students either as you elicited so clearly they could at least partake what was going on’.

In a comment later on about Jeff’s teaching, David said ‘whereas I didn’t do any drilling you could have probably randomised it a bit’.

For teaching practice 2,3 and 2,5 David went to observe students in the higher level group being taught by the other trainees. TP 2,4 saw David and Penny teaching their first full hour long lessons. Sarinder and James had worked on giving feedback to David and had, as instructed, written three positive and two negative points on the whiteboard in the break before feedback started:

<p>+ elicited information / words checked instructions were understood good monitoring + offered guidance with h/o s</p> <p>work on pace of speech was fast some ungraded language – obscure, distinct, doubt words</p>
---

When asked about his pace of speech David stated that he was not conscious of it being any different to other lessons. The tutor suggested that he did speak a little too fast and that he should ‘consciously slow down a little bit’ next time. After the other trainees had finished explaining the points, David was invited to add anything, and he referred to drilling and a concern over students’ learning:

I put I did some drilling probably not enough but better than none as I did I didn’t do any on Tuesday so I put that but I I don’t feel comfortable drilling students I don’t that’s something I thought I’d feel comfortable about it with the more I did and [...] I think at the end they they more or less understood when to use ‘going to’ and ‘will’ whether or not that will stick in their heads is another matter but I think at the end they understood

The tutor then summarised his feedback on David’s performance, suggesting that he introduced too much grammar which could have been confusing for students but that he involved them well, his lesson was ‘very stimulating’. He also praised David’s teacher presence and the fact that he appeared genuinely interested in the students:

what I liked also about the lesson generally and this phase in particular was when the students were actually talking to you you appeared interested and attentive yeah it



wasn't like they were just stating sentences for you you'd actually taken an interest in what they were saying as people which was great

Week 3 saw the group of trainees moved to teaching the Upper Intermediate group. In session 3,1 David's feedback to Angela on her teaching focused on something that the tutor Robert had commented on in session 2,4 that all of the trainees were using monitoring more as individualised explanation and input:

I thought the monitoring was good better than it had been I think all of us tended to last week erm like Robert was saying correcting people more than than instead of just monitoring and you did it very well today just they were getting on with it

Later, in the feedback from the trainer to Penny, David interrupted to check when feedback on pronunciation in her kind of lesson (speaking) was appropriate:

- D but would you do that in in Penny's lesson today you're just after authentic use / or conversation otherwise you'd be interrupting constantly \
- P / yes I was supposed to do that yeah \
- TT oh don't interrupt no you delay correction
- D delay and do it at the end

In the comments on his own lesson, David indicated that he was pleased with his 'pace and delivery' and his drilling, although he felt that he should have done more. David told the group that the aim of the lesson wasn't difficult, and that it was the students 'talking amongst themselves using the language'. The trainer pointed out David's 'low profile' in this activity to the other trainees. The trainees thought he needed to concept check and to drill more; Angela praised his 'really good props' and that fact that the students 'really enjoyed' the lesson. The tutor added that he thought the props (for a driving lesson) were 'excellent and that he 'learnt that you can just use stick ons you don't need detailed drawings'. David told the group about his original intention for the lesson:

originally I was very tempted to take them all downstairs but it was raining I was going to take them to Theo's car [all laugh]

In his feedback to Angela, David focused on the good atmosphere that she had created in her lesson and again on whether the students had understood what she was teaching them:

I thought the lead-in was was very good and lively and I think it was very good that everyone was laughing to start with 'bum bum' number one everyone was having a

laugh in the lesson and and it created a good a good atmosphere [...] I think everyone understood the pre-teach 'backpacker' 'fells' and all that they got the meanings of that [...] they understood the task there erm good monitoring you got the room organised well [...] and then the thing that came out for me is is the importance of erm is the importance of having a good atmosphere it just makes the lesson go so much easier and it just flows along

TP on Wednesday of Week 3 (TPF 3,3) involved David and Helen teaching for one hour each, with David on first. On the whiteboard at the beginning of the class, Theo and Jeff had written four good points and three weak points in his lesson:

<p>obviously well planned thought on his feet well good peripheral work excellent group interaction</p> <p>could have varied 's-s' task, pairwork etc too much teacher talk</p>
---

Theo began the session by elaborating on his and Jeff's feedback orally:

I think this was the erm best lesson that David's done erm and it was down to his planning that was the first thing he said to me when he said when I asked him what he thought of it he said well I planned this one and I planned it really well [...] he thought very well on his feet I thought it was a difficult lesson [...] good peripheral work er you let the students er get on hung around in the peripherals and er then monitored well when it was necessary it was nice and relaxed well timed and erm very good group interaction er I think it was [...] I did find it hard to find three er bad things but erm we decided could have varied the student to student tasks pairwork etc make it more exciting and erm David and Jeff think there was too much teacher talk but I don't

Theo spoke at length about the planning in David's lesson and about the way he dealt with the questions about grammar which the students asked. After the comment about too much teacher talk, a discussion of this ensued as David and the tutor established when and why there was too much teacher talk. Essentially David had chosen to tell the students the grammar and explained that he did this because although it is usually better to involve the students, in this case he had a good reason for choosing to lecture them. The teacher trainer encouraged David to question this decision:

D    yeah I didn't want them <TT: yeah> to be saying this is this because then I thought maybe it would confuse the others so I didn't want I didn't want to get into that area of getting confused confusion coming from here and someone else saying yes but here so I wanted it the ground rules laying out properly <TT: right> if you know what I mean

- TT [...] so the issue is is it more effective to lecture the students or to involve them in thinking it through themselves that's the issue really so one option is to explain as you did at some length or you could ask questions or involve them in a task and th..those are the options aren't they [...] have you got any feelings about which one's more effective?
- D ^I think you know I think it's probably it's probably always wiser to try and use the students to do it <TT: yeah> but erm
- TT yeah it involves them <D: yeah> actively participating in thinking through
- D but I just feel ^ I wanted to do that today [TT, P, T laughs] I didn't want any complications in in the lesson and so I felt more comfortable explain explaining it to them because it's you know the future is difficult

The next part of David's feedback was then hijacked by Penny who was worried about the overlap between the grammar point she needed to teach in the following class and that covered by David in this one. The tutor finally brought attention back to David's class, he was positive, praising his 'tremendous clarity', 'sure-footed' planning, smooth execution and the way he dealt with the complexity of the target language. He also complimented the appropriate 'slower pace' of the lesson.

David and Angela worked together in the session which followed [TPF 3,4] to write and deliver feedback on Penny's teaching. David said that Penny's positive points were that she achieved her aims and that she elicited the grammar from students thus involving them rather than lecturing them as he had done the previous day:

elicited [sic.] the meanings of the erm the future continuous and er the future simple rather than what I did yesterday explaining it so that was a difference involving the students

David also praised her monitoring and use of student correction. He and Angela criticised her voice projection.

The session at the beginning of Week 4 (TPF 4,1) saw David and Penny teaching for one hour each. At the beginning of the session Helen and Angela wrote up three positive points and three negative points on the whiteboard:

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ elicitation s-s</li> <li>S correction</li> <li>good brainstorming</li> <li>- No skim or scan reading</li> <li>Could have drilled more</li> <li>No word stress</li> </ul> |
|---|

The tutor's summary of the lesson included comment on his 'patchy drilling', and absence of work on word stress. On the positive side, he said that David 'involved the

students most of the time' and chose useful vocabulary which was well-contextualised. He suggested that although David 'guided [students] very expertly', he should have reduced his own involvement and given students more thinking time.

In TP feedback session 4.2, Theo and David gave feedback to Helen. Although he did not speak in the class, he had been involved with Theo in writing up the feedback to the whiteboard. They praised Helen's lead-in, continuity, achievement of aims and correction; and criticised her for her lack of concept checking.

David gave feedback in session 4,3 on Theo's one hour class. He said that Theo had taught 'a very lively lesson as always', and the writing task was monitored and elicited well. He said that Theo achieved his aims but that some of the vocabulary he taught was not necessary and that in the correction phase he had missed some of the errors that students had made.

In the final TP session of the course, observed by the external examiner, David taught for 30 minutes along with three other trainees. His comments on his own lesson highlighted his confusion. He said that he had thought that the students understood the rules because they gave them to him but 'when I gave them the exercise they didn't seem to have to have actually grasped grasped the actual concept of it'. He said that he had expected the students to complete the task he set them quickly, Angela suggested that they may have struggled because many of the questions could be answered in more ways than one. The tutor indicated that he should have looked more carefully at the task he gave them because there was confusion over two different forms. The tutor summarised:

but the fact was and you weren't to know this that they weren't anywhere near as familiar with the structure of 'have something done' as you thought they would be

The tutor also pointed out that David had introduced a second structure into the lesson and it was this which caused the confusion.

## 10.6 Assignments

The assignments which will be included in this section are (in the order in which they were handed out on the course): 'Learner Profile 1', 'Coursebook Evaluation' and 'Reflection'.

All David's assignments were handwritten.

### 10.6.1 Learner Profile 1

Despite the fact that much of this assignment dealt with the interviewee's ideas and language learning background, the final sub-section which was intended to answer the question 'How will your findings influence your future approach to teaching?' seems to provide interesting personal opinions:

Knowing that I can't rely on one student's answers [sic.], I don't think I will change too dramatically my way of teaching. Obviously it's important to gauge a student's feelings [sic.] towards a particular style of teaching, but I have to think of the class as a whole. Therefore adaptability is essential and that increases my need to be totally prepared for any circumstances which may arise during a lesson.

The interview with the student taught me that, while students are individuals, they need to be integrated with the whole class, as this is a less stressful way of learning.

David seems to be indicating a concern more for the group than for particular individuals and indicates that he feels this approach is better for the learning of individuals. In terms of teaching skills he also seems to value adaptability, preparation and being able to think on your feet as important skills to develop.

### 10.6.2 Coursebook Evaluation

David failed the coursebook evaluation assignment the first time and was required to resubmit with alterations (thus limiting him to a grade no higher than a 'C pass' for the course).

In his first version of the assignment, David did not follow the suggested organisation of the paper and was told that he had not addressed many of the questions which were required. The first version also contained many more personal opinions than the second. Both versions are reported here.

#### 10.6.2.1 Version 1

David was relatively positive about the coursebook, describing it as using 'generally realistic' units with 'tangible everyday scenario[s]'. He stated that he thought the material was 'authentic' and used 'real situations'. Much of the assignment is given

over to a discussion of the danger of relying too much on a book – ‘the English language is changing so rapidly we should never rely on one book’. David continued his discussion by talking about the need to use the book as a guide which must be adapted to the level of the students and the class:

Within the units there is one pre-determined route or aim, although, while achieving the aim, it is, in my opinion worth adapting the materials according to level of the class. There is no point in setting tasks which will not be achieved by the students. If you set them un-achievable tasks their morale and confidence will fade away, and we as teachers finish the lesson having achieved nothing ourselves. [...] It is essential to adapt to the level of the class as a whole – not on an individual level. We can keep individual needs in mind, but why set tasks that will not be achieved? This is where adaptation comes in to play. The course book is a guide – it is adaptable and is not set in concrete.

[...] I feel as if my adaptations were largely successful and while the course book was useful as a guide, even more important, for me, were the ‘guidance notes’ that I was given by my tutors and, at the end of the day preparation is more important than following the course book in question. Achieve the aims in a relevant manner with understanding of student level. [underlining in the original]

David is clear in his concern that coursebooks should be adapted, primarily according to the level of the students. He is equally clear that he is referring to the level of the group as a whole and not to individuals. David also claims that the TP points which were provided by the tutors were more useful than the coursebook.

### 10.6.2.2 Version 2

David’s second version of the paper, which was given a passing grade, followed the organisation seen in other trainees’ work: Syllabus, Approach, Adaptations.

In the section on ‘syllabus’, in addition to a considerable amount of description of the book, such as retaining the description of the material as ‘real’ and authentic’, David comments:

Generally the book places more emphasis on speaking and listening with reading taking on a secondary role, which I feel is appropriate for a Pre-Intermediate level.

The section on ‘approach’ contains some of David’s concerns, expressed in his first version, regarding the need to set achievable tasks although there is more discussion on the topic of communication in this version:

Overall the course book favours accuracy over fluency, although fluency can be introduced by ourselves through use of role plays for example.

The facilitation of real communication is achieved by relating topics to tangible everyday scenarios, as far as the students are concerned.

[...]

There is the opportunity to use personalised language activities and these can be encouraged by the teachers so the students feel more relaxed confident, as they are communicating about areas in which they are familiar with.

[...]

The course book 'Reward' encourages us to use the P.P.P. approach (presentation, practice, production), although while accepting this approach we must be able to set tasks which are achievable. [...] Tasks can be achieved, however, by recognising the differences and using stronger students to help the weaker students.

In the final section on 'adaptation', David again explains that his adaptations involved supplementing and re-writing in order to help the students, pitch the exercises at the class level and achieve the aims. However in the second version he also talked about his use of visual aids which he used in his teaching:

I've also tended to rely on strong visuals and have used my own pictures to help explain certain situations and to elicit vocabulary that I needed to pre-teach which wasn't always given.

I feel as if my adaptations were largely successful in bringing the exercises to the right level of the students and also steering them to the language and vocabulary that was needed to achieve the aims. This was largely achieved through visuals.

### 10.6.3 Reflection

David structured this assignment according to the recommendations in the assignment handout, using a series of headings: 'class management', 'correction', 'learner differences', 'use of course books and published materials' and reflections on own teaching'. This section will follow that organisation.

#### 10.6.3.1 Class management

After commenting that the lessons he had observed up to that point were 'very well run', and had all achieved their aims, David added a note about concept checking, something he identified as a difference between the teaching of the experienced teachers and that of the trainees:

Concept checking has been one of the main differences I've noticed. Whereas we, the students, are not yet confident enough to follow this through to the end, the professional teachers do it naturally. Obviously we will continue to develop as teachers, because we're not the genuine article yet.

### 10.6.3.2 Correction

David outlined the different strategies and techniques that he had seen for dealing with error correction. He then indicated that he saw this as a matter both of personal preference and dependent upon the kind of lesson being taught: ‘The best way is obviously open to discussion and lesson type and personal preference’.

### 10.6.3.3 Learner difference

David seemed to take a strong line in this section of the assignment, feeling that learner differences can be effectively ‘eliminated’ by establishing a good rapport and involving the learners in the lesson:

I feel as it’s [sic.] all (or mostly) the question of realising how to get the most out of everyone. Examples are the Japanese observed in one lesson. A very shy student, the teacher found some common ground and was obviously sympathetic towards her, and she ‘became’ part of the class. If we make that effort, they reward you by participating.

A good rapport is essential for meaningful progress and if this is established, learner differences can often be eliminated. Of course the same student level is all important here, as a student with no English cannot be as involved as a student with some English. If they’re all at a similar level it’s easier to break down barriers and maximise student involvement from all sides.

### 10.6.3.4 Use of coursebooks and published materials

As with concept checking, David saw the use or lack of use of a coursebook as a major difference between the teaching of the experienced teachers and that of the trainees. He stated that the ‘established teachers’ did not use the book, relying more on ‘self-styled’ lessons. He felt that the ‘student teachers’ needed the coursebook which served as ‘guidance’ and stated that he felt lessons that were guided by the book were ‘more successful, in terms of aims being achieved, than T.P. lessons using ‘own material’.

David went on to say that the books served as ‘as a guide and for idea-generation’ and that as such were ‘essential but totally adaptable’.



### 10.6.3.5 Reflections on own teaching

The final section of David's assignment was very positive, he talked about his initial feeling that he 'wouldn't make the grade' due to his lack of teaching experience and the fact that he was 'a person of few words'. He said that he felt that he had benefited from his previous experience in the 'tourist / service industry' as he felt that working in this had involved the 'primary target' of 'please people and help them enjoy themselves while achieving targets and aims'.

David continued by describing how he felt that he had 'progressed on an upward curve'. He said that although he had areas which needed further work that he would continue this after the course. He commented that he found the teaching more enjoyable as he learnt to 'focus more on student needs rather than my own needs'.

David then summarised his strengths, his 'progress in [...] classroom skills and awareness' and his 'response to feedback'. He wrote that with the attitude that 'all feedback is for my own good' he was able to improve areas which needed work. He then summed up the lesson he felt he had learnt from the TP points and what he had learnt from the students:

With the T.P guidance notes given to us to begin with, I've been able to recognise the value of properly planning a lesson. Organisation is vital, combining visual aids with classroom skills to achieve aims.

Most important has been the realisation that foreign students want to be helped and, if I feel as if I've helped them learn, then I feel good myself, they feel good and my aims have been achieved.

David concluded by saying that the 'group cooperation' was an important element of the course for him and that he felt that 'all the student teachers have contributed to my professional development'.

The feedback from the tutor was positive but he added that David should have reflected more on his weaknesses.

## 10.7 Progress Records

### 10.7.1 End of Week 1

David's summary of his progress at the end of the first week was very general and indicated more of a concern with managing the course than with learning the elements:

From no experience and an 8 year gap from studying, I am pleased with my start to the course.

Next to David's comment above, the tutor had ticked and written 'yes'. In the section entitled 'next week I need to work on...' David wrote 'All of the above – either to maintain standard or improve. Particularly to delivery'. His reference is to a checklist of classroom skills and awareness points which he was required to grade as either 'good', 'satisfactory' or 'weak'. Examples on the list include: 'clear voice and delivery', 'grading of language to the level', 'appropriate use of teacher talk' and 'response to feedback'.

The teacher trainer's summary of David's first week was also positive:

A good beginning. You have a lively class presence, you are sensitive and encouraging to the students and involve them well. You have an appropriate visual approach. Teaching is well organised. Keep speed and grading of teacher talk in mind, be sure to exemplify tasks and think about context for and checking of meaning.

### 10.7.2 End of Week 2

David's second progress record was more detailed and he indicated in the 'overall progress' section that he felt more relaxed, comfortable and confident with both trainees and students. He seemed to attribute some of this increase in confidence to the improvement in his knowledge of English grammar:

Am feeling more relaxed and at ease than during the first week and feel as if I've integrated with fellow students and foreign students more.

I'm generally feeling as if my teaching ability is improving as the confidence and my understanding of the grammar improves with our lessons.

Overall fairly pleased / going in the right direction.

In the section 'next week I need to work on...' David listed 'pace of delivery, graded language, focus don't complicate.'

The teacher trainer's summary stated that David had developed 'an effective and likeable persona' and that he was 'clear and effective' in skills such as elicitation and correction. The tutor suggested that he should 'not teach too much about a structure all at once' and confirmed that he did need to 'slow down' his delivery.

### 10.7.3 End of Week 3

David indicated in the section of the form on planning that he felt this is ‘up to a reasonable standard’ in terms of aims, stages, level and timings but that he needed to be ‘more thorough’ and include ‘all details’. He added that this was apart from his ‘poor lesson plan’ from Monday of Week 3.

Under the heading of ‘classroom skill and awareness’ David wrote that he was very happy with this area of teaching. He felt he was particularly good on presentation of materials and being sensitive to student needs:

I feel as if this is one of my strongest areas, and was particularly pleased with my grammar lesson on Wednesday week 3. forms of language, checking meaning of language, achieving my aims, practice activities are all heading in the right direction & I believe will continue to improve with time.

Particularly pleased with the presentation of materials & logical procedure through lessons & my sensitivity to student needs.

David felt that he needed to work on phonology, concept checking and drilling.

In the section on ‘professional development’ David defined his effective area as his positive response to feedback ‘accepting as constructive, any feedback which will help me develop as a teacher & putting it to positive use’; and his ‘good involvement’ with students and trainees alike. He added that by the end of the course he would be ‘in a confident mood to accept the challenge of teaching’. His entry in the section on ‘things to work on’ referred to his natural reticence:

Possibly giving feedback to others. But if I feel I’ve said what needs to be said why say more.

The tutor’s summary is very positive on David’s confident approach and his involvement of students in the lessons:

Your strengths have continued to develop this week – self assured, smooth lesson execution with a very appropriate visual approach (including use of gesture for phonology). You are able to balance teacher and student centredness and to maximise class involvement.

The tutor recommended that David should work on his use of exemplification, particularly ‘involving students in thinking about grammar’.

## 10.8 Mid-course Interview

David was interviewed informally in the third week of the course. When asked how he was finding the course up to that point, David was very upbeat, describing the course as ‘becoming progressively easier’ as he became more familiar with the grammar. He said that at the beginning of the course he ‘didn’t have a clue about grammar’ but by this stage he felt ‘hopefully it will be just be putting it into practice and improving with time really’.

David said that he had started to enjoy the teaching. He felt that his initial lack of enjoyment initially was due to nerves. He also credits his enjoyment with the fact that he knew the students better and that they were now more comfortable which resulted in a greater rapport:

I’m enjoying it yes yes I wasn’t enjoying it to start with but that’s probably nerves erm now I’m enjoying I think it’s easier because you know the students which makes makes life easier anyway erm you can guarantee that you well you can count on them to respond erm and there’s nothing worse than the first week [...] when we were all I think getting limited responses from from the students so I think the students are feeling more comfortable now because they see a familiar face as well erm interaction isn’t it to get a rapport going [...] you’re friendly with the students and they’ll help you out as well at the end of the day they know that we are only practising so they need our they know that we need them to help us out as much as they are trying to learn something about the about the English language and how to speak it and whatever so it’s a two-way thing and I think the students realise that as well as us the student teachers

In the extract above, David also highlights the idea that the trainee teachers need the students in order for them to learn in a ‘two-way thing’, something he felt that the students were aware of.

David referred to the TP feedback sessions saying that he felt that he was ‘quite aware of my weak points’ and that although people may raise other things he needed to work on, that he couldn’t work on everything at once otherwise he would ‘totally muck it up’. As a result he said that he chose to ‘focus on two or three things for the next lesson and try and improve them’. After these ‘get sorted out’ he could then ‘move on to the next points’. He concluded that he needed to work on this strategy far beyond the actual course:

you’ve got to keep working at the points in the future just because the four weeks is up so you know I don’t conquer my speed of delivery in the next week and I’ll have to keep going on it so it’s erm a continuous thing but but erm that’s the way I see it reduce it conquer it and then move on to the next point that needs to be improved

Finally when asked if he would like to change the lesson plans he responded that he appreciated the guidance that they offered him as to ‘topic areas’ and ‘aims’ and that it had rightly become ‘more minimal’ as the course progressed.

## 10.9 Interview 2

In the second interview, carried out on Wednesday of Week 4, David was clear that although the intensity of the course had ‘caught up with [him]’, leaving him ‘really tired’, that the content was ‘fine’.

### 10.9.1 Beliefs about teachers and teaching

When asked about an effective learning experience he remembered, David changed from the one with the university lecturer and the rocket to relate an event on the CELTA course. He described a lesson in which the teacher ‘got one of the students out to the front [...] and the student was sitting in the car and everyone else [...] went through the driving lesson’. He felt that this lesson was particularly effective because all of the students were involved and focused on the student, the teacher was ‘upbeat about everything and he was raising his voice for emphasis’. He said that he felt that the focus was on the task and the other students rather than on the teacher:

I thought that was that was very effective as opposed to other ones were it’s a lot of teacher talk and er and on to the board so yeah I thought that was er an effective lesson

David talked a great deal about effective teaching and much less about the teachers themselves. An example is his discussion of the importance of planning. David felt that in order to have a successful lesson, it needed to be well planned, which entailed having a clear focus and aims. He believed that if the lesson was not planned well then the aims would not be achieved. He also felt that if the teacher ‘spends an hour waffling about nothing’ then the lesson doesn’t achieve anything. David talked additionally about the need to plan the stages of the lesson carefully:

it’s quite obvious if lessons aren’t planned erm sufficiently you can tell and and the lesson’s not effective which there have been a couple of examples of that this past month [...] if you plan it you know what your aim is and you achieve it and if you don’t if it’s if you obviously haven’t planned it well enough or thoroughly enough

then you don't achieve your aim [...] that's my key thing it's gonna be it's gonna be thoroughly planning a lesson having the beginning having a middle and achieving the aim at the end coz otherwise what's the point of of doing it if you have to spend an hour just waffling about nothing or about something but you haven't achieved anything at the end perhaps so

Clearly, along with the importance that David ascribed to planning is the need to achieve the aims of the lesson. He was clear in his connection between the aims of the lesson and the choice of activities used in classes.

Another element which David thought of as crucial for good teaching is the need for the teacher to 'establish a rapport' with learners. He believed that a 'lively' teacher established rapport and also that rapport involved finding a 'common-ground' between teacher and students. He felt that a good rapport encouraged students to 'reciprocate' and to 'make the effort to participate' in lessons and conversely that if the rapport between teacher and students were not good then the students would not be interested in the lesson and would not respond. David believed that a teacher needed to be sympathetic to 'quiet' students and that this would lead to them becoming 'more involved in the class':

you've got to be a little bit a little lively to establish a rapport if you walk in dead you're not going to get any response from the students [...] you're lively you have the rapport and then the students often erm reciprocate and give you the answers that you're looking for or they try to at least they might not get them right but at least they try to they make the effort to erm to participate you know

[...]

I thought the students would be pretty much as they are er some some are quieter than others but then again that that's comes back to establishing the rapport and if you're sympathetic to them gradually they they they become more involved in the class you get basically you're looking for a chan..a common ground if you like something that they feel comfortable with and everyone feels comfortable with and then as I say they'll make the effort to give something back to you

David was also clear in this interview about the importance of student-to-student interaction which he felt served several purposes. It focused the students' attention on each other and on the task at hand rather than on the teacher. Hence it was useful in reducing teacher talking time. Student-student interaction also involved everyone and it helped the lesson to 'flow':

they had a focus coz it was one of their fellow students there was erm the object of the lesson if you like and erm I think that helped them coz they were te..they were talking to the other student rather than talking to to Mark the teacher so it helped it helped the lesson flow along

David also seemed to see group discussion as a way to get students participating and involved in the lesson. He felt that when discussing a topic people were involved in ‘throwing ideas around’ and was thus particularly useful for achieving the aim of authentic conversation. David felt that group discussion worked well if the teacher sat back and let the students get on with it, leaving the teacher free to record students’ errors and deal with them at the end of the lesson. David thought that the use of discussion did however depend on the type of students, in that it couldn’t be used with children or with quiet students:

you wouldn’t plan a speaking open discussion lesson if you’ve got erm a bunch of dumb people would you so it depends if you’ve if you’ve got a class full of Stefanos<sup>10</sup> [...] you could you could get away with it and have quite a good time as well sit back and erm sit back and let the students get on with it give them the topic and er and erm off they go note the errors correction at the end

David was clear in the interview about his belief that coursebooks should be used with caution. He felt that teachers need to use a book that they ‘feel confident with’ and that even then the teacher needed to prepare the class carefully because otherwise ‘you can lose the plot’. He believed that if the teacher didn’t prepare they might introduce too much material and ‘get muddled’. He also thought that being ‘selective’ and adapting was important because coursebooks contain ‘too many mistakes’ and ‘irrelevant areas’.

### 10.9.2 Beliefs about language and language learning

In the second interview David was relatively clear about the centrality of communication in language learning. He talked about the importance of ‘putting into practice’ what he had been taught and how easy it is to learn a language by talking to people. He felt that this was an authentic activity. He talked about how friends can correct your mistakes and how the better the relationship, the easier it is. Drawing on his memories of language learning at school and his later experience of learning Spanish in-country he talked about learning by having to speak, and of learning with friends. David also talked about how he enjoyed the trips abroad as part of his school language learning experience and, about how not ‘being stuck in the classroom’ was very motivating for him:

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<sup>10</sup> Swiss student in Upper Intermediate class known for being talkative and opinionated

I must admit I used to look forward to the erm exchange visits and the months away from home and er actually being chucked in the deep end and ok you know you've got to talk the language and put into practice what you what we've been teaching you

[...]

French was quite easy for me to learn so I thought ok ok maybe languages is quite a good thing to concentrate on but primarily it was because of the trips abroad erm which is another another way of learning isn't it you're not stuck in the classroom you've got something to look forward to

[...]

Spanish has just come through talking to people erm and they have been correcting me as I make mistakes [...] you see the same people erm all the time the regulars come in and [...] as the friendship has built up with people they you it all becomes more easier you know

David was also very clear about the need for teachers to be able to adapt to learners' needs. Citing his experience of learning Spanish in Spain he talked about a teacher who 'had her own syllabus' and how frustrating he found this:

there was a lot of grammar there which I didn't want I wanted to be able to speak it and er understand why yeah but I didn't want grammar lessons I want more conversation and I wasn't getting it even though I'd asked for it so there was something fundamentally wrong there with with the school or with the teacher maybe she had her own syllabus or whatever laid out and she wasn't prepared to change it but I lasted two weeks and then I found that the best way was just to er authentic speaking if you like and correcting you know friends correcting me and er it's a two way thing you know I help them out with their English they help me out with the Spanish

### 10.9.3 Beliefs about learning to teach

David discussed his sense that his personal style had not changed during the course, that he found that his teaching had been effective and that he would continue to work on 'little things'. He felt that he needed to practice, get 'more experience' and develop his confidence in areas such as 'delivery of speech' and using warmers in class. He felt however that his personal style would not change, for example he would not change the way he talked:

I've learnt things that I think I need to work on through feedback and so on erm but I think I'm a particular type of person erm and [...] I'll never be someone who who talks so slowly and whatever I'm gonna be you know I'm just naturally erm I just talk as I talk erm so that's something I've got to work on but the ideas of being prepared for lessons erm and my style that I'm going to carry on by hasn't changed it hasn't changed it's be..I mean I've learnt that the way that I do it is in the on the whole erm effective I think I've I reach my aims erm so it's lots of lots of little things to work on but I won't change my style I won't become a muddled person who or a quiet person or you know things like that I have my style and I don't see any reason to change it



In his discussion of the various elements of the course, David talked about how he had learnt from the teaching and from the feedback which followed. He talked about how he had started the course 'anxious' that as a quiet person he would struggle 'having to talk for you know run a lesson for an hour or even half an hour'. He found however that he could help the students and he enjoyed seeing them learn. He said that the teaching hadn't been as 'terrifying' as he had thought it would be.

With reference to his observation of the other trainees on the course, David felt that this experience was useful for collecting ideas but that it depended to a large extent on a similarity to his own style of teaching:

observing the the fellow trainee teachers all you can do is learn you learn good points and you learn bad points and you collect ideas and store them away erm [...] that would that depends on whether you're whether I personally would feel confident teaching a particular way erm level of class again would come into that and er er observation of the professional teachers here same thing same thing as the I've seen one or two things that er there's not a chance in hell I'd do because I personally would just find them boring erm and there's there's been others where I think yeah great great ideas so it's all about personal personal selection and er and but it's been useful to see the various me..methods of teaching but erm you take some away with you and you leave others behind

David felt that the assignments were of varying use and relevance to him. He said that he 'didn't see the point' of the personal reflection assignment, although he recognised that it 'tied together' the observation of the teachers. He described the coursebook analysis as 'the most useful' because it made him aware of the need for preparation and adapting the material:

it makes you aware again of prep..preparing preparing for lessons because if you just go into a lesson blind with a coursebook and it's it's it's not exactly what you're looking for then then you can you can lose the plot and too many things get introduced into the lesson that you don't wanna talk about [...] be prepared to adapt it to your needs or change it totally to to one that you're you feel confident with [...] don't just run through a coursebook because it it's just not worth it too many mistakes too many irrelevant areas that you don't that you don't need to go into

When talking about the input sessions, David felt that they were useful in that they taught trainees about the grammar that they needed to know: 'it shows how much how little I knew about grammar'. He said that this awareness needed to be followed by the trainees who would 'go away and work at it' themselves.

## 10.9.4 David's self-reported changes in beliefs

When asked directly, David felt that his beliefs about teaching had not changed over the duration of the course, and he talked about how he had a particular style and would not change this. However he did talk about what he called his 'preconceived ideas' which he said came from his schooldays. He said that he had expected 'more written work' on the course and more 'teacher to boardwork'. He also expected the teacher to be dominant in the class and that there would be lots of 'teacher talk'. He said that he realised that these things were 'not the effective way when it comes to language teaching':

student-wise pretty much as I expected and and as I said the teacher I thought would be a lot more erm if you like dominant in the classroom but that was ideas from that I I brought with me from from school having been taught that way by teachers [*RR: and you prefer this way?*] ah it's much it's much better I I actually need this involvement group involvement and open discussions and it's er it's great

[...]

preconceived ideas were were there that there'd be a lot more erm written work and and teachers to boardwork but that's that's preconceived ideas from from my schooldays I suppose and then and then now we can see that that's just not not the effective way of when it comes to language teaching

David said that another thing he realised whilst being on the course was that students were motivated to learn and he talked about how he enjoyed helping them and seeing them learning:

I've found out that that the students wanna be they wanna they wanna learn they wanna be helped and I know more than they do so so it's a question of er you know I found out that erm that I'm I'm helping them you know it's qui..it's a nice it's a nice for me to be helping them and it's nice when they le..when they go away and say 'oh thank you very much' or something like that

## 10.10 Post-Course Questionnaire

This was never returned by David following the end of the course

## 10.11 Summary

This chapter has looked at David and the beliefs and concerns that he had concerning language teaching and learning. It is clear from the various data sources that David was concerned in a major way with the development of a rapport between teacher and students. David viewed rapport as something which was helped by a teacher who was lively and upbeat, and who worked to keep students awake and involved in the lesson. David seemed to feel that rapport was also helped by a teacher who was sympathetic to learners, especially weaker or shy students. In turn David felt that once a good rapport was established, then teaching would be easier in that learners would be more comfortable and would make more of an effort to participate in lessons. Interest and motivation would also be helped in this process.

David also felt that individual differences in learning could be ‘eliminated’ through the development of rapport and the use of student involvement in lessons. He felt that, whilst it was important to get to know learners as individuals, to make them feel more comfortable it was necessary to integrate them into the group. David expressed his belief in the need for teachers to be adaptable to students’ needs, and he was clear that he felt the use of a didactic teaching model was not effective for language teaching. His rejection of didacticism included a rejection of teacher-dominated lessons in which the teacher did most of the talking and students copied work from the board. In contrast, David favoured a strong visual approach and this was in evidence in many of his lessons.

David also was clear, certainly by the end of the course, on the value of preparation, having a clear focus and achieving the aims that were set out for the class.

Finally, with regard to language learning and teaching, David emphasised the importance of communication, in addition to associating language learning with learning about culture. He also spoke several times about the motivational effects of getting out of the classroom and learning in the real world.

The findings for David are summarised in the table below:

	<b>Main points</b>
Individual elements	<p><i>Early in the course:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of beliefs which seem to come from schooling and higher education eg the need to keep students' attention and re language learning (see below)</li> <li>• Strong anti-didactic beliefs eg teachers should not dominate lessons and do all of the talking</li> <li>• Belief in the need to get to know learners as individuals; need for teacher – student interaction, not simply student – student</li> <li>• Belief in the importance of visuals and the use of audio-visual equipment</li> <li>• Concern for student learning from the first lesson</li> <li>• Language learning involves communication and learning about different cultures</li> <li>• Language learning is more effective if you can get out of the classroom</li> <li>• Very aware of the kind of students and teaching situation he would be entering after the course</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><i>Late in the course:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Similarities in many beliefs from early course eg anti-didactic, need for learner involvement and good rapport, getting out of the classroom</li> <li>• Beliefs from language learning are important eg the importance of correction</li> <li>• Reinforcement of beliefs eg related to need to avoid didactic teaching, minimise teacher talk</li> <li>• Self-reported change in beliefs – expected more teacher to boardwork and a teacher-dominated lesson with lots of teacher talk, realised that these were not effective</li> <li>• Focus on the importance of preparation, planning and lesson aims; connection between aims and activities</li> <li>• Need to adapt to learners' needs</li> <li>• Mention of the importance of setting achievable tasks</li> <li>• Focus on the group as a whole rather than individuals; integrate individuals into the group; learner differences can be 'eliminated' through involvement and rapport</li> <li>• Focus on the students, use student – student help; student – student interaction helped involvement</li> <li>• Coursebooks are useful but need to be adapted to the students and their level</li> <li>• Personal style was clear and would not change</li> <li>• Related qualities of self as a teacher to previous work experience – working in the service industry</li> <li>• Focus on weak points a few at a time; see development as something which goes beyond four weeks of the course</li> </ul>
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Usefulness of observation depended on similarity to own teaching</li> </ul>

elements	<p>style; pick and choose amongst ‘methods of teaching’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning from peers in feedback eg ‘the value of student involvement’ from watching Theo’s lesson</li> <li>• Praised peers in feedback for putting theory into action eg Angela – stress, skimming and recycling</li> <li>• Seeming difficulty in putting some elements into practice eg drilling and one example of telling students about grammar but this was abandoned after feedback and effort made to involve students in the explanation</li> </ul>
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**Table 10.1: Summary of the major findings – David**

# Chapter 11: Angela

## 11.1 Introduction

Angela, aged 28, had been working for a large department store. She had no teaching experience but a range of other work experience such as bar and office work and she had trained in design.

Having travelled extensively, Angela was taking the course because she wanted to visit Australia and Asia following its completion, for a long period of travelling. She intended to teach in order to supplement her travelling.

Angela received a grade 'B' pass for the course.

## 11.2 Interview 1

The first interview with Angela was carried out on Friday of Week 1. It had been timetabled earlier but postponed twice.

### 11.2.1 Beliefs about teachers and teaching

When talking about effective learning experiences she remembered, Angela brought up the quality of teaching being 'straightforward'. She talked about two learning experiences which she enjoyed and seemed to regard as successful – the first was a computing 'text processing' course which she undertook recently and the second was learning mathematics at school. She described the computing course as involving her working at her own pace using the computers whenever she wanted and following a book. She said that the teacher was there 'to answer questions'. The second experience involved her 'best subject' Maths and a teacher whom she liked even though she couldn't 'remember the exact method she taught by' but she added 'but I think because it was straightforward it wasn't boring'.

Another quality which Angela seemed to value highly was clarity. She talked about the need for a good teacher to be 'clear' and to 'do a lot of examples'. Again she

seemed to be drawing on her experience of effective Maths lessons during her schooling. When asked directly about what she thought made a good teacher, Angela repeated the need for a teacher to be clear and she seemed to link this to the ability to ‘put across what they want to say erm easy so people can understand them easily’.

Angela also discussed the need for good teachers to be ‘positive’ and ‘enthusiastic about what they are doing’. She felt that it was ‘really important’ for a teacher to be ‘passionate about teaching’ because this would ‘come across when they’re teaching and affects the student’. Again drawing on her own learning experiences she said that of the various things she had learnt over the years, the good teachers ‘all had loads of energy’. She felt that these good teachers were also ‘really positive about what they were doing really wanted to teach [...] the reason wasn’t just money or that they had to do it for a job’. Angela also felt that a good teacher should be interesting.

When thinking about good or effective teaching, Angela focused on several elements; the first was the use of ‘visual props’ or pictures for teaching. Angela also seemed to feel that a teacher needed to adapt their teaching to suit the class. Drawing on her experience of the course thus far, she talked about adapting to the students’ level and to suit the students’ interests. She said that she thought a teacher should use materials that the students would find interesting in their L1:

I would get erm a paragraph about erm a a you know a popular band you know erm some gossip column in a magazine or something like that and er something that’s a bit interesting a bit fun something that they would that they would read they would try to read anyway or something that they would read in their own country erm and and use that

Angela seemed to explicitly use her own experiences and feelings as a student about materials or activities to guide her judgement as a teacher:

I wouldn’t have too much writing erm because I know that even when I look at a piece of writing like that and I’m told to read it in class I’m a slow reader a very slow reader and that would take me quite a while to read so I I sort of judge it by what I can do

### 11.2.2 Beliefs about language and language learning

In terms of her beliefs about language learning, Angela felt that it was important that it was not simply the teacher talking all the time but that the students needed to have opportunities to speak too:

*what kind of things do you think are important for learning a language?*

[...] I think it it's really good to speak it I think if the teacher's just speaking it just talking to you then you [...] don't pick it up you don't remember it

As can be seen from the extract above, Angela felt that students needed to be active in order to learn and remember. Again, the point about student speaking opportunities and activity was mentioned in relation to her own successful learning of computing when she said 'it was actually doing something rather than just listening to people talking'.

When asked about her own language learning experiences, Angela was somewhat vague and did not seem to feel that her own language learning had been very successful:

I did German for a few years at school I did French [...] but I can't remember much of it now [...] I wasn't very good at learning the words ^ but it was quite interesting yeah I remember vaguely remember erm doing like books a bit like this with pictures you'd have like pictures of trousers clothes and put them on a person or something

She moved on to describing how in order to successfully learn a language she would need to go to the country and be forced in to 'using it everyday'. She felt that being in the situation 'where you've got to speak it and you can't speak your own language at all erm and things aren't translated' would be 'the easiest way'. Angela attributes this belief to having spoken to 'people that I know'. This presumably would include trainees on the CELTA, several of whom successfully learnt languages in-country and also learners at the school who were learning English in Britain.

Angela felt that the way of teaching on the CELTA course where 'you don't speak their language at all' was similar to this immersion and the students at the school who were forced into having to use the language to survive in the country would benefit from this:

it's good when you've got to go down to the shops you know that you can't buy something unless you know how to say 'I want this' erm and so that makes you do it makes you learn it

### 11.2.3 Beliefs about learning to teach

Angela, who by the time of the interview had experienced four full days of the course was clear that the course was better in many ways than she had expected. She felt that it would be 'really stressful' and that because she gets stressed easily that the teaching



would be difficult. She found however that, although she got nervous during the teaching practice, it was becoming easier. She also mentioned that she was enjoying studying again after a break of several years:

after doing the first one I find it erm I'm a lot more relaxed more confident about it and I enjoy it erm and I I'm really enjoying studying again coz I love studying and I haven't done it for a few years

One of the elements that Angela credits for the increased sense of relaxation during teaching was the 'really nice atmosphere' on the course. She felt that it didn't matter if trainees made mistakes and she said that she felt 'comfortable speaking out in class'. She also mentioned the 'supportive' and 'positive' feedback that they received from tutors:

the teaching's really good it's really positive they they always erm praise you after teaching practice and then show you like maybe ways you could do it

## 11.3 Course Questionnaire

The first part of Angela's questionnaire which was handed back on Friday of Week 1, provided some background details on her work experience which included a number of jobs such as working in an office and bar work. She also indicated that she did not speak any other languages.

Angela described her main reason for doing the CELTA course as 'to learn to teach English'. She cited her major concerns as 'teaching practice' and the thing she was most looking forward to on the course as 'studying again'. She described her experience up to that point as 'much better than I thought – easier + fun'.

In the sentence completion part of the questionnaire her responses centred around providing interesting lessons for students and being patient:

*The best way to learn a language is ... to speak it*  
*A good teacher should always... be interesting*  
*A good teacher should never... shout at students*  
*When teaching English, it is important to... be patient + clear*  
*The key to a good language lesson is... lots of talking + games*

In the question which asked trainees to choose which view of learners they agreed with most, the terms offered were: resisters, explorers, raw materials, partners, receptacles, clients. Trainees were invited to offer alternatives if desired. Angela used

two of the terms ‘explorers’ and ‘clients’; questioned the meaning of another term ‘receptacles’ and added one term of her own ‘people’<sup>11</sup>. She then explained her choices:

People – a fact (they should be treated with respect)  
Explorers – they are finding out about something  
Clients – they pay to be taught

The final two questions asked Angela to list (a) five factors which make an effective teacher; and, (b) up to three factors which make an effective language learner. She responded as follows:

- (a)
  - interesting
  - clear / easy to understand
  - patient
  - passionate about their job
  
- (b)
  - open minded
  - willing to learn

## 11.4 Guided Preparation

In GP 1,1 the tutor moved through the TP points explaining and demonstrating various points; Angela asked was how many students they would be likely to get. The discussion of the second teaching practice in the same GP session was similar. The tutor explained the difficulty with teaching definite and indefinite articles for students with various L1s. Angela asked a couple of questions, checking that when the TP points said ‘match the rule to the example’ it meant have the students do the matching; she also asked how she could make an exercise into a team game.

In GP 1,2 Angela asked how they should introduce themselves and what they were going to teach. The tutor advised them to avoid explaining what they were going to teach as it would lead them into teacher talking time. Angela told the group that when she had met the students the previous evening she had tried to teach one of her pre-teaching vocabulary items. She showed the tutor the handout she had prepared and asked whether she should tell the students the word if they didn’t know. The tutor

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<sup>11</sup> I recorded in my field notebook that when handing back the questionnaire Angela had said that she struggled with this question because she didn’t feel that any of the responses were quite right but she couldn’t explain why not. [field notebook, Week 1, Day 5]

responded that she should wait '1½ seconds max' and then tell them; she asked about the use of capitals and lower case on the whiteboard. Later in the session Angela asked the tutor 'if we can't answer a question can we look to you to answer it?'

When the tutor asked Angela if she wanted any help (GP 1,3) she said that she was going to do 'her own little bit' at the beginning of the class. She explained the activity which used realia and was intended to elicit the indefinite article. The tutor approved, saying it was a 'good' start. The discussion of Friday's lesson was mainly the tutor running through the TP points, with Angela making notes. Angela asked about changing a task due to the presence of lower level students in the group who she feared would 'shut off' if a task was too difficult. The trainer explained that gist tasks boosted confidence and enabled weaker students to answer questions.

In GP 1,4 Angela asked if she could 'change a few things but in the same subject'. She then said she wanted to change some of the pre-teaching vocabulary that she had been told to deal with 'because I don't see the point in teaching 'tent' when I'm not going to mention it later on'. She checked on one of the points in her TP points regarding pronunciation and explained how she was going to restructure the lesson. She also asked if she could cut the text down in size and use her own questions which she argued were more suitable for the class. The tutor accepted all of her points saying that her changes suited the class and 'fulfilled the lesson aims'.

Angela checked that her pictures and technique could elicit the vocabulary she wanted from the trainees (GP 1,5). She also went through her concept questions for the lexical items. She then explained her lesson plan briefly. Her questions about her lesson for Monday were specific, such as how she could elicit the vocabulary she needed. She also asked the group if they had any vocabulary she would like them to introduce.

The beginning of Week 2 (GP 2,1) saw Angela asking about whether she could accept any offers for her brainstorming activity, and checking with the tutor the vocabulary she had chosen to pre-teach. She asked about how to teach particular words such as 'boarding pass' and 'departure'. She also checked the stresses on some of the vocabulary and how this should be marked on the board. At the end of the session, the group went through the full-hour teaching for Wednesday. This consisted primarily of Angela making notes as the trainer went through the TP points.

In GP 2,2 Angela asked the trainer to suggest a warmer for her lesson. She then asked about an exercise that she was unsure of and was advised to leave it out if she

didn't like it. She then told the group about her 'terrible' listening exercise which consisted of 'narrow minded people [saying] you should know English culture if you're learning English coz it's important and all this rubbish'. She also had questions about how to complete her lesson plan.

GP 2,3 saw Angela asking the tutor's advice about an exercise she felt had 'no connection at all' to the other parts of the class. Angela explained she had thought about alternatives and had checked with the listening transcript. She explained her alternative, the teacher trainer told her she had 'a good idea' and offered another option as a lead-in. She then discussed a second exercise and her replacement activity, telling the trainer that she had timed the tapescript and was concerned about the length. She explained her 'extra time' activity in case she needed it.

The GP on day 2,4 was organised by the other tutor because the trainees started to look at the preparation for the upper level group in Week 3. Angela made notes on the quite explicit preparation advised by the tutor, which included help with the grammar and laying out the board for the presentation. Angela did not ask many questions, but simply clarified how she should organise the writing-up section of her class. The final session of the week, GP 2,5, involved a discussion of Angela's lesson on Tuesday of a jigsaw listening lesson. The tutor explained the procedure for the task which involved a considerable amount of classroom management. The tutor was careful to leave things to Angela to decide 'so the vocabulary it's up to you how wanna do it [...] as long as you cover basically meaning pronunciation and form'. Again, Angela wrote notes and questions were minimal. Her questions about that day's teaching were about the grammar, about what she should do if the students brought 'allow' into the class on 'make' and 'let'; and about the logistics of using two classrooms and two tape recorders.

GP session 3,1 saw Angela asking a lot of questions about her teaching for the next couple of days, they largely involved questions about grammar, and about how to fill in her lesson plan. The main questions Angela asked in GP 3,2 were to clarify with the tutor where the stresses lay on various lexical items that she had to deal with. She also checked terminology for her lesson plan and, whether her listening was authentic or not.

The guided preparation session held on Thursday of Week 3 (GP 3,4) saw Angela talking about her lesson for Friday which was entirely planned by herself with no TP points provided. She explained she was doing 'I wish' in a 'photo story' and was going

to elicit regrets from students. Then she planned to elicit the structure, exemplify with herself and then get students to discuss what they regret in their life. Angela explained that they were not using the book because it was very confusing. The trainer approved of her lesson plan and offered a follow-up activity that she could consider using.

In GP 4,1 Angela talked about her lesson on Wednesday. She told the tutor that she was not using the book because 'I have a bit of a phobia about the book'. She explained her ideas for the lesson and the tutor offered suggestions, such as 'ideal partners' rather than 'reasons to get married' as the focus for her ranking activity. She then planned to do a 'pyramid speaking' exercise. She planned an 'open debate' for the end of the class. Angela also talked about the lesson in 4,2. She told the tutor that she was worried about her pyramid speaking as they had only had 3 students in the class the day before. She was also worried about the discussion as the students may not talk and the activity might not last. They discussed the possibility of doing a role play and Angela explained which roles she would have. The tutor offered advice on how to design role cards. Angela returned to the topic of this lesson in GP 4,3. She said that she had still not decided between the role play and an activity involving the writing of a marriage contract, she told the tutor that she was worried about the students not speaking. She asked the tutor about how to fill in the lesson plan, specifically her aims. When she ran through the plan for the lesson the tutor told her that it sounded 'okay' and that she shouldn't change it.

## 11.5 TP and TP Feedback

Angela was probably the most vocal trainee in the group and tended to become involved in giving feedback on the teaching of all trainees rather than simply those she had been assigned to observe and give feedback on.

In the first TP feedback session (1,2) Angela began by praising Theo, saying that he was 'very encouraging' and had a 'lively voice' which kept the students' attention. She gave feedback on her own teaching next. Angela told the group that 'it wasn't as bad as what I expected' and that 'I felt that I actually taught some of them something'. She indicated that although she was aware of rushing that she felt that the students had learnt: 'I was rushing through it too quickly but er they seemed to get the gist of it'. She then moved on to things she needed to work on which included 'more drilling' and

exemplifying a task, something which she was aware that she had forgotten to do but decided that she could not go back to once students had started working.

Angela had further points to make: she felt that she needed to be more confident, although the tutor indicated that he thought she looked confident; she also discussed the need to check students had understood, something the tutor felt she had in fact done, praising her for concept checking when they had only been introduced to the technique in input that afternoon:

- A     erm check the students when they need it erm the new words  
TT    you did check didn't' you you said 'soft drink' <A: yes yes> you did well on  
      checking we've only just barely just scratched the surface of that this afternoon  
      for the first time so er you were straight in there on checking mm very good

Angela continued with points to work on, 'be more lively make it more fun' and the need to give students 'more reassurance when they were right' although she said that she couldn't really remember if she had done this. Angela then indicated her discomfort with a question in one of the exercises for which there were several possible answers:

I didn't feel confident because there wasn't a right or wrong answer [...] I felt like I couldn't erm teach them it I didn't feel very comfortable with that

The tutor then summarised his feedback on Angela's teaching which included telling the group that she presented a 'model of vocabulary teaching' with 'cleverly elicited vocabulary', 'effective' drilling and concept checking, and 'involving all your class'. The trainer then recommended that Angela work on her board writing, using capitals where necessary, something she explained was due to her overcompensating her habit of always writing in capitals. He also drew attention to her tendency to stand forward in the room 'addressing these people and ignoring those people'. He advised her to 'try to keep the whole class in view' which he thought would improve with confidence. He added that she was 'very encouraging the whole time to the students'.

Angela was also teaching on the following day (TPF 1,3) and she was involved in giving feedback to all three of the other trainees who were teaching. She started with Jeff for whom she had been asked to write feedback. Angela praised Jeff's 'clear presentation', that he 'gave praise regularly', told him that his mimes were effective and that he was 'quite patient with some of the students'. She suggested that he needed to drill more, that he should 'walk round and check when students are working in pairs' rather than sit down, and that he needed to be more careful about using ungraded

language. Angela's feedback on Theo's teaching was focused on his boardwriting which she thought might have confused the students.

When discussing her second TP session, Angela again listed her positive points as being that students understood the point she was teaching, that her visual prompts had been successful and that she had explained the answers instead of just telling students. She felt that her improvements were that she was 'more relaxed' and 'more confident' and that she 'gave examples this time'. She thought that she still needed to work on 'make[ing] sure everything is explained first er that means explain the task [...] before handing it out'. The tutor told Angela that she needed to elicit an example from students rather than give them one, 'coz it's more effective'. Although Angela initially resisted, saying that students couldn't understand what was needed, she seemed to accept the point after the tutor had demonstrated how she could have managed it.

- TT I think you could have said look at number one er what can we match with number one? And then if they could have done that then they would have been much clearer on what to do [...]=
- A = but I could tell they didn't have a clue because it was it was a bit confusing coz when they first looked at it
- TT well I think you gave it out and they all started working on it straightaway <A: yeah> so they weren't paying attention
- A yeah yeah they were yeah
- TT so if you just hold it up and say 'we'll do the first one together what what goes with the first one? ok good off you go yeah' <A: yes yeah>

At that point Penny questioned whether Angela should have handed students the sheets face down then asked them to turn them over, rather than what she did which was to ask one student to pass them around the class. Angela rejected the idea, saying that she didn't like doing that because 'it treats them like they're in a test'. The group then moved on to talk about the grammar that Angela was teaching, with the tutor telling her that she managed a complex grammatical area very well:

- TT the articles are very confusing if you look at them in a grammar book you there are twelve pages of rules / so you did very you did really well \
- A / yeah I know I looked through all the books and \ I didn't really like that first one and I was trying to find an easier way to explain and I looked through all the books I looked through everything I could find to try and find the easier way to do it but there's it's so difficult
- TT yeah it's a very complex area I think you did really well

Angela added a further point which she felt she could have improved which was that she could have 'gone around the class to get the answers [...] individually coz they were all shouting out'. Penny, who had been assigned to give feedback on Angela's

lesson commented on how she ‘organised the time well’ to which Angela responded ‘it was luck’; Penny also praised Angela’s large and clear board writing. Angela told the group that she wrote up ‘indefinite’ and ‘definite article’ on the whiteboard in advance of the lesson ‘in case I spelt it wrong or wrote it wrong’. Penny also praised Angela for giving ‘personal help to everyone’ but criticised her for not keeping the whole group in view (something Penny had been asked to watch out for specifically). Jeff praised her for ‘going round helping students in difficulties’. The tutor indicated that Angela had made a ‘very big improvement’ in keeping the whole class in view and dealt well with the grammar:

you did very well in a tricky area it’s one of the most difficult areas maybe it was the most difficult area to teach in the language actually its very complex as you saw so you did very well with it and er very systematic and the worksheet I thought that was really well designed

Finally in the session Angela gave minimal feedback on Helen’s teaching when she said that she thought Helen had been ‘a little bit patronising’ in her praise of the students.

In TP feedback session 1,4 Angela gave feedback to Helen and to Penny. Angela praised Helen’s drilling, the way she ‘went round and checked the students well’. She said that her class was interesting and that the lesson was at the right level for the students so that ‘the ones that aren’t very good at English did learn something’. However, Angela then criticised Helen heavily for her ‘unnatural’ ‘slow’ way of speaking, a point upon which the tutor disagreed. Angela also criticised Helen for leaving too much of a gap when students couldn’t get the answer, proposing a way of dealing with this:

- A     there’s the vocab if they don’t get it maybe there’s a bit too much of a gap  
TT     yes we’ll that’s=  
H     =yes that’s right  
A     I think coz you expected them to get it you know / you were stumped by it \  
H     / I didn’t have any alternative \  
A     yeah I think that I wrote that in mine  
H     which I realised=  
A     =as something I learnt <TT: yeah> but we should have if we’re gonna do vocab  
we should have some kind of alternative meaning <H: absolutely> or some  
alternative way of explaining it because we’re relying too much on one thing  
<TT: yeah> if they don’t get it and maybe also [...] we should if we’ve got time  
practice some of our teaching practices with each other <TT: yeah> like  
practice the meanings that we do for vocab erm ask the questions and see what  
response we get from English people and if we don’t get the right response off  
each other then we’re not going to get it off them so then we can



Angela was supportive in her feedback to Penny, telling her that she had made 'a real improvement' over her 'rambling' in the previous lesson. She did however tell Penny that she needed to 'get clear in your mind about what you're doing'. She said that Penny should have been clearer on the spelling rules that she was teaching, a point which the tutor supported. She added that Penny gave 'good individual help' to students, and that her boardwork was very clear. She suggested that Penny, like the others, needed to get answers from all students and not just the strong ones:

I did it as well yesterday but we're getting all the answers off this lot coz they all know it and this lot aren't answering so well I don't know personally I think that we should maybe go round or pick out try and pick out answers to give everybody and get something out of everyone

Angela gave feedback on Penny the following day too (TPF 1,5). She praised her elicitation, but questioned whether, given that the level of the students present was higher than they had expected, Penny should have changed the way she gave the questions to students. When it came to giving feedback on Theo, Angela praised the improvements he had made in his boardwriting.

Angela explained to Robert that she had arranged with the other tutor to 'change a few things with the points' to make the material more accessible to lower level students. She felt that this had 'backfired' as it was the higher level students who were in attendance. The tutor, however, felt that the changes she had made were appropriate anyway. Angela then moved onto talk about her positive points and her points to work on:

A erm yeah positive points I elicited the vocab erm although I didn't do it as well as I would have done with a lower class because they knew it so well so I didn't do as much drilling as I could have done but it seemed like they didn't really need it that's probably why I lapsed I dunno and I checked the meaning and the stress I did the stress coz I thought I might forget it because it's the first time I've done the stress

TT mm yeah good yeah / you focused on the stress \ sometimes yeah

A / which was one of my main aims \ and I tried and I made the lesson more enjoyable erm improvements since my last lesson er my board writing was better coz I was doing capital letters before and I involved er all the students in the answers <TT: you did yeah> er points I need to work on I didn't think this I wasn't very happy with this lesson I didn't think it was very organised erm er I lapsed on the drilling like I said er the last task wasn't very organised coz I sort of [inaudible] coz I didn't think the questionnaire I just didn't wanna repeat it too much and make it boring and I thought well I've got these brochures I could get them to read it because that would give the reading thing erm so they would be reading and doing something that's authentic =

TT =yeah good idea

A but my instructions weren't very clear the last ones coz I wasn't really clear in my head <TT: yeah yeah> so I didn't really give them clear instructions at the start which I should have done

David, who was responsible for feedback on Angela's lesson, commented on her good concept checking, and that she had putting into practice what they had learnt about reading lessons. David did feel however that the way she initiated drilling was a problem:

I dunno whether it's right or not but er when you were doing the drilling you sometimes you said erm er 'do you want to say this' instead of saying 'say it' you were saying 'do you want to say this' and then some of them were shaking their heads [all laugh] then they were just left so instead of offering the chance to do make their own minds up just drill it and whatever

David also suggested that she needed to make it clearer when she wanted students to work in pairs. The tutor did not give oral feedback on her teaching because he said that the trainees had successfully done his job for him and provided their own feedback.

The next feedback session (TPF 2,1) started with Angela feeling that she should have 'anticipated the problem of them not getting any words' and that she should have drawn 'a few pictures'. Her 'positive points' for the lesson included that she 'drilled well', 'better than before', that the exercise she did on stress had worked well and that she was more organised. She listed points to work on as:

I did too much teacher talking maybe and maybe I could have done more mimes at the beginning ^ see I was originally gonna draw some pictures but then all the work that could have gone into the picture and it got a bit bitty so but I think maybe I still could've done it with less talking erm and I put I felt that my concept questions weren't very strong erm ^ yeah I wasn't getting any answers

The tutor agreed that she needed a 'bit of support from a visual aspect' and a 'bit more volubility miming gestures'. However he felt that she was on target with her concept questions for that stage of the course. David praised her recycling of material which he said was 'a point we've been doing today'. Angela responded that this had been a decision made interactively, that is, whilst in the classroom:

yeah I mean that wasn't that wasn't in my notes or anything but I just thought about it coz we've done it today and because I had them on the board I thought I'd try and recycle them a bit

The tutor's feedback focused on the need to use more visual cues and gestures and to be 'a bit tighter on pronunciation'. He described her drilling as 'impressive'.

TP feedback session 2,2 saw Angela offering supportive feedback to Helen who felt that her lesson had gone badly. Angela suggested how she could have organised the exercise she had used and told her that she used 'really clear and really definite instructions'. When the trainer asked if anyone had written notes on Penny's class, Angela's response elicited laughter from the others:

- TT    erm did anyone in particular focus on Penny?  
A     I I wrote quite a few notes [others laugh] sorry sorry  
TT    well let Penny say what she wants first

Following Penny's feedback on her own teaching, Angela told her that she needed 'a strong voice' and that her 'unsure facial expression' had confused students who were uncertain whether their responses were correct or incorrect. Angela then praised Penny's use of correction techniques which they had just covered in input sessions. Later in the session the feedback turned to David's lesson and the trainer asked again:

- TT    did anyone particularly focus on David's lesson today?  
A     I've got a few points  
TT    you've always got a few points [all laugh]  
A     well I've got to have something to keep me going throughout the lessons

Angela told David he had not drilled enough and raised a question about his use of concept questions:

- A     you didn't do any drilling and the concept questions right at the end I don't know whether it's right or wrong but I dunno  
T     ok wrong order  
A     you know well I dunno but I've I've been taught to do it straight after each word the concept questions I mean I suppose it's a good way of remembering it after but if they're not sure in the first place ^  
TT    I've never known anyone do it like that before

In her feedback on Jeff's lesson, Angela suggested how he could have presented his material more practically, how he could have integrated visual aids into his lesson and pointed out that he was talking to the board when he was supposed to be addressing the class.

In her final teaching practice of the week (2,3) Angela was observed teaching by the trainees from the second group. These trainees were also present in the TP feedback session. In her feedback on her own teaching she mentioned that she had missed

something out because she was trying not to look at her lesson plan in order to make the class flow more:

erm I put that it flowed well and each part related to the next and there was nice connections between them erm the warmer was ^ which I thought was quite successful [...]

[...]

and I put I achieved my aim erm improvements a lot more interesting and it's clearer I thought <TT: yeah> er but erm my organisation's a bit lacking erm I think I had so much stuff er there were a few things where I ^ I sort of lost my place where I was and I was trying to ^ I was trying not to look at my notes too much and see where I was because I wanted it to flow better but as I was all I was doing steps the wrong way round and missing something out or doing something wrong a couple of times I did that

The tutor then moved on to evaluate what had happened in the lesson. He praised her 'careful and clear' instructions and her genuine interest in the students' opinions:

then er you checked out what the students actually thought about these various propositions which I thought was a nice stage coz what I liked about it was that you were interested in what they were saying you know they felt as if you really did want to know what they we..what they thought rather than just get sentences from them and you reacted naturally to what they were saying they appreciated that

He continued with his summary:

so a pretty effective lesson erm clear on the grammar involved the students as much as possible good rapport nice smile happy atmosphere supportive practice activities were mostly realistic [...] you thought carefully about instructions and achieved good results with them mostly established clarity throughout the lesson and made good progress in correction pity you forgot about the question form

Week 3 (TPF 3,1) saw the start of teaching at the higher level, with an Upper Intermediate class. Once again Theo started, followed by Angela, Penny and David. All trainees taught for half an hour.

Angela's feedback on her own performance focused initially on her response to the different level, she felt that there was 'something missing' from the class:

I don't know I felt really strange about the lesson I think the transition is harder than I thought I thought that not only my lesson but everyone else's lessons seemed ^ it was also it's also the fact that Robert's doing the lesson plan thing for us it's totally different to your approach and I feel erm I dunno erm it doesn't feel like it feels like there's something missing and I think it's because when we were doing them last week [...] it was step by step [...] and you you knew you were teaching something [...] whereas I saw with these lessons it was generally just a discussion I mean like your [Penny] lesson I was like [...] you know what were you doing? I mean [...] surely you're not teaching them about military service [...] I find it strange that I feel

like there's something missing but [...] I think it's just what we're used to it's just different

Despite the tutor's efforts to find out what she thought was missing, Angela was unable to say and the discussion of good points of the lesson continued with Angela expressing happiness with her boardwork which she felt was 'good and clear'. She also felt that she achieved her aims and that the lesson 'was quite interesting' and she felt 'quite relaxed'. Angela was unhappy with her explanation of the form of the language she was teaching saying that 'it didn't come out as confident as it could've done'. A discussion of functions followed with the tutor explaining that she could have asked the students about this. Angela was also uncertain about the stress on the sentences which she had had to deal with, explaining that she had asked the other tutor, Robert, prior to the lesson but said 'I didn't feel sure about it'. Her own feedback was followed by Jeff and David's comments: they highlighted her difficulty in eliciting the form she wanted suggesting she could have prompted sooner (Jeff); that the students 'obviously understood' the lesson (Jeff); that she had a 'good conversational lead-in' (David); and that her 'monitoring was good' (David). David emphasised this final point, saying that:

I think all of us tended to last week erm like Robert was saying correcting people more than than instead of just monitoring and you did it very well today just they were getting on with it

Angela explained her strategy for collecting and giving feedback to the students on the errors that they had made in their writing:

I was trying to find mistakes and only one person made a mistake and that's why at the end I put I went to put it up on the board but I didn't want her to know that it was just her mistake so I changed the end bit

The teacher trainer summarised his feedback on her lesson, praising her work to get the students talking, her 'well organised' boardwork, that she 'involved' the students and her 'delayed correction and 'very nice feedback around the class'.

In the feedback on Penny's class which followed (3,1), Angela was vocal in her opposition to Penny's sense that she needed 'boys' in order to talk about military service, saying 'we still know about military service just like guys do'. Later, when the tutor told Penny that she needed to drill the higher level students to a higher standard than the elementary group, Angela expressed her discomfort 'that's strange because I don't feel as comfortable drilling them'.

In the same session Angela gave feedback to David, pointing out that the students ‘really enjoyed’ the lesson and that he used ‘really good props’. When Jeff commented that he wouldn’t need to teach so much vocabulary in his next class because David had covered it in this session Angela was quick to back up the tutor:

J he helped me a lot because he’s taken about three quarters of my words for me to do tomorrow so erm

[...]  
TT except we haven’t checked any of them so we don’t know if they understand  
<J: ah>

A yeah one person might know but the rest might not

In TP feedback session 3,2, Angela criticised Helen’s grading of her language and explained what she thought had caused this:

maybe you could have done the readings as well in a bit more simple English coz you’re using quite a lot of ungraded language in the meanings [...] you need simple English that’s what I found hard when I was doing mine coz I was looking in the dictionary for meanings and the meaning words were bigger than word I was teaching and I was trying to keep it simple [...] so I mean I think that confused them as much as the meaning coz er [...] a few of them didn’t know what those words meant

Angela’s comments above indicate not only that she had been paying attention to Helen’s lesson (even though she was not required to give feedback on Helen and was in fact teaching herself afterwards) but that she had been noticing students’ reactions and interpreting these. Commenting on Jeff’s lesson which preceded her own, Angela pointed out that the handout that he gave to students was unclear and that she had found it difficult to read.

Angela was pleased with her own lesson which was a jigsaw listening exercise. She commented that her main problem was a lack of drilling:

A erm overall I thought it was quite a good lesson <TT: yeah> it was really interesting I could tell they were really interested although they found it challenging but that was good that they found it challenging <TT: definitely definitely> erm and erm er it was quite clear er I didn’t do drilling again I don’t know why I keep missing out drilling

TT well you started to do it and then you kind of gave it up <A: yeah I> too too much shall I do it shan’t I do it [P laughs]

A no I drilled ‘maniac’ <TT: yeah> and then I didn’t drill any of the other ones <H: yeah> I lost it really [all laugh] [...] but yeah I definitely should have drilled the others [...] I knew I hadn’t concept checked the first few words but in a way I didn’t want to because <TT: sure> it was going to be too obvious but I thought oh I’ll do them at the end which I did <TT: sure>

Angela then told the group that she had got ‘a bit confused’ and that it was ‘hard work running in and out’ of the two classrooms. The teacher trainer advised her to give over responsibility to the students to run the tape recorder and suggested she should adopt a ‘co-ordinator’ role and ‘hand everything over to the students’.

David’s feedback was positive, a ‘good and lively’ lead in, ‘everyone was having a laugh in the lesson’ which created ‘a good atmosphere’. He also felt that all of the students understood the vocabulary and the task, and that she monitored and organised the task well. His only criticism was that Angela had forgotten to zero the tape counter and therefore wasted time re-cueing the tape. David concluded ‘the thing that came out for me is [...] the importance of having a good atmosphere it just makes the lesson go so much easier and it just flows along’. Angela finished the feedback talking about feeling more relaxed and comfortable with students:

I’ve felt so much more comfortable in the last few lessons and I can tell I’m more comfortable because I am relaxing and making a joke with things and they’re reacting well to it [...] they’re more confident as well with speaking so therefore I think that that’s why the rapport is a bit better because erm you know they can say things to you in in everyday language and you know you can have a joke with them which you can’t joke with somebody that you can’t communicate with

Towards the end of the session the trainees talked about the students in the group and the fluctuating numbers in classes, Angela asked the tutor if this variability was normal or ‘do you reckon it’s a reflection of our teaching?’ The trainer indicated that this was perfectly normal. The final exchange of the session was between Theo and Angela and on Theo (Chapter 8, Section 5), indicated the friendly competition which developed between the two trainees:

- A Jorge said I had bad writing I said it’s not as bad as Theo’s though and he said no Theo’s is terrible [all laugh] coz he couldn’t get the word sleep and I went I’ve just taught you that  
T ^ I tell you what it’s better than being the class swot [all laugh]  
A you’re just jealous coz I’m better than you

In the following session, TP feedback session 3,3, Angela and Penny had worked collaboratively to give feedback on Helen’s teaching. Angela began supportively with ‘I thought it was really good especially considering erm Helen wasn’t feeling too well’. She then praised Helen’s lead-in, error correction and drilling and criticised her for a lack of variety in her pairing of students, although she did emphasise that ‘we were struggling [...] for bad points’.

TP feedback 3,4 began as the trainees gave their own feedback to each other without the teacher trainer being present – he was delayed. The feedback was light-hearted although serious points were raised. At one point, Angela told Theo that he should have done more error correction, suggesting that if the students didn't make any language errors that he should make them up:

- A I think it at the end maybe you should have done some erm monitoring and error correction what is it 'if you don't find them you lie'  
T sorry say that again  
A if you don't find any errors you make em up  
T [laughs] ha yeah I didn't need to do that no  
A who told me that ?  
H that is true yeah  
A someone told me that

Angela told Theo that using delayed correction was something that they should be doing at this stage of the course:

- A it's just nice at the end <T: oh yes yeah> coz it's just one of the things we're all meant to be doing <T: yeah yeah> it's like / that extra step \ <J: / it is yeah \ > from last week to this <J: yes yes>  
T yes yes I agree with you

When the tutor arrived they started the feedback session and Angela was teamed up with David to give feedback on Penny's lesson. Following David's delivery of points such as 'achieved aims', 'monitored well' and 'voice projection', Angela was quite critical saying that Penny's instructions were unclear, that she needed to help students more when teaching pronunciation and that she didn't do any concept checking. When Penny indicated her unhappiness at the level of the material being too low for the students, Angela stepped in:

- A it makes a change coz some of the lessons are really challenging for them and giving them challenging lessons all the time means that they are gonna feel really exhausted all the time so it's nice coz the ones that aren't really at that level I mean that they can achieve something as well  
TT yeah so it's within their range  
A yeah and it gives them more confidence

Later in the session her good relationship with Theo seemed evident when the others were giving him feedback and she commented 'we're trying not to give him a big head coz he's got a big one already'. When the tutor praised Theo for giving students the responsibility for the tape recorders in his jigsaw listening, Angela pointed out that he had learnt this 'after seeing me running round' the previous day. She also told the



group that whilst sitting at the back of the class observing she had wanted to try and make him laugh to put him off.

In the first TP feedback session of Week 4 (4,1), Angela and Helen gave feedback on David's lesson. In addition to praising his elicitation technique and correction of errors, Angela criticised his division of the group and his lack of drilling or work on stress:

I put a little point that maybe you could have just had one group and scrapped that I know it would have scrapped a big part but just because it was sort of isolating a student I'd favour having one big group but he didn't seem to mind

Angela's feedback to Penny was mostly critical of her decision not to adapt the text and cut down the vocabulary she dealt with, although she was supportive of Penny's efforts to improve her voice projection.

In TP feedback 4,2 Angela was responsible, along with Penny, for giving feedback to Jeff. In feedback on Helen's lesson, Angela, indicating her awareness of students' reactions, commented that Helen had not explained the phonetic alphabet to students, leaving some of them confused:

I think maybe you should have explained the phonetics whatever it was a bit confusing for them coz you just put it on the board and then didn't explain it and Miriam was like 'what's that?'

Later in the session, the feedback switched to Jeff. Angela's disapproval of his failure to set the task before the reading exercise is indicated in her quoting of an earlier comment by the teacher trainer that this was a fundamental element in a reading lesson:

J ^ just er pre-set task before reading ^^ yes yes I er plead guilty to that one yeah  
TT remember that? <J: yes yes>  
A yes yes fundamental rule [said in an adopted stern voice]  
J I know I know  
A then why did you do it? I was like what are you doing  
J I knew as soon as I started I said then I realised I'd done wrong 'huh stupid boy'  
A did you have it in your lesson plan to pre-set it yeah?  
J oh yes definitely yes yeah  
A and then you just did it yeah <J: yes yes> that's the sort of thing I do that I always forget

This comment was made by the tutor in feedback to Jeff in TP feedback session 1,3: 'it's a kind of fundamental thing for skills work to pre-set tasks'.

Following her questioning of Jeff as to why this omission had occurred, Angela became more sympathetic when she decided that he had simply forgotten, rather than ignored the rule.

Angela then criticised Jeff for not explaining his target language:

I mean you got your sentences put down you know the function of it or whatever put down what what tenses you should use erm put erm sentence stress erm and then concept checking it but it was really good practice on it I thought the practices were good and they they probably knew what was going on but some theory in there it was the theory missing on the whole

She did praise the way Jeff had dealt with error correction in the lesson: 'your correction's pretty good though [...] you use [...] students really well to correct everything'.

The penultimate TP session of the course was carried out by Angela and Theo who taught for one hour each. This time the feedback (TPF 4,3) was begun by the other trainees. Jeff felt that Angela's class was 'attention-grabbing' and that the role play that was the mainstay of her lesson went 'very well' as the students 'jumped into' their roles. Helen praised the fact that Angela had given students thinking time and had carefully divided the groups and thought about roles. Angela responded:

yeah I I thought about the people that were gonna come before and I hoped that they would and I just sort of planned it in case they did and if they didn't then planned a different idea you know

The tutor then commented in glowing terms:

it was really good excellent superb in fact one of the best role plays I've seen people do <A: really?> on a four week course yeah excellent

Jeff commented that the only criticism he had was that Angela had not left much time for error correction, particularly of pronunciation, at the end of the class. Angela explained that she had found it 'really hard' to control the class and monitor for mistakes and had in fact only found the few that she did deal with.

At that point Penny initiated a discussion about the fact that one of the students had felt intimidated at having to speak, turning to Penny and saying 'ooh this is a nightmare'.

A the thing is Carmen hasn't got much confidence and=

P =I know but you can't ac..I know but it that's Carmen / but to me she's just Carmen \

- A yeah I know / but I think she was happy that she spoke in the end \
- P oh yes she was ok
- A I mean she needs forcing to be spoken really in a way not forcing <P: no> but you know encouraging
- [...]
- P she needs that confidence and to be forced doesn't really give you the confidence
- A well she was she was quite happy about it at the end
- [...]
- A I know what you're saying I understand that and I saw her do that but I made a judgement about it because ^ I knew that given one of the other things that she wouldn't speak and I knew that part of having a debate is having opinions and ha..opinions come from personal opinions so you know there's more chance of her speaking if she's got a strong opinion about something

The trainer supported Angela, saying that the student had the language resources and that Angela had made a decision. The tutor did however follow this discussion up with a comment that Angela needed to react more naturally to students:

I think one thing yeah Angela you can sometimes react a bit blankly to what students say you react to what they say more as examples of English rather than ideas that they've given you so try to react more naturally and with more genuine interest and I think to them as people [...] erm so the only thing I'd say then is well done excellent lesson erm two things empathise more with students as individuals and erm pronunciation

Angela then told the tutor that she had other comments to make on her class. She felt that she had prompted students too much, commenting that 'I thought I could've maybe left it to a silence and try and got them to speak about it but I don't know whether that would have worked or not I was scared of their silences a bit'. She also felt that the role play would have worked better if there had been more conflict involved.

Later in the session Angela joked about Theo pre-teaching some words that the group thought were unnecessary:

it's an addiction with pre-teaching we all have it now we like to pre-teach everything that we say [all laugh] were going to be going home and going 'do you know what this is?' to our partners [all laugh] concept checking the ^ tomato sauce

The final TP session of the course, observed by the external examiner, saw Angela in the feedback role for David and Helen, although she also gave feedback on Jeff. Angela had actually swapped with Theo in order to avoid giving feedback to Penny with whom her relationship had deteriorated.

Her feedback on David's lesson was relatively concise and quite critical. She pointed out that he'd had difficulty eliciting responses from students because he had

used questions which could be answered in several ways and that he had confused the target language he was teaching by introducing another structure into the session. Angela was positive about Helen's lesson, saying that the students 'really enjoyed it' and that it 'was really useful it wasn't just a game [...] it was quite educational as well'.

Angela also praised the fact that students enjoyed Jeff's lesson, saying that it 'brought out some of the quieter students'.

## 11.6 Assignments

The assignments which will be included in this section are (in the order in which they were handed out on the course): 'Learner Profile 1', 'Coursebook Evaluation' and 'Reflection'.

All of Angela's assignments were handwritten.

### 11.6.1 Learner Profile 1

In the final section of the assignment which dealt with the impact that the study of a student would have on her own teaching, Angela referred to the need for 'interesting' and humorous lessons which are 'clear' and 'simple'. She also referred to the usefulness of pair and groupwork and the use of student correction for dealing with errors:

From this interview it can be concluded that teaching English in this specific case has been successful. These findings highlight the importance of making a lesson interesting and occasionally funny. It is also essential to correct any errors the students make and it is acceptable to use other students to help with error corrections without emb [sic.] anyone. The benefits of working in pairs or groups have been highlighted in this interview and I will endeavour to use this system whenever appropriate.

My teaching approach in the classroom will be influenced by these findings and I will concentrate on giving clear, simple and interesting lessons which will involve group activities and error corrections from other students.

It is important, however, to remember that this is only the experience of one student and will not reflect the experiences and opinions of all the students.

Her caveat at the end is interesting as she recognises the limitations of the assignment experience. The tutor's feedback on the assignment was that it was 'clear and comprehensive with relevant conclusions'.

## 11.6.2 Coursebook Evaluation

For the first two sections of the assignment, Angela was relatively positive about the coursebook, describing its 'good balance' of skills and lessons which 'facilitate real communication'. However her final section on 'adaptations' began by saying that she felt that although many of the points she mentioned were positive, she felt the need to adapt the book. Angela then described some of her adaptations, rewriting and adding questions, shortening texts, reducing the number of vocabulary items introduced and adapting the grammar focus to allow the target structure to be elicited rather than simply presented. She concluded that her adaptations made due to the level of the students and in order to involve students in elicitation were successful and would have helped learners to understand more and to build their confidence:

I used materials of my own and took examples from other coursebooks to satisfy the needs of the learners. [...] My adaptations were successful, I believe, especially with regard to eliciting vocabulary and grammar rather than just presenting it. This enabled the learners to understand the concepts behind the language. Adapting the material to the level of the class enabled the learners to understand more of the lesson and so learn more whilst building their confidence, which is essential for them to speak English successfully.

The tutor's summary of the work is that it is 'clear, detailed and comprehensive'.

## 11.6.3 Reflection

Following the recommended division of this assignment, Angela used a number of subheadings:

### 11.6.3.1 Class management

Angela described several different arrangements of students and the use of for example music to create a relaxing, 'comfortable environment'. She described one teacher's use

of students to teach other students as ‘an effective method of teaching whilst reducing unnecessary teacher talk’.

Angela described how she had learnt from her observation of the other trainees the importance of careful pairing or grouping of students due to the varying levels within a class. She also noted:

I also observed the effectiveness of planning a lesson and using prepared drawings and material in helping the lesson run smoothly. I observed how important it was to speak clearly and to the whole class rather than to the board or to just a few students. It also became clear that all students must be given the chance to speak and included in the lesson.

### **11.6.3.2 Correction**

In this section Angela described the different ways in which she had observed correction being carried out by both the experienced teachers and the trainees. She concluded that all of the methods seemed to be effective and their choice depended ‘on the method of teaching preferred’.

### **11.6.3.3 Learner differences**

Angela commented on the contrast between the ‘more reserved’ Japanese students and the more ‘outgoing’ Europeans, crediting difficulties with pronunciation for this. She also noted that age did not seem to make much of a difference to class participation. Observing that the student level within a class was extremely variable, Angela concluded that ‘it was more effective, therefore, to use the knowledge from the ‘better’ students to help the ‘weaker’ students’. Angela also commented that she did not see much reliance on the teacher, with the exception of students with very limited English.

### **11.6.3.4 The use of coursebook and published materials**

Angela commented on the way that so few teachers used a coursebook or published materials and when they did, that they tended to have designed their own questions or exercises to accompany them.

Angela noted that the trainees often used the coursebook or whatever materials they could find. Whilst she felt that adaptation was effective, she commented on the ease with which aims could be forgotten in the rush to adapt or abandon the book:

I did, however, witness how effective it can be to adapt the tasks in the coursebook to suit the students. I also observed how easy it can be to confuse or forget the aims of a lesson when trying to adapt tasks in the course book or deciding against using the course book at all.

### **11.6.3.5 Reflections on own teaching**

Angela's reflections on her own teaching were thorough and clear. She felt that despite having no teaching experience she had learnt 'in this short time [...] how to be an effective teacher'. She stated that she had learnt 'how important it is to be clear, enthusiastic and lively whilst being well organised and well planned'. She continued by summing up her strengths:

My strengths include a clear voice and delivery, appropriate grading of language and well-structured lessons. I have learned to adapt the material available to suit the students and have successfully experimented with various methods of teaching.

The paragraph which followed, on her weaknesses, was lengthy but came together with explanations of how she expected to improve on these areas:

My weaknesses include concept checking; drilling, which I have yet to feel comfortable with; grammar, which I don't know comprehensively; and phonology which I am only vaguely familiar with. The latter two weaknesses will be resolved by private study which I will continue with after the course. Drilling will be improved with practice and concept checking will be helped by better planning and experience.

I have made progress in all areas but especially the exemplification of tasks which was a problem at the start of my teaching. Other improvements include my board work and error corrections (especially pronunciation). My lessons flow more freely than they initially did and my rapport with the students has improved. I have gained confidence which shows in my teaching and as a result I am becoming more demonstrative.

The teacher trainer who graded her paper praised her 'well-organised', 'easy to read' paper, suggesting that she was 'rather over-critical' and that she had made 'ample progress' over the duration of the course.

## 11.7 Progress Records

### 11.7.1 End of Week 1

In the section under the heading ‘Overall progress’ Angela wrote ‘confidence, aims, whole class management’. She thought that she needed to work on ‘classroom organisation, establishing rapport, grammar’. The teacher trainer put a question mark next to this.

The tutor’s summary was positive and indicated that he thought her classroom organisation and rapport were up to standard:

A good first week. You have good class rapport. Your teaching has been clearly staged and involving. You are effective in teaching meaning. You are very sensitive to student needs and adept at adapting material. You make a strong contribution to your colleagues in feedback. Clear progress on whole class management. Always ensure you exemplify.

### 11.7.2 End of Week 2

Under the heading ‘Overall progress’ Angela wrote:

I was more confident + more relaxed – therefore more enthusiastic.  
My classes were more organised

For the following week Angela thought that she needed to work on ‘integrating phonology’ and ‘error correction using students / other methods’. The tutor’s end of Week 2 summary praised Angela’s language awareness and her clarity and the fact that she was putting into practice what they were learning in the input sessions:

A very good week for you Angela. You are progressing on all fronts and produced a good first long lesson, integrating various aspects of the input sessions. You establish clarity well and language awareness is fine. Remember to separate out stages clearly and highlight function / concept clearly.

### 11.7.3 End of Week 3

In the first part of the progress record which dealt with planning, under the headings of effective areas and areas which need attention, Angela had written, respectively:



*Effective areas:* I have planned my teaching practices quite thoroughly & I think I have achieved my aims.

*Areas which need attention:* I need to look at other methods of teaching plans eg Task Based Learning.

My timing could be planned a bit better.

Angela's write-up under the heading of 'classroom skill and awareness' showed a concern with making lessons interesting, amongst other things:

*Effective areas:*

- My lessons are a lot livelier & more interesting.
- I usually concept check my vocabulary & structures & show stresses
- I think my practice activities are quite interesting & successful.
- I present grammar quite clearly on the board

*Areas which need attention:*

- Drilling
- Error correction
- Correcting pronunciation

The inclusion of 'drilling' in the section above had 'yes' written next to it by the tutor. In her final section dealing with professional development Angela wrote:

*Effective areas:* I accept the feedback I get off other people & try hard to work on the areas that are not up to standard. I integrate well with my fellow students & I think I can give an accurate self-assessment of my teaching practice.

*Areas which need attention:* I think I can be a bit over-enthusiastic with my feedback & a bit of a perfectionist.

The tutor's summary praised Angela's planning, adaptation of materials and use of the board and visuals and she was told that to get a grade 'B' she needed to remain consistent:

Good progress this week. Planning has been clear. You have been effective in eliciting talk from the class. You have been successful in adapting materials, making very effective use of the board and visuals to clarify / practice language. Good progress on concept checking. To secure a 'B' pass just continue to show the same strengths consistently. You could work on drilling more forthrightly.

## 11.8 Mid-course Interview

This informal interview was carried out on Wednesday of Week 3.

Angela said that she was enjoying the teaching on the course 'a lot more' because she was 'more comfortable with the students' and hence the lessons were 'more interesting' and 'rapport' was better. She said that she was making more mistakes now

as a result of attempting to do things ‘more naturally’ in the classroom rather than continually consulting her lesson plan:

I’m probably making more mistakes than I did at the beginning just like stupid mistakes like forgetting to drill and I remember it all in my lesson plan erm because I write down everything in my lesson plan and I remember to put it all in but then when I’m doing it because I’m trying not just read my lesson plan out to them trying to do more naturally and I’ll forget bits and pieces or you know just forget to do things and then when I remember it is too late to put it in so yeah silly little mistakes really

She said that she did not find the TP feedback sessions a problem because she was aware of her mistakes and so wasn’t surprised when something is mentioned, ‘I don’t get hurt or anything because I mean I know what mistakes I made’.

In the interview I asked Angela if she were free to change her TP points and hence lesson plan whether she would. She explained that although she looked forward to the final week when trainees were creating the lesson, from aims to materials, that it seemed a real challenge when there was so much else to think about:

well I have looked at a few [TP points] and thought I wish I could do something more interesting especially if it’s a reading or something but then again [...] it’s another thing to think about [...] I mean it’s very hard when your halfway when students are halfway through learning something to think what can I teach them like grammar-wise or anything like that because you don’t know what’s been done already erm if you started at the beginning it’s not as it wouldn’t be as bad and I’d like to do my own stuff [...] my Friday’s lesson there isn’t really much in the book so I’m trying to find something different and it’s hard without guidelines it’s hard to know where to start

## 11.9 Interview 2

### 11.9.1 Beliefs about teachers and teaching

In a change from the first interview in her choice of effective learning experience, Angela related her experience of learning ‘whole body massage’. She felt that this was a successful learning experience and explained that the teacher was ‘really good’ and had ‘loads of positive energy’. She felt that this energy motivated the students who were ‘really keen’. Angela also felt that a good teacher should be ‘lively’ and ‘enthusiastic’ as this helped to build a good rapport between teacher and students and made the lessons more interesting:

enthusiastic definitely [...] somebody who's quite lively I think it's I think it is really important just watching watching us all teach and it seems a lot more interesting the lesson when somebody's lively and erm and really enthusiastic about the lesson and the lesson's interesting it does make a difference

As can be seen from the extract, Angela also drew on her experiences on the course, experiences of observing both the qualified teachers and the other trainees. She seemed to be making a link between the liveliness of the teacher and an interesting lesson: 'I would probably try and find try and find something as lively as I could [laughs] I'm really into doing some things that are interesting for them'. Referring to one of the qualified teachers, Mark, however, she suggested that it was possible to be too lively:

I think Mark's a good teacher erm because he has got a lot of life in him although [...] I wouldn't want to be like him I'd tone it down a bit I think he can be a bit too much a bit intimidating for the students erm I think out of the students I think probably Theo's [laughs] got the best rapport coz he's usually quite lively

Angela thought that good teachers could make classes interesting by giving students 'interesting things to do' including 'games to play'. She also saw providing students with 'a lesson that's challenging' as key to increasing interest:

it seems a lot more interesting the lesson when somebody's lively and erm and really enthusiastic about the lesson and the lesson's interesting it does make a difference I think it's good to provide a lesson that's challenging as well rather than just you know repeating words all the time give them give the students erm interesting things to do and you know games to play or whatever or tasks to do

In addition to the positive learning experience with massage, Angela also referred to her experience of learning mathematics at school. She said that this had initially been ineffective as she failed her 'A' level but then that this had been turned around by a good teacher who helped her to pass. From all of these experiences Angela took the need for a teacher to be 'organised' and 'clear'. She explained that her first Maths teacher 'didn't explain things very clearly' and was not organised, 'we were all over the place'. Her second teacher however was 'brilliant' because 'he was so organised and everything [...] was so clear'. She re-emphasised her point 'I mean Maths it's gotta be clear it's got to be explained clearly'. Angela linked the well organised clear teaching to the massage teacher too, saying that she 'was so brilliant' and that the course was 'organised really well'.

Angela saw confidence as an important quality in a good teacher. saying that good teachers are ‘confident with what they’re teaching’. Angela seemed to view this confidence as extending to a good teacher not being afraid to try new things. She talked in the interview about how she would enjoy experimenting with different approaches and techniques such as mimes and the silent approach:

I’d like to do maybe one time do a lesson were I hardly speak at all or not at all I was gonna try and do that on Friday but I thought that was a bit a bit too much [both laugh] go in there and just mime everything [RR: *would you like to do that then?*] yeah I reckon it’d be a challenge I reckon it’d be er I dunno whether it’d work that’s I would have to do it with a class that I was comfortable with and when I’m not being assessed

Along with confidence Angela also saw voice and presence as important qualities of a good teacher. She likened teaching to acting in this:

it is a bit like acting you know you’ve gotta have a presence about you erm I think it’s good to have quite a good voice I think voice is quite important

Angela was clear that she thought that the teacher shouldn’t dominate the class. She felt that a good teacher is patient and ‘lets the students erm like speak encourages them to speak rather than speaking themselves too much’. This ties in with the extract above where Angela talked about using the silent approach in her lesson. She also discussed the need to treat students as equals in the classroom:

it’s not really about being like your the teacher and they’re the student as in like you know being a dictator or anything definitely see it more as a bit more of an equal balance you know you’re just teaching somebody else something that you know and you’re still on the same level as them which is good

## 11.9.2 Beliefs about language and language learning

When asked in the second interview about her experiences of learning foreign languages, specifically French and German at school, Angela talked about not having native speaker teachers ‘we didn’t have a teacher that was French or a teacher that was German they were both English’. She continued to say that unlike at the language school where she was doing the CELTA course, when she was at school the lessons were not conducted entirely in the target language ‘they never used to teach all the lesson in in French in the language like we do here’.

Angela also pointed out the difference between her school language lessons where students did not do much speaking in the lesson, rather they worked from a text book:

I don't remember having to speak that much in the language and I mean we just used to do exercises out the book and things like that I know I didn't learn very much

### 11.9.3 Beliefs about learning to teach

When talking about the usefulness of the various elements of the course, Angela felt that the assignments would be 'the bottom one' although she stated that she thought she had learnt 'quite a bit' from them due to the reading that they had to do. She said that this helped to 'fill in those gaps [...] especially about grammar'.

Angela felt that the most useful element was the teaching practice and the feedback that they received afterwards because 'I've gone from never being able to teach before to being able to teach hopefully quite competently'. She felt that she had improved with each lesson. She then talked about how the TP 'interlinked' with the input sessions, saying that:

if we weren't taught those lessons then I wouldn't be able to get better erm because I'm learning things in the lessons like new techniques and that and then using them in the lessons

Angela then talked about the usefulness of the feedback she received. She said that it was 'good' to have other people's feedback to 'reinforce' her own. She felt that she was good at giving her own feedback as she knew 'exactly what [...] was wrong with the lesson when [she] did it'. When giving feedback on her lessons she felt that it was more important to 'concentrate on negative points' because they were the things that needed working on in the future: 'you don't need to do anything with the good points so much it's like you have to improve the bad points'.

When talking about the observations which were a major part of the course, Angela felt that observing the other trainees was very useful as it allowed her to see herself and learn what she should do more or less of in her own lessons:

I think every time one of the other trainees gets up and I do learn something either it's something they've done and I think yeah that's a really good idea or something they haven't done and I've thought erm I've gotta make sure you know I don't do that either [...] it's really interesting to watch them coz I mean when we're doing it ourselves we don't really see exactly what we're doing and we see them and we think no you're talking too much or you know you're doing this or that's a really good idea

Referring to the observation of the experienced teachers, Angela said she thought 'it was mad' to see how different they all were. She felt that despite this that they were all good teachers. She said that she learnt useful techniques from watching them:

the experienced teachers is just it was mad to see all how different I mean I saw three teachers and they were all so different in their teaching but they were all good teachers erm and it was amazing to see the difference

#### 11.9.4 Angela's self-reported changes in beliefs

When she was asked about possible changes in her ideas or beliefs about teaching since starting the course, Angela felt that she had changed because prior to taking the course she 'didn't have a clue about what erm what teaching entailed'. She said that the only model she had were the teachers who taught her. She felt that these teachers were enthusiastic. She recalled the application for the course when she was asked what made a good teacher and she wrote 'patient and understanding'. She said that now she realised 'there's more to it'. She went on to talk about teacher presence and voice and the need to be clear and not be afraid of experimentation. She also talked about the need to avoid dominating the class:

all I knew was the teachers that have taught me when I'm grown up when I was growing up and erm I mean I kn..I remember you know the teachers that were good were the teachers that were enthusiastic and so that's about all erm so I mean I didn't have a clue [...] I remember being asked at the interview what makes a good teacher [...] I remember putting things like patient and understanding erm and I probably put interesting but I know there's more to it now [...] it is a bit like acting you know you've gotta have a presence about you erm I think it's good to have quite a good voice I think voice is quite important erm and to be clear er and not be afraid to do things like you know mimes [inaudible] things like that but it's also not it's not really about being like your the teacher and they're the student as in like you know being a dictator or anything definitely see it more as a bit more of an equal balance you know you're just teaching somebody else something that you know and you're still on the same level

When I asked her about her ideas of things to do in the classroom she said that she had definitely changed in this area, saying that she would not have had any ideas about how to teach if she hadn't done the course:

if I hadn't been on this course I probably would've gone in and gone you know 'this is a book' and 'this is a table' erm I wouldn't have had a clue at how to teach the thing and I've learnt so much about the activities and I can see how important they are to vary the activity and to erm to do things that are interesting

## 11.10 Post-Course Questionnaire

The questionnaire was returned in June 2001. Since completing the course Angela had been teaching on a ‘casual’ basis for the school in which she did the CELTA course. This involved teaching mainly adults but also teenagers. Accompanying the questionnaire was a note which apologised for the delay in sending it back and explained that because she had to think about it, ‘it always got put to the end of the jobs to do’.

### 11.10.1 Experience of teaching

Angela indicated that she had not received any further training since completing the course but she did have access to a professional publication – *The EL Gazette*.

The section which asked her to talk about whether her students were any different from those on the CELTA was completed in some detail:

Some were very different

1. taught refugees (some with problems with literacy with their own languages)
2. taught one-to-one students with specific needs
3. taught teenagers who had a low level of concentration
4. taught hotel staff who were tired, unmotivated and often had to go back to work half-way through class.

The next question asked if the lessons she taught had been different in any way to those on the CELTA; and if any of the differences mentioned had led her to change her teaching approach. She provided more details about the kinds of teaching that she did with the students listed above:

1. Refugees – used more visual aid & lots of revision lessons
2. One-to-one – taught specific vocab & areas of grammar they had problems with (also lots of pronunciation)
3. Teenagers – more games & projects eg compiling a magazine
4. Hotel staff – vocab & phrases used in hotels

1. One-to-one – used lots of speaking tasks & recording the students
2. Teenagers – took them around [name of town] (to complete a quiz)

In the final question in this section where she was asked about other influences on her teaching besides the CELTA course, Angela indicated that the ‘other teachers and their ideas’ were ‘very useful’ for her.

## 11.10.2 Reflections on the CELTA course

The first question in this section asked Angela about what she thought the most useful and the least useful aspects of the CELTA course were:

Useful aspects:

- planning lessons effectively to ensure variety
- learnt various teaching methods
- saw how other people teach and got ideas from this
- gained practise in actual teaching

Less useful aspects:

- the assignments
- some of the teaching methods are not commonly used in regular teaching (eg the cuisanere [sic] rods) & so maybe more important things could be shown instead

Although she listed planning as a useful element of the course, above, Angela also mentioned this point in question eight which asked how far the CELTA was adequate preparation for her subsequent teaching. She also emphasised the need for a better knowledge of grammar:

They were not adequate – preparing for a  $\frac{3}{4}$  hour lesson is a lot different to  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour lesson.

I also needed to learn the grammar – it is very difficult to teach some areas & it would have been helpful to know the best way to teach these (eg perfect tenses).

The next question which asked Angela what advise she would give to someone about to start the course reflected her concern with grammar mentioned previously:

- read a grammar book before you begin the course
- use your imagination
- ask lots of questions
- learn from other students

Angela's suggestions for improving the CELTA course were clear and specific, and dealt with reducing the importance of assignments and the provision of more models of teaching and of planning:

- Less assignments [sic.] – or done at the beginning or end of course.
- CELTA teachers should teach more free classes as examples.
- Sample lesson plans given to students after they have taught lesson (to show how the teachers will do it).



## 11.11 Summary

This chapter focused on Angela and surveyed data which was available from a number of sources. One of Angela's beliefs related to the need for a teacher to be clear and to use examples when teaching in order to make teaching understandable for students. Angela talked about the need for a teacher to be organised and to plan carefully to achieve the aims of the lesson. She also mentioned the need to adapt one's teaching to suit the level and interests of the learners in several places. Angela also referred to adapting materials and the coursebook, again to the level of the students. This also allowed the teacher to involve the students more in elicitation phases, hence increasing student involvement in the lesson, in addition to helping student understanding and working to build their confidence.

Angela was also clear in her belief in the need for teachers to be positive, energetic, enthusiastic, and lively. She said that this helped to establish a good rapport between teacher and students, and hence increased student interest in the lessons. Student interest was improved by giving students interesting tasks and games to play, and also by providing a challenge for them. Angela thought that it was important for the teacher to be confident, both with the subject and with the idea of experimenting with different methods of teaching. She felt that a confident teacher would make lessons more fun and would lead to the development of a comfortable and relaxed environment and hence to better rapport and student interest.

Finally Angela spoke of the need to avoid the teacher dominating the classroom. She felt that students should be allowed and encouraged to speak, and student-to-student help could be useful in order to achieve this. She was clear that teachers should be patient with students and that teachers should treat them with respect and as equals.

A summary of the findings for Angela is presented in tabular form below:

	<b>Main points</b>
Individual elements	<p><i>Early in the course:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of beliefs which seem to come from schooling eg the need for teaching to be ‘straightforward’ and clear and for teachers to be positive and enthusiastic</li> <li>• Beliefs from later education eg the teacher serving primarily as a resource and students being active in learning and speaking</li> <li>• Beliefs concerning the need to avoid the teacher dominating the lesson and the desirability of learners being active; with lessons which are ‘lively’ and ‘fun’</li> <li>• Awareness of need to adapt materials to the students’ level and in order to increase participation</li> <li>• Successful language learning seen as involving immersion</li> <li>• Felt that feedback sessions were positive and supportive</li> </ul>
	<p><i>Late in the course:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Similarities in many beliefs from early course eg need for lessons which are interesting, humorous and clear</li> <li>• Continued rejection of teacher-dominated lessons, need to treat learners with respect and as equals</li> <li>• Self-reported changes in beliefs – increased awareness that there is more to being a good teacher than being patient and understanding; the need for the teacher to avoid dominating the classroom</li> <li>• Connected liveliness to rapport and to interesting lessons</li> <li>• More explicit focus on the need for planning and organisation</li> <li>• Awareness of need to challenge students in addition to setting achievable tasks</li> <li>• Successful language learning can be achieved using only the target language in the classroom</li> <li>• Habits which influence teaching eg writing in capitals</li> <li>• Expressed desire to experiment with alternative teaching approaches and activities eg task-based learning, the silent way</li> </ul>
	<p><i>Post-course teaching:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching for the school in which she did the CELTA</li> <li>• Post-course teaching involved very varied learners and situations</li> <li>• Thought the useful aspects of the CELTA were planning to ensure variety, learning various teaching methods, observation of teaching and her own teaching practice; thought some of the techniques such as cuisenaire rods were less useful, and also assignments</li> <li>• Commented on differences in planning for different classes</li> <li>• Learning to adapt – help from other teachers in school</li> <li>• She would have liked more teaching and sample lesson plans from other teachers</li> </ul>
Social elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noticed the ‘interlinking’ between input and teaching practice</li> <li>• Observation of experienced teachers – all very different but all good teachers</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very active in providing feedback to other trainees – beyond course requirements</li> <li>• Observation of other trainees allowed her to see herself</li> <li>• Supportive and helpful to other trainees informally eg teaching Theo to write more clearly</li> <li>• Understanding of why trainees made errors eg Helen and explanations being too difficult, Jeff not setting a pre-reading task</li> <li>• Learning from peers in feedback although not afraid to reject feedback if she thought it inappropriate eg Penny and role play</li> <li>• Friendly competition between Angela and Theo</li> <li>• Fear of silences in the classroom</li> <li>• Deliberate strategy of focusing on weaknesses</li> <li>• Awareness of learners eg knowledge of learners' levels; indications that she watched and thought about learners' reactions whilst observing trainees</li> <li>• Awareness of process of the course eg if you don't find any errors make them up</li> <li>• Deliberate attempt to develop interactive decision-making and to make lessons 'flow'; awareness that this caused more mistakes in the short term</li> <li>• Independent from the start in terms of lesson planning and preparation; seeming to understand link between activity and aims; rejection of book exercises in favour of self-produced</li> <li>• Desire to put into practice the input as soon as possible eg concept questions in the first teaching practice</li> </ul>
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**Table 11.1: Summary of the major findings – Angela**

# Chapter 12: Jeff

## 12.1 Introduction

Jeff, in his late fifties, had been running his own business arranging accommodation for foreign students and taking them on tours to places of interest in the area. He had had, over the years, a considerable amount of contact with the language school where the CELTA was held. He knew Theo, Robert and all the staff at the school prior to starting the course. His daughter, who had taken the CELTA the previous year, had recommended it as being worthwhile and interesting. Jeff had plans to set up a business offering tailored one-to-one teaching of business English, using his contacts in Europe to bring people over to the UK and organising the whole programme for them, both academic and social. He had not taught before but said he came from a teaching family.

Jeff appeared very confident and cheerful, always ready to joke and chat with anyone, tutors, trainees, students and staff.

Jeff failed the CELTA course.

## 12.2 Course Questionnaire

The questionnaire was returned on Thursday morning of Week 1.

In the first part of the questionnaire Jeff listed his work experience as running an ‘accommodation bureau and mini-bus travel company’. He listed the languages he knew as: French to advanced level, learnt at school; German to intermediate level, also learnt at school; and Italian to Pre-Intermediate level, learnt through night-school and self-study.

Jeff described his main reason for taking the CELTA course as ‘to achieve some qualification in the language field and to sell 1 to 1 tuition courses’. He said that the thing he was most looking forward to on the course was ‘the certificate’, which I interpreted to mean he had a fairly instrumental motivation for taking the course. He said that he worried about the intensity of the course and that he was ‘apprehensive about covering everything’. In the question which asked Jeff how he had found the course up to that point he wrote ‘extremely stimulating & aided by the best teacher I have ever had’.

The sentence completion section of the questionnaire was completed in considerable detail, and seemed to indicate a real concern for learners:

*The best way to learn a language is ...* to live in the country & be totally immersed in the language by yourself.

*A good teacher should always...* listen – involve their students as much as possible in conversation & stimulate thought

*A good teacher should never...* criticise students in front of their peers or seek to humiliate them in any way.

*When teaching English, it is important to...* ensure that you give instructions clearly & do your best to assist the weaker elements of the group

*The key to a good language lesson is...* gain attention.  
Have a structured lesson  
Focus on the points you wish to emphasise

In a question which was intended to tap trainees' beliefs about learners, the questionnaire offered six terms and asked trainees to choose which they agreed with most. The terms offered were: resisters, explorers, raw materials, partners, receptacles, clients. Trainees were invited to offer alternatives if desired. Jeff chose one of the terms – 'partners'. He then justified his choice, 'without their cooperation you cannot advance'.

The final two questions which asked Jeff to list five factors which make an effective teacher (a); and, up to three factors which make an effective language learner (b) were answered as follows:

(a)  
Confidence.  
Rapport.  
Well organised.  
Humorous  
Interested.

(b)  
willing to work hard  
willing to absorb facts  
willing to try to converse  
willing to be a [illegible]  
willing to explore new ideas and facts  
an open mind

Jeff was the only trainee who wrote anything in the final section of the form which asked trainees if they had any other comments about the course or any of the topics mentioned in the questionnaire. He wrote:

Having not known another I cannot really comment but I have total confidence in the teacher – Jim.

## 12.3 Interview 1

The first interview with Jeff was not carried out until Wednesday of the second week due to difficulties with scheduling.

In the first interview Jeff talked more about his background and his motivation for undertaking the course. He explained that he ran two companies, both of which were involved in business with the language school running the CELTA course. His first company was involved in collecting students from airports and also taking them on excursions at the weekend and his second business was concerned with arranging host-family accommodation for foreign students visiting the UK. He explained that he intended to ‘promote one-to-one teaching’ for foreign business executives. His other main motivation for undertaking the course he explained was for ‘personal satisfaction’. He talked about his intention when he was younger to be a teacher and how this had not left him even though he had gone into the business of selling. He said that his family were teachers, his wife and one daughter were primary teachers, and his other daughter had gone into TEFL after successfully completing the CELTA course. Later in the interview he told me that he felt that teaching EFL was ‘a really nice way of giving something back’.

As the first interview was considerably later than those of other trainees, Jeff also talked about his experiences on the course to date. The focus of his comments related to the intensity of the course:

it's a bit mind boggling as they say you know you get so much thrown at you erm I've not got enough hours in the day but er I'm going to stick at it but I'm I'm enjoying it yes I am I am enjoying it no doubt about that [...] I've learnt a tremendous amount I mean it's ten days of whew mind-blowing information thrown at you all the time erm you can't take it all in but you've just got to try to probably if you had about three months you could do it er effectively but I mean you know I think I'm just like fire fighting [...] I'm just coping with the day [laughs] getting ready for the next teaching practice

### 12.3.1 Beliefs about teachers and teaching

Jeff talked about teaching in quite general terms. He talked about his admiration for Jim, one of the trainers on the course and the aspects of his teaching that he admired. He highlighted the need to ‘stimulate interest’ and the ‘mixing’ and organisation of his lessons:

*How erm how would you describe effective teaching? How would you characterise it? Effective teaching? well I’m trying to model myself on Jim I mean he’s he’s very cool calm and collected but he throws questions at you to stimulate er to stimulate interest and with the warmers and that sort of thing it’s very well put together he he mixes it up and er I just think he makes it er you know come alive and you know showing you how to demonstrate how to help them*

When talking about his own teaching, he described one of his lessons which he felt went ‘badly’ because he ‘didn’t prepare it properly’.

Jeff also seemed to value highly the use of visual elements in teaching, indicating that he felt that presentations with a strong visual approach had an immediacy and were more memorable for students:

*from the word go I think er visuals are the to me erm pictures are are great coz they’re there you can see what it’s all about you can describe them and they stick in peoples’ minds you know I was thinking yesterday with er David what he did was good work but he didn’t he didn’t er it wouldn’t retain in peoples’ minds at all nothing to hang onto coz I think presentation is very important erm I don’t know if you noticed in my ones I’ve always tried to stick up er the the nub of what we’re doing that day [RR: yeah] you know yeah that’s right ‘has got hasn’t got’ you know that’s that’s it start around that*

The extract above suggests that Jeff also felt it was important to tell students what they were studying and that his sense of a visual presentation included writing up the target language for the students to see.

Jeff felt that listening was something that they should have done more of and he also raised and connected this with the pre-teaching of lexis for the tasks:

*I think we perhaps should have more of the tapes because I think especially for language tapes are very important listening to the language and understanding erm I think the pre-teaching is is well it’s got to be a great idea you pre-teach new words probably not too many*

Jeff was very concerned with the need to help students in the group and clearly felt a great sense of satisfaction when he could help them. He talked about the difficulty that the mixed language abilities of the group caused in class and was keen to explain

how he had decided to use the L1 of some of the students in the classroom in order to try and help. He related his sense of injustice at the trainer for agreeing that he could use French in the classroom and then criticising him for it (in written feedback):

it's very difficult with the the group that we've got to teach because their level is so very disparate [RR: *that's right*] you know you've got some who've got absolutely nothing and some with just very little and one or two who are very very good it's quite dif..it's a bit un-natural [...] I got criticised for doing putting something into French yesterday I felt a bit hurt about that because I did ask Robert if I could just er do one or two words and he agreed in in in well it doesn't matter I don't want to go back I was a bit hurt that er he didn't back me up criticised me for it but anyway I did it for that reason because the I mean he had absolutely nothing at all he couldn't contribute at all so I thought I could just help him a little bit and he did write some things down and I was very pleased with another guy Jakup one of the Kosovans I got him to write down you know 'it has got a church' and he wrote that down and that was the first time I've ever seen him put anything down so I was quite pleased about that

Jeff seemed to feel that the rapport between teacher and students was very important. He explained that he thought his rapport was good and that he was people-oriented: 'I think I relate quite well with er with the students I like people basically'.

### 12.3.2 Beliefs about language and language learning

Jeff did not talk a great deal about language although he did explain that he enjoyed learning languages and had been successful at a few, interestingly he included English in this:

*Have you learnt a language yourself?*

Yeah I speak French with some fluency and er I did three years German I like languages [RR: *do you?*] yeah I got 'A' level English erm I used to like writing essays I always used to get very good marks for essays imaginative writing things like that

He related his language learning experience which he felt was badly taught with the exception of his overseas exchange to France, during which he had to communicate with the people around him:

*Is is the kind of teaching here like like how you learnt a language? Is it similar?*

Oh god no no it was unbelievable I mean I did 'A' level French for example and I went down to France and I you know I got amongst it as it were and er I learnt more when I was 14 you know I'd been studying French for three years and I went and stayed in this family and they couldn't speak a word of English so I had to for two weeks it was extremely painful [...] and I learnt more in those two weeks than I had done in three years at school



The main reason Jeff seemed to blame for his poor education in languages was the focus on grammar rather than on the communicative elements of language, something he felt was ‘stupid’. He explained:

it was very formal and the accent was on grammar not on language and it's stupid this is 'A' level even I had a friend [...] his grammar was better than mine but he couldn't speak a word

He returned to this later in the interview when he talked about how, as he was leaving school, there was a change over to an audio-lingual system, something he thought was better than his ‘boring’ grammar lessons:

it was dreadful [...] they did just start the language laboratories in in the last year that I was there but they've since dropped that apparently and it was better than what we had I mean we just had books and we learnt grammar you know bum bum like that you know ‘the cat sat on the mat’ sort of stuff you know it was extremely boring erm very poor

When talking about language learning, Jeff indicated that he thought an important quality for a language learner was ‘to have an ear for language accents’, something he felt he had.

### 12.3.3 Beliefs about learning to teach

One of the major things that came out of the interview with Jeff was his admiration for Jim, one of the tutors on the course. In fact, he did not simply think Jim was ‘terrific’ and ‘a star’ but also sought to ‘model’ himself on him:

*How erm how would you describe effective teaching? How would you characterise it?*  
Effective teaching? well I'm trying to model myself on Jim I mean he's he's very cool calm and collected but he throws questions at you to stimulate er to stimulate interest and with the warmers and that sort of thing it's very well put together he he mixes it up and er I just think he makes it er you know come alive and you know showing you how to demonstrate how to help them [...] it's very clever the way he puts it over

Jeff also talked about the need to be prepared for class and explained that he saw one of his weaknesses as being his tendency not to read through his TP points carefully enough:

I've had what er four teaching practices now I think the last one was was ok er but I did badly on the second one coz I didn't to be truthful I didn't prepare it properly and I didn't read the question properly that's one of my weaknesses actually [RR: right] is not read the question properly

Jeff explained that he had received help from his wife who had assisted him by doing the ‘really nice writing’ on his worksheets because he felt that his own writing was ‘terrible’.

## 12.4 Guided Preparation

In GP 1,1 the tutor went through the TP points explaining and demonstrating things such as how to elicit some of the pre-teaching vocabulary; and how to organise gist reading with a time limit. Jeff checked which exercises he needed to photocopy and how many questions he should write. He also asked if he needed to get all students to repeat the words, the tutor explained that yes, drilling was needed. Jeff asked how they should deal with American English.

After arriving late for GP 1,2 Jeff only had one question, he asked if he should teach the students the twenty-four hour clock, something the tutor advised against. He told Jeff he should feel free to change the questions if he wanted and demonstrated how to organise some of the activities such as open pairs. At the end of the session, when the trainer had left the room, Jeff remarked that he felt as if he was nodding and saying yes but he felt like saying ‘go back a few pages’. Arriving late again (GP 1,3), Jeff said that it was ‘too early’ to check anything for the following day’s teaching. When asked about that day’s teaching Jeff said did not need any help.

In GP 1,4 Jeff told the tutor that he didn’t like the text which he felt was ‘unbelievable’ and ‘weak’ so he had done something ‘of his own’ in addition. The tutor went carefully through where Jeff’s additional ‘scenario’ would go and asked to look at Jeff’s ‘picture’. The tutor told him ‘I’m wondering (a) whether whether you’ve got time for it and (b) whether it’s on the lesson aims or off the lesson aims’. The tutor pointed out the language needed for his exercise was not practising the target language as it used the present continuous. He also suggested that he would need ten minutes to do it so would need to leave something else out. Jeff was concerned that he should explain that students shouldn’t use the verb ‘to smell’ in the present simple because of the ‘connotation’. The tutor responded that ‘I don’t think it’s got anything to do with the lesson’ and told him that the key was ‘staying on track having the aims clear in your mind and following the aims’.

In GP 1,5 Jeff went through his lesson for Monday. He asked about various points and the tutor explained how he would set up a listening task amongst other things. The tutor told him he could adapt the material if he felt it should be easier or shorter. He explained to Jeff the point of getting students to make predictions and how it didn't matter if the predictions turned out to be right or not. In GP 2.1 Jeff returned to the listening class saying that he had 'a lot of problems' for the class that day. He said that the listening was overlong and following his reading of Scrivner he planned to play the tape and *then* hand out some questions. The tutor suggested that it was probably the other way round as having questions second was simply a memory test. When Jeff said he was worried about having too much vocabulary, the tutor explained that the students didn't need to understand everything, something Jeff had 'totally misunderstood'. When the tutor asked Jeff if he had any questions for the following day's teaching he said that he 'hadn't looked at it'.

In GP 2,2 Jeff was concerned that he would not have 'enough meat to spin out the time'. He felt that he needed to 'pad it out' because it was 'a bit thin'. The tutor checked through the timings of the various elements. Jeff told the group about his class including his map of the local area which was for the presentation stage and how he had included items like a 'roman villa' and a 'cave'.

GP 2,3 saw the tutor running through the TP points for Jeff's lesson on Friday. More so than with the other trainees by this stage, the trainer was quite explicit when going through the points of the lesson and he demonstrated many of the exercises using the trainees. He told Jeff to collect picture prompts for the presentation stage. Jeff was concerned that he should pre-teach all of the vocabulary in the listening exercise, but the tutor told him to only choose a couple of key items. Jeff commented that the previous lesson had brought in more students than normal and this slowed things down. He said he did not like it when 'there's small numbers it got a different reaction'.

Jeff was not involved in the GP session 2,4. In GP 2,5 the tutor went through his class for Tuesday. Jeff listened and made notes on the tutor's suggestions.

Again, as Jeff was not teaching at the beginning of the week, he was not involved in the preparation in GP 3,1 or GP 3,2. In GP 3,3 he talked with the tutor about his lesson on Friday. The tutor ran through the TP points and suggested how he could do various stages, advising him for example to adapt a certain exercise and how he needed to prepare to deal with explaining correct and incorrect answers for another exercise. Jeff wrote notes and asked a few questions about procedures. In 3,4 they returned to the

lesson being discussed in 3,3. He told the trainer he was planning to change the activity and use the tape as a competition getting students to label as many sounds as possible. The trainer told him that he hadn't expected him to do this as the tape was to give students a sense of the place only. Jeff continued saying that the tutor had 'shot that idea down' and he would just do as the tutor said. Jeff then moved onto the next part of his lesson which was an exercise that he planned to tabulate, however the tutor told him that this exercise was not on his TP points. Jeff told the tutor that he had 35 words to deal with in the lesson and he asked about dictionaries, the tutor responded 'my norm is that I'm the dictionary'. The tutor advised Jeff that he needed to be prepared to deal with students' questions about vocabulary but should not try and teach them all as he 'can't deal with 35 words' and that he shouldn't 'go looking for problems'. Jeff told the tutor that he felt the 'extract' that students had to read was 'pretty boring', he felt that students needed to have 'a lot of imagination' to answer the questions. He felt that there was 'very little meat there for them to latch onto'. Jeff then suggested that he could 'bring in a souvenir just as a bit of fun' and students could try and 'identify where they think it came from'. The tutor advised him to keep it brief.

On Friday of Week 3 (GP 3,5), Jeff who was teaching that day told the tutor that he was 'doing something quite different' and showed the trainer his plan asking him if it was 'acceptable'. Jeff had decided on a plan in which they wrote stories as a lead-in and the students read out the stories, which Theo would judge. The tutor offered advice on areas such as guidance for students and how to deal with errors.

GP 4,1 saw Jeff talking about his TP on Tuesday. He told the tutor that he wasn't teaching from the book, he had changed his plan. The trainer queried how he intended to present the passive. Jeff had chosen an authentic passage which had been used in the input to trainees. The tutor said it 'sounds ok' and that he thought there was 'quite a load on [the teacher]' in his clarification of focus stage. Jeff said that he didn't see an alternative. The tutor asked for a free-ish activity towards the end of the session, suggesting a personalisation activity. Jeff also discussed this lesson in GP 4,2 which started with the trainer telling him 'don't worry I won't confuse you with any more ideas'. Jeff responded that he 'was up all night re-drafting his plans' and that he was 'not going according to the book'. He explained that he planned to introduce the passive and then do an 'authentic bit of writing'. He said that he had planned to teach all the passives but 'it was suggested that I restrict myself to present and past so I had to do all my work again'. The trainer questioned how he was going to use the text and Jeff

explained his predictive work followed by pre-teaching of vocabulary and then his sentences to transform. The tutor asked if he was clear on form and Jeff asked if he should put the structure on the board to start with. The tutor advised against this. Jeff asked if he should get students to read around the class, to which the tutor replied that this was more a pronunciation skill than a reading skill. Jeff explained that he had seen this in one of the experienced teachers' lessons and he had liked it and 'it was just a thought'.

Jeff also talked about his Thursday class which he said he didn't know what to do with. He said that he wanted to make it 'a fun lesson if possible'. He said he wanted to make it 'a bit different' as it was their last lesson. Theo and the tutor talked about a wedding role play, Helen suggested a quiz, and Angela a game of Blockbusters. The tutor suggested he get a list of vocabulary covered during the week. In GP 4,3, Jeff told the group that he kept changing his mind about the class on Thursday. He said that he wanted to play Hangman with vocabulary and two teams of students. The tutor advised him to check back over the vocabulary for the week and then he suggested a game of Charades rather than Hangman. In the final preparation of the course (GP 4,4) the group explained to Jeff how to play Charades. Jeff asked the group to brainstorm vocabulary for him to use. He told the group again that he was going to do Hangman. The trainer then told him to write down all the words the group suggested and choose between them. The tutor then listed suitable vocabulary items, helped by the trainees.

## 12.5 TP and TP Feedback

Jeff did not teach in the first TP session of the course and did not offer any contribution to the feedback session. In the TP on Wednesday of Week 1 he taught first and hence was the first trainee to receive feedback. Jeff's first comment was very negative:

- TT ok first Jeff feedback on yourself  
J I thought I was terrible  
TT well I can see at least one you've written at least one positive thing there tell us what you've written  
J well [laughs] the only thing I thought I did properly was demonstrate the time clearly but

Following this exchange the tutor appealed to the observers to offer some positive points about the lesson. Penny and Angela praised his clear voice and projection.

prompting Jeff to comment that he had thought his voice was clear. Penny said that she thought his use of ‘props’ was effective and Angela said she thought that ‘he gave praise regularly’ and was quite patient with some of the students who were having trouble with English. The tutor suggested that Jeff’s use of mime for eliciting vocabulary was effective and, following Jeff’s suggestion that he could have got the students to ‘repeat the words’:

- J I should have followed it up on the board made them repeat the words perhaps  
TT yes you could have DRILLED the words before you got to the board

Following Jeff’s statement that the students seemed to know the words the tutor initiated a discussion of the use of concept questions to check this.

- J they seemed to know to know it seemed most of them seemed to know the words  
TT how can how can you tell <J: yes> [TT laughs] that’s a very bold statement <J: yes yes> in fact how can we tell if students understand the words?  
J well 2 or 3 of them said the word  
TT mm how can we tell if students understand the words?  
A ask them a question  
TT yeah concept questions yeah it’s the only way the only way to find out is to find out which is by asking for example concept questions

The tutor said that Jeff had involved students in the reading exercise and in a pairwork. When the feedback turned to things to work on Jeff, using the correct terminology this time, offered ‘not enough drilling not enough interaction between the students’. Angela commented on the fact that Jeff had not done any monitoring during the pairwork:

- A I put [...] walk round and check when students are working in pairs <J: exactly> you sat down and you didn’t walk round  
TT yes you need to keep an eye open and see how they are getting on and you also make yourself available then if they need help

Penny pointed out that Jeff was ‘facing the board and talking and giving instructions’ at the same time, a point backed up by the trainer. Penny also said that Jeff was mixing capitals and lower case in his boardwriting, Jeff’s response was again very negative:

- J yeah the writing was terrible yes  
TT it wasn’t terrible it’s just more useful to use lower case

In the tutor's summary he said that Jeff had 'a very good start' and noted that he had a 'very nice rapport' and was 'encouraging' and 'patient', involving the class in activities. Apart from points to work on already made, the tutor suggested that Jeff needed to pre-set exercises for reading, something he described as a 'fundamental thing for skills work'. The tutor, however, was clear that this was something that they would cover in the input session later in the week.

Later in the session Jeff was called on to give feedback to Angela, he praised her for 'going round helping students in difficulties'.

In the TP feedback session 1,4, Jeff was asked to give feedback on David's lesson. He noted that it was an 'interesting presentation' with 'good involvement' and good visuals, and he suggested on the negative side that David waited too long before providing the answers:

I just thought one point er when they didn't understand what you had drawn er you delayed a little bit too long you understand there was a a little pregnant pause there perhaps it would have been better to have gone in a bit quicker that was all when it was obvious they couldn't understand what what the visual was were for

Jeff's feedback on his own teaching, his second class, was as negative as for his first with his initial comment being 'I thought I lost the plot'. He continued by explaining that although he was more relaxed and the rapport was better he did not achieve his aims:

the object of the exercise was to was to differentiate between the present and the simple and the erm continuous and I didn't do it properly erm ^ I I related alright with the students whether I got I was more relaxed this time and I got on well with the students and they seemed to react to me and so on much better erm the task I set them I thought they they did quite well erm but in my own mind I knew I didn't I I didn't set the well I I missed the plot I I didn't put it across to them exactly what I wanted to put across

Theo, who had been given the job of providing feedback to Jeff praised his rapport and confidence which he felt was better in this lesson 'he was doing a touchy feely thing which is good and they related more to him'. Theo suggested that he was weak in terms of setting up context and exemplifying the tasks, concluding that 'a lot of people were left without a clue about what you were going on with'. Theo also commented on the amount of ungraded language that was used and the fact that Jeff did not drill students. David praised his patience and help for weaker students. The tutor offered positive points such as that his teaching was 'much smoother more relaxed' with

‘better [...] rapport’ and he involved the students in the task. However, the tutor then dealt with some confusion in the differences between present simple and continuous. His suggestions for the main things to work on related to Jeff’s treatment of pairs and whole class work:

try and treat class as a whole class what you tend to do is treat the class as 8 individual students or 4 individual pairs [...] you were talking to one pair over there these are all ignored and you do a little lesson with those two students and then you move on and do those two students and those two and those two and you are treating them as four separate pairs so you need to keep when it’s whole class work you need to keep the whole class involved

Jeff’s response to this was to suggest that he was unhappy with the way the lesson he was given was structured, the teacher trainer brushed this aside:

- J        yes it’s not an excuse but you know when I said to you I didn’t like the format  
          that it was working on I I didn’t have sort of faith in it  
TT       well you followed it  
J        I followed it yes but I I I  
TT       it seemed to work so they you are  
J        it just seemed a bit weak

The tutor then advised Jeff to keep to his TP points rather than going off at a tangent. It should be noted that although Jeff had a clear grammar focus, he caused much amusement, and confusion, when he brought out an unusual musical instrument. He told the students about the instrument before commenting ‘it’s nothing to do with the lesson’ and continuing with the exercise [observation notes]. The tutor told him to ‘follow the TP points to the letter’. He then praised Jeff for being ‘very encouraging’ and for involving students in the tasks.

Jeff did not teach in the final TP of the week and did not contribute any feedback to the other trainees.

In TP feedback session 2,1, Jeff’s feedback started with the tutor commenting to him that ‘you had a hard road to motivate with the level of students versus erm the level of the material’. Jeff this time was more positive about his performance, saying that he was ‘better prepared’, had ‘reasonably good rapport’ and drilled the vocabulary. He was also pleased that he recycled vocabulary from Angela’s lesson, although he did not use this term, using instead ‘I [...] repeated what Angela had already ^ taught them’. He felt that his instructions were ‘a little bit dodgy’ and that he ‘talked too much’. He commented that he had not used concept questions and he was unsure whether the students had understood. The tutor agreed, saying that ‘there were times when you you



got the impression that the students were going through the motions without really knowing what they were doing'. He continued by advising Jeff that he needed to work on his instructions to 'make them distinct'.

Helen, who then joined in the feedback, suggested that Jeff should use the stronger students to answer the first 'demonstration' questions rather than weaker students, a point backed by the trainer. Jeff suggested that he did try to 'dodge about' but had a problem as the weaker students or 'duds' were sitting together.

The tutor offered his summary next and focused on his good rapport and speaking voice and his patience and supportive help; and on the negative side the need for him to improve his instruction-giving:

on the plus side excellent manner with the students er good rapport your voice is very comprehensible it's slow and delivered loudly enough erm slowly enough but just about not un-natural you've got a good voice and delivery good manner nice rapport erm ^^ instructions are probably the things to work on so do's and don't's then make them stand out more [...] don't give instructions walking across the classroom be near a central position everybody's attention [...] you monitored well [...] I thought you guided them very supportively and patiently through a really difficult task for them which I'm sure they got something out of [...] I thought you did well in a difficult situation

When giving feedback to Helen in TPF 2,2 Jeff praised her 'pictorial presentation', her 'clear enunciation' and 'nice speaking voice'. He questioned whether she 'left [...] a little bit too long between the questions and answers if they were not forthcoming', suggesting that 'perhaps you should have stepped in a little bit sooner'. In his feedback to David, Jeff commented on his good elicitation and his 'word pictures' which he liked. The feedback on his own teaching came with the teacher trainer acknowledging an overlap between David's topic and Jeff's which he felt couldn't have been avoided. Jeff began by saying that he had tried to improve his instructions although he only remembered 'half way through them'. Jeff then began to comment on the overlap between David's class and his own before stopping himself and returning to the need to improve his instructions:

I felt I did improve a bit there ^ instructions erm ^^ I I don't know I perhaps I was a little bit I was thrown [J laughs] I was a bit thrown by David stealing my I put there but that's not really fair erm but it certainly did alter slightly what I was going to do there erm but at the end of the day it didn't really matter er I've just got to re..improve the instructions again make sure that they totally understand it

At that point, Helen and Theo began an exchange in which they criticised Jeff heavily for using French in the classroom. Jeff initially tried to defend his decision. the tutor did not intervene:

- H I I actually put down here that it's quite I think a lot of the other students feel left out when you start speaking a language you know that you were using French
- T alienation
- H yeah yeah and three of them could you know follow you but the rest of them were like [gestures confusion]
- J er but no but I I explained it in English first
- T you may have even so
- J then for the help of the three others I I because they won't understand anything will they I mean like this French fella here <H: yes> er didn't understand anything at all so
- H I I I think I still wouldn't use a language / if I knew it \ coz I'm in an English class and I'm there to teach I I don't know that's just me personally
- T / still alienating \ so when I interviewed a student last week this is one of the points he made exactly he doesn't want anybody else to speak another language / he specifically said that he didn't want \ the teacher to speak any other languages specifically I mean that's why he was over here learning it here rather than in Switzerland <H: yeah> coz they all had a common language over here don't he wants to hear only English nothing else and he wouldn't have liked being spoken to in his language even if he didn't understand what the teacher was trying to explain he'd rather it was elicited from him or he had student help so I agree I think er alienation point there

Theo then moved the feedback to a more positive note, saying that Jeff had achieved his aims and that his use of the map was a 'great idea' although the photocopy was too small. Angela raised the issue that Jeff had given instructions whilst facing the board again, Jeff said he had remembered after a while and turned round. The tutor's response was a terse 'well remember it earlier'.

The tutor in his summary praised Jeff's 'nice rapport' and 'engagement with the students' and his interest in the students' efforts:

when students said something that you thought was worth listening to which was an impressive piece of English for their level you got them to repeat it and share it with everybody else which I think is good so we don't always want you to listen for errors you can actually get them to erm appreciate each others good ^ sentences that they come up with and learn from each other

David, backed up by the tutor suggested that Jeff should randomise his drilling rather than going around the class in turn. Jeff also raised a point that he seemed pleased with, that he got one of the weaker students in the group to produce a sentence:

- J I think I got Jakup to I was quite proud I got him to write down a a sentence

- TT yeah everybody said a bit actually you were very determined  
J well I felt sorry for him he just sort of sits there you know sort of ^ he actually wrote something down

Finally in the session Jeff asked the tutor about the students' understanding in his lesson 'do you think they understood everything else I mean the library the station and that sort of thing?'. The question seems to indicate that Jeff was largely unaware of whether students understood or not, something the tutor had advised him to use concept questions to find out:

- TT don't bother saying 'did you understand the story? good' coz it doesn't prove anything <J: no no> so don't say it  
J no I said I perhaps should gone and done a bit of er ^ check concept checking I think

For the next couple of classes of this week Jeff visited the other group to watch them teaching the Upper Intermediate students. The teaching practice in Weeks 3 and 4 involved trainees teaching this higher level group. The week began with other trainees teaching and Jeff and Helen working in an observation role only [TPF 3,1]. Jeff did not really offer any feedback on Theo's class, only commenting on Theo's self-created listening material, which he liked. In his feedback to Angela he returned to the idea of stepping in sooner when students didn't know the answer, saying she should have 'just [...] prompted a bit sooner perhaps'. He sympathised that she had found the elicitation difficult but said that the students had understood 'they got through they obviously understood it and they knew what you wanted'. Jeff did not give feedback on Penny's class although he did question the degree to which they should correct the higher level students' pronunciation. He commented that although several students were very fluent that their pronunciation 'was pretty dire'. He told the group about his experience of interviewing a student for his Learner Profile 2 assignment: 'what's interesting with er Inga I taped her just now and er coz I played it back and er she said "I have a very strong German accent er I don't like it"'.

In an exchange during feedback on David's lesson, Jeff's comments seemed to indicate that he still had not understood the idea of concept checking. Angela and the trainer are quick to correct him:

- J he helped me a lot because he's taken about three quarters of my words for me to do tomorrow so erm  
D well they did that  
J I shan't er=

- TT =except we haven't checked any of them so we don't know if they understand  
<J: ah>
- A yeah one person might know but the rest might not
- TT the concept checking needs to be done all the time
- J they know the name but they're not quite sure what it is
- TT well we don't know we'll have to find out you can only find out by asking  
concept questions <J: yeah> they might think that erm they might think that er  
I don't know they might think the 'gear stick' is a 'brake' I don't know and we  
have to check <J: ah> check concepts yeah
- J so perhaps I'll do what I was going to do anyway

Jeff taught the Upper Intermediate students the following day for the first time, an experience he described as 'a little bit novel' [TPF 3,2]. His feedback was quite positive, feeling that he was 'a bit better organised' and that he 'elicited better' and corrected some pronunciation errors. The tutor commented that he should have drilled more and that when he drilled that he needed to ensure that he provided a natural model for students to repeat 'generally your your models were unnatural'. Jeff summed up by saying that although he 'felt happier' about the lesson as a whole, that it was 'a bit disappointing that there were only so few people'. He moved on to talk about negative points, feeling that he 'should have been walking around more' rather than sitting down whilst students were working. The tutor disagreed and felt that the class was 'more relaxed' as a result.

In an exchange which suggested that Jeff may have had difficulty understanding the timing of his lesson, he explained to trainees and the tutor that he had planned to do a game of Blockbusters for the students using the driving vocabulary. Unfortunately he had run out of time:

I had intended to do a hell of a lot more because what I was going to do erm it's interesting you can actually do 26 letters all on driving you know like accelerator brake clutch driving erm I did it last night erm I went through the dictionary and I got a word er I was gonna make a much bigger thing but there wasn't enough time [...] and then there's competitions you have two or three teams and there's one that shouts out you ok you're you're zeros and you're crosses and we were going to squeeze it in the end but unfortunately [...] we ran out of time

This was followed by other trainees giving feedback on Jeff's lesson. Theo began with a jokey 'I'd like er a vote for all the ayes to actually nominate Jeff as the attention-grabber king' before explaining that he enjoyed the 'attention-grabbing' start to the lesson, and the 'great pace', saying that the students 'enjoyed it and you achieved your aim'. He then commented that Jeff needed better exemplification and better instructions and that he thought that Jeff made the task more confusing and complicated than it was.

Jeff rejected the idea that students were confused but accepted responsibility for his instructions saying: ‘my instructions were not clear on that [...] they got it but it wasn’t clear to start with’.

Theo was also clear that he thought Jeff should have used concept questions to check the meanings of words. The tutor stepped in to advise Jeff that he needed to use questions rather than asking ‘do you understand?’. He suggested Jeff needed to ‘look right back at your your notes on vocabulary teaching’.

In session 3,3 Jeff said he thought that David had talked too much and that consequently the students had ‘lost it a bit’. This was his only contribution to the oral discussion. His contribution to the following feedback session, TPF 3,4, was also brief. This time he had worked with Helen to give feedback to Theo. He gave examples of words that Theo used but did not concept check. He also suggested that Theo should have fully explained ‘UFO’ which was a key word in Theo’s listening exercise about aliens. The tutor and the other trainees disagreed.

In the first TP session of the final week, Jeff and Theo wrote feedback for Penny’s lesson. Jeff told the group that they liked the way Penny had a good start and linked to other lessons and that they thought she ‘spoke clearly and they understood what she was going to do’. Commenting later on the lengthy vocabulary lesson that Penny had done, Jeff was concerned with the learners’ reactions:

- J I think you just went on a bit too long coz this poor girl here she was absolutely dead and er he switched off I know he did yeah but he also commented you know ‘so much vocabulary’ yeah I think it was a bit too=  
P =it was a lot of words=  
J =heavy on them yeah I think

Jeff did a full hour of teaching practice on Tuesday of Week 4 (TPF 4,2). In the session which followed, Angela and Penny gave him feedback, writing on the whiteboard three positive points and two negative points in advance of the oral feedback:

<p>+ Good gap fill tasks Good error correction S-S correction - must pre-set task before reading where was the concept checking etc for grammar eg boardwork [sic.]</p>
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The feedback began with Jeff reading the first line of his negative points:

- J ^ just er pre-set task before reading ^^ yes yes I er plead guilty to that one yeah  
TT remember that? <J: yes yes>  
A yes yes fundamental rule [said in an adopted stern voice]  
J I know I know  
A then why did you do it? I was like what are you doing  
J I knew as soon as I started I said then I realised I'd done wrong huh stupid boy  
A did you have it in your lesson plan to pre-set it yeah?  
J oh yes definitely yes yeah  
A and then you just did it yeah <J: yes yes> that's the sort of thing I do that I always forget

In the extract above Angela's seemingly impatient attitude towards Jeff forgetting to pre-set his task is dropped when it becomes apparent that it had been his intention to pre-set but he had forgotten whilst in the classroom. Her mimicry of the teacher trainer's stern voice was in reference to TP feedback session 1,3 where the trainer told Jeff that pre-setting tasks was important for skills work. The tutor then invited Angela to continue with her feedback. Angela described her confusion at Jeff's lack of explanation of the grammar, saying that she had thought that he was using a task-based approach of doing the task first and then explaining the grammar 'and they all got their pens ready but then you just you went off on examples again'. Although praising his practice activities she felt that 'it was the theory missing on the whole'. Jeff agreed with her and explained that he had 'altered [his] plan' because he was concerned that the task was 'quite hard' and then he 'ran out of time'.

Angela did have some praise for Jeff's handling of error correction:

your correction's pretty good though you use erm like use students really well to correct everything and erm yeah either using other students or asking asking questions 'is it right?'

When the floor was opened to Jeff he was reasonably positive, feeling that he 'got the idea over well' to students and got good 'comeback' (cf feedback) and that he 'did try to concept check' the vocabulary which he felt they mostly already knew. He then went on to say that he had deviated from his 'script' (cf lesson plan), which it turned out he had forgotten to give to the tutor prior to the lesson:

- J I deviated from the script that I gave you there=  
TT =you didn't give me one  
J what?

- TT you never gave me a lesson plan so I don't know <J: I did> no you didn't no lesson plan no lesson plan
- J where the hell is it then? [searches in paperwork]
- TT anyway that's that's water under the bridge now
- J ^^ where the hell is it? ^^ oh god sorry I didn't give it to you sorry oh my god so er yes that would have help wouldn't it [hands over lesson plan to TT]
- TT so anyway yeah carry on sorry
- J er well if you hadn't read it you wouldn't know I deviated from it no [all laugh]

Jeff continued by explaining that when he realised that students were struggling with the vocabulary and the text which he felt was 'quite long and hard' he decided to continue with vocabulary and then return to the grammar point later in the lesson, 'I just felt I would come back to it and just sort of finish it off as it were to make sure they understood'. The tutor told him that this 'was probably a mistake'. The trainer tried to explain that the exercise that Jeff had moved onto which required students to manipulate the passive form was in fact more complex than the one he returned to which required them to re-read the passage and underline the passive. Jeff seemed confused 'yeah that's why I wanted to sort of once they'd practised it sort of be able to recognise it in the text'.

Although acknowledging that there was not enough concept checking Jeff said that he was happy that students seemed able to do the exercise. The tutor offered his summary:

there was no phonology [...] pronunciation or rhythm or stress it would have been nice if you had paid attention to that but I thought progress definitely today erm more organised than it was in your class management clear in direction it seemed clear to us what was happening at each stage [...] the actual execution of the stages was was good your instructions were fine er you set up the activities clearly you checked them clearly [...] do try to give students a little bit more of a chance to help to think but you often ask a question nice and laudably involving a student and then three seconds later you start providing the answer [...] first stage I thought you set up well very clear I liked your guidance and elicitation techniques which I thought was a clear step today good graded language [...] more drilling maybe for some of it [...] giving the task before the text give the students a focus and allows them to find out what they need or you decide what they need rather than simply saying read it [...] try and vary it er if there's one thing that a wow lesson needs it is variety [...] but erm error awareness and correction's improving

Following the penultimate TP of the week (TPF 4,3) Jeff gave feedback on Angela's teaching. The tutor asked him to suggest 'two good things' about Angela's lesson and he offered 'attention-grabbing' and getting students to act in the role play for which Angela had assigned roles 'very cleverly'. The only criticism he offered was that

Angela had not picked up many of the errors that students made and corrected them at the end, something he described as ‘a tiny thing’.

In his final TP (TPF 4,4) which was observed by the external examiner Jeff's feedback on his own teaching was very negative, he began:

terrible ^^ I think it was about my worst lesson I did everything wrong we started off alright but then when we got to the second part where I was asking them to do questions and tell tell me about why they were the most important erm I I er echoed I I tried to elicit er Stefano rambled on a lot he made lots of mistakes and I was trying to correct him but I didn't do it very well and I put Jiaxue down as well which I shouldn't have done but erm so I handled it very badly ^^ started off alright they seemed to enjoy that bit they talked amongst themselves and came back to me quite well

The trainees then discussed the fact that one of the students had given a very long response to a question but then Jeff had asked him to explain his answer, thus making the situation worse. Jeff commented that ‘the trouble is that he he's very fluent but he does make a lot of mistakes [...] and it's very difficult when he's in full flow to stop him and correct them’. The teacher trainer pointed out that the student had in fact not made any mistakes until Jeff had asked him to rephrase his answer. Jeff moved on, telling the group that he echoed students ‘several times’ and that he ‘felt sorry for the team who didn't get anything’ in his game of Charades. After positive comments on the game of Charades from the rest of the group, Jeff added ‘I think they enjoyed it anyway that's that was one it's light-hearted it's the end of the day I didn't want to stress them too much’.

At this point the teacher trainer stepped in to the feedback and pointed out that Jeff's lesson amongst other things, did not achieve the aim of reviewing vocabulary as he had covered vocabulary that was new to students. The trainer also pointed out that the first activity had wasted a lot of time as it was ‘a long series of student talking to teacher sort of mini-talks with nobody else doing very much’. Jeff was then short of time for his second task which was a game of Charades. The tutor rather critically added:

you got the stress marking wrong and the pronunciation model you gave them wasn't right erm that was all very much a waste of time ^ so the wrong answer and then you marked it on the wrong syllable

The session ended on this rather negative note.



## 12.6 Assignments

I was unable to get copies of Jeff's assignments. I was however aware that Jeff had a number of his assignments returned for re-writing.

## 12.7 Progress Records

I was also unable to get copies of Jeff's progress records.

## 12.8 Interview 2

The second interview which was carried out on Wednesday of Week 4 was not very satisfactory. Difficulties with the time available and a problem in controlling the topic and line of the interview resulted in a short interview in which many of the questions were left unanswered.

Jeff did speak a great deal about his experience on the course. He was firstly very concerned about failing the course, something he mentioned several times:

I only hope I pass I ^ the last two reports were not very good obviously I was only like borderline but I made a big effort to do something good yesterday ^ and ^ I've had to re-do a couple of my assignments which were not up to standard but I managed to get it there second time so I'm hoping I really want to get it [...] even if I do fail which I hope I don't but even if I do fail it's been a tremendous experience for me [...] if I don't pass I shall be very upset but erm it's been a wonderful wonderful month

He explained in detail why he felt he struggled so much. One of the things he struggled with was the assignments as mentioned above. He explained that the 'first two weren't too bad' but the later, more in-depth assignments were harder, Learner Profile Two was 'quite hard' but the Reflection assignment was 'the real killer'. Jeff also blamed the intensity of the course in terms of the time commitment required, saying that despite putting in a lot of time on his coursework, he still had outside commitments which reduced the time he had available:

there just ain't enough hours in the day that is the big problem erm you know I've neglected everything else but that's fine I mean I knew that it was going to be tough [...] it's just the time factor you know I would've ideally would have liked to just a few more days to have well or like had tomorrow off if you like [...] I've been getting up at six and you know well I've had to do a bit of office work for myself I've had to

send some faxes and things out that demanded immediate attention that I had to do er and I've got to reconcile the bank and er you know there has to be things done out outside of of the course unfortunately er all of which take away precious time and so forth erm but erm that's an excuse really if you sat down to it and did nothing else then you could probably do it quite successfully

Despite this, Jeff was very positive about his experience on the course, which he described as 'extremely stimulating' and said that 'I had no idea that it would be so good and enjoyable'. He also explained that he thought it had 'exercised my brain which had fallen asleep'. He twice mentioned the very positive experience of meeting other people on the course and getting to know them.

He talked about his desire to be a teacher and his sense that this was something he could or should have gone into earlier in his life:

I think teaching's very challenging and er I really want to my wife said to me many years ago 'you know you should've gone into teaching' all my family she was a teacher a primary school teacher er number one daughter has just opened this playgroup down in Brighton er number two took the TEFL course er so we're all very much into the teaching world

### 12.8.1 Beliefs about teachers and teaching

In an exchange about one of the experienced teachers on the course, Mark, Jeff seemed to indicate his belief in the importance of the liveliness of the teacher. He returned to this broad topic later in the interview when he spoke of the need to have fun in lessons 'I'm a great believer in whatever you do get an element of fun in there'. He explained that he ascribed his success in sales to his 'cheerful persistence', telling me that he thought 'people like happy people'. When asked if thought this was also true of teaching he indicated that it was:

I think humour is in yeah yeah it's gotta be good yeah I put in my book that all the teachers the the all of them during the class time there was laughter and that's great that's good ^ if you like when I made a mistake on the board you know and we all laughed it was great it's lovely it's no I think it's nice yeah it's people isn't it?

In addition to his belief in the importance of humour and a lively teacher presence, Jeff seemed to feel that teachers needed to be 'relaxed with the students'. Again, this was explained in the context of describing a teacher on the course that he liked and whom he thought had 'a very nice teaching style'. He also talked about how some

teachers were more ‘personal’ with students by which he appeared to mean had more personal interaction with students. This was something he approved of:

I think particularly like Mark er the last session it was Mark and he’s very lively erm very upfront very relaxed with the students erm a very nice teaching style er very personal some of them not quite so personal obviously she he knows the class very well

Jeff was also appreciative of two of the trainees who he praised for being well organised and being good with the board ‘Helen is very good [...] she is very good with the board she’s very organised’; ‘Angela is very very organised’.

### 12.8.2 Beliefs about language and language learning

Jeff did not talk a great deal about language learning or teaching. He did indicate that he realised that teaching English and his own experience of learning English were quite different:

I mean er ways of teaching erm English to er foreigners is obviously very different from teaching our own language as I I sort of English was my best subject at school and I was always in the top three erm but that was that wasn’t really grammar that was essays which I’m good at which I like being creative making up stories things like that I like that I’ve got a good imagination

In the follow-up question to this I asked him what he saw as important for teaching the English language. He referred to the need for teachers to take into account learners’ individual needs:

*What kind of things do you need for teaching the language ^ particularly?*

I think I think the language it’s very as I put in my pr..I think it’s very individual you know you’ve got to recognise the the needs of each student because they differ I mean er in the class yesterday when I was teaching Miriam er she she wasn’t comprehending very well she was er so you have to sort of try and you know and help her a little bit as it were erm but ways of doing it I mean we we’ve been taught I mean Jim is a tremendous teacher I’ve been very impressed with him erm and it’s I wouldn’t say tricks of the trade but obviously that comes into it doesn’t it how do you how do you do this how do you get somebody to elicit information?

### 12.8.3 Beliefs about learning to teach

Jeff talked about the different elements of the course in terms of their usefulness. He said that the assignments were ‘tremendous’. He explained that the Reflection

assignment in particular forced him to ‘look at every aspect of what you’ve done over the last three weeks’ and hence was a ‘very good revision exercise’.

He talked about learning by observing others where he enjoyed ‘seeing how other people do it [...] different ways of going round er a a subject or attacking a a a target or aim’.

Jeff said that he enjoyed the ‘hands on’ experience of the teaching practice. He did however seem to view this rather competitively, discussing at length how some of the trainees who he felt had previous teaching experience were at an advantage over people like him without:

I’m not sure about Angela but Helen has certainly done a lot of lecturing er in her life so she is very good with the board she’s very organised er to start with you know whereas people like David and myself and Theo er we’ve not had this and it shows of course [...] I said to Liz my daughter I said ‘oh god I don’t think I don’t think I can do it’ coz the week before on the Friday when I didn’t have a very good lesson I was a bit upset with myself and she said ‘dad you don’t think of anyone else you just think of your own situation’ and then I heard that David had had a bad bad er mark as well so it ma..I’m not saying it made me feel better but it well it did actually [...] because you’re it’s like against the clock as well you know and you want to do well in front of your of your peers and everybody’s your peer do whatever with the age or background we’re all at the same or similar level

Jeff expressed the clear view that, despite different individual styles, all of the experienced teachers were successful:

all of them have different styles of course I observed four teachers two ladies and two gentlemen and erm they’ve all got their own individual teaching style but erm all of them very successful

Later in the interview, as mentioned above he referred again to ‘all the teachers’ and in this case he explained how all of them had used humour in the classroom. This may give an indication of how Jeff was judging ‘successful’: ‘I think humour is in [...] all the teachers the the all of them during the class time there was laughter and that’s great that’s good’.

A further point which came out of the interview data was that Jeff even by the end of the course was surprised by the learners’ knowledge of English:

I mean there were very doing that er exercise yesterday on the on the dog bite and taking them to the hospital and things like that er er we got them there didn’t we? We took them there and they came up with the right there was just one word that they didn’t get but all the other words they got which was really good coz some of the words I would have thought were you know ones you wouldn’t hear about so I’m quite impressed with the way the students have erm responded

Jeff also talked about how they had been the luckier of the two TP groups as they had moved from teaching the lower level group at the beginning of the course to teaching the higher level group in the latter half. He explained that the higher level students were at a similar level to the trainees and that this corresponded with the reduction of support from trainers by this stage of the course:

I think we've done it the best way our group coming from the lowest to the to the higher level because erm their lear..they're at the same stage as you are at that stage if you know what I mean you know you are only like you know one degree ahead of them aren't you at that stage so it was probably better and as Richard was saying in the first two weeks you're spoon-fed if you like erm but erm last week and this week you're much more on your own you it's your ideas and you've got to do it that way

#### 12.8.4 Jeff's self-reported changes in beliefs

This aspect is particularly difficult to report on as the questions which were asked in interview were answered in a way which reflected Jeff's concerns of the moment rather than my research agenda. Thus when asked about whether his ideas had changed over the duration of the course Jeff indicated that they had. He then proceeded to explain that he thought the course should have included tuition on how to teach English via the internet using video conferencing facilities. He told me that although he thought that this topic should 'not be the main part of the course' that it should be included as he saw it as 'the way of the future'. He indicated that he saw this as a potential business opportunity.

When the question was re-phrased, this time much more explicitly, Jeff talked about how he hadn't expected anything in particular from the course although he knew it would be 'very tough'. He then moved on to talk about his desire to set up one-to-one teaching, describing someone he knew who provided this kind of EFL experience.

As the interview with Jeff was so brief and much that was discussed was less relevant than it could have been, it was impossible to judge from interview data whether any of his beliefs about teaching and learning had changed.

## 12.9 Post-Course Questionnaire

This was not returned by Jeff. However I did have some limited contact with him post-course in the form of Christmas cards. In these he informed me that he was considering re-taking the CELTA course and that he was working to recruit teachers to go and work for a company that he had contacts with in Poland.

## 12.10 Summary

This chapter, which looked at Jeff, drew on fewer data sources than other trainees although as with the others, the data was consistent across sources.

Jeff clearly had a strong desire to help students and in particular in several places he mentioned the need to help weaker students in the group. He felt that good teaching meant involving the students in the lesson and maintaining their interest and attention. He thought teachers were responsible for involving students in conversation and for ‘stimulating thought’. Jeff also thought the mixing of activities in a lesson was important. Rapport and the creation of a relaxed atmosphere were considered important, and Jeff thought humour and fun were part of this.

Jeff spoke of the need for teachers to plan and prepare lessons carefully, and the need to focus on the points which need to be taught in order to achieve the lesson aims. Jeff believed a strong visual approach was useful for teaching as this provided an immediacy for learners in addition to making the material more memorable. As a part of this Jeff felt that the target language should be written up on the whiteboard each lesson.

In terms of language learning, Jeff spoke of the importance of immersion and of living in the country of the target language. He felt that his experience of learning language by learning grammar was ineffective and that a focus on communication was much more appropriate.

The table below summarises the findings for Jeff:

	<b>Main points</b>
Individual elements	<p><i>Early in the course:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of beliefs which seem to come from schooling eg related to language learning – the need to focus on communication skills rather than study grammar</li> <li>• Mentioned family members who taught as influential in decision to undertake CELTA</li> <li>• Related qualities of self as a teacher to previous work experience – selling and relating to people</li> <li>• Number of beliefs which were related to the need for the teacher to involve students in lessons, to be humorous, interesting and to stimulate thought</li> <li>• Beliefs related to affective concerns eg don't humiliate students; concern to help students, especially weaker students</li> <li>• Create interesting lessons through 'mixing' activities and through the use of visuals which make lessons more memorable (included writing target language on the whiteboard)</li> <li>• Recognised the importance of preparation</li> <li>• Effective language learning involves immersion in the country and target language</li> <li>• From the start the teacher trainers attempted to hold Jeff back in TP, reminding him of the importance of the lesson aims when choosing activities</li> <li>• Very inspired by one of the trainers, on whom he tried to model himself</li> <li>• Jeff's motivation for doing the course was related to his interest in setting up business tuition</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><i>Late in the course:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Similarities in many beliefs from early course eg the importance of rapport and student involvement in the lesson, the need for humour and a lively teacher</li> <li>• Tendency to be unprepared for lessons</li> <li>• Lack of awareness seemingly throughout on the connection between aims and activities, focus on providing interest for the students</li> <li>• Tendency to copy and adopt activities seen in other classes (both experienced teachers and trainees) regardless of appropriacy to aims</li> <li>• Became aware of the need to take individual students' needs into account in the lesson</li> <li>• Lack of understanding of stages of lesson and grading of tasks</li> <li>• Tendency throughout of teaching students in a series of one to one dialogues rather than addressing whole group</li> </ul>
Social elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seemed to have difficulty in improving areas of weakness highlighted in feedback</li> <li>• All teachers had very different styles but all were successful in terms of getting students to laugh</li> <li>• Observation of others was useful as seeing how other people</li> </ul>

	<p>approached 'a subject' helped</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning from peers in feedback eg from feedback to Angela</li> <li>• Rather competitive in comparing himself to other trainees eg Helen had some clinical teaching experience</li> <li>• Continued difficulty in using terminology</li> <li>• Did not seem to put the ideas from input into practice eg monitoring, drilling, pre-setting questions for reading, concept questions</li> <li>• Tendency to blame others for his problems in feedback eg blaming the TP points, blaming David for 'stealing' his material; blamed the intensity of the course and 'outside commitments' for failing the course</li> </ul>
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**Table 12.1: Summary of the major findings – Jeff**



**SECTION III:**  
**DISCUSSION**

# Chapter 13: Discussion

## 13.1 Introduction

The discussion chapter will attempt to bring together the findings reported in Chapters 6 to 12 inclusive and synthesise them in the context of the review of studies and the framework chapters.

The following table summarises some of the points which came out of the findings chapters. Due to the richness of the data in these chapters, not all of the findings can be discussed in any detail. I have chosen to focus on the findings which were to some degree common across at least several individuals rather than those which were more idiosyncratic in nature. The table below therefore highlights the issues which will be the focus of discussion, summarising them according to those which could be described as more individually-based and those which are more social in nature. Obviously, as argued in Chapter 3, with reference to the literature of various learning theories, I consider these to be more selective focuses rather than entirely separable elements. For the purposes of clarity of discussion however they are separated here:

<p>Individual elements: <i>Early in the course</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beliefs about teaching and learning strongly influenced by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Schooling</li> <li>○ Other learning experience</li> <li>○ Work experience</li> </ul> </li> <li>• A number of (most) trainees' beliefs are anti-didactic in nature</li> <li>• Trainees believe in the importance of learners having fun and enjoyable lessons in which they take an active role; teachers are lively and energetic</li> <li>• Teachers should respect learners and be patient and empathetic; teachers can learn from their students</li> <li>• Need to get to know students so that teaching can be adapted to suit them</li> <li>• Language learning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Focus on communication, rather than grammar</li> <li>○ Association (for some trainees) between learning a language and learning culture</li> <li>○ Learning language through immersion / real world activities</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Open to input especially where trainees perceive a gap in their knowledge or in the knowledge of people who taught them</li> </ul>
<p><i>Late in the course</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many beliefs are similar in nature <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Belief in fun lessons with lively teachers</li> <li>○ Anti-didactic beliefs – focus on the learners</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Need to adapt materials and teaching to suit learners</li> <li>• Focus on the importance of planning and preparation for teaching</li> <li>• Focus on the achievement of aims as central to effective teaching</li> <li>• Beliefs about language learning were very similar</li> <li>• Discussion of the habits which lie behind and have an impact on behaviour in the classroom</li> <li>• Observation of experienced teachers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Teachers all had individual style but were all effective teachers</li> <li>○ Teachers exemplified the techniques and methodology that trainees were expected to learn and use</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<i>Post-course teaching</i>	<p>Very different experiences of three students who returned questionnaire:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CELTA was useful training</li> <li>• Varied comments related to planning for lessons</li> <li>• Varied comments related to adapting CELTA techniques</li> <li>• Would have liked more teaching practice</li> </ul>
Social / Community elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interlinking between input and teaching practice</li> <li>• Experienced teachers have different styles but all equally effective</li> <li>• Learning from peers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Observation</li> <li>o Feedback</li> <li>o Interaction</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Learning the discourse of ELT</li> <li>• Deliberately targeting weaknesses in TP</li> <li>• Some weaknesses as identified in TP feedback are overcome and others are not</li> </ul>

**Table 13.1: Summary of the findings, Chapters 6-12**

The discussion chapter is organised according to these themes which came out of the data and the literature review. Following a discussion of the findings is a section which revisits and restates the research questions and summarises the findings in relation to these questions. This is followed by a discussion of the limitations of the study and of the implications both for research and for teacher education. The chapter concludes with suggestions for further research.

## 13.2 The Discussion Section

In this section, I will review the findings of the study, focusing primarily on looking across the cases and bringing out common elements across the trainees. In line with the framework I have chosen, which enables me to shift focus between the individual level and the interactional or community level, I will begin with a focus on the beliefs and experiences of the trainees. This will be followed in the second part by a focus on the community level.

## 13.2.1 A Focus on the individuals

### 13.2.1.1 Trainees' beliefs at the beginning of the course

It can be seen from the findings (Chapters 7-12) that the trainees arrive on the CELTA course with a variety of beliefs about teaching and learning, despite the fact that none of them had done any classroom teaching prior to the course. These beliefs came from a variety of sources but the major areas are early schooling, later learning experience such as university, and work experience. School is mentioned more often than any other outside experience by trainees, but in most of these cases the experience was a negative one. Trainees spoke of being bored, bullied, and generally about the ineffectiveness of many of their learning experiences. A number of trainees also mentioned post-school learning and work-related experiences: David talked about his university experiences and his experience of learning Spanish; Helen about her experience of learning (and later teaching) midwifery and of learning Dari; Angela learning computing and massage; and Theo referred to his experience of explaining history as part of his job as a tour guide.

All of these experiences were influential in the formation of trainees' beliefs and, like the experiences themselves, there is variation in specificity or vagueness. Examples would include David's reporting in a very general way ineffective learning at school due to large classes in which he felt he didn't have to pay attention, or Penny's lengthy and detailed discussion in both interviews, of her experience of writing a ghost story. In both of these cases, whether vague or specific, the underlying beliefs can be seen – David's sense that teachers need to keep students' attention and Penny's concern over the respectful treatment of learners and the need for sensitive and discrete feedback.

When looking across the group, it can be seen that many of the beliefs which were held by trainees at the beginning of the course are rather similar. There is a general rejection of the kind of didactic teaching methodology which many of the trainees associate with school learning. This is true of all trainees with the exception of Theo. Trainees talked about teachers who stood at the front talking whilst learners were bored, sitting at their desks copying things down. In contrast, Theo spoke very positively of his 'authoritarian' education:

corporal punishment there didn't only come from the top not from the headmaster although we did have beatings at the school but I wasn't regularly just occasionally [...] it was very very authoritarian er rather than sort of playing in the playground we

were we were forced to drill [...] but er looking back looking back on this erm I don't regret this at all erm my formative years really were exploited to the maximum [Theo. Interview 1]

It should be noted that although he was positive about his authoritarian schooling he did indicate that he thought that this was less suitable for adult learners who had their own discipline. He did not however criticise his didactic school experience as the others did.

All of the trainees talked of the need to make lessons interesting and fun for learners by using varied activities. They all mentioned the need for learners to be active and involved in lessons. Most trainees indicated that they felt teachers should use humour in the lessons, and that they should be lively and energetic. Another major concern for trainees was the need to treat students with respect, and words which they also used in this area included 'patience' and 'empathy'. Three of the trainees went as far as to suggest that they, as teachers, could learn from their students in a reciprocal learning process. Four of the trainees, Penny, David, Helen and Angela, talked of the importance of getting to know their students in order to be able to adapt their teaching to the students' needs.

In terms of their beliefs about language and language learning, the trainees at the beginning of the course also evidenced a certain degree of commonality. There was a clear concern that the focus of language learning should be on speaking and communication, with all of the trainees mentioning this in some form. Two of the group, David and Penny, made clear links between learning a language and learning about another culture and a further three trainees – Helen, Jeff and Angela – talked of the most effective way to learn a language as being immersion in the language whilst visiting the country. Helen and David referred to the need to get out of the classroom and into the real world. Only Penny and Theo talked of the importance of grammar for language learning, and Theo only referred to grammar when prompted.

On the whole, then, it can be seen that the beliefs of most of the trainees could be broadly described as anti-didactic in nature. Several of the trainees also have quite clear concerns over areas that they perceive as gaps in their own learning experiences. Examples would include Penny's concern over learning grammar, something she remarked her teachers thought she (and her school peers) were not capable of. Another example is Helen's expression of the need to be available for students by staying behind after class to help them deal with problems, something she described as 'a big issue' and

which she explained she did not receive at school and could have benefited from. A further example is Theo's concern with asking questions in order to check students' understanding, something which he felt would have helped prevent him from falling behind at school:

I remember this [...] from schooling that things weren't clarified and they would just assume 'everybody ok right ok fine we'll move on' and I'm lost [...] and I've found myself sort of falling back [...] and I was sort of too scared to actually to put my hand up and ask [Theo, Interview 1]

The above examples of the beliefs and concerns of the trainees indicate that part of the package of beliefs and concepts that they brought with them to the course was idiosyncratic in nature, shaped by the personal experiences of their individual lives. Despite the personal significance suggested by the stories behind the beliefs and despite their idiosyncratic origins, some of the beliefs were shared by other trainees, for example, both David and Penny talked about the need for the teacher to be available and approachable to students, a core belief of Helen's.

Motivation could well influence the experiences and outcomes of the trainees, and should be considered. The trainees seem to have a variety of reasons for taking a course which is often seen as leading to a particular job. David, Angela and Helen have the possibly more immediate motivation of wanting to learn about teaching so that they can move into teaching EFL. David already had his target teaching location worked out by virtue of his living in Barcelona; Angela intended to teach whilst travelling in order to fund herself, and Helen seemed quite open to different places to work. Penny, although saying she might go into teaching, seemed much more concerned about learning English grammar. Like Penny, Theo stated he was more interested in learning about grammar than teaching methodology though he was considering teaching for at least part of the year to supplement his current job. Jeff, like David had a clear aim in mind, and that was to set up a company specialising in one-to-one teaching and so was presumably taking the course to give him a greater understanding of the business. Barduhn (1998) reported on how most of the trainees in her study entered the course motivated by a desire to go abroad and teach. She explained that she found trainees' motivation shifted from solely instrumental to a more intrinsic nature as they began to find the course rewarding and motivating in its own right. On my course, all of the trainees did enjoy their experience, although, largely due to the intensity of the course, their enjoyment started to wane in the third week as they became increasingly tired.

Studies by researchers such as Holt-Reynolds (1992), John (1996) and Burn et al. (2000) have indicated the role of schooling, that is the apprenticeship of observation, in equipping trainees on initial teacher education courses with beliefs about how to be a teacher. It was seen that trainees arrived with beliefs about what made good teachers and bad teachers and on the whole they tended to be dissatisfied with the didactic elements of their school learning experiences. This rejection came despite the long hours of teacher watching during schooling which provided them with a didactic model. As, being good constructivists, they did not simply accept this model but reacted to it in their own individual ways. Other studies cited raised the importance of other life experiences in the formation of trainees' beliefs; Almarza, in her study of modern language student teachers referred to the role of informal language learning experiences (Almarza, 1996). This is mirrored in my study with Helen and David who were particularly influenced by their in-country language experiences. Powell (1992) described non-traditional student teachers, that is those who were changing careers, as being influenced more by life experiences – work, children, non-classroom teaching, and having relatives who were teachers – than by the apprenticeship of observation. It should be noted that all six trainees in my study would be classified as 'non-traditional' by this definition. These influences are in evidence alongside beliefs formed during the apprenticeship of observation with the trainees on the CELTA course. John referred to the influence of his wife and daughter who were teachers:

my wife said to me many years ago 'you know you should've gone into teaching' all my family she was a teacher a primary school teacher er number one daughter has just opened this playgroup [...] number two took the TEFL course er so we're all very much into the teaching world

Helen, Theo, and Penny referred to relevant work experience as influencing them. Several trainees also mentioned their university and later life learning experiences as influencing them, for example, David learning Spanish in Spain, Angela learning computers and massage, Helen learning midwifery.

### **13.2.1.2 Trainees' beliefs at the end of the course**

At the end of the course, the beliefs expressed by the trainees in the interview and in assignments and elsewhere in the data were very similar to those expressed at the beginning of the course. There was again a very clear rejection of a didactic approach



to teaching, this time by all of the group. Again, this approach was rejected in favour of one which centred around a focus on learners who needed to be kept active and involved in lessons, and a need to respect learners, creating a relaxed, comfortable and non-judgemental atmosphere in which they could work. All trainees again talked of the need for teachers to be lively and energetic and several of them again mentioned the use of humour in the classroom.

Unlike at the beginning of the course, by the end all of the trainees were referring to the need for teachers to adapt materials, the coursebook, and their teaching to suit the learners. At this stage trainees also talked about the importance of planning and preparation for teaching and of the need to plan out and achieve lesson aims. The following example is taken from David's second interview:

that's my key thing it's gonna be it's gonna be thoroughly planning a lesson [...] and achieving the aim at the end coz otherwise what's the point of of doing it if you have to spend an hour just waffling about nothing or about something but you haven't achieved anything at the end [David, Interview 2]

Another new element which was mentioned by trainees was their experience of observing the experienced teachers. All of the trainees commented on the fact that they had observed four different teachers on the course and that all of these teachers had their own individual style, and yet they were all effective teachers. It seemed that despite differences in their personalities and teaching personas all of the trainees were able to identify with at least one of the experienced teachers. Several trainees additionally commented that these teachers were using the techniques and approaches which they themselves were expected to employ.

In terms of beliefs about language and language learning expressed at the end of the course, there was not a great deal of change in general ideas, with all of the trainees commenting on the need to focus on speaking and communication.

Although the course does not explicitly allow for trainees to talk about their experiences and beliefs, something which will be discussed more fully later in the chapter, they did in fact bring in their background and life experiences, usually in an ad hoc fashion. There were a number of examples of this in the TP feedback sessions where trainees sought to explain the reasoning or habits behind their actions. Theo, Penny and Angela all referred to outside experience to explain their difficulty with writing on the whiteboard; Penny mentioned her work habit of drafting a first copy and then proof-reading; Angela mentioned her habit of always writing in capitals and Theo

of not being taught to use lower case for writing at school. Theo and Penny also made reference to their respective jobs to explain the differences in their abilities to project their voices when teaching.

When the trainees are examined as individuals, the pattern of little or no change in beliefs between the beginning of the course and the end is also clear. For example, Helen stated her concern over being available for students after the class, which she restated at the end of the course, this time with a rationale that she cannot read students' minds and that some students are more comfortable in a one-to-one situation with the teacher than speaking out in front of the group.

Of course there were examples of trainees' beliefs being modified and claims of a complete change in beliefs. An example of the former is Helen's assertion in the first interview that, in order to avoid learners becoming bored, classes should be short. By the second interview she talked about how using a variety of activities of a controlled length could achieve the same purpose. A further example of a modification is in relation to Helen's reference to the ineffectiveness of rote learning in the first interview. By the time she wrote the reflection assignment in the final week of the course she was expressing a different point of view: 'I have also learned that it is possible to drill students without feeling that it is a waste of time and effort'.

One of the more dramatic changes in beliefs is exemplified by Theo, who stated that he had begun the course with a belief that the teacher was the focus of the lesson and that the teacher should do the talking. By the end he said that he had totally changed his opinion and embraced the idea of student-centred teaching with the resultant peripheral role for the teacher. As was discussed in his case study (Chapter 8), there were some indications that this transformation may not have been as complete as he indicated.

In addition to the changes reported by Theo, other trainees reported changes that they thought they had made. Penny reported surprise that the course was what she had hoped for in terms of being student-centred rather than teacher-centred, although she said that she had wanted this. Helen talked about how she had learnt that a teacher can adapt their teaching as long as they stick to their aims, and that a teacher can use students as resources. David, like Theo, talked about expecting to see a classroom dominated by the teacher and about how he realised that this was not effective, and Angela talked about learning that teaching was more complex than she had thought and that teachers needed to avoid dominating the class.

The conclusions of this study regarding the degree of similarity between beliefs held by trainees at the beginning and end of the course is at least superficially similar to the general thrust of findings regarding teacher education courses in general, for example McDiarmid (1993), Cronin-Jones and Shaw (1992) and Rodriguez (1993). The changes in beliefs reported were limited and on the whole not radical. Beliefs were maintained and reinforced, and in some cases such as Penny's beliefs about grammar, they were elaborated. Most of the beliefs that trainees evidenced at the beginning were present at the end of the course.

If the trainees' beliefs indicate a high degree of consistency between the beginning and the end of the course, the question of 'why' arises. Firstly, why did the changes which were evidenced occur and secondly, why was there such a level of continuity between the beliefs early in the course and those held towards the end? These questions will now be considered in turn.

### **13.2.1.3 Changes in trainees' beliefs from the beginning to the end of the course**

First I will look at the trainees as a group and consider the changes in beliefs or at least the additions to their beliefs, including a focus on the appreciation of the need for preparation and planning, the importance of aims for a lesson, and the need to adapt one's teaching and materials to suit learners. Whilst some of these were mentioned by individuals early in the course, it is at the end of the course where they are major issues for most trainees. It is worth re-quoting Penny in one of the TP feedback sessions (3,4) and Theo in his second interview as they both illustrate the point being made here:

- P it's hard work  
TT well teaching is hard work  
P no I mean the it's just I don't mean that side of it it's just the  
TT what's the hard work?  
P just the all the tasks and everything and trying to work out how to fit them into it <TT: oh yeah> to make them flow you know  
TT that's that's the hard work of teaching [Penny, TPF 3,4]

I always thought that teaching was straightforward quite honestly that puts a sort of erm a very sort of belittles it sort of in many ways erm and I didn't understand the methodology of teaching and erm in some ways I was arrogant enough to think erm perhaps it wasn't actually really needed [...] then all my my sort of interruption if you want to call it was sort of taken away and I certainly understood the methodology of teaching was incredibly important and there was a lot more to it [Theo, interview 2]

Although, as discussed earlier, the trainees held largely anti-didactic beliefs about teaching which were acquired during their lengthy apprenticeship of observation in school, these beliefs about elements such as the need for a teacher to be humorous and lively, to have a good voice and presence, and the need for learners to be active, etc. were concerned with the front-stage behaviours involved in the job. Backstage elements include aspects such as the thinking, planning, preparing, reflecting, and decision-making concerning aims and objectives for lessons, and the selection of activities which were intended to achieve these aims. By the end of the course the trainees seem to have a developing appreciation of the importance of these backstage elements, although, as the quotation from Penny (above) indicates, even by the end of the third week she was still viewing teaching, that is classroom performance, as separate from planning and preparation.

The quotations above from Theo and Penny both indicate a notion of teaching which reduces it to its front-stage elements. By the end of the course Theo and Angela explicitly refer to the fact that they underestimated the complexity of the job. Penny also seemed aware of this although, as discussed, it seems that she still separated front-stage from backstage elements, seeing teaching as involving only the former. So the tendency to underestimate the complexity of teaching seems common to student teachers on CELTA courses as well as those in mainstream teacher education programmes (Book et al., 1983; Kalaiian & Freeman, 1994; Weinstein, 1988). Lortie's (1975) assertion about the limitations of the apprenticeship of observation, in providing trainees with a view of those elements of a teacher's job which are observable, that is the front-stage elements such as classroom management, seems to be upheld in this study. However the increasing attention towards the end of the course given by trainees to the backstage elements of planning and fulfilling aims suggests that trainees on this course do become more aware of the backstage processes once they take on the teacher role.

### **13.2.1.4 Consistency in trainees' beliefs between the beginning and the end of the course**

Turning now to the second question of why the trainees' beliefs at the beginning of the course were so similar, across the group, to those they held at the end of the course, we need to look at the course itself to try and understand how or why this may be the case.

The CELTA course was developed based on an opposition to traditional teacher education (see Chapter 2) with its emphasis on philosophy, psychology and the separation of theoretical knowledge and practice (Haycraft, 1988, 1998). The course has also been strongly influenced by various approaches such as humanism and neurolinguistic programming, resulting in an approach to teaching which claims a focus on the learners with the priority on the development of a comfortable, relaxed environment in which they can work in an active, involved way. As the CELTA has always involved training people to teach adults rather than children, there has been little need to deal with problematic issues such as maintaining discipline in the classroom. Further, with a general model in mind of language school courses in Europe, and the UK, the difficulty of teaching large classes and working around a shortage of materials have not been major concerns. The result of these various elements, which have shaped the development and hence delivery of the course, have tended to favour an eclectic approach to teaching which has at its core a reaction against much of the methodology traditionally employed in schooling.

Studies indicate that some student teachers arrive on their courses with beliefs that teaching should not be so teacher dominated, but rather should involve active learners (John, 1996; Johnson, 1994; Virta, 2002). However it was also reported, for example in the study by John (1996), that student teachers believed that teaching equalled knowledge transfer. It was also noted that trainees on these courses often seemed to revert to the default model provided by their schooling, sometimes seemingly against their better judgement (John, 1996; Johnson, 1994). I have discussed the generally anti-didactic beliefs of the trainees on the CELTA course and I have indicated that, unlike traditional teacher training, the CELTA course does provide an alternative model to the didactic one so familiar from their schooling. As was outlined above, with the exception of Theo, who initially seemed to approve of a teacher-centred approach, the other trainees did not seem to change their opposition to didactic teaching so much as

they came to understand a model that they could apply to achieve a more student-centred focus.

Freeman (1992) outlined a number of characteristics which he thought would increase the likelihood of a teacher education course having an impact on trainees: a unified discourse; reflexivity in the practices of the teacher educators and the use of reflection for trainees; the utilisation of different contexts of teaching; and an underlying constructivist practice on the course. The CELTA course achieved a largely unified discourse partly due to the fact that the centre of theory was also the centre of practice and also that the two trainers involved in the course interacted with each other on a daily basis. Although their discussions centred on the trainees and their progress, these contacts allowed considerable interaction concerning methodology and pedagogy. The trainers and teachers were also graduates of the same system that produced the trainees, that is the UCLES certification process. Freeman's point about the need for teachers to be taught in the way that they are expected to teach was something commented on by several trainees and was very evident in the reflexive approach to the input sessions (Freeman, 1992). Further, as mentioned earlier, this modelling was also reinforced by the lessons of the experienced teachers, too. The context of teaching on the CELTA course was always a real-world language school, and the teaching always carried a degree of risk, as it was all working with real students and it was all assessed. Trainees were reminded a number of times, though, that trainers regarded making mistakes as a part of learning, and students who tried novel or more risky techniques, such as Angela's use of role play or Theo's use of the overhead projector for a group writing task, were not penalised for taking chances. However in relation to Freeman's final point regarding the need to underpin a teacher education course with constructivist principles, the CELTA clearly diverges. There was never any discussion with trainees of what they brought with them to the course, and trainees were expected to adopt and use techniques without much consideration of their beliefs or stance towards these techniques.

There seem to be some differences between student teachers on this CELTA course and those in mainstream education. Edwards (1997) and Maynard (2001) refer to mainstream trainees who are keen to immediately position themselves as colleagues, and practising teachers, and are afraid of being seen as learners who may not be fully knowledgeable. This contrasts with the student teachers on the CELTA who, although keen to be seen as teachers, also very clearly positioned themselves as learners. This

was expressed in many ways, for example, in their acceptance of help and criticism from trainers and other trainees, and in the way several trainees, most notably Penny and Helen, referred to how they could learn from students in the class, as the extract below, taken from an interview with Helen, illustrates:

in actual fact the teacher doesn't know everything that its a two way process erm its not you're Mr Wonderful or Mrs Wonderful and here I am with a learner who doesn't know anything but in actual fact its a two way process erm that we can both learn from each other [Helen, Interview 2]

There was also a general acknowledgement by all trainees that the Certificate course was the first step in their development as teachers, which included learning more about grammar and trying out new and different techniques in the future. In this way the trainees on this course were not afraid to cast themselves or at least allow themselves to be cast in the role of peripheral participants.

It is not simply the *ideas* which underlie the course which differ from a more traditional teacher education programme; some of the *practices* are also quite different. This will be explored next, along with a look at what happens to trainees on the course.

On the course the trainees are introduced to the tools of ELT that they are expected to use. It should be noted that on the whole, trainees do not have the option of whether to use many of these tools; they are simply expected to use them. Examples of tools which trainees are required to use in order to pass the course include drilling, the use of exemplification, and pairwork. There are also concepts which they are expected to adhere to, such as the minimisation of teacher talking time and the maximisation of student-to-student interaction. Although trainees on this course were introduced to task-based learning as an alternative to the PPP format and encouraged to try it, this session occurred later in the course (Monday, Week 3) than the sessions introducing a grammar presentation approach. Thus the trainees were prepared to use the PPP approach as a organisational and presentational tool.

Earlier in the thesis (Chapter 3.1), it was suggested that a sociocultural approach to learning through the use of tools could be usefully combined with an understanding of skill theories on learning. As was discussed in that section, trainees are expected to perform with the tools before they have mastered them. Later the role played by TP feedback in this process will be considered, but here I wish to discuss the performance / mastery issue. It was outlined earlier how the trainees seemed to readily embrace techniques and concepts which they felt filled a gap in their own education or which

fitted their notions of learning and teaching. An example is Theo, who talked about the importance of teacher questions in order to check that students understood the points of the lesson. In the second interview he focused specifically on concept questions, explaining that they had fitted this perceived gap in his own schooling. There were many occasions in TP feedback where Theo brought up the issue of concept questions, usually telling the other trainees that they needed to use questions to check students' understanding. Another example where trainees' beliefs seemed to feed into a ready embrace of techniques taught was Helen and her positive attitude towards the role of feedback for learning. It can be seen in the description of her TP feedback that she focused on this aspect of teaching and worked hard to master different methods of dealing with feedback to learners. This element of focusing on a perceived gap was also reported in a study of student teachers carried out by Gupta and Saravanan (1995).

Despite the lack of choice for trainees in taking or rejecting tools presented to them, there were nevertheless clear examples of resistance as well as examples of trainees embracing techniques and concepts. One example was Helen with drilling. She had stated quite unequivocally in her first interview her belief that rote learning was not effective, and so it was perhaps unsurprising that her lack of drilling or a need to work on her drilling was mentioned in feedback on several of her classes. Her comment in the Reflection assignment which was completed in the final week is telling: 'I have also learned that it is possible to drill students without feeling that it is a waste of time and effort'. It is possible that this represents a change in her beliefs about drilling, although this was not confirmed by evidence from other data sources.

A further and very clear example of resistance to the techniques and concepts of the course comes from Penny and the strikingly different outcomes related to her mastery of voice projection and teacher talk. As was seen in the case study (Chapter 7), she was repeatedly told that she needed to work on her voice projection and this continued throughout the four weeks of the course. Penny herself seemed to accept that this was something that she needed to work on and had even mentioned voice as an important quality for a teacher in the first interview. In an exchange in TP feedback session 3,4, it became clear that her resistance to working on voice projection seemed to come from her beliefs about what it was possible to change over a course of such short duration. This example contrasted with her problem with teacher talk. Despite saying in her first interview that it was important that learners had a chance to speak and it should not be just the teacher talking in class, she was criticised for lecturing students in



the first TP feedback session. However she achieved an ‘overnight transformation’ according to the trainer, which was backed up by other trainees, in which she brought her talking under control and reduced it to an acceptable level. Clearly, she not only believed it important to master the control of teacher talk but she also must have viewed it as something she could accomplish in the time available.

Wertsch (1998) referred to the phenomenon of mastery without appropriation which he exemplified with reference to history teaching / learning in the former Soviet-controlled Estonia. On the CELTA course, as has been documented, trainees are required to perform techniques in an ongoing process towards mastery. That is, the techniques or tools were part of a skill cycle in which trainees received input on the tool, often through demonstration and explanation in the input sessions. They were then encouraged to try the techniques and received feedback on them. Often subsequent feedback would then evaluate the degree to which the performance of the technique had improved. As I have mentioned, trainees, on the whole, did not have an option to use techniques as all teaching was subject to observation and assessment. Therefore trainees worked towards the development of mastery. According to Wertsch (1998), resistance could lead to a tool being mastered but not appropriated. On the CELTA course, though, it would seem that when faced with the requirement to use a technique which conflicted with their beliefs, trainees resisted mastery itself, choosing to ignore certain techniques as far as possible. Direct confrontation or explanation was avoided.

Whilst this approach may have been possible with some techniques such as drilling or methods of handing out work to students, resistance to concepts such as reducing teacher talking time would not have been acceptable. The degree to which these concepts and their respective practices were appropriated remains in question.

### 13.2.2 A Focus on the community

We have seen over the last few pages that trainees bring to the course a range of beliefs about teaching and learning and that these beliefs influence the learning on the course. This is despite the ‘tabula rasa’ training approach implicit in the UCLES syllabus and employed by the trainers. It is now time to shift the focus from the individuals to the context and community level. This will draw on findings discussed both in the cases, Chapters 7-12, and additionally presented in the course context, Chapter 6.

The role of the TP feedback session has already been mentioned but here it will be considered in more detail. Fulfilling a crucial role in supporting the teaching practice on the course were the TP feedback sessions. They were maximally relevant, and, taking place after the completion of TP, they were immediate and situated. Their timing allowed trainees who were teaching the next day to incorporate the feedback into the following day's preparation and teaching. The tutors dealt primarily with feedback on topics that trainees had previously covered on the course and offered advice but not criticism of elements not covered. This probably contributed to the trainees' sense that theory and practice were well integrated on the course. Additionally, trainees were praised by their peers for incorporating and applying recently learnt theory into their classroom practices. For example, Angela praising Penny for using finger correction and David praising Angela for her work on word stress. Clearly this relates to the skill cycle (see Chapter 3.1):

the skimming exercise [...] so that was another erm another element of what we've learnt this week so you put that into practice [David to Angela, TPF 1,5]

I thought you've obviously listened to all the lessons [P laughs] coz we had an example of finger use which was the first time anybody used that for error correction [...] we saw loads of new approaches today yeah I thought that was really good [Angela to Penny, TPF 2,2]

### **13.2.2.1 Learning from peers**

The issue of peer praise for applying theory to practice brings into the discussion the most striking aspect of the TP feedback, and this is the social interactional essence of the sessions. The trainees' contributions to the feedback on their peers were central to the success of these sessions. All of the trainees became involved, offering advice, support and criticism of each others' teaching, and thus the circulation of knowledge amongst the trainees in the group was an integral part of the TP feedback. The trainees gave feedback based on the knowledge learnt in the input sessions, their observation of experienced teachers, conversations with learners and their own classroom experience. They commented on the degree to which trainees' behaviour conformed to the norms of the community – as seen in sometimes quite prescriptive comments to each other – and again by focusing on and hence reinforcing the importance of teaching techniques which had been recently taught on the course. Some examples of this are Helen and Theo's censuring of Jeff for using French in the classroom, Angela criticising Jeff for

forgetting to pre-set the task before a reading exercise, and Penny's comparison of Helen to Mike, an experienced teacher, who she said was more humorous.

Another major element of the TP feedback was the fact that trainees were present observing both lessons and feedback and hence had an opportunity to learn from each other. They were able to see other ways of dealing with classroom issues and teaching, and they were able in a sense to observe themselves but in a more secure, distanced fashion. There were a number of examples of trainees learning from each other. This included learning through observation of teaching, for example, Theo saying he had learnt about visual aids from watching David teach; also from listening to feedback on each other, for example, Theo learning about organising a jigsaw listening from observing Angela's class and feedback.

The importance of learning from peers was a point that has been made particularly clearly by researchers using a participatory approach. Within this framework novices do not simply learn from interaction with experts but also from the circulation of knowledge within their peer group. It can be seen that on the CELTA course this occurred in three main ways: the observation of peers in the TP sessions; the formalised peer-peer feedback involved in the TP feedback sessions; and in the less formal peer-peer interactions throughout the course. The observation of peers teaching allowed trainees not only to see the multiple ways in which a task may be approached but also facilitated them in calibrating their performance against the other novices. This point was made by Collins et al. (1989). The observation of peers and associated potential for calibration encouraged trainees to drive each other forward in a competitive yet supportive environment. In the feedback sessions on TP, the trainers were careful to encourage and require trainees to give feedback to each other regarding their performance. As has been noted, these sessions were rich with examples of trainees helping, supporting and criticising each other and there were clear examples of breakthroughs in understanding which took place in these sessions. Examples include Penny's developing understanding of the meaning of 'exemplify'; and David explaining to trainees who had previously been absent Robert's point about monitoring. There were also many other examples of trainees helping each other with assignments, lesson plans and materials outside of class time. All of these points support the assertion of the value of paired placements made by Bullough et al. (2002) and Manouchehri (2002). These two studies reported that when trainees were paired in their teaching practice placements, they felt more supported and worked together to help each other and

collaborated in planning and reflection; furthermore, peer interaction contributed to the student teachers' development of the subject matter as well as pedagogical issues, and enhanced reflection on learning and teaching.

### 13.2.2.2 Learning the discourse of ELT

The TP feedback also played a major role in trainees' learning to talk about teaching and learning using the vocabulary and terminology of the discipline. There were numerous examples of the teacher trainer naming activities, and trainees appropriating and using this terminology. There were also examples of trainees seeming to struggle with terms, for example Jeff: 'I got very good comeback from them' (TPF 4,2) and Helen 'what do you call it ex..erm' (TPF 3,4); mispronouncing terms eg Theo 'I elicited elicited' (TPF 1,3); or often hesitating before using the terms. There were also examples of trainees negotiating the term that they were trying to use with the tutor and other trainees, for example in this extract from TP feedback session 1,4:

- P I didn't do the verb I don't know whether you noticed  
TT you didn't write up the verb 'to be' you mean?  
P yeah in in 'am' or 'is'  
TT no you just wrote the '-ing form' yeah that's just the verb 'to be' yes

Richards et al. (1996) reported that trainees rapidly adopted ELT terminology and this is borne out in my study. Maynard (2001) and Murray (2000) both commented on trainees using terminology before acquiring a rich and complex understanding of the terms, something both researchers saw as serving to help the trainees become an accepted part of the community. This was observed on the course, particularly with Theo who seemed to adopt and use terms of which he appeared to have only a limited understanding.

Lave and Wenger wrote about how part of the process of moving from peripheral to full participation in a community involves learning to talk like a practitioner or, more accurately, 'learning how to talk (and be silent) in the manner of full participants' (Lave & Wenger, 1991: 105). This extra phrase 'and be silent' is important here, as one of the key elements of their teaching that trainees received feedback on was their ability to control their teacher talk. Reducing their talk was something the trainees struggled with and received explicit help with, in the form of advice on how to give clearer and minimalised instructions and explanations, and on how long to wait before supplying

students with an answer. Theo in particular, was explicit in the second interview about his discomfort with silence in the classroom ('I don't like uncomfortable silences when the students students are talking to themselves and I just have to pace the room') and Jeff and Angela criticised their fellow trainees on several occasions in TP feedback for waiting too long before stepping in with the correct answers. Conversely, Jeff and Theo were both criticised by the tutor for not allowing students long enough before stepping in and providing the correct answers. In the TP feedback on one of her classes, Angela commented 'I was scared of their silences' in an attempt to explain why she thought she had talked too much. Learning to be silent was clearly something that trainees struggled with alongside learning to speak like a practitioner.

It should be noted that the trainees' learning to talk and be silent like a teacher was something on which they received feedback in much the same skill cycle as with other tools. Their use of language in the classroom, in the sense of not talking too much, controlling their explanations and instructions, and their grading of language were major targets in the TP feedback sessions. This was particularly the case at the beginning of the course.

As outlined above, the adoption of terminology served to help trainees to gain access to the community (Maynard, 2001; Murray, 2000). It also, in a more immediate way, served to help trainees to communicate their ideas with others. This distinction may be helpful in understanding an apparent contradiction within Theo's practices. He was an early adopter of terminology in the TP feedback sessions, and, as mentioned above, he seemed to use terms before he had a full understanding of them. His attitude towards learning languages, expressed in the interview towards the end of the course, may explain his desire to master and use these terms:

accuracy doesn't matter so much to me I wanna get out there I wanna get out there armed with my new language and I wanna talk to people 'look I've got this new weapon now' [laughs] I can grind people down in Indonesia I can grind people down in Portugal [laughs] not just England [laughs] I can state my opinions in every language around the world [laughs]

The contradiction lies in the resistance to the use of ELT terminology which Theo seemed to evidence elsewhere. Bakhtin (1981) and Wertsch (1998) described the friction and resistance which tool users can feel. The resistance seemed to be expressed in Theo's description of his difficulty with assignments: 'they wanted you sort of shove in big words you know you had learned they wanted [you] to to become familiar and

comfortable with using teacher teacher jargon' [Interview 2]. This resistance could be associated with the other major element of learning the discourse of a community, a certain resistance Theo felt to joining a profession he believed 'stinks':

I always thought that teaching was straightforward quite honestly that puts a sort of erm a very sort of belittles it sort of in many ways erm and I didn't understand the methodology of teaching and erm in some ways I was arrogant enough to think erm perhaps it wasn't actually really needed I think I've become cynical about the sort of teaching profession because one of my bugbears today in Great Britain is erm the teaching profession I think it stinks [...] I hate to see what's going on in our education at the moment

### **13.2.2.3 Deliberate practice**

The reflection assignment and the second interview were key elements in shedding light on the tactics employed by trainees for dealing with the feedback on their teaching. Several trainees, David, Theo and Angela, mentioned a strategy of choosing to focus on a few points from the feedback on each session and working to master these points before moving on to other ones. This very deliberate practice was in fact encouraged by the course requirement to give feedback under the headings 'main positive points about my lesson today', 'improvements since my last lesson / consolidation of good points' and 'points I need to work on'. The lesson plans that trainees were required to complete and submit from Monday of Week 2 onwards also had included a section entitled 'Trainee's aims' which required them to name two or three points which they were going to try and improve in the lesson. For example Penny wrote 'don't say no' on one of her plans, referring to changes she needed to make in her feedback to students and David wrote 'Less T.T.' and 'Elicit rules of grammar rather than lecturing the rules' on one of his. This 'deliberate practice' was identified by Anderson (2000), as a crucial element of skill learning (see Chapter 3.1). Anderson, citing a study by Ericsson et al. (1993) reported that deliberate practice, that is, the process of identifying discrepancies between correct actions and discrepant ones with a subsequent focus on the elimination of these points of discrepancy was what separated experts from novices and not simply a lengthy period of practice.

#### 13.2.2.4 Learning from observation

As was touched upon in the section above, the observations which were part of the course – observation of trainees teaching, observation of experienced teachers and the reflexive modelling of the tutors – were all significant factors for learning on the course. The course offered trainees the opportunity to observe multiple experts and peers in a real teaching situation. All trainees talked about the different but equally effective individual styles of teachers at the school, and all trainees seemed to find someone with whom they could identify in terms of their teaching persona. Besides this, the observation of the experienced teachers offered trainees the chance to see not just the theory of language teaching but also this theory applied in action.

The importance of multiple experts and of reflexive modelling has been commented on by a number of researchers and is seen as a major factor in a participatory framework as well as in skill learning (Britten, 1985a, 1985b; Collins et al., 1989; Lave & Wenger, 1991). Several trainees commented on the fact that the experienced teachers taught using the techniques, concepts, and skills that the trainees themselves were learning on the course and using in their teaching practice. This real-world value reinforced the worthiness and importance of the techniques and concepts dealt with on the course. In addition, trainees were taught in the way in which they were expected to teach, with the tutors building their sessions around group and pairwork, trainee involvement and activity, and notions such as fun, variety, and learning from mistakes. Penny's comments on this reflexive teaching are worth repeating here as they sum up the integration and coherence of the course as a whole:

what we were asking the students to do especially in the participation thing we were also asked to do in our tuition so that's where you could see it does work it is fun [...] and that was exactly the way it was in the teaching practice and and in the experienced teachers' lessons as well it was just the way it was the way we were taught was the way we were going to teach [Penny, Interview 2]

Elements of the TP feedback sessions and of the various parts of the observation touch upon some of the key characteristics of the course. They are reminiscent of the conditions for learning in a sociocultural 'learning as participation' approach outlined in Chapter 3.1. The course is carried out in the real-world environment of a private language school in which trainees are involved in teaching and mixing with real students and expert teachers. From the start of the course, the trainees are treated as novice teachers, and are referred to as colleagues; they are allowed to use the staff room

and trusted to use the school resources such as the photocopier. Thus, from the start they are a part of a community of practitioners.

### 13.2.2.5 Working in the periphery

A key element of the participatory approach is the move from a peripheral to a central role in the community. As was discussed in the outline of the course, trainees started with a twenty minute lesson in which they were given detailed TP points outlining what they had to teach, and they were supported and assisted in the guided preparation sessions in terms of how they could teach the lesson. This support was gradually reduced over the duration of the four weeks to the point that trainees were choosing their own lesson focus and preparing it themselves by Week Four. They also moved to teaching for one hour. Thus the participation and responsibility for the process on the part of the trainees increased proportionately. Trainees did not, however, achieve full practitioner participation or responsibility on the course, in that they were never involved in teaching fee-paying students, and hence the pressure of paying clients was not present. Trainees did seem to be aware of this, as in the following exchange, taken from an input session in which trainees, in this case Penny, Theo and Angela, had to discuss and plan a course outline for a fictional group of business people:

- A they're gonna want erm  
P a result  
A yeah, a result, yeah, cause when you're paying it's quite different  
T you have the incentive  
A yeah, they really want everything they can get out of you  
[Input, Week 3, Day 2: Angela, Penny, Theo]

In addition, the fact that trainees are teaching together gives them a sense of shared responsibility and a sense of mutual support. Support whilst teaching is also potentially available in the form of the tutor who told trainees at the beginning of the course that they could ask him a question if they needed to. In the following extract, taken from my fieldnotes, Helen was writing up student contributions onto the whiteboard when the other trainees attempted to let her know they thought something was wrong. The trainer (Jim) stepped in to indicate that she was correct:

- T [Helen] goes round gp [group], in turn & elicits sentences – writes up correct form.  
Ss [Students] have to use ones not already done. Elicits –ve s [negatives] & writes up.



Ts [trainees] at back make a lot of noise when st [a student] comes up with sentence wh [which] doesn't go. Jim nods approval to Helen. [Fieldnotes. TP 1,4]

Trainees also did not take on the full responsibilities of a practitioner, that is, elements such as testing, writing reports and marking homework etc. Despite these limitations to their teaching role, they were involved in many of the various tasks in teaching, and they changed levels so that they could experience different types of teaching role. Variations in their teaching order means that they were involved with taking the register, greeting or dismissing the class and dealing with latecomers. Further, varying the type of lesson that they taught meant that they experienced different aspects of teaching such as grammar presentation, practice activities and reading lessons.

As was discussed earlier in this section, the trainees on this CELTA course differ from those reported by Edwards (1997) in that, unlike the student teachers she reported, trainees were accepting of their learner roles. They accepted that they were peripheral in terms of not teaching fee-paying students and not being full teachers, and, whilst they were on the whole willing to take on more responsibility, they did not seem as keen as Edwards' student teachers to hide their need for learning and present themselves as full participants. In response to a question in his mid-course interview about having the freedom to change his lesson plans, David responded:

I think it's good to have at this stage I think we need some kind of guidance as to topic areas and er aims because otherwise there would be too broad a scope there'd be no logical succession in the lessons [...] it has to become more minimal as as three weeks have passed but erm no some guidance definitely [David, mid-course interview]

It was noted in the case study of Penny that she, in particular, was reluctant to accept responsibility for her lesson and teaching right up to the end of the course. She assigned responsibility to the tutors and the TP points that she was given, and to the coursebook for elements which were criticised in the feedback sessions. Even when aware in advance of problematic aspects to her lesson she resisted personal responsibility for change. Although this behaviour could be seen as idiosyncratic and to some degree it was, in that it was more extreme than other trainees, the attitude expressed by David above also indicated this willingness to remain peripherally involved in the process.

Related to this acceptance of being seen in the role of learners in the classroom, several trainees discussed how they could learn from students – most notably Helen and

Penny. David also expressed this idea, as in the following extract taken from the mid-course interview:

they'll [the students] help you out as well at the end of the day they know that we are only practising [...] they know that we need them to help us out as much as they are trying to learn something about the about the English language and how to speak it and whatever so it's a two-way thing and I think the students realise that as well as us [David, mid-course interview]

As was discussed in the section on the TP feedback, learning from peers is an important part of learning as participation. On the CELTA course trainees learnt from each other in many ways: from working together in input sessions, observing each other's TP and feeding back to each other on it, or listening to feedback from the tutor; helping each other with for example activities, lesson plans and advice; and through driving each other on through competition and by setting examples. Observing each other also enabled trainees to calibrate their own performance against their peers.

### **13.2.2.6 Changing the community**

Much has been written in the 'learning as participation' literature, (in Chapter 3.1.2.2), about how the incorporation of newcomers into a community changes the community itself (for example Lave & Wenger, 1991). In the context of this course, the first question would have to be 'what is the community?' If the community is taken as the school where trainees take the CELTA, then there are several ways in which the community can be changed. On the final day trainees are involved in giving feedback on the course to the trainers. I was aware that several changes had been made since the piloting of my study – two courses earlier – as a result of this process. In addition to this elicited feedback and deliberate change, trainees also feed back into the school community through their own participation on the course by going above and beyond expectations of their contributions. The group of trainees had a direct influence on the nature of the experience for all group members including the tutors on the course. Additionally, in the case of the course I observed, two members of the group, Theo and Angela, were subsequently employed by the school on completion of the course. Clearly, this would feed back into the school community. However, if the community is seen as larger than the school, for example language schools in the UK, centres running the Certificate or even the ELT community in general then obviously feedback into the

community is going to have less impact. However, by becoming teachers in ELT, even if for a short time, the trainees will nevertheless influence the profession.

### **13.2.2.7 Difficulties in using the learning as participation model**

There are a number of problems in considering the course within a framework of ‘learning as participation’, not least of which is the notion of community just mentioned above (see also Chapter 3.1). With little distinct or widespread knowledge base or system of practices and beliefs, the induction of the trainees into a community is somewhat limited. However if the language schools in the UK are taken as a type of community, then it may be possible to consider this as a community of practice into which newcomers are enculturated. Another element is that apprenticeship does not usually include external testing or assessment, and community participation does not usually include more formalised learning. The CELTA course clearly has evaluation and components such as the assignments which are requirements for course assessment rather than real world tasks. However, due to its impact, the teaching practice is considered far more central to the experience than the assignments and hence the notion of a practising community is very real to participants. Additionally, some of the aspects, such as the lesson plan, which may also be seen as a testing tool, are emphasised by tutors to have a real world purpose, as the following examples taken from written feedback to David indicate:

Lesson Plan: ...Procedure was organised but rather too short; I couldn't have taught the lesson from the lesson plan. [TT Written Feedback, Week 2, Day 4; David]

Clearly this plan is below standard – you need to provide a statement of lesson names coupled with procedure, interaction, timing, and stage changes. This is a course requirement. [TT Written Feedback, Week 3, Day 1; David]

...procedure sometimes lacks detail – I wouldn't know what to do [TT Written Feedback, Week 3, Day 3; David]

Clearly, the tutor indicates real world purpose and, in the second example, the requirements of the course, in his attempts to encourage David to improve his plan.

One further element is the question of what is central and what is peripheral in regard to teacher education. Clearly the trainees when involved in teaching were central participants. However I would argue that, as they did not assume full practitioner duties and responsibilities, they were to some degree peripheral whilst on the course.

### 13.2.2.8 Learning with / from tools

Wertsch (1998) asserted that using a tool to perform an action would lead to a transformation in two areas, the learning effect *with* the tool, that is, the increased capability of the user as they use and master the tool, and the learning effects *of* the tool, that is, the cognitive transformation which occurs as a result of using the tool. I have discussed the role of feedback and of observation in the process of trainees learning to use the tools. It can be seen that the trainees, as they master the tools to which they are introduced, become more proficient in the classroom. An extract from TP feedback in which Theo talked about David's lesson sums this point up well:

today for the first time this week David looked like a proper teacher this was the first time he was standing up there oh it's David and he's a teacher not one of the students [...] and and there were improvements he was more relaxed you were right in saying that erm better interaction with the students this time round it was extremely well structured I thought and your grading was better erm er good grading and er you achieved the aim [TPF 1,5]

Looking for evidence of a cognitive transformation in trainees which goes beyond the immediate context is more difficult. However I think there were a number of clear examples of this, such as the development and elaboration in Penny's thinking about grammar or the change in the way Helen talked about her school mathematics experience. Theo's increasing pre-occupation with concept questions, exemplification and clarification are also good examples, as his feedback to other trainees develops until by the end of the course it is very similar in nature to that offered by the tutors themselves. Probably the clearest evidence for an out-of-context effect was offered by Theo in the final interview:

actually my girlfriend was saying to me tonight she says she can't believe how I've changed I've changed completely as a person for the worse [laughs] no no for the better for the better erm which have I have I've changed dramatically doing this I don't want to back to being how I was [...] before [Theo, Interview 2]

### 13.2.2.9 Post-course teaching experience

Only three of the five trainees who passed the course returned post-course questionnaires, Angela, Penny and Helen. Both Angela and Helen commented on the need for more teaching practice on the course. Whilst Angela and Helen seemed to be

comfortable with much that they had learnt on the course, Penny was far from happy. It is possible that the different teaching situations that they entered after completion of the course played a role in this. Helen entered a college, and, apart from mentioning a difficulty in teaching monolingual students rather than multilingual, she seemed to be happy with the techniques she learnt on the CELTA. Angela was teaching for the same school in the UK that she did the CELTA in, and so her colleagues and work conditions were similar to those experienced on the CELTA programme. Penny however went to work for a private language school in Greece teaching children. She mentioned the problem of discipline as a difference with the course ('screaming at the children in order to get classroom discipline is not my idea of fun') but her overwhelming comments related to the shock of entering a community of practice which was very different to that of the language school where she did the CELTA. She seemed to have struggled to transfer the skills she learnt to her new setting, saying that learners 'do not know the CELTA teaching techniques and there's no time to explain'. As a result she said that she had stopped using many of the techniques she had learnt. Her experience of having to deal with this new community also caused tension between her and the school owners as she writes of her resistance to them:

You have to do what the owners of the school say which is fair enough but the education system here is more or less corrupt and screaming at the children in order to get classroom discipline is not my idea of fun (me not shouting causes a problem but unfortunately I'm not going to conform to their way of 'teaching').

The net result of this 'traumatic' experience was that Penny abandoned TEFL after the completion of her first year of teaching in Greece and returned to the UK to continue to work as a secretary.

## 13.3 Research Questions Revisited

This section is intended to serve as a brief summary of the findings reported earlier in this chapter, but arranged according to the initial research questions reported in Chapter 5.1.

### 13.3.1 Research Question 1: Beliefs

What is the impact of the CELTA course on the pedagogical beliefs of trainee teachers?

- a) What are the beliefs of the trainees at the start of the course with regard to teaching / learning, language and learning to teach?
- b) Are the trainees' early course beliefs modified during training?
- c) What is the nature of these modifications?

These questions have been dealt with at length in the discussion chapter. It was shown that trainees arrive with a complex of beliefs which in part reflect their own idiosyncratic experiences and in part are unified by a largely anti-didactic stance, adopted in a reaction against much of their school learning experiences. These anti-didactic beliefs relate to the treatment of learners, that is they should be treated as equals and with patience and respect; they also relate to classroom practices, such as the need for teachers to avoid dominating lessons, such as in lessons that follow a pattern of the teacher talking and writing on the blackboard and students copying.

In the discussion chapter I highlighted the fact that trainees' beliefs on the whole are not radically altered over the duration of the course. Rather, beliefs that were held at the beginning are still held at the end, although possibly with a clearer rationale or understanding. I explored reasons for this and outlined the idea that change was not a major element largely because the trainees arrived with beliefs which were in line with the CELTA ethos. What trainees did need and what they in fact got on the course was an understanding of how to apply the principles of learner-centred, learner-focused teaching in actual classroom practice.

### 13.3.2 Research Question 2: Experiences

How do the trainees experience the CELTA course?

What role do their beliefs about teaching and learning play in this?

The discussion chapter has outlined how the beliefs that trainees brought with them to the course influenced their experience. Trainees' beliefs influenced their mastery of some of the techniques on the course despite the fact that the course adopted a 'tabula rasa' approach, in which trainees were expected to work towards mastery of the techniques taught. This was particularly noticeable when trainees noticed a gap in their knowledge or experience in their schooling, and when this was felt, trainees seemed to make a considerable effort to master the technique or concept. Contrary to this, when a technique was felt to conflict with a belief held, trainees seemed reluctant to master it, seeming to simply neglect it rather than confront the issue.

Despite the fact that the course was a training course which incorporated particular models of teaching, the trainees' classroom practices were shown on the whole to reflect the beliefs that they held. This was particularly the case in terms of their beliefs about teaching. Their beliefs about language were not as clearly reflected in their classroom activities.

### 13.3.3 Research Question 3: Reflections

What are the trainees' immediate reflections on the course as evidenced in the final week of the course?

What are their reflections on the course as evidenced in a post-course questionnaire?

On the whole trainees' reflections on the course were positive. In keeping with teacher education students elsewhere, they valued the teaching practice the most, crediting it and the feedback sessions which followed for essentially teaching them to be teachers. All trainees seemed aware of the integration of the course, with several commenting on how different parts of the course supported other parts. Examples included the observation of experienced teachers, which helped trainees to see the techniques and skills that they needed to learn and deploy in action in the classroom. Somewhat unsurprisingly, the assignments were the least valued, although there were differences, for example Penny and Learner Profile I and David and the coursebook assignment.

More distant reflections on the course, expressed in questionnaires returned by three of the trainees, were on the whole also positive. Trainees, now novice teachers, were using techniques introduced to them on the CELTA although local conditions had an impact on teaching practices.

### 13.3.4 Research Question 4: The Course

What learning conditions and learning opportunities does the course provide?  
What role does social interaction play in their learning?

It was seen that the course adopted a skill cycle for teaching the trainees, which centred around planning, teaching, and feedback, with this then feeding into a further cycle of planning and teaching. The role and importance of social learning were discussed, as were some examples of this such as learning from peers and the importance of learning to use the tools of the trade, including the adoption of the language of practitioners. It was also shown that the skill cycle was central to the process of learning to use these tools. Many examples were taken from the socially-situated feedback sessions which support the argument that the social interaction was very important for the trainees' learning.

Other important and influential elements of the course were highlighted, such as the reflexive modelling and the unified discourse of trainers.

## 13.4 Limitations of the study

There are a number of limitations which will affect the conclusions and implications of this study. One of the major limitations is due to the methodological approach employed. In-depth case study was chosen because it provided a rich thick description of the setting, the trainees and the course in question and allowed me to gain an insight into the perspectives and experiences of the individuals. This study was, however, only of one centre and, whilst there may be grounds for claiming that due to standardisation of the course content by UCLES, experiences may be similar in different centres, this would be an oversimplification of human experience. So it needs to be remembered that the group of individuals on this course may be like those on other courses in some respects, but they will also differ in perhaps significant ways. In terms of how typical



these trainees are, it is difficult to say as the data which is available is either vague and from single institutions or is not available, for example from UCLES. Further, of course such data probably would not represent the life histories other candidates bring to the CELTA. However, data which is available suggests that the group of trainees on this course do share much in common with trainees elsewhere, that is they fall within the age range expected on such courses and have similar educational backgrounds. Similarly, Barduhn's (1998) statement, reported in Chapter 4, that the most challenging aspect for many trainees is to accept the need to move away from a traditional didactic model would support this issue as being a major issue on the CELTA programme.

Another limitation of the study arose from the intense nature of the course, that is that the data collected, although thorough, could have been more comprehensive. I would have liked to have conducted longer interviews and used more comprehensive questionnaires to gather data. However, time was severely limited and stress and fatigue were significant factors in dictating the timing and length of interviews and other research-oriented activities. It was not simply the trainees who suffered from this stress and tiredness; I also struggled, as I worked through lunch-hours and attempted to maintain a distance when people around me were dealing with the pressure of teaching for the first time.

### 13.4.1 Limitations of the interviews

Arrangements for interviews were subject to the difficulties associated with working with people and in this case working with people under extreme pressure. For example the interview with Angela which had been arranged for 16<sup>th</sup> November did not take place until 19<sup>th</sup> because, after staying behind to interview her, she complained that she felt too ill to continue being interviewed that day (she had flu) and it was postponed until 18<sup>th</sup> – this was again postponed when she missed her train and arrived at school too late. Similarly the final interview with Theo was shorter than I had hoped, as he had to go out during the lunch hour because his brother had locked himself out of his house. There were also difficulties in timetabling an interview with Jeff due to his need to spend his free time dealing with his business commitments.

Interviews were arranged for breaks in the day – most commonly lunchtime, as many trainees were reluctant to arrive early or leave late. Lunchtime was therefore the only available option. Interviews were carried out according to my interview schedule

although again due to the difficulties often incurred with such issues as dealing with people, late starts sometimes meant that questions had to be left as we had to get back to class or trainees started getting stressed because they had preparation to finish. Two assignments required trainees to interview language learners, which they did in free classrooms in their lunch-hour, thus increasing the difficulty for me on these two issues.

### 13.4.2 Limitations of the observation

One of the main difficulties that I found as an observer was the balancing required to maintain good relationships with trainees and staff against the desire to not influence the course or trainees too much. This latter point was discussed in section 5.2.4.3. As was explained in the introduction, another major difficulty faced in the field was simply fatigue due to the long hours and constant requirement to be on the ball. As breaks were filled with interviews or arranging interviews or filing, this did cause considerable stress.

As with all observation situations, there was the difficulty of dealing with a fast-paced, interactive classroom with seven or thirteen individuals (depending on the type of class, that is, six trainees or twelve plus the teacher trainer) many of whom were keen to be involved and to contribute to group discussions.

Despite the issues and difficulties concerning the use of interviews and observation mentioned above, the data which was outlined in the findings chapters is remarkably consistent. There are many examples of concerns and beliefs raised by trainees which were multiply-evidenced within different data sources. Of particular note is the fact that data which was collected which were less influenced by me, such as the assignments, the TP preparation and feedback served to verify the validity of the other data. And, on the whole this was successful, with a high degree of coherence across the data sources.

## 13.5 Implications and Suggestions for Further Research

The implications of this study can be divided into those relating to research and those relating to pedagogy. These two areas will be considered in turn. Following this will be some suggestions for further research.

### 13.5.1 Implications relating to research

The crux of this study was the use of multiple theoretical approaches to investigate and understand the process of learning to teach on a CELTA course. Thus ideas from constructivist, skill theory, and sociocultural approaches were employed in a complementary way with the result that the study reflected the complexity of the issues at hand. It allowed a richer picture to be seen than studies in which a single theoretical framework was utilised. It is hoped that this study can contribute to the voices that are encouraging the melding of these varied frameworks.

The eclectic approach which was employed in this study was intended to allow a focus on several levels, the individual, the social interactional level and the contextual level. I believe that the study has demonstrated that this can be used to good effect.

### 13.5.2 Implications for teacher education

In terms of the pedagogical implications of the study, these can be divided into those relating to the world of ELT and those relating to a broader world of mainstream teacher education.

#### **13.5.2.1 Implications for ELT**

The study has shown that, despite the brevity of the course, there are many positive attributes which enhance the learning of individuals who undertake it. Of note in this respect are the points relating to the opportunities that trainees have to learn from each other in a real-world setting. In this world there is a relatively unified discourse and there are multiple experts who model and reinforce the concepts and techniques taught

on the course. It is clear that trainees on this course were similar in many ways to trainees taking mainstream courses, in that they had a tendency to underestimate teaching, seeing it as largely involving classroom performance, and that they had fairly anti-didactic beliefs. Like many trainees on mainstream education courses, their beliefs were very influential and resistant to change. Unlike many courses however, the anti-didactic beliefs were not simply shared by the trainers and experienced teachers involved in teaching on the course, but trainees were given a model which enabled them to escape those acquired during the long apprenticeship of observation.

Whilst it can be seen that the skill cycle allowed trainees to learn and begin the process of mastering useful techniques for teaching, the lack of discussion of the beliefs that they brought with them to the course must be considered a weakness. Trainees need help to become more aware of their beliefs and how these impact on the choices that they make in the classroom. This could be in part achieved through a more structured approach to helping trainees to reflect on the teaching that they are seeing and doing. On this course, reflection was rather neglected, and, although trainees did discuss observations on an ad hoc basis, as the course wore on and time became more precious this was reduced (the issue of reflection will be returned to later in this section). The trainees' beliefs also had an impact on their reaction to the techniques and input that they received. Often this was assumed to be lack of understanding but I think 'belief block' played a role in this. As was pointed out earlier, trainees were not really given the option of choosing which techniques to use and which to reject; rather they were expected to use what they were taught. They dealt with this by either just doing it or by avoiding the issue. Greater openness to their beliefs could help trainers and trainees to avoid belief block.

The trainees were taught that language learners have beliefs which influence their language learning and their behaviour in the classroom. However there is a tension relating to the fact that the trainees themselves were treated as 'tabula rasa'. Whilst it is recognised that the course is a training course with a tight schedule and a considerable amount to cover, I feel that trainees' beliefs need more attention.

The shock experienced by Penny when she took up her post-course teaching contract in a Greek language school also raises a question about the narrowness of EFL training. As has been mentioned, the course was initially intended to teach European teenagers and adults in language schools in the UK and abroad. However, many novice teachers like Penny move into teaching situations which are very different to this, often

working in the state system and frequently involving the teaching of children. Whilst it is recognised that it would not be possible on the CELTA, at a month in length, to teach trainees about the teaching of children in addition to teaching adults, this market is extremely important in EFL and shows no sign of abating. Penny's traumatic experience in her new community of practice was sufficient to cause her to abandon TEFL. Research has shown that most teachers leave EFL within two years of taking up a job, and, whilst it is known that at least a proportion of this number were simply paying for an extended holiday, questions remain about the rest. UCLES currently offer a Certificate in Teaching Young Learners and some centres offer this as an add-on after the CELTA. However these centres are few and far between and many teachers, like Penny are thrown into the deep end with children's classes. It should be noted, of course, that asking teachers to work with children having only trained with adults is somewhat similar to the EFL adage, fortunately seldom heard now, that to teach EFL all you need is to be a native speaker of English. Similarly, as CELTA trainees are essentially unqualified in teaching children, one can only wonder about the cost to parents and children themselves of this.

One of the defences for the brevity of the CELTA by course providers and UCLES is that the certificate essentially produces people who are 'TEFL-initiated' rather than 'TEFL-qualified' (Lewis, 2001). Since its inception (see Chapter 2 for further details) it has been expected that further training takes place in-country when in a new job placement. The recent revision of the course saw the replacement of the grading system which explicitly stated that trainees would need more or less guidance from future employers with one which requires trainees to be aware of their need for further development. However, one survey found that 70% of novice teachers received no additional training upon taking up a teaching position (Timmis, 2000). The position taken by UCLES then does not seem tenable, and their abdication of responsibility for training people to teach in a variety of circumstances and with a variety of students is unfortunate.

Of course, the reason that this situation is allowed to happen is due to the market-driven nature of the course, which is not subject to state regulation as is the case with teacher education courses in the state sector.

Returning to the issue of reflection, I have commented that on this brief course, reflection was limited to a rather immediate response to TP which was required in the feedback session which followed. It should be noted that some CELTA courses, such as

International House, require trainees to use reflection journals. When combined with the tendency for the course to adopt a fairly prescriptive approach to learning to teach which does not take into account trainees' beliefs, then there is a real danger that trainees who graduate from the CELTA may not simply struggle to adapt to their new teaching situation but also may fail to develop as professionals. The CELTA programme fulfils the need for a survival approach which is what may be required for preservice teachers; however, in order to continue to develop as teachers they need to be able to reflect and to learn independently. Whilst the post-experience DELTA course may provide this, coming as it does after the completion of at least two years of teaching, the number of teachers who take the DELTA, said to be 10% of those who take CELTAs, is worrying. If the CELTA is the only professional qualification undertaken then does it provide a sufficient springboard from which novice teachers can develop? At the moment there are few incentives for EFL teachers to return to the training room. DELTAs and Master's degrees are expensive and the return on investment can be low. I think for the CELTA to function properly, that is providing a survival level entry-point to the profession, then the framework for development and progression to a further, post-experience qualification should be clearer and incentives for continuing offered. However, with ELT being such a market-driven business, I cannot see this happening in the near future.

### **13.5.2.2 Implications for mainstream teacher education programmes**

Many of the advantages of the CELTA course mentioned above, particularly those relating to the social and contextual aspects of learning on the course, could be usefully integrated into mainstream teacher education programmes. The results of a study of paired placement of trainees with mentors in school by Bullough et al. (2002) and of formalised discussion sessions following observation and teaching (Manouchehri, 2002) would support my assertion that teachers on mainstream teacher education programmes could benefit from working in paired or group teaching placements rather than the traditional single placings. The findings of my study were clear in their support of the role of learning from and with peers. Other elements which have been touched upon by researchers such as Freeman (1992) were the importance of reflexive modelling and a unified discourse. My study indicated that trainees not only noticed but seemed to benefit from these elements. One further element was that trainees taking teacher

education courses would probably benefit from encouragement to see themselves as learners rather than attempting to immediately position themselves as practitioners in the centre of the action.

### 13.5.3 Further research

As has been mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, there is a real dearth of research on teacher training in ELT, and in particular on the CELTA and DELTA programmes. There are a number of areas in which further research should prove interesting and fruitful and these will be outlined briefly in this section.

As this study was limited to an in-depth look at what happened in one centre running the course, the obvious choice for further research would be to look at other centres to test the degree of similarity and difference in how the course is delivered. This could focus on covering a range of courses in language centres, FE colleges and universities, and also both part time and full time courses in the UK and abroad. Clearly this variety of centres is likely to have an impact on delivery and various elements could be examined in order to understand in a practical sense these differences and their respective impact.

Further research could be carried out on various elements which make up the course in order to understand what these lend to the CELTA experience. Candidates for analysis would be a focus on the observation of experience teachers or the TP feedback sessions. It would be interesting, for example, to investigate whether the effectiveness of the teaching practice feedback session varies according to the composition of the trainee group or the approach of the trainer.

In addition to research on different centres and the way they carry out courses, further research could be usefully carried out on trainees on different courses. A larger scale questionnaire study of trainees' beliefs and attitudes, possibly pre- and post-course, would be interesting, although there would be a number of practical difficulties associated with such a study, not least of which would be getting the co-operation of teaching centres.

A further area which would be worthy of research would be what happens to trainees when they move into the work place upon completion of the course. It is known that a large number of trainees leave TEFL each year, usually within two years of taking a course or starting work. Although a certain number of drop outs will be due

to people intentionally working in the field for a short period only, there must remain a large number of people who simply fail in the workplace for one reason or another. Although a study of this kind would be logistically difficult to carry out, I think it could provide an insight into the profession and possibly into the preparation of novice teachers.

Obviously there are many other areas in which research could be directed, such as the role of reflection on a course of such brevity, and how this is best achieved, or research directed towards the trainers on the course, looking at their backgrounds, beliefs and the impact that this has on their delivery of a fairly strictly controlled syllabus.

## 13.6 Concluding Remarks

I feel I have learnt a great deal about all aspects of research whilst working on this thesis. I have developed a greater appreciation of the planning and implementation of a research project and the design of research tools.

I have also learnt from the experience of the teacher educators I dealt with, in terms of practical ideas and activities and I have developed a greater understanding of some of the issues involved. I have also gained insight into the experiences of the trainees on the CELTA course. All of these insights are useful not only in an academic sense but will also assist me in the future when I undertake responsibility for the education of trainees myself.



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# APPENDICES



# Appendix A: Interview schedule

- A1.** Could you tell me about any past learning experiences you remember  
What did you learn?  
How did you feel  
What were the factors which influenced your learning?
- A2.** Could you tell me about your a teacher you have really admired or liked.  
Could you tell me about your a teacher you have really disliked  
Why did you admire/dislike them.
- A3.** How would you characterise a good teacher or good teaching?
- A4.** Have you learnt another language besides English?  
Which language?  
How did you learn?  
What factors influenced your success or difficulties in learning the language?
- B1.** Why are you doing the CELTA?  
What do you expect to learn on the course?
- B2.** How do you think people learn to teach?  
Which parts of the course do you anticipate will be most useful in terms of your learning to teach?]
- B3.** (If appropriate) How do you see the course fitting with your own teaching experience?

## C. Focused questions: Teaching

You're going to teach a group of students, any level you feel comfortable with for a 45 minute lesson. Any topic you want. You've been teaching them for several weeks and feel comfortable with them. What would you be doing and what would the students be doing (focus on events not description of room). Why would you / they be doing those things.

# Appendix B: Course Questionnaire<sup>12</sup>

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**NB: Information provided in this questionnaire will have no effect on your course grade and individual responses will not be discussed with anyone connected to [school name] or UCLES.**

**In the case of any results being published, all responses will remain anonymous.**

## 1. Teaching Experience:

(a) Do you have any teaching experience?

- No
- Yes, up to 1 year
- Yes, 1-2 years
- Yes, more than 2 years

(b) Is your teaching experience in ELT?

- No. Which subject did you teach? \_\_\_\_\_
- Yes. Which country did you work in? \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Other Work Experience:

Do you have any other full-time work experience?

- No
- Yes... Please give brief details

## 3. Language learning experience:

(a) Do you speak any other languages besides English?

- No
- Yes... Please indicate which languages and the approximate level...

Language (1) \_\_\_\_\_ Level: \_\_\_\_\_

Language (2) \_\_\_\_\_ Level: \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>12</sup> Some formatting elements of the questionnaire have been altered to conform to thesis regulations. ie the page margins and font size of some headings have been reduced; due to some reduction in space between questions, the pages of the questionnaire do not appear exactly as in the original.

(b) Did you learn this language:

	Language (1)	Language (2)
At school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
At college / University	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
At night-school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self-study	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other :	_____	_____

## 4. The CELTA Course:

(a) What is your main reason for doing the CELTA course?

(b) Is there anything in particular you are looking forward to on the course?

(c) Is there anything you are worried about concerning the course?

(d) How have you found the course so far?

## 5. Sentence completions:

Please read and complete the sentences below, writing down your immediate response to the prompt if possible.

The best way to learn a language is ...

A good teacher should always ...

A good teacher should never ...

When teaching English, it is important to ...

The key to a good language lesson is ...

## 6. Views of Learners

The words in the box reflect differing views of learners. Which view(s) do you most agree with? Are there any other terms which come to mind? Give reasons for your answer.

Learners are:

resisters

explorers

raw materials

partners

receptacles

clients

a) View(s):

b) Reasons:

## 7. Effective teachers and learners

(a) What, in your opinion, makes an effective teacher? Indicate up to 5 factors.

(b) What, in your opinion, makes an effective language learner? Indicate up to 3 factors.

## 8. Any other comment?

If you have anything you would like to say about the course or any of the topics mentioned in the questionnaire please use the space below.

# Appendix C: Post-Course Questionnaire<sup>13</sup>

Please note, all information gathered will remain completely anonymous, at all times.

Please return the questionnaire to:

1. Since doing the CELTA:

Please give details below of any EFL teaching experience since doing the CELTA - including your current position  
If you have worked in more than two jobs please feel free to write overleaf

	Job 1	Job 2
Country		
Institution (eg State school, or private language school)		
Students (eg children, adults)		
Rough dates		

2. Did you receive any further in-country or in-school training on taking up any teaching positions? Please give brief details: length, what did it consist of:

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<sup>13</sup> Some formatting elements of the questionnaire have been altered to conform to thesis regulations, ie the page margins and font size of some headings have been reduced.

3. Please tick any of the following teaching publications that you read on a regular basis:

ELTJ

EL Gazette

IATEFL Issues / SIG newsletter     MET

Other, please name:

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4. How similar / different have the kinds of students and the kinds of lessons you've taught been to those you were prepared for on the CELTA?

(a) Have the students been different in any respect?

(b) Have the lessons been different in any respect?

5. Have any differences you mention above led you to change your teaching approach?

6. Can you think of any other influences besides the CELTA course on your teaching eg reading, workshops or conferences? What effects did they have?

7. How useful do you think your CELTA course has been to you in your EFL teaching?

(a) Useful aspects:

(b) Less useful aspects:

8. How far do you think that the techniques and approach(es) you learnt on the CELTA were adequate preparation for your subsequent teaching?

9. What advice would you give someone who was about to start the course?

10. What suggestions would you make for improving the CELTA course?

Thanks for your help

Further Contact:

Could you write your contact address here, if it is out of date, thanks.

(NB this will not affect the anonymity of your reply.)



# Appendix D: Course Timetable

## WEEK 1

Monday	11.00 – 11.45	Introduction	
	12.00 – 13.15	Learning Language I: Language Lesson – Role of Teacher / Learner, Learner Styles / Motivations	Jim
	14.15 – 15.45	Guided Preparation for Teaching Practice	
	16.00 – 17.00	Live Lesson Observation I: of your TP tutor & your TP class	
	17.15 – 18.15	Meeting your TP Students	
Tuesday	11.00 – 11.45	Guided Preparation for Teaching Practice	
	12.15 – 13.30	Language Awareness I: Tense / Time, Structure / Function	Jim
	14.30 – 15.30	Lexis I	Jim
	16.00 – 18.15	Teaching Practice	
	18.15 – 19.00	TP Feedback	
Wednesday	11.00 – 11.45	Guided Preparation for Teaching Practice	
	12.15 – 13.30	Language Learning II: ARC – Activity Types	Jim
	14.30 – 15.30	Language Learning III: Clarification and Focus of Form / Meaning in a Picture Context	Robert
	16.00 – 18.15	Teaching Practice	
	18.15 – 19.00	TP Feedback	
Thursday	10.15 – 11.15	Live Lesson Observation II	
	11.30 – 12.15	Guided Preparation for Teaching Practice	
	12.30 – 13.30	Language Learning IV: Checking Concept	Jim
	14.30 – 15.30	Language Learning V: Restricted Use	Robert
	16.00 – 18.15	Teaching Practice	
	18.15 – 19.00	TP Feedback	
Friday	11.00 – 11.45	Guided Preparation for Teaching Practice	
	12.15 – 13.30	Receptive Skills I: Reading	Robert
	14.30 – 15.30	Tutorials I: Discussion of Progress	
	16.00 – 18.15	Teaching Practice	
	18.15 – 19.00	TP Feedback	

## WEEK 2

Monday	11.00 – 11.45	Guided Preparation for Teaching Practice	
	12.15 – 13.30	Lesson Planning	Jim
	14.30 – 15.30	Lexis II	Robert
	16.00 – 18.15	Teaching Practice	
	18.15 – 19.00	TP Feedback	
Tuesday	10.15 – 11.15	Live Lesson Observation III	
	11.30 – 12.15	Guided Preparation for Teaching Practice	Jim
	12.30 – 13.30	Learning Language VI: Clarification & Focus of Form / Meaning through a Text	Jim
	14.30 – 15.30	Error Analysis & Correction	Robert
	16.00 – 18.15	Teaching Practice	
	18.15 – 19.00	TP Feedback	
Wednesday	11.00 – 11.45	Guided Preparation for Teaching Practice	
	12.15 – 13.30	Learning Language VII: Restricted Use & Authentic Use – Role Play & Information Gap	Jim
	14.30 – 15.30	Phonology I: Word Stress	Robert
	16.00 – 18.15	Teaching Practice	
	18.15 – 19.00	TP Feedback	
Thursday	10.15 – 11.15	Live Lesson Observation IV	
	11.30 – 12.15	Guided Preparation for Teaching Practice	
	12.30 – 13.30	Language Awareness II: Present Simple & Continuous	Robert
	14.30 – 15.30	Receptive Skills II: Listening	Jim
	16.00 – 18.15	Teaching Practice	
	18.15 – 19.00	TP Feedback	
Friday	Morning free to catch up		
	13.30 – 14.15	Guided Preparation for Teaching Practice	
	14.30 – 15.30	Tutorials II: Discussion of Progress	
	16.00 – 18.15	Teaching Practice	
	18.15 – 19.00	TP Feedback	

## WEEK 3

Monday	11.00 – 11.45	Guided Preparation for Teaching Practice	
	12.15 – 13.30	Task Based Learning	Jim
	14.30 – 15.30	Course Books: Syllabus & Approach	Jim
	16.00 – 18.15	Teaching Practice	
	18.15 – 19.00	TP Feedback	
Tuesday	10.15 – 11.15	Live Lesson Observation V	
	11.30 – 12.15	Guided Preparation for Teaching Practice	
	12.30 – 13.30	Phonology II: Sentence Stress	Robert
	14.30 – 15.30	Timetabling & Planning a Series of Lessons	Jim
	16.00 – 18.15	Teaching Practice	
	18.15 – 19.00	TP Feedback	
Wednesday	11.00 – 11.45	Guided Preparation for Teaching Practice	
	12.15 – 13.30	Authentic Use: Speaking	Robert
	14.30 – 15.30	Timetabling & Planning a Series of Lessons II	Jim
	16.00 – 18.15	Teaching Practice	
	18.15 – 19.00	TP Feedback	
Thursday	10.15 – 11.15	Live Lesson Observation VI	
	11.30 – 12.15	Guided Preparation for Teaching Practice	
	12.30 – 13.30	Phonology III: Sounds	Robert
	14.30 – 15.30	Language Awareness IV: Future Forms	Jim
	16.00 – 18.15	Teaching Practice	
	18.15 – 19.00	TP Feedback	
Friday	11.30 – 11.45	Guided Preparation for Teaching Practice	
	12.15 – 13.30	Writing Skill	Robert
	14.30 – 15.30	Tutorials III: Discussion of Progress	
	16.00 – 18.15	Teaching Practice	
	18.15 – 19.00	TP Feedback	

## WEEK 4

Monday	11.00 – 11.45	Guided Preparation for Teaching Practice	
	12.15 – 13.30	Phonology IV: Intonation	Robert
	14.30 – 15.30	Language Awareness V: Present Perfect	Jim
	16.00 – 18.15	Teaching Practice	
	18.15 – 19.00	TP Feedback	
Tuesday	10.15 – 11.15	Live Lesson Observation VII	
	11.30 – 12.15	Guided Preparation for Teaching Practice	
	12.30 – 13.30	Evaluating & Monitoring Progress / ELT Exams	Jim
	14.30 – 15.30	Language Awareness VI: Modals	Robert
	16.00 – 18.15	Teaching Practice	
	18.15 – 19.00	TP Feedback	
Wednesday	11.00 – 11.45	Guided Preparation for Teaching Practice	
	12.15 – 13.30	Professional Development I: Other Teaching Situations	Robert
	14.30 – 15.30	Language Awareness VII: Conditionals	Jim
	16.00 – 18.15	Teaching Practice	
	18.15 – 19.00	TP Feedback	
Thursday	11.30 – 12.30	Live Lesson Observation VIII	
	12.45 – 13.30	Guided Preparation for Teaching Practice	
	14.30 – 15.30	Language Awareness VIII: Articles	Jim
	16.00 – 18.15	Teaching Practice	
	18.15 – 19.00	TP Feedback	
Friday	11.00 – 12.15	Professional Development II: Finding Work, Support Systems, Publications, Courses, Organisations	Robert
	12.45 – 13.30	Reflections on the Course / End of Course Admin. Course Ends	

NB: Breaks and lunch were not entered on the timetable, but it can be seen from the timing that there was a morning break of 15 or 30 minutes, a lunch break of 1 hour and an afternoon break of 30 minutes. These were usually spent getting coffee / snacks, preparing for TP eg photocopying or writing out the lesson plan, and working on other things such as assignments, organising the portfolio or making materials for future TPs.

# Appendix E: Observation Sheets

## CELTA Observation of Experienced Teachers

You will observe a total of 8 hours of lessons taught by experienced teachers.

The purpose of the observations is to give you the opportunity to reflect on classroom techniques and the process of learning / teaching.

You may see teaching that you feel is effective or ineffective. You may see procedures discussed on the course in use or quite different approaches used. Above all the observations offer a chance to learn about ELT from the inside.

At the end of the course you will be asked to write an assignment of 800 words which will ask you to reflect on your own teaching, what you learnt from observing your colleagues, and what you learnt from observation of the experienced teachers. You could organise this part of the written assignment under the following headings - Classroom Management, Correction, Learner Differences, Use of Published Materials.

It is difficult to produce an observation task which will fit all types of lessons. The following is a list of areas which you might like to consider. None is more important than another. Make notes while you are watching. The notes do not need to be handed in or kept in your Portfolio but you will need to refer to them when you write the final assignment referred to above.

- The teacher's use of gestures to give instructions, convey meaning, to get error correction or elicit language and ideas.
- Focus on the learners - you could keep track of which students speak or contribute the most / least. Did you notice differences in classroom behaviour/participation or strategy amongst students of different cultures or ages? Did some students need to rely more on the teacher or more on the written word or on their dictionaries?
- Correction - when and how were errors corrected? Did the teacher enable students to correct themselves? Did students correct each other? Was correction immediate or delayed? Were there times when or most errors were corrected or when none was corrected?
- How was phonology handled? What techniques were used for oral drilling? How were elements of phonology dealt with at the board?
- How were instructions given? How were they checked?
- How were published materials used? Were they adapted?
- How was the board used? Was attention paid to layout and use of colour? How could the boardwork have been developed?
- How many different types of classroom interaction did you notice?

OBSERVATION OF EXPERIENCED TEACHERS

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Class/Lesson Type: \_\_\_\_\_

Aims \_\_\_\_\_

<p>THE LEARNERS – differences of: contribution, cultures, ages. Reliance on teacher, written work, dictionaries.</p>	
<p>INSTRUCTIONS – how given, how checked.</p>	
<p>PHONOLOGY – oral techniques, board techniques.</p>	
<p>CORRECTION – when, how, who, how many.</p>	
<p>GESTURES.</p>	<p>INTERACTION TYPES.</p>
<p>PUBLISHED MATERIALS – how adapted.</p>	<p>BOARD – layout, colours, development</p>

# Appendix F: TP Points

CELTA TP POINTS

WEEK:  / 2 / 3 / 4

DAY: Mon /  / Wed / Thu / Fri

Level: *Pre Int*

Trainee: *Penny*

Lesson Type: *Grammar*

Time: *30 m*

Teaching Order: *3*

AIM{S}:

*To practise questions in the present simple*

*To present and practice adverbs of frequency: usually always  
often never sometimes*

MATERIAL:

*Reward PreInt p 3 Grammar ex 1,2,3*

STAGES:

*(1) Clarify the frequency adverbs with a matching exercise using a percentage system - eg always = 100% never = 0%*

*(2) Drill the adverbs from the board*

*(3) S's do ex 3. Clarify the position of the adverbs - go before or after the verb?*

*(4) Ex 1 - exemplify then pairs. Feedback at the board*

*(5) ex 2 - exemplify then pairs. Feedback at the board.*

*(6) Pairs interview each other using the questions. They report back on their partner*

ADVICE / NOTES:

CELTA TP POINTS

WEEK: 1 / 2 / 3 / 4

DAY: Mon / Tue / Wed / Thu / Fri

Level: *Pre Int*

Trainee: *Theo*

Lesson Type: *Grammar*

Time: *30 m*

Teaching Order: *1*

AIM{S}:

*To present & practise questions in the present simple*

MATERIAL:

*Reward Pre-Int p 2 Ex 3,4,5*

STAGES:

- (1) ex 3 Exemplify the task with no. 1*
- (2) Pairs order the questions*
- (3) Feedback to the board*
- (4) Play tape - are they correct?*
- (5) Exemplify underlining the stress with no.1*
- (6) Pairs decide on stress*
- (7) Feedback to the board.*
- (8) Play tape - are you right? Pause after each item.*
- (9) Drill questions from the board.*
- (10) Ex 4*
- (11) Ex 5 - do as a milling activity*

ADVICE / NOTES:

*Zero the counter number and ensure you can use the cassette player blindfold.*



Level: *Pre Int*Trainee: *Theo*Lesson Type: *Listening / Phonology*Time: *30 m*Teaching Order: *2*

AIM{S}:

*To practise gist / intensive listening**third person singular of present simple**To present & practise pronunciation of three endings of third person ' -**s' /z/ /ɪz/*

MATERIAL:

*Reward Pre-Int p5 Listening & Sounds*

STAGES:

*(1) Pre-set task in ex 1 listening**(2) Feedback**(3) ex 2**(4) Replay if required. Pairs compare answers**(5) Feedback to the board**(6) Three columns on the board**/z/ /ɪz/ /s/**Exemplify each sound (eg laughs / lives / passs)**Students sort verbs in Sounds ex 1**(7) Check and drill from the board*

ADVICE / NOTES:

# Appendix G: Extracts from Guided Preparation Sessions

## Extract 1: Guided Preparation for TP (1,1)

Extract: 7 minutes recording time

[After drawing trainees attention to the TP points and handing out the course book to them, the tutor focuses on Theo's points]

TT So the students will need for stage one they'll need that exercise 3 in the book the jumbled questions right ^^ hold up a piece of paper or the photocopy of it 'here are some questions in the wrong order you put them in the correct order ok? look at number one one ok what's the correct order?' ^^ and the alert student will say? ^^ [Jim laughs] <Angela: what's your first name?> good and you can write on the board 'number one what's' – your – first – name?' Ok we call that in a very technical way 'exemplify' so what you'll find is that the best way the easiest way and the most idiot-proof way of giving instructions to the class especially at the low level is to get them to do an example with you if they can do that then they must know what to do and you can let them lose on the remainder of the task yeah so so there we've got the students to put the words in the right order for us everyone's seen it being done so they should be able to manage that 'ok right with a partner' and you need to let them know who they're working with so you go two two and two and two you don't say 'work in pairs' [inaudible] so pair them off ^^ and they can work together through 2,3,4,5,6,7,and 8 and er decide together what these questions should be which one should be at the end so you set them working on that and you can wonder round and make sure they're doing the right thing [inaudible] ok so when they all seem to have finished that then it says stage 3 feedback to the board so you say 'right now number 2 what's the answer to that?' and as they tell you you can write it on the board [inaudible] it's very important at this level to do feedback at the board if you just do it orally and say 'what's number 2?' just do it orally they may not pick up all there is whereas if you've got the answers written on the board then you can see what the answers are [inaudible] so that's feedback to the board they tell you the answers and you write them down then stage 4 now actually you could you could actually leave out stage 4 coz it says play the tape are they correct? I reckon it's probably easier if you do it with them you can just ditch that just cross out stage 4 because you're if it's wrong you've got the correct version on the board and that saves you having to mess around with the tape recorder in your first teaching practice [inaudible] just get rid of stage 4 [inaudible] alright ok so then stage 5 it says exemplify underling the stress with number 1 so er er what you can do is you can say 'right listen to this sentence' which is what 'what is your first name?' which is the stress word 'what's your first name? what's your first name?' and the stress word is? <trainee responds> good and number 2 would be 'how old are you? How old are you?' stress word?

<trainee responds> right so you can do that as I've done with the class underline 'first' and underline 'old' they've they've by this time they've copied down the correct questions so they've got them all anyway so what you can do now is simply read through each one and say 'right I'll read each question underline the stress words' ^ so you can go through that 'how much do you earn? how much do you earn? Where do you live? Where do you live? Are you married? Are you married?' what do you do? Dah dah dah?' and you've got to be clear in your own mind of course where the stresses are and keep it the same coz in fact you can stress any word you like it could be it could be er 'what's your first name? what's your first name? What's your first name? what's your first name?' so it depends on the context so you've got to be very careful that you've got that you're not careless and you stick to the same story otherwise you might make it different every time yeah [laughs] so they've got to identify where you've put the stress so have on your sheet just have it marked and stick to the same one don't change it [inaudible] so read each one out twice they just underline get them to check with a partner to see if they agree and then go over them say 'ok so number 2 was how old are you?' ok 'old' and then go through underlining the correct stresses on the board right? Is that ok?

T yeah yeah I'm just writing it down

55 TT alright yeah I put cross out number 8 I put 'play the tape are you right?' I think it'd be easier if we avoid the tape and you can decide where the stresses are and you see very often the tape is provided for non-native speakers you know if you were Japanese and your English wasn't very good you'd be very pleased because you'd get to play the tape [inaudible] so often the tape material is more ^ is more for the use of non-native speakers like if you were teaching French or something and you were one chapter ahead of the class you'd be quite happy to have the French on tape wouldn't you? So often we can avoid the tape [inaudible] alright so we can cut out the stage anyway so stage 9 'drill the questions from the board' so stuff we were doing this morning [inaudible] so you point at the tape and say listen 'what's your first name?' 'can you say that?' <trainees repeat> good all together <trainees repeat> good so individually and chorally and just go through each of them like that and listen quite carefully to make sure if they're saying 'what's your first name?' say 'hang on stress on first what's your first name?' so listen to how they're producing it and make sure they produce something closish to your model ^ alright? <Theo: yeah ok> er then stage 10 exercise 4 so simply it says 'look at the questions' so you say right 'here you are here are the questions which questions do you ask a friend which questions do you ask a stranger what do you think?' just to get things going so what do you think [inaudible] and exercise 5 you say right 'I want you to stand up' get them all standing up they've got their sheet with the questions on they go round the class and ask the questions and they go round and change partners like we did this morning with piece in front you work with a student and you read them off and it gives them that maximises the practice they've all got plenty of practice of asking and getting answers to those questions ^^ and er that's it really

80 ^ sit down  
and collapse is that ok?

T yeah fine

## Extract 2: Guided Preparation for TP (4,1)

Extract: 5 minutes recording time

- TT: Right what about you Theo?
- T: yeah what I've got I've got a writing exercise erm again on er on er on marriage so what I've got lined up I think I'm probably going to do this I'm not going to use the book at all er I'm going to write my own script basically and the the erm
- 5 core of my erm lesson is going to be erm basically this I'm going to write a whole load of sentences out erm for the erm students and I'm going to get them basically to write a story for example erm they're going to work in pairs first two students might have the sentence erm 'we inspected all the chapels and churches in our area' and then they have to go off and write 50 words on erm why they
- 10 chose [inaudible] a chapel or a church or St. Paul's or whatever and then the next students have another section and they take and at the end just sort of write them all down and get a whole story just bas..basically making up a story from what the students erm er write erm=
- TT = its based on this idea here?
- 15 T erm it its sort of only I don't like that too much <TT: no> coz I have to do too much pre-teaching and er this is a writing exercise I don't mind pre-teaching erm a little bit <TT: mm> erm but I thought its based on on that idea but I wasn't going to use that text I was going to use my own text and er yeah the first exercise er with regards to re-arranging the paragraphs thing do you think it's
- 20 worthwhile doing?
- TT this one?
- T yeah ^^ I wasn't sure I looked through it and erm ^^ I'm trying to think is it actually worthwhile doing in terms of the warm-up
- TT erm er I don't know you could
- 25 T sorry? ok yeah
- TT its a lead in that gets them into the topic <T: yeah> there's like honeymoon and=
- T =yeah so I like pre-teach a few things yeah yeah erm when they've actually sort of written their stories [inaudible] shall I sort of put it to the board and correct it as I go along would
- 30 you say? coz
- A it'll take ages though won't it?
- T well / or /
- TT / what / so they are ^ are they writing a section each?
- T yeah they are
- 35 TT which then they collectively put together?
- T yeah it is ess..it is essentially a writing lesson I might well=
- A = then why don't you just get them to write it on a big piece of paper each group and then you can put it on the board you've got the different sections <T: yeah> and see how it leads together there's no point in you re-writing it
- 40 T yes yes no there isn't I was wondering how to do the correcting I haven't done a writing lesson before and basically you know the plan is not particularly interactive there's nothing wrong with that erm but er normally teachers might say well I'll take them back and correct them and I'll give them back to you next lesson but in this case I want to do corrections within an hour obviously so I was
- 45 wondering really how to

TT right er yeah I know what you mean and it's a bit of a problem coz they say write their erm section together don't they? <T: mm> so they're talking about what they should write and how to write it you're monitoring and maybe you're perhaps saying you know what's that? [inaudible]

50 J what about the word order here?

TT yeah mini..yeah they're quite capable of making an awful lot of errors / kind of weeding a few out yeah / while you're monitoring

T sure so you're [inaudible] correction yeah

TT ok and then the problem is you now want them to put it on erm a board-legible form don't you? <T: yeah> which kind of it's a bit flat because all they're doing there is writing it out

55 T ok yes they are that's what I was thinking yeah I don't like flat you know me erm I I don't mind=

A =can't just get them to read it out at the end?

60 T I could do yes and just write out and maybe do a bit more correcting as I go along as they're reading out or / just make notes /

A / well just make notes / as they're reading it out

T sure or something but it'll do me good to keep a sort of passive role actually

TT you might like to short cut that situation ^ how can we ^ get it up on the board

65 I'm not saying I know but basically its like a test

T I can I I can use the overhead projector

D so what are you talking about trying are you talking about correction?

TT yeah yeah you could coz then they would write directly on the transparency and if they make a mistake simply <H: yeah yeah>

70 T oh right they can write on transparency can they? <TT, D: yeah> ah [inaudible]

A well it won't come through will it?

T ok so I can use the transparency that's a good idea ^ can they see what they're writing?

TT they need OHP pens

75 T / ok I'll get some /

A / why why can't you just do it / on a big piece of paper like you did it didn't you? / right at the beginning /

H yeah / or David did an / exercise in week one

A he got them to write down a story that he'd gone over on the board

80 P yeah and then he put it on the board

A they won't bother about doing it on a big piece or a little piece

T well you see its too small

TT and the other thing is its more complex <A: yeah> if they're gonna make mistakes we don't want them them sort of=

85 P =/ crossings out /

TT / crossings out /

T no no it'll be highlighted better and also its going to be clearer if you've got small pieces of paper how big [inaudible] you're still using A4 basically you know whereas an OHP

90 P can't you use pencils [inaudible]?

D unless you just=

P = / [inaudible] if they don't have / them

T / I think I think I use / I should use the overhead projector anyway

TT its nice it does because you can project it big enough

95 T it'll be an exercise you know so <TT: that's right> so I'll get some OHP pens  
then yeah?  
TT then you're just sitting there correcting it getting someone to read someone  
else's yeah 'can you read that again first sentence is that ok? read is that good  
English? Right what about this one? what do you think? This kind of procedure  
100 and its already there for you yeah  
T yes as long as my writing lesson doesn't turn into a reading lesson that's what I  
wanted to avoid coz as I say its essentially writing that they should be doing  
whereas its going to be reading if they're reading it out  
TT yeah the reading is a sharing of knowledge and correction  
105 T yeah ok well I'll work on that tomorrow  
TT ok I think that's it good

# Appendix H: Extract from TP feedback

## Session

### Teaching Practice Feedback (1,4)

- TT ok David
- D ^^^^ ok I've got the the positive points I put down first of all that that I got managed to get my timing right <TT: mm> which hopefully said something about it that it was a bit better delivery not rushing so much as I did on Tuesday
- 5 TT you certainly slowed slowed down today
- D sure and I thought my the boardwork was was quite clear
- TT mm yeah very strong visual approach [inaudible]
- D yeah the visual thing they seemed to understand it erm and I tried I don't know whether I did I think I lapsed a couple of times but I tried I consciously tried not
- 10 to give the instructions when I was doing the boardwork
- TT yeah good very very well done there big improvement yeah
- D and I think I don't think I I still haven't got very much confidence in drilling ^ I mean I did it but then again that could have been something to do with the size of the class in that when they're speaking they need to get a more positive
- 15 response because the guys that actually know something and they don't [inaudible]
- TT so you presumed they were most of them were quieter than=
- D =they were quieter today I I felt than other days
- TT sort of awkward drilling the quiet ones because [inaudible] drilled yeah that that
- 20 could be true as erm there's all of us lot sat at the back so it's quite a [inaudible] in a way isn't it produce things in front of the class and in front of a group of us lot at the back <D: and then> but they still did it
- D and then something that we were doing this morning which I should have done and I probably concept checking
- 25 TT yes yes that's interesting because erm what have we got we've got 'carpet' which could be confused with ^^
- D rug
- A er mat
- TT that's right yes lo..er lamp which could be confused with
- 30 H light
- TT er sofa confusing with
- D chair
- A armchair chair
- TT yes that's right dishwasher confusable with
- 35 H / washing machine \
- D / washing machine \
- TT yeah so those would be options wouldn't they to er and fridge confused with freezer maybe yeah so yes I mean obviously we've just been through it but we can start to incorporate that more and more particularly now so if you're

40 teaching vocabulary from tomorrow onwards then start to think about checking vocabulary and interestingly you can see the need for it can't you with erm today even though it's very simple vocabulary it does need checking up I mean lamp versus light it's er it's a significant difference and er as are rug and carpet so er

45 something we can work on as a group I think from now on good ok good good alright er who are the feedback people? ok

T er a very innovative er lesson good use of visual aids and well organised boardwork er improved attention to struggling individuals and I learnt the importance of visual aids when used well <TT: mm> mm yeah very good ok on

50 the downside erm perhaps I I agree with David actually perhaps it would have been er there should have been more examples er I would have used perhaps more examples like when you were doing the house er saying this is the first one now you can do the rest and put up a little=

TT =yes so getting them to do an example of the activity with you as part of the

55 instructions so it's all look at that one then they'd be clearer for example

T yes coz I I agree with you on the concheck..on the concept checking I er <TT: yep> but I found that very good very impressive

TT good ok who else has got feedback? sorry ... erm are you sure about that?

T sorry

60 J ^^^^^^ erm good attention interesting presentation good involvement and I just thought one point er when they didn't understand what you had drawn er you delayed a little bit too long you understand there was a a little pregnant pause there perhaps it would have been better to have gone in a bit quicker that was all when it was obvious they couldn't understand what what the visual was

65 were for

TT yeah that's that's a good point to pick up on coz sometimes they weren't clear what the visuals were <D: yes> so when you had the one that was er the square with the two dots so I mean what needs adding to visuals sometimes in some?=  
=pictures

H

70 TT well they were picture all but what needs adding to the pictures?

A [inaudible] / shoes so you ask a question \

TT yes / so for for for the cupboard \ what could you have added in there?

D well put food in it

TT yes you say what's this and we use it and cups and saucers yes so you need to

75 often add a kind of context yes just like the example we had with erm er a trolley [inaudible] so you say I'm in a supermarket yeah so you've got to maybe add context to the visuals so the dishwasher ok this is to clean plates and cups and that sort so dishwasher yes so often you can't rely on visuals alone you need visual and mime plus plus in context and then they'll be able to [inaudible] so

80 that's another learning point that you can't rely on a picture you need a context as well for it

J but I thought you know providing the er the house like that I thought was very good obviously [inaudible] <H: yes> I thought it was a very good presentation

TT yes very strong on visual presentation / [inaudible] topic it was nice \

85 A / the little house they liked that \

H and it involved them

TT yeah it was very simple but very very powerful isn't it sometimes very powerful

J I can only draw stick houses



TT  
90 yeah so yeah so certainly a dimension on from his last teaching it's much slower  
it's very cool calm and collected very smoothly executed very nice visual  
approach to eliciting you did the drilling and again you had a separate board  
stage you gave them time to copy the stuff down yeah very nice visual  
presentation you involved them in building up the rooms of the house which was  
95 what we were saying so really involved in the class all the way down the line  
you took great care with setting up the pairwork task and very successfully done  
and again you did very well with the weakest student you got him to produce a  
sentence that was good and again the only one he produced today you did well  
there it was well [inaudible] so yes so visuals need context really [inaudible] to  
erm another general point I think for for drilling I mean you did drill and you  
100 went round and it was very effective erm when you are drilling individuals now  
aim for stress and make sure they've got the stress in the right place which they  
did but you also need to listen out for sounds so for example they they're all  
saying 'lump' rather than 'lamp' yeah so listen out for two things at least the  
stress and are they getting the sounds ok an example later on what was it from  
105 someone else's was erm what was it 'chip' <H: oh yeah> for 'cheap' yeah oh  
and erm 'dirty' [/dirti:/] for 'dirty' so often it's a question of you know is the  
sound long or short so in 'dirty' it's a long sound they were making a short  
sound and producing 'dirty' which wouldn't be understood probably obviously  
'chip cheap' is a classic short 'i' long 'i' so listen out for the vowel sounds an 'a'  
110 [/@/] is often quite difficult for them when you consider you actually have an 'a'  
sound in lamp and they produce something sounding like 'lump' so what's this  
lump sounds quite different to the words lamp so lets as a as a kind of group  
thing start listening out for the sounds very carefully obviously there's a long-  
short issue or it maybe entirely the wrong sound as opposed to say stress so  
115 that's something people need to be alert to now that we've got the drilling on  
drilling is very effective so we can [inaudible] next time and listen more  
carefully to the sounds they're producing erm another thing we can think about  
erm is is randomising drilling coz we seem to be going around one by one by  
120 one so like the first person is off the hook and they kind of relax and the person  
on the end is getting tense coz my turn's coming in a minute but if you jumped  
around more random if you randomise the drilling it keeps it more lively it keeps  
them on because they could be asked at any time and the bigger the class the  
more important that is to be randomised jumping around so they never know  
when their turn to when they're going come to be drilled so and be careful about  
125 doing that kind of thing because it's a very aggressive to actually gesture which  
you were doing with a pen and pointing so either soften the gesture or use  
students' names that's another option start to use their names a bit more when  
you get feedback ^ a little aggressive so in certain cultures it can be very  
aggressive ok good yeah good very nice lesson came together very nicely very  
130 smooth excellent teaching good presentations great right Helen