METHODOLOGICAL TALES OF

ESL TEACHERS AND TESL TEACHER EDUCATORS

IN THE POST-METHOD ERA

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Dedication

For my beloved husband Steven,

my precious daughter Zoë,

and my supportive parents.

Abstract

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This MA thesis explores the stories ESL teachers and TESL teacher educators tell about their understandings of language teaching methodology in the "post-method era" (Brown, 2002). The goal of this thesis is to explore how ESL teachers and TESL teacher educators come to know what they believe about teaching by examining their pedagogical choices.

Seven ESL teachers from a city in Atlantic Canada participated in the study. Two of the seven are also TESL teacher educators. I used qualitative research methods, in particular, semi-structured interviews. I also conducted in-class observations and follow-up interviews with five of the participants. I also included autobiography in this research.

I used narrative analysis to analyze the research data and to identify different topics: entering the profession by accident, the influence of L2 learning, teaching by principles, formations followed by frustration, the use of music and movement, teaching to school culture, continuing professional development, research in practice, and educating for Guided Discovery and Task-Based Language Teaching. The data is represented as fictionalized narratives of the ESL teachers and TESL teacher educators— the tales of the narrator Joy and five main characters: April, Bridget, Cynthia, David, and Emily.

The research findings in this study include: (a) ESL teachers and TESL teacher educators have varied educational backgrounds and working experiences before teaching, (b) a teacher's own L2 learning experiences, favorable or unfavorable, influence his/her teaching in practice, (c) teachers learn to teach differently in various ways, (d) teachers and teacher educators teach according to their own principles and beliefs, but not according to a single method, (e) both teachers and teacher educators teach to fit the school culture; school culture has an influence on the language teaching methods/approaches/principles that teachers use in teaching, (f) teachers and teacher educators believe in eclectic methods in language teaching, (g) teachers who do not identity mainstream language teaching methods and approaches also teach effectively, and (h) some teachers are particularly loyal to a British system in second and foreign language education.

My research findings suggest that (a) sincere ongoing institutional support for teachers' professional development is necessary and important for the expansion of their knowledge and practice, (b) it is important for teachers and teacher educators to share knowledge after professional development with internal and external networking, (c) teacher education programs should include a teaching methods course (also see, Bell, 2007), and (d) teacher education programs should encourage and, most importantly, support practitioner research in the ESL classroom during the program so that teachers can continue with their helpful classroom researching as they begin to teach.

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1

Introduction

I started English as a Foreign Language (EFL) studies at junior high school in my hometown in southern China. Fortunately, for six years of secondary education, I was taught by the best teachers in the city. Because of my good foreign language learning experiences and results, before I graduated from high school, I decided to be an English language teacher. I chose to major in English Education at a teacher education university. My studies at university were very hard but also fulfilling. Over four years of study, I studied English language, British and American literature, and English language education. In my memory of English studies, there were not only a lot of grammar exercises and translation, but also a lot of reading, listening, writing, and conversations. Though I took a language teaching methods course during my undergraduate studies, I do not remember any related terminologies being used. I was not taught any of the mainstream language teaching methods that I learned later in Canada. For most of my EFL teaching, I taught with textbooks chosen by the department or the institutes. In the summer before I came to Canada, I also went to the workshops offered by a textbook publishing company, where the presenters were modeling their teaching.

My interests in language teaching methodologies started with my Canadian graduate studies in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) program. First I was introduced to Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and the Communicative Approach, or Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which have been around for a

few decades. Then I noticed most of my Canadian colleagues say that they learned their second or foreign language with the traditional teaching method: the Grammar Translation Method. Later on, I encountered one colleague who did not believe in language teaching methods and insisted that methods did not work. This perspective has formed the heart of my inquiry. I began to wonder what teachers know about methods, and whether they believe in them and use them. At the same time, some of my Canadian colleagues said that they used TBLT all the time, while others said that they did not use any methods, but they used different activities that they believed were good for their students. Further, most of the people I met who learned English as a foreign language comment that the English they learned in their original countries was not very useful because they realized that they could not understand or make themselves understood when they first came to the English-speaking provinces in Canada or other English-speaking countries. Some of them even used the word "useless" when they commented on their English learning in their original country. Looking back at my English learning experiences in China, I always feel very thankful. When I was an EFL learner, my teachers did spend quite a large amount of time on grammar. That was not all we did. We also spent time on the well-known four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In addition to these, translation was always emphasized. Certainly, I have been improving my English skills since I moved to Canada, especially since I started my graduate studies at university. However, I would not have been able to do as so well without my successful EFL learning and years of teaching experiences.

Certainly, the methods used to teach English as a Second Language (ESL) and EFL have developed and multiplied rapidly in the past 50 years. The Grammar-

Translation Method was used in the late nineteenth century, while the Direct Method broke from this tradition with the intention of remaining entirely in the target language. The Audiolingual Method revolutionized language teaching in the 1940s and 1950s with discoveries in applied linguistics. Communicative Language Teaching has been popular since 1970s as it attempts to focus on communicative competence (Brown, 2000). Of course, these are only four of the better-established methods; to these we can add Total Physical Response (TPR), Suggestopedia, CLT and others (Brown, 2000). Most recently, new research suggests that Tapestry of Language Learning (Oxford & Scarcella, 1992), Content-Based Instruction, and TBLT (Nunan, 2004; Willis, 1996) are more effective. Clearly, second and foreign language teachers, teacher educators, and language teaching scholars have been looking for the best way to teach a second or foreign language. There are many methods and approaches from which to choose.

During my graduate studies, I also came across the concepts of "postmethod" (Kumaravadivelu, 1994) and "post-method era" (Brown, 2002). With the influences from postmodernism and postcolonialism, some scholars started to question the concept of "teaching" (Stern, 1983), the concept of "method" (Clarke, 1983; Pennycook, 1989), and the concept of "best method" (Prabhu, 1990). Others (Larsen-Freeman, 1999, 2005; Liu, 1995; Richards & Rogers, 2001) argue that the problems that teachers have are not with the methods but with using the methods in the wrong place at the wrong time (Liu, 1995); that one of the reasons why methods have been criticized is that they are falsely assumed to be fully intact formulaic packages for teaching practice (Larsen-Freeman, 1999), and that teachers should modify and adjust the approach or method to fit their own teaching practice (Richards & Rogers, 2001). Kumaravadivelu (1994) claims that second

and foreign language education has shifted from a method-based condition to a postmethod condition. Brown (2002) uses the term "post-method era."

As part of the requirements to complete my TESL degree, I did my practicum in an immigrant learning program where adults learn ESL. It was a wonderful and successful experience. I had the opportunity to implement my previous EFL learning and teaching experiences and what I learned in the Canadian TESL program into my ESL teaching practice. I planned my lessons on a thematic unit—*Travel*. When critically reflecting on my Canadian ESL teaching experience, I realized that, because of various reasons, I did not include enough language focus activities or grammar noticing exercises in my task-based lesson plans, both of which are a necessary final element in the TBLT framework (Nunan, 2004; Willis, 1996).

My own experience as an EFL learner for twenty years, my role as an English language teacher in China for seven years, my Canadian graduate studies in the TESL program, and my Canadian ESL teaching experiences have inspired me to uncover the perspectives of ESL teachers and TESL educators on the issue of language teaching methods in this post-method era. While some scholars have decided theoretically to go "beyond methods" (Kumaravadivelu, 2003b), my MA research looks into the choice that active teachers make regarding language teaching and their teaching actions in practice. I started my research with the belief that the ways in which teachers teach are influenced both by their formal teacher education or professional training experiences and by their language learning experiences as younger learners or adult learners.

For my MA research, I explore how teachers have come to know what they know and to believe what they believe. I want to know what teachers know about and how they

learn language teaching methodology; I want to know what teachers do in their teaching practice; I also want to know how teachers view their own teaching actions. Three main research questions guide this study:

1. What are teachers' and teacher educators' understandings of and attitudes toward language teaching methods?

2. What do ESL teachers do in the classroom in terms of language teaching methods and approaches?

3. How do ESL teachers view their teaching actions?

By investigating ESL teachers' and teacher educators' experiences of, conceptions of, and attitudes toward different language teaching methods and approaches, my research examines how these professionals navigate their apparent choice of methods.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Since the end of the Second World War and the increasing awareness of the need to understand others' languages and cultures, discussions on second and foreign language education have often focused on teaching methods. However, in the last 20 years scholars and educators have shifted from looking for the best method to realizing that there is no single best method (Prabhu, 1990), to questioning the concept of method (Pennycook, 1989), and to suggesting going beyond method (Kumaravadivelu, 2003b) in the "post-method era" (Brown, 2002). It is interesting to note however, that in the scholarship and teacher education textbooks, even in this "postmethod condition" (Kumaravadivelu, 1994), the topic of method is still a popular but sensitive issue in the field.

The purpose of my research is to understand the perspectives and practices of ESL teachers and TESL educators. In this chapter, I review the related research literature on which I base my own research. Two themes are categorized: (a) approach and method, and (b) teacher knowledge in teacher education. Under the theme of approach and method, there are six aspects: a) the concept of method, b) second language acquisition research, c) sociocultural theory in second language learning and teaching, d) critical theory in language education, e) postmethod pedagogy, and f) reevaluation of methods and the postmethod condition. Under the theme of teacher knowledge in teacher education, there are four aspects: a) The concept of teacher knowledge, b) current research on teacher knowledge in second and foreign language teacher education, c)

teachers and the implementation of methods and approaches, and d) methods and teacher education.

Approach and Method

Many scholars and educators (e.g., Anthony, 1963; Brown, 2002; Larsen-Freeman, 1986; Pennycook, 1989; Richards & Rogers, 2001) attempt to distinguish between "approach" and "method" when defining language teaching methods. Richards and Rogers (2001) define approach as "a set of beliefs and principles that can be used as the basis for teaching a language" (p. 244). A method is "a specific instructional design or system based on a particular theory of language and of language learning" (Richards & Rogers, 2001, p. 245). According to Brown (2002), an approach is "the theoretical rationale that underlies everything that happens in the classroom" (p.12); a method is "a set of theoretically unified classroom techniques thought to be generalizable across a wide variety of contexts and audience" (p. 9). Prabhu (1990) refers to method as "a set of activities to be carried out in the classroom" and "the theory, belief, or plausible concept that informs those activities" (p. 162). He seems to merge method and approach and maintains that a method "has more or less pedagogic power to influence teachers' subjective understanding of teaching" (p. 175).

In sum, the differences between approach and method lie mainly in the understanding that approaches do not have a specifically prescribed set of techniques for language teaching. They are belief-systems that may inform methods or teachers' actions in the classroom. In contrast, methods contain detailed specifications for content, the roles of teachers and learners, and teaching procedures and techniques (Richards &

Rogers, 2001). It is the rise of approaches and the decline of the methods that have occupied scholarly debate in second and foreign language teaching in the last two decades. Over the next few pages, I retrace this shift (Kumaravadivelu, 2006) as it has occurred in scholarship.

The concept of method. By the late 1980s and early 1990s, many methods and approaches had been theorized and popularized in the language teaching profession. At the same time many scholars started to question the concept of "teaching" (Stern, 1983), the concept of "method" (Clarke, 1983; Pennycook, 1989), and the concept of "best method" (Prabhu, 1990). Prabhu (1990) steps into the debate between a single best method and an eclectic approach to language teaching. In response, he suggests a third option of teaching according to a "sense of plausibility" (p. 172). By this he means that good teaching is an activity that contains a "sense of involvement" (p. 171) by the teacher who teaches in a way that she believes best suits her and her teaching context.

Many scholars (e.g., Clarke, 1983; Grittner, 1990; Larsen-Freeman, 1986; Pennycook, 1989; Prabhu, 1990; Richards & Rogers, 2001) address the strengths, the weaknesses, and the problems of "methods." Larsen-Freeman (1986) describes eight methods and approaches for second and foreign language teaching and suggests that teachers should "evaluate each method in the light of their own beliefs and experience" (Larsen-Freeman, 1986, xii).

Likewise, Grittner (1990) analyzes various foreign language teaching methods and points out that that such methods tend to focus on one or two aspects of language learning upon which they then base an entire instructional approach. Similarly to Larsen-Freeman (1986), Grittner (1990) concludes:

No teaching method is suggested for any one teacher, for any one class, or for any one individual. The teacher should be cognizant of current trends and innovative techniques in foreign language methods, and should employ the best methods to achieve the desired goal. (p.39)

Similarly, Clarke (1983) points out some of the problems of methods that scholars and teachers face when learning about and evaluating language teaching methods. He claims that the term "method" is ambiguous and vague and that "it is a label without substance" (Clarke, 1983, p. 109). Pennycook (1989, p. 602) adds to this by saying that (a) there is little agreement as to which methods existed when, and in what order, (b) there is little agreement and conceptual coherence to the terms used, and (c) there is little evidence that methods ever reflected classroom reality.

Responding to the dissatisfaction with methods, Long (1991) claims that "methods do not matter" and "methods do not exist" (p. 40) and suggests that teachers think in terms of syllabus types, materials, task, test, and the psycholinguistically relevant design features of learning environments. Long explains that what happens in classroom practice is different from what methods prescribe, that no method is better than another, and that methods are not the conceptual basis for how teachers operate in practice. He believes that tasks are more important when teachers plan lessons and those are what teachers consider when teaching in the classroom.

Certainly, most recent scholarship and research literature on language teaching methods take issue with methods rather than propose new methods. Scholars (e.g., Grittner 1990; Larsen-Freeman, 1986, 1999, 2006; Prabhu, 1990; Richards & Rogers, 2001) seem to share a similar opinion that methods are not designed to fit every teacher

and every classroom, and that teachers should use the methods that fit their beliefs and fit their classroom best.

Second language acquisition research. Perhaps the greatest concern regarding methods is the one raised in the fields of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and Applied Linguistics (AL). Focusing more on learners and the second language learning process, SLA research has made significant new contributions to the language teaching profession. However, researchers and educators (e.g., Lightbown, 1985, 2000, 2002; Mitchell, 2000) have come to a conclusion that findings from SLA research have thus far had only a limited influence on language teaching methods. Lightbown (1985, 2000) analyzes the influence that SLA and AL have had on second language teaching. She (1985, 2000) summarizes ten general findings from SLA research. They are:

1. Adults and adolescents can acquire a second language even after they have passed the critical period for language acquisition.

2. The interlanguage systems of second language learners are influenced by their first language.

3. There are predictable sequences in second language acquisition.

4. Practice does not make perfect because learners appear to forget what they seemed to have once mastered.

5. Knowing a language rule does not mean being able to use it in communication.

6. Isolated explicit error correction is usually ineffective.

7. For most adult learners, acquisition stops before the learner has achieved native-like mastery of the target language.

8. Learners cannot achieve native-like command of a second language with one hour per day in the classroom.

9. The learner's task is enormous because language is enormously complex.

10. A learner's ability to understand language in a meaningful context exceeds his/her ability to comprehend decontextualized language and to produce language of comparable complexity and accuracy.

Lightbown (1985, 2000) states that such generalizations cannot tell teachers what to teach (i.e., syllabus content) or how to teach (i.e., specific methods), but they can tell teachers what to expect realistically and how not to teach. She (1985) remarks that SLA research had no influence on CLT; CLT was influenced by British AL who emphasized language context and language in use for a purpose. However, she clarifies that "prior to the 1980s a variety of language-related research and theory influenced second language teaching, and it was not until the mid-1980s that SLA research began to have a direct impact on second language teaching" (2002, p.530).

Similarly, Mitchell (2000) maintains that research in applied linguistics cannot prescribe effective pedagogy for language teaching. She continues that theories and research findings on language pedagogy cannot tell teachers how to teach but they can influence teachers' possible actions and choices in the classroom. She claims that second language pedagogy is influenced by cognitive theory, Universal Grammar theory, and sociocultural theory. She points out that policy for grammar pedagogy in the UK is shifting toward a cognitively inspired, direct instruction.

In recent years, more scholars (e.g., Lightbown, 2000; Richards & Rogers, 2001) have come to recognize the influence of SLA on second language learning and teaching.

Richards and Rogers (2001) comment that "second language acquisition research provided impetus for the development of the Natural Approach and Task-Based Language Teaching, and it will doubtless continue to motivate new language teaching approaches" (p. 253).

Indeed, approaches such as TBLT indicate a clear shift from strict methods with set actions for teachers to a series of tasks, activities, and teachable moments informed by SLA principles. The TBLT framework described by Willis (1996; also see Long, 1991) includes the pre-task, task cycle, and language focus exercises. Willis (1996) maintains that TBLT provides a context for grammar teaching and form-focused activities. She explains that the teacher does not pre-select specific linguistic forms to teach before the task. Instead, at the language focus stage, learners ask about the language that they notice during the task cycle (Willis, 1996). Nunan (1999, 2004) also includes language exercises as enabling skills in the TBLT framework. Ellis (2001) makes a similar point by emphasizing non-reciprocal tasks for teaching specific linguistic items by embedding them in the text of the task, so that students have the opportunity to acquire such linguistic items while engaging in the communicative activity.

Similarly, Wong and VanPatten (2003) propose Processing Instruction (PI), which is devoid of drills, as an alternative approach to grammar instruction. The basic features or components of PI are:

1. Learners are given information about a linguistic structure or form.

2. Learners are informed about a particular input processing strategy that may negatively affect their picking up the form/structure during the comprehension.

3. Learners are pushed to process the form/structure during activities with structured input— input that is manipulated in particular ways so that learners become dependent on form and structure to get meaning, and/or to privilege the form/structure in the input so that learners have a better chance of attending to it. Learners do not produce the structure or form during structured input activities. (Wong & VanPatten, 2003, p. 40)

In this PI, the linguistic form is taught during the activities, which is similar to the language focus or language exercises of the TBLT framework.

Based on SLA research and second language pedagogy studies, Brown (2001) suggests "a principled approach" to language teaching in the "post-method era." This "enlightened, eclectic" (Brown, 2001, p. 40) approach includes five cognitive principles, four affective principles, and three linguistic principles.[1] Brown's (2001) principled approach is similar to the "principled pragmatism"[2] and macrostrategies[3] that

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[1] These twelve principles (Brown, 2001, pp. 55-68) are, namely, automaticity (i.e., automatic processing of language forms), meaningful learning (e.g., content-centered approaches), the anticipation of reward (to create opportunities for moment-by-moment rewards to keep classrooms interesting), intrinsic motivation (i.e., externally administered rewards), the learner's own strategic investment, language ego (a sense of fragility, defensiveness, and a raising of inhibitions within the learners), self-confidence, risk taking, the language-culture connection, the native language effect, interlanguage (what the learner's language comprises at a given stage in development), and communicative competence.
Based on those twelve principles, Brown (2002, pp. 16-17) suggests ten strategies for teachers to follow: (a) lower student-learner inhibitions, (b) encourage risk taking, (c) build students' self-confidence, (d) help students develop intrinsic motivation, (e) promote cooperative learning, (f) encourage students to use right-brain processing, (g) promote ambiguity tolerance, (h) help students use their intuition, (i) get students to make their mistakes work for them, and (j) get students to set their own goals.

[2] Principled pragmatism proposes teacher autonomy and focuses on how class-room learning can be shaped and managed by teachers, as a result of informed teaching and critical appraisal (Kumaravadivelu, 1994).

[3] Kumaravadivelu (1994) suggests ten macrostrategies: (a) maximizing learning opportunities, (b) facilitating negotiated interaction, (c) minimizing perceptual mismatches (between teacher intention and learner interpretation), (d) activating intuitive heuristics (e.g., to provide enough textual data for learners to infer certain underlying grammatical rules), (e) fostering language awareness, (f) contextualizing linguistic input, (g) integrating language skills, (h) promoting learner autonomy, (i) raising cultural consciousness, and (j) ensuring social relevance.

Kumaravadivelu's (1994) proposes in postmethod condition (see below) except that the latter does not promote eclecticism as Brown does.

While certainly not advocating a rigid method, the approaches (e.g., TBLT, PI, and the principled approach) influenced by SLA research clearly offer guidelines for teachers.

Sociocultural theory in second language learning and teaching. SLA research has focused on the process of second language learning as an internalized, cognitive process (Zuengler & Miller, 2006). In contrast, Vygoskian sociocultural theory considers the social dimension of language learning. Recently, researchers (e.g., Atkinson, 2002; Mondada & Doehler, 2006; Smith, 1991; Zuengler & Miller, 2006) have turned to examine the sociocultural perspective of SLA research. Atkinson (2002) maintains that language and language acquisition are both cognitive and sociocognitive phenomena. He uses the term "sociocognitive" to show that language and language acquisition occur simultaneously and are constructed both cognitively and in the world interactively. He argues that, while language is internalized, it always exists in an integrated sociocognitive space. Atkinson suggests that teaching language should occur in real human contexts and interactions.

Mondada and Doehler (2006) make a similar point that second language learning is situated in learners' social practice and interactions in social contexts. Their conversation analysis (CA) of the discourse in French as a Second Language classrooms shows that teacher's instructions are reflexively redefined during the language learning task. This draws the attention to the fact that how teachers teach, with methods or approaches, is subject to the students' perception of the learning activity.

Zuengler and Miller (2006) summarize five sociocultural perspectives in SLA research: Vygoskian sociocultural theory, language socialization, learning as changing participation in situated practices, Bakhtinian theory or dialogism, and critical theory. They explain that Vygoskian sociocultural theory (Vygosky, 1979) highlights the social dimension of consciousness; that language socialization (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986) is interested in understanding the development of socially and culturally competent members of society; that situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998) stresses learners' participation in particular social practices; that Bakhtin's dialogism (Bakhtin, 1981) emphasizes the sociality of intellectual processes; and that critical theorists emphasize the relations of power in the language learning practices, interactions, and learning processes (Zuengler & Miller, 2006). Zuengler and Miller (2006) conclude their overview by indicating how relativism has been at work in all these sociocultural theories (in contrast to the position of cognitive theories) and so has shifted the focus of teaching methods and approaches away from external ways to deal with language content to the local practice of teachers and the local interpretations of learners.

Critical theory in second language education. While SLA, cognitive, and sociocultural theories are concerned with the mental, social, environmental, and emotional processes of learning and teaching language in the classroom, critical theory examines the sociopolitical dimension of classroom methods. As Zuengler and Miller (2006) explain, critical theory emphasizes the relation of power in language learning and teaching. Pennycook (1989, 1990a, 1990b, 1994) is particularly concerned with critical pedagogy in second and foreign language education and argues for the existence of critical applied linguistics. Accepting that education is political, Pennycook (1989) argues

that all knowledge is "interested." He interprets method as "a prescriptive concept" that maintains the inequities on the "power periphery" (Pennycook, 1989, p. 589). By this he understands method as a discourse that commercially benefits publishers (also see, Clarke, 1983), de-skills the role of the teacher, enables greater institutional control over classroom practice, and maintains the gendered division of the workforce. He draws on Stern's (1983) scholarship when regarding the concept of method as a process in which: "Teachers make a whole series of decisions about teaching based on their own educational experiences, their personalities, their particular institutional, social, cultural, and political circumstances, individual needs, and so on" (Pennycook, 1989, p. 606).

Kumaravadivelu (2003a) discusses critical language pedagogy from a postmethod perspective. He points out the four interrelated scholastic, linguistic, cultural, and economic dimensions of language teaching methods that are conceptualized by theorists. Kumaravadivelu (2003a) explains that the language teaching methods designed in the West were originally designed to run the colonial system (also see Pennycook, 1989); that the monolingual tenet[4] prevents teachers and learners from using L1 linguistic resources and privileges English native speakers; that the emphasis of learning the cultural aspect of the target language has a specific purpose of culturally empathizing and assimilating; and that the "economy is the engine that drives the ELT industry" (p. 543). Kumaravadivelu (2003a) argues for a decolonization of English language teaching with possible classroom methodological means, because "methods are used to establish the native Self as superior and the non-native Other as inferior" (p. 541). He (1994)

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[4] Monolingual tenet refers to the principle that the teaching of EFL and ESL should be entirely through the medium of English (Phillipson, 1992, in Kumaravadivelu, 2003a).

maintains that the decolonization of ELT methods require a shift from the concept of method to the concept of postmethod (see below).

Postmethod pedagogy. Kumaravadivelu (1994) proposes the "postmethod" paradigm since the notion of methods in second and foreign language education has been under criticism (e.g., Clarke, 1983; Kumaravadivelu, 1994, 2001, 2003a, 2003b, 2005, 2006; Pennycook, 1989; Stern, 1983). While many scholars (Brown, 2001, 2002; Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Larsen-Freeman, 1986; Nunan, 2004; Rogers & Richards, 2001) advocate different "approaches," Kumaravadivelu (1994) first claimed the concept of a "postmethod condition," which he describes as a *search for an alternative to method, rather than an alternative method* (my italics), where the teacher is autonomous and works according to principled pragmatism. This third aspect is based on the pragmatics of pedagogy where the theory can be realized during the teaching activity. To explain how to follow principled pragmatism, Kumaravadivelu (1994, pp. 29-30) also refers to a sense of plausibility (c.f. Prabhu, 1990) and claims that teachers' sense of plausibility is not linked to the concept of method. Since then, he has continued to theorize this alternative to method in the form of a "postmethod pedagogy" (Kumaravadivelu, 2001) which consists of the parameters of "particularity, practicality, and possibility" (p. 538), with "attempts to propose a modular model (see below) for language teacher education" (Kumaravadivelu, 2005). Kumaravadivelu (2001) explains that a pedagogy of particularity should "be sensitive to a particular group of teachers teaching a particular group of learners pursuing a particular set of goals within a particular institutional context embedded in a particular sociocultural milieu" (p. 538); that a pedagogy of practicality "seeks to overcome some of the deficiencies inherent in the theory-versus-practice,

theorists'-theory-versus-teachers'-theory dichotomies by encouraging and enabling teachers themselves to theorize from their practice and practice what they theorize" (p. 541); and that a pedagogy of possibility empowers teachers and students, and is concerned with identity as well. Clearly, as the scholar states, this postmethod paradigm is influenced by sociocultural theory, postcolonial theory, and critical pedagogy (Kumaravadivelu, 2003a).

Kumaravadivelu (1994) suggests ten macrostrategies for postmethod pedagogy and claims that these macrostrategies are method neutral. By this he means that the strategic framework which consists of macrostrategies and microstrategies is "not conditioned by a single set of theoretical principles or classroom procedures associated with any one particular language teaching method" (1994, p. 32). He (2003a) defines macrostrategies as "a general plan, a broad guideline, based on which teachers will be able to generate their own situation-specific, need-based microstrategies or classroom techniques" (p. 545). In this paradigm, classroom techniques are described as "microstrategies." The ten macrostrategies certainly bear a strong resemblance to the "approach" defined by Richards and Rogers (2001) as "a set of beliefs and principles that can be used as the basis for teaching a language" (p. 245) and by Brown (2002) as "the theoretical rationale that underlies everything that happens in the classroom" (p. 12). Clearly, the macrostrategic framework of postmethod pedagogy appears to be an approach though it is named differently (also see Liu, 1995). In his scholarship, Kumaravadivelu (1994, 2001, 2003b, 2006) critiques the mainstream language teaching methods and approaches such as CLT. Like many others (Brown, 2001; Ellis, 2001; Long, 1991; Richards & Rogers 2001; Willis, 1996), he (2006) also turns to a TBLT

approach as offering an alternative to method by emphasizing that "TBLT is not linked to any one particular method," but "different methods can be employed to carry out language learning outcomes" (p. 65). He argues that task, including language-centered tasks, learner-centered tasks, and learning-centered tasks, is curricular content rather than a methodological construct (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). Like Brown (2001), Lightbown (1985, 2000), and Mitchell (2000) above, Kumaravadivelu is also influenced by research in SLA.

Of course, Kumaravadivelu's assertion raises the issue as to whether or not methods are a thing of the past in relation to postmethod pedagogy or whether they are still being used in language teaching (cf. Beale, 2002). Beale (2002) celebrates Kumaravadivelu's postmethod condition, but he refers to it as an "eclectic mixing of teaching methods" (p. 7). Similarly, Arikan (2006) likens this to the "postmethod condition" as "the qualities of the contemporary era in English language teaching in which previously well trusted methods are put under serious scrutiny and in which a body of methods and techniques collected from all previous methods and approaches are used pragmatically with a belief that such an eclectic practice leads to success" (p. 1). According to Kumaravadivelu's original theory, the "postmethod condition" paradigm is not eclecticism, because in his view, eclecticism is still constrained by the conventional concept of method. Instead, his "principled pragmatism" focuses on "how classroom learning can be shaped and managed by teachers as a result of informed teaching and critical appraisal" (1994, p. 31). In reviewing current literature in second and foreign language education, it is obvious that "postmethod pedagogy" has become popular, though some writers (e.g., Arikan, 2006; Beale, 2002) might have misconceptions of the

original "postmethod condition" paradigm and perhaps perceive methods more like Brown (2001, 2002).

Reevaluation of methods and the postmethod condition. Since the theorization of the postmethod condition and a postmethod pedagogy, many scholars (Bell, 2003; Larsen-Freeman, 1999, 2005; Liu, 1995; Richards & Rogers, 2001; etc.) have responded to the discussion with a critical eye. Liu (1995) argues that the problems that teachers have are not with the methods but with using the methods in the wrong place at the wrong time. He comments that Kumaravadivelu's macrostrategies framework is not an "alternative to method" but an "addition to" method or a framework subsuming method.

Larsen-Freeman (1999) argues that one of the reasons that methods have been criticized is that they are falsely assumed to be fully intact formulaic packages for teaching practice. She maintains that a method is a coherent set of links between teachers' beliefs and teaching actions. By this she means that methods help teachers inquire into their understanding of teaching, gain clarity about their beliefs, and form a basis from which they can make decisions about their teaching actions (Larsen-Freeman, 1999). Richards and Rogers (2001) point out that experience with different approaches and methods can provide teachers with an initial practical knowledge base in teaching and can be used to explore and develop teachers' own beliefs, principles, and practices. They explain that in the early stages teaching is a matter of applying procedures and techniques developed by others. As teachers gain more experience and knowledge, they begin to develop their individual approach to or method of teaching. Even then, teachers do not have to abandon the approach or method that they started out using. Instead,

teachers will add, modify, and adjust the approach or method to fit their own teaching practice (Richards & Rogers, 2001).

Larsen-Freeman suggests an "appropriateness of language teaching methods" (1999) and calls for a "critical analysis of postmethod" (2005). She suggests that "teachers and teacher educators should not be blinded by the criticisms of methods and thus fail to see their invaluable contribution to teacher education and continuing development" (Larsen-Freeman, 1999, para. 32). Current scholarship shows that researchers and teacher educators are still very careful when they discuss issues related to teaching methods. Probably because of the popularity and influence of the concept of the "postmethod condition," the term "method" is now not often used. Other terms such as "approaches," "strategies," "skills," and "techniques" are currently more popular with scholars and educators as they theorize language teaching and learning. All of these terms can be brought together—along with "method"—under the term of "teacher knowledge."

Teacher Knowledge in Teacher Education

Johnson (2006) claims that second language teacher education has shifted the research focus to an understanding of "teacher cognition," which is to understand "who teachers are, what they know and believe, how they learn to teach, and how they carry out their work in diverse contexts through their careers" (p. 236). Teachers' knowledge is the major concern in teacher education. Johnson (2006) maintains that there are four challenges for second language teacher education. These challenges include:

1. To create public spaces that make visible how second language teachers make

sense of and use the disciplinary knowledge that has informed and will continue to inform L2 teacher education.

2. To position teachers as knowers and to position their ways of knowing that lead to praxis alongside the disciplinary knowledge that has dominated the traditional knowledge base of second language teacher education.

3. To get school administrators and educational policy makers to recognize the legitimacy of alternative forms of professional development and to provide the financial support that will enable teachers to sustain them over time.

4. To construct locally appropriate responses to support the preparation and professionalism of second language teachers. (Johnson, 2006, pp. 239-247)

In the history of second and foreign language teaching, the changes and innovations in the field seem to have been greatly influenced by government policy, and outside experts and gurus, who are criticized greatly because they do not know the classroom as well as the teachers. As demonstrated above, research and scholarship has also had an impact over the last 20 years. Literature (e.g., Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Li, 1998; Sun & Cheng, 2002; Yu, 2001) shows that many teachers have difficulties when they try to implement methods or approaches created by others. This brings me to the question of what teachers know about language teaching methods and how teachers interpret different methods and approaches. Further more, it leads to the discussion of teachers' knowledge. Over the next few pages, I review the scholarship and research literature on teacher knowledge.

   The concept of teacher knowledge. The most influential theoretical

framework for teachers' knowledge comes from Shulman (1987). Shulman (1987) includes different types of teacher knowledge: (a) content knowledge, (b) general pedagogical knowledge, (c) curriculum knowledge, (d) pedagogical content knowledge, (e) knowledge of educational ends, purpose, and values, and their philosophical and historical grounds. He refers to general pedagogical knowledge as "the broad principles and strategies of classroom management and organization that appear to transcend subject matter" (Shulman, 1987, p. 8). Pedagogical content knowledge is the "special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of teachers, their own special form of professional understanding" (Shulman, 1987, p. 8).

In the profession of second and foreign language education, educators have begun to realize a "basic truth" in language teaching, that the language teaching is most important, not the language (Johnson & Goettsch, 2000, p. 438). Many scholars and teacher educators (e.g., Day & Conkin, 1992; Freeman, 1989; Richards, 1991) in the field of language education have developed their own interpretations and understandings of teacher knowledge. Day and Conkin (1992) include four aspects of the knowledge base for second language teacher education and give detailed definitions and various examples:

1. Content knowledge: knowledge of the subject matter (what ESL/EFL teachers teach); e.g., English language (as represented by courses in syntax, semantics, phonology and pragmatics) and literary and cultural aspects of the English language.

2. Pedagogic knowledge: knowledge of generic teaching strategies, beliefs, and practices, regardless of the focus of the subject matter (how we teach); e.g.,

classroom management, motivation, decision making.

3. Pedagogic content knowledge: the specialized knowledge of how to represent content knowledge in diverse ways that students can understand; the knowledge of how students come to understand the subject matter, what difficulties they are likely to encounter when learning it, what misconceptions interfere with learning, and how to overcome these problems (how we teach ESL/EFL in general; or how we teach ESL/EFL skills (reading, writing) teaching grammar, TESOL[Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages] materials evaluation and development, EFL/ESL testing, TESOL program and curriculum evaluation and development, TESOL methods.

4. Support knowledge: the knowledge of the various disciplines that inform our approach to the teaching and learning of English; e.g., psycholinguistics, linguistics, second language acquisition, sociolinguistics, research methods. (Day, 1993, pp. 3-4)

Freeman (1989) describes language teaching as a decision-making process that requires different strategies depending on four constituents: knowledge, skills, attitude, and awareness. According to Freeman's (1989, p. 36) descriptive model of teaching, teacher knowledge is "the *what* of teaching," which includes subject matter, knowledge of students, sociocultural or institutional context; skills are "the *how* of teaching," which includes methods, techniques, activity materials or tools; attitude is a stance toward self, activity, and others that links intrapersonal dynamics with external performance and behaviors; awareness includes the triggers and monitors. Freeman (1989) and Day and Conkin (1992) include teaching methods in their description of teachers' knowledge.

Richards (1991) maintains that pedagogical content knowledge is the content of second language teacher education. He interprets pedagogical content knowledge in the second language teaching context as "the core set of theories, concepts and practices regarding second language learning and teaching" (Richards, 1991, p. 1). Richards (1991) maintains that pedagogical content knowledge in second language teacher education programs consists of two main areas: subject matter knowledge (language theory, English grammar, phonology, second language learning, etc.) and teaching skills (methodology, classroom management, presentation and practice techniques, etc.).

Gatbonton (2000) describes pedagogical knowledge as the teacher's accumulated knowledge about teaching goals, procedures, and strategies. She maintains that pedagogical knowledge is the basis for teachers' classroom behavior and activities. In her research, Gatbonton (2000) includes different types of knowledge as pedagogical knowledge: knowledge of language management, knowledge of learners, knowledge of teaching goals and subject matter, and knowledge about teaching techniques and procedures.

Freeman and Richards (1993) examine different conceptions of teaching skills. They maintain that teachers' decisions about how they teach are based on the teachers' beliefs, principles, and values instead of on criteria developed within a scientific paradigm, or through process/product forms of research. They believe that "a good teacher is seen as one who analyzes a classroom situation, realizes that a range of options is available based on the particular circumstances, and then selects the alternative which is likely to be most effective in that instance" (1993, p. 206).

Scholars (e.g., Freeman & Richards, 1993) have suggested that it is very likely

that teachers teach in the way that they were taught. Freeman and Richards (1993) believe that "the foundations of an individual's ideas about teaching are well established through the experience of being a student" (1993, p. 210). Golombek's (1998) study also suggests that teachers' personal practical knowledge, which was influenced by their experiences as language learners in the classroom, as persons outside of the classroom, as participants in the teacher education program, and as teachers in the teaching profession, informs their teaching actions in classroom. She maintains that different strands of teachers' knowledge are woven together and that teachers use their knowledge holistically (Golombek, 1998).

Some scholars (Day & Conkin, 1992; Freeman, 1989; Gatbonton, 2000; Richards, 1991) categorize teaching techniques, procedures, teaching skills, and methods under the term teachers' knowledge. However, as previously discussed, other scholars (e.g., Clarke, 1983; Kumaravadivelu, 1991; Pennycook, 1989) have questioned and criticized the concept of method. It appears that in the post-method era scholars and educators who in particular seem to avoid the term "method" in their studies, have instead adopted the terms "teacher knowledge," which subsumes language teaching methods, content, techniques, and general education knowledge, and "teacher beliefs" or "teacher attitudes," which reflect teachers' general experience, educational experience, and perspectives.

Current research on teacher knowledge in second and foreign language teacher education. Several researchers and teacher educators (Day & Conkin, 1992; Freeman, 1989; Gatbonton, 2000; Richards, 1991) have done studies on

second and foreign language teacher knowledge and teacher education. Researchers have found that in the initial stages of teacher education programs, student teachers may have understandings of teaching and learning but these understandings might be inappropriate, unrealistic, or vague (Brookhart & Freeman, 1992; Calderhead, 1991; Cumming, 1989).

In their research, Johnston and Goettsch (2000) examine the knowledge base of experienced teachers, which includes content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and the knowledge of learners. They maintain that the knowledge base of language teaching is situated, process-oriented, and contextualized. By this they mean that the knowledge base is utilized in the classroom; that the knowledge is rooted in an essentially dialogical approach to teaching in which there is an ongoing interaction between the teachers' knowledge and action and teachers' awareness of student knowledge and student learning; that the knowledge base should be central to any language teacher education program. In Canada, Gatbonton (2000) uses both quantitative and qualitative research approaches to look for the patterns of pedagogical knowledge that experienced teachers use when teaching. She includes various domains of pedagogical knowledge: (a) handling language items, (b) factoring in students' contributions, (c) determining the contents of teaching, (d) facilitating the instructional flow, (e) building rapport, and (f) monitoring student progress (pp. 611-616). Similarly, in Australia, Mullock (2006) examines the impact of teaching experience on classroom teaching practice. Her findings suggest that teachers tend to think in terms of teaching the four skills, that there is little difference between the more experienced and less experienced teachers, and that institutional factors affect teachers' decision making (Brookhart & Freeman, 1992; Calderhead, 1991; Cumming, 1989 as cited by Mullock,

2006).

Flowerdew (1998) studied the Language Learning Experience (LLE) program in Hong Kong, which provides student teachers the opportunities to reflect on language learning as beginners, and on language teaching, including different teaching methods, from language learners' perspectives. Flowerdew (1998) notes that such a program benefits the teachers by requiring them to experience the difficulties of the second language that learners encounter and giving them insight into how to teach in a way that helps students the most. Tsui (2003) investigates the professional development of four ESL teachers in a Hong Kong secondary school. This study focuses on teachers' perceptions of their own teaching action: classroom management and curriculum enactment. Tsui's (2003) research shows that teachers' actions in the classroom reflect their personal practical knowledge, principles, beliefs systems, and values.

These studies contribute to the teacher education profession by investigating what teachers know and what they need to know for their second and foreign language teaching. Studies indicate that teachers' decision making is influenced by their experience, especially their educational experience (see Freeman & Richards, 1993; Golombek, 1998; Pennycook, 1990; Tsui, 2003). However, regarding the issue of theories and teacher knowledge in teacher education, Johnson (1996) suggests that teacher educators cannot, and should not, look to theory as the solution to all that ails classroom practice, or all that is needed to prepare second language teachers (p. 766). She states that second language teacher education programs should focus on "sense-making" because "teachers' knowledge is inherently their own, constructed by teachers themselves, and largely experiential" (Johnson, 1996, p. 767).

As literature (e.g., Day, 1993; Freeman & Richards, 1993; Flowerdew, 1998; Gatbonton, 2000; Golombek, 1998; Kumaravadivelu, 2003b) shows, there can be no definite answer to the question of what teachers need to know for their language teaching (cf. Oxford & Scarcella, 1992) or whether they need to learn language teaching methods since it is now widely believed that much depends on their circumstances. What teachers need to learn in their preservice training and teacher education program is one thing, how and whether the teachers find it worthwhile to implement what they have learned into their teaching practice in the classroom is another. Over the next few pages, I review the literature on teachers' implementation of language teaching methods.

Teachers and the implementation of methods and approaches.

General education research (Beckett, 2002; Gorsuch & Belgar, 2004) shows that implementing new approaches and getting teachers to change is particularly difficult. Research (e.g., Beckett, 2002; Brumfit, 1986a, 1986b; Carless, 2004; Jeon & Hahn, 2006; Li, 1998; Littlewood, 2004; Yu, 2001) indicates that many second and foreign language teachers have difficulties with the methods and approaches created by outsiders. As early as in 1986, Brumfit discusses the problems and prospects of CLT in relation to teaching second languages (1986b) and raises the question as to whether or not language teaching has to be communicative (1986a). His concern is the students' needs. He concludes that while there is a set of shared assumptions about the concept of a genuine communicative approach, there is no one specific communicative method (Brumfit, 1986b). Similarly, Seedhouse (1996) argues that it is unreasonable and impossible to produce and replicate genuine or natural communication in the classroom because any conversation with a pedagogical purpose is institutional discourse rather than genuine or natural

communication.

Beckett (2002) refers to Eyring's (1989) research when discussing the difficulties that teachers have with Project-Based Instruction (PBI) in second language education research literature: It is complex and demanding to negotiate the curriculum with the students regarding project-based instruction, it is difficult to come to agreement on topics and assignments, students do not always participate enthusiastically, and the teacher might not be respected and appreciated by the students.

There is considerable research on the difficulties that teachers have when implementing a foreign method such as CLT or TBLT in their teaching practice in an EFL context. Li (1998) studies the difficulties that a group of secondary teachers have with CLT in Korea. Yu (2001) addresses the resistance to and constraining factors that Chinese teachers have when implementing CLT. In their case study, Sun and Cheng (2002) investigate the context and curriculum of an institute where CLT was implemented. They suggest a modification of the CLT method in an EFL context and promote task-based teaching (p. 83). Though still popular and considered desirable by some, CLT has been under criticism for years (see Brumfit, 1989a, 1989b; Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Li, 1998; Seedhouse, 1996; Sun & Cheng, 2002), and scholars and teachers continue to look for solutions. Gatbonton and Segalowitz (2005) suggest an "Automatization in Communicative Contexts of Essential Speech Segments" (ACCESS) method as the alternative to CLT. The ACCESS method includes three phases: a creative automatization phase, a language consolidation phase, and a free communication phase. It has been suggested that TBLT is truer to communicative principles than CLT itself (Beale, 2000). Some scholars and educators (Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Long, 1991; Sun &

Cheng, 2002) turn to the TBLT approach as an alternative to methods.

However, TBLT also has its own problems with implementation. Littlewood (2004) points out that the initial problems of TBLT are that teachers do not understand what a task-based approach really means; and that the learner involvement is a major challenge for teachers when employing TBLT. Carless (2004) discusses the teachers' perceptions of the difficulties in implementing TBLT innovation in primary schools in Hong Kong. In his studies, three issues are addressed: mother tongue use, classroom management, and target language production. Carless (2004) points out that teachers mould innovations to their own abilities, beliefs, and experiences, the school context, and sociocultural environment. In Korea, Jeon and Hahn (2006) investigate EFL teachers' understandings of TBLT and why they choose or avoid TBLT. They show that the main reasons include teachers' limited knowledge of TBLT and a lack of target language proficiency. J. L. Plews (personal communication, July 8, 2006) also observes that teachers may find the large amount of time and creativity needed for lesson planning according to TBLT a hindrance, at least at first.

These studies try to disclose the problematic aspects of different methods (CLT) and approaches (TBLT) and seem to confirm the perspective that there is no best method (Prabhu, 1990). Some researchers and educators (e.g., Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Sun & Cheng, 2002) offer alternatives as solutions to the problem. When talking about teacher knowledge, researchers (e.g., Day & Conkin, 1992; Gatbonton, 2000; Richards, 1991; Shulman, 1987) combine teaching techniques, teaching strategies, and teaching methods, though the word "method" seems no longer an appropriate expression. In the following

and final section, I review recent research literature on the teaching of language teaching methods in teacher education.

Methods and teacher education. Second language teacher education programs in North America usually include foreign language courses and courses about the language (e.g., applied linguistics), which together would be considered the content knowledge for teachers. They also typically include a methods course which covers the pedagogical content knowledge, and a second language acquisition course, which is about the knowledge of learners and the learning process. Grosse (1991) maintains that the methods course is the primary vehicle for pedagogical instruction in most of the second language teacher preparation programs. If this is so, what should be included in the methods course? Grosse (1991) investigates the content of methods courses by studying the curriculum of TESOL methods courses in the United States. His research findings show that the typical methods course includes (a) traditional and innovative methods, (b) the theory of second language learning, and (c) approaches to teach the four language skills (Grosse, 1991, p. 32).

Larsen-Freeman (1999, para. 15) maintains that with the knowledge of various methods, teachers "may be able to make choices that are informed, not conditioned," for "teaching is more than following a recipe." She continues that with the knowledge of various methods, teachers "may be able to resist, or at least argue against, the imposition of a particular method by authorities or outside experts" (Larsen-Freeman, para. 15). Similarly, Richards and Rogers (2001) suggest that "teachers and teachers in training need to be able to use approaches and methods flexibly and creatively based on their own judgment and experience," and "they should be encouraged to transform and adapt the

methods they use to make them their own" (p. 250).

Day (1993) suggests four models for second language teacher education: (a) the apprentice-expert model, (b) the rationalist model, (c) the case studies model, and (d) the integrative model. As previously noted, Day (1993) claims that the knowledge base of these teacher education models includes four categories of knowledge: content knowledge, pedagogic knowledge, pedagogic content knowledge, and support knowledge. Here, language teaching methods are also included in the knowledge base.

Emphasizing that teacher knowledge plays an important role in teacher education, Kumaravadivelu (2005b) proposes a "modular model" for language teacher education which includes five components: (a) knowing (which involves acquiring personal knowledge, professional knowledge, and practical knowledge); (b) analyzing (which involves examining learner needs, learner wants, and learner's situations); (c) reviewing (which involves using self, peers and educator assessments for teacher preparation); (d) doing (which involves performing micro-teaching, team-teaching, and self-teaching); and (e) seeing (which involves comprehending mismatches between learner, teacher, and researcher perspectives of teaching acts). In this model, Kumaravadivelu (2005b) also includes professional knowledge as part of the module of "knowing." Also, as reviewed earlier, Kumaravadivelu (2003b) includes classroom techniques in his macrostrategic framework.

Since the mid 1980s, teacher educational research has been focused on teachers' cognition, or how and why teachers do what they do by investigating teachers' prior experiences, their interpretation of their classroom actions, and the contexts within which they work (Johnson, 2006). Though some scholars (Grosse, 1991; Larsen-Freeman, 1986,

1999; Richards & Rogers, 2001) recognize the importance of teachers' knowing different language teaching methods, and though it is suggested that teachers' educational experiences influence teachers' decision making, there is little research literature either in the form of surveys of the field or in the form of qualitative research with teachers and teacher educators on the language teaching methodologies taught in teacher education programs.

Summary

The research literature discussed in this review indicates that there are still many discussions on language teaching methods in the "postmethod condition" or "post-method era," but many of these discussions either carefully avoid the term "method" and/or subsume the term under the topic of teacher knowledge. Another preferred term is "pedagogical knowledge," which can include teaching methods and approaches. The shift that I have described from method-based to approach-based second language teaching has largely taken place in the realm of scholarship and research. Certainly classroom practice has also begun to change as student-teachers exposed to new ideas enter the teaching profession. My study examines how teachers come to know what choices to make in their teaching and what choices are available to them with regard to their knowledge of methods and approaches. In this postmethod condition, should a methods course still be included in a second language teacher education program, or should it be replaced with a course on principles and techniques or macro and micro strategies? What are teachers' understandings, experiences, and perceptions of language teaching methods and approaches that they learned and use? Do teachers use any methods in the language

teaching classroom? If not, is it because methods do not work, or is it because teachers do not believe in them, do not understand them, or have some other framework to follow? If teachers do not use methods, what approaches or techniques do they use in their classroom teaching practice? And, how do teachers define, distinguish, and describe them?

Chapter 3

Research Approach and Design

The purpose of my research is to understand the pedagogical knowledge of ESL teachers and TESL educators, particularly their attitudes toward and experiences of language teaching methods and approaches. I do this by examining the choices current ESL teachers and TESL teacher educators make in regard to how they teach, and by paying attention to how both of these groups interpret their understandings of language teaching methods and approaches. To gain these understandings, I need to inquire with teachers and teacher educators about their experiences with second language pedagogy, including their educational backgrounds, beliefs, their attitudes towards second language teaching, and their teaching experiences.

I use qualitative research methods for my study, because qualitative research provides the means to understand the thinking and behaviors of individuals and groups in specific situations (Arksey & Knight, 1999). I use a "subtype" (Chase, 2005, p. 651) of qualitative inquiry, narrative inquiry, in which stories are used to describe human actions (Polkinghorne, 1995). "Narrative is the best way of representing and understanding experience" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p.18). To collect the research data, I conducted semi-structured interviews with seven ESL teachers and teacher educators, field observations with five of them, and follow-up interviews with those five participants. I also incorporate aspects of my own experiences as an ESL teacher and learner.

In the next section, I outline my understanding of qualitative research and present my research design and procedures.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research methods have been used in social and behavioral science disciplines, including education, history, political science, business, medicine, nursing, social work, and communication (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) define qualitative research as follows:

Qualitative research is a situated activity that consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. (p.3)

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) observe that qualitative research methods capture the individual's point of view, examine the constraints of everyday, and secure rich descriptions. In educational research, a qualitative approach is favored when researchers want to probe for deeper understanding, rather than just examining the surface features of a phenomenon. A qualitative approach provides the researcher with a variety of tools for enhancing our understanding of teaching and learning. My research topic is concerned with individual teachers' and teacher educators' personal experiences in their language teaching career, and teachers' subjective understandings of

and attitudes toward language teaching methods and approaches. I am interested in listening, interacting, exploring, reflecting, changing my own understandings of a phenomenon in a natural setting. Therefore, I choose qualitative research methods for my study.

Qualitative researchers sometimes use novel forms of expressing lived experience, including literary, poetic, autobiographical, performance, as well as multi-voiced, conversational, critical, visual, and co-constructed representations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). For my qualitative research, I use multiple research methods (interviews, field observations, follow-up interviews, and autobiography) to collect various types of data to understand individual teachers' point of view on the issue of language teaching methodology and describe their educational and working experiences. I am interested in the lived experiences of individual teachers and teacher educators; I want to have multiple voices heard: ESL teachers, TESL teacher educators, and myself.

The goal of qualitative research is to find out the meanings behind the phenomena or the behavior of the participants by examining the differences and particularities in human affairs to discover what people think, what happens and why (Arksey & Knight, 1999). In my research, my goal is seeking deeper understandings of the individual participants in my study. I try to understand the experiences of ESL teachers and TESL teacher educators and to explore their understandings. I try to understand the meanings of what they say and what they do.

Narrative inquiry. Every person interprets events, people, and objects in order to participate and interact in the human society (Ellis, 1998a). Qualitative research methods enable researchers to understand the ways in which people interpret any event (Stringer, 2004). In my research, I use a special type of qualitative inquiry—narrative inquiry.

Polkinghorne (1995) defines narrative as "a discourse form in which events and happenings are configured into a temporal unit by means of a plot" (p. 5). I understand narrative as stories of individuals, and people telling stories of their lived experiences. Narrative inquiry, as a form of interpretive inquiry, is a formal research process through which researchers collect stories of the lived experiences of individuals, retell stories of the research participants, and seek to explore the meanings of the stories (Ellis, 1998a; Polkinghorne, 1995). Polkinghorne (1988) categorizes two types of narrative inquiry: descriptive narrative and explanatory narrative. The descriptive narrative is used "to produce an accurate description of the interpretive narrative accounts individuals or groups use to make sequences of events in their lives or organizations meaningful" (pp. 161-162). The explanatory narrative is used to account for the connection between events in a causal sense and to provide the necessary narrative accounts that supply the connections (Polkinghorne, 1988; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). I use explanatory narrative for this study because it gathers events and happenings as its data and uses analytic procedures to produce stories (Polkinghorne, 1995).

Narrative researchers focus on understanding an individual's history or past experiences and how the latter contribute to present and future experiences because an individual's experience is a central lens for understanding a person, and how one

experience leads to another experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell, 2002). In this study, I focus not only on reporting the facts and events of the experiences, but also on analyzing the connections between the events and exploring the meanings behind the narratives of teachers and teacher educators. In order to do so, I integrate a number of interview-based stories into a coherent and connected narrative.

Connelly and Clandinin (1990) maintain that narrative inquiry is the construction and reconstruction of personal and social stories. Narrative researchers explore an educational research problem by understanding the experiences of an individual (e.g., teachers, teacher educators) (Creswell, 2002). In recent social science studies, especially in educational research, researchers (e.g., Carter, 1993; Clandinin, 1989; Johnson, 2006; Kanno, 2000; Rushton, 2004; Simon-Maeda, 1999) have used rich narrative stories in their studies. Clandinin (1989) reports the stories of a first year kindergarten teacher's experience in the classroom. Rushton (2004) observes a student-teacher Julie's culture shock experience during her placement in an inner-city school. With narrative stories, researchers in second and foreign language education have done studies on second and foreign language learners (e.g., Bell, 2002; Kanno, 2000; Pavlenko, 1998), and ESL teachers (e.g., Casanave & Schecter, 1997; Terryson & Golombek, 2002; Simon-Maeda, 2004; Simon-Maeda, Churchill, & Cornwell, 2006). Kanno (2000) studies the cross-cultural experience of four children of Japanese expatriates after they returned from Canada to Japan. Simon-Maeda (2004) reports the life stories of nine female EFL teachers in Japan. In addition to this, using narrative inquiry, Simon-Maeda, Churchill, and Cornwell (2006) tell the experiences of doctoral students enrolled in a TESOL program in Japanese institutions.

Narrative is seen as an appropriate research tool for educational research, and it has become an important means of understanding and documenting teachers' knowledge, teachers' ways of knowing and their educational experience (Carter, 1993; Conle, 2000; Johnson, 2006). Most of the narratives of teachers' practical knowledge are about teachers in general, especially teachers working in the K-12 context in public schools. There is limited qualitative research about the stories that ESL teachers and TESL teacher educators tell regarding their pedagogical knowledge (e.g., Golombek, 1998; Johnson, 1994).

All of the research mentioned above focuses on the lived experiences of the storytellers. In my study, I paid attention to ESL teachers' narratives of their experiences in their journey of TESL education and ESL teaching. I probed the ESL teachers' personal perspectives on and attitudes toward the issue of language teaching methods and approaches in the post-method era. I observed ESL teachers' current experiences and their teaching actions in the classroom. I explored their own interpretation of their knowledge and their teaching practice. Also, I listened to the voices of TESL educators: their beliefs of and attitudes toward language teaching methods and approaches.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) maintain that, in narrative inquiry, the stories of the narrator are at the core of the research because the storyteller shapes, constructs, and performs the self, experience, and reality during the narration. As a narrator and story (re)teller, I am aware that my interpretations in this research are temporal (that my own interpretations may change over time), and that other researchers might interpret the same phenomenon differently (Ellis, 1998b).

My Researcher Identity

How researchers carry out qualitative research depends on various factors: researchers' beliefs about the nature of the social world and what can be known about it (ontology), the nature of knowledge and how it can be acquired (epistemology), the purpose(s) and goals of the research, the funders of the research, and the position and environment of the researchers themselves (Snape & Spencer, 2003). Qualitative researchers stress the intimate relationship between the researchers and the researched, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). My research is influenced by my own identity. I recognize the influence of my own bias, values, educational background, and working experiences. My experiences and identity predict the ways in which I see the world before I even began my research. This subjectivity is central to qualitative work, because it is the task of tracing changes in my own subjective understandings of a phenomenon as I interact with it and my research participants that leads to new understandings. I have twenty years of EFL learning experiences, seven years of which were also EFL teaching experience. As a professional, I am familiar with the field of TESL. I have Canadian ESL teaching experience in the immigrant learning program. I share similar experiences with the ESL teachers in my research. After seven years of teaching, I have my own opinions regarding how to teach. However, these opinions will change or be confirmed in more sophisticated ways as a result of undertaking research and dialogue.

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) see qualitative researchers as bricoleurs, quilt makers, or as filmmakers. They categorize different kinds of bricoleurs: interpretive, narrative,

theoretical, political, and methodological. They explain that the interpretive bricoleur views research as an interactive process shaped by his her own personal history, biography, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity, and by those of the people in the setting, and that the gendered, narrative bricoleur knows that researchers tell stories about the worlds they have studied (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). In this study, I consider myself a narrative and interpretive bricoleur. I collected narratives from ESL teachers and TESL teacher educators and retold their stories. I understand that my research is shaped by my own educational background and teaching experiences, my identity as an English as second language speaker, as a Chinese Canadian, as an immigrant woman, and as a graduate researcher.[5] My research is also influenced by the people around me, my colleagues, my family, and my friends.

During the research, I respected my research participants. My participants talked about their graduate experiences and their experiences with some of the language teaching methods and approaches. They wanted to know my experiences. When we discussed the definition of "method" and "approach," they wanted to know how I define them before they told me their understandings. Some of them even wanted to know what I wanted them to say instead of telling me what they really believed in. However, I patiently encouraged my participants to speak first. During the follow-up interviews, some of them wanted to know what I found out from other teachers. At such moments, I carefully avoided imposing my own opinions as a TESL professional upon them. However, we did take such occasions as opportunities to pursue rich conversations.

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[5] For example, I was told by an administrative staff in a language school that the school preferred teachers with white skin and blond hair. This experience influenced how I interpreted the meaning of the narratives. Therefore, I related the character Emily's experience with her mentor teacher to her Non-Native Speaker and Non-Canadian identity (see Chapter Four, Formation Followed by Frustration).

I tried not to judge or evaluate ESL teachers and their teaching. During the classroom observations, I focused on how teachers taught instead of how well I thought they taught; Instead, I focused on how the teachers viewed what they did and how they did it, rather than on the results of a lesson. During the process of the study, as I sought to understand the beliefs and experiences of teachers and teacher educators, I reflected on my own experiences in language learning and teaching, and also on my teacher education experiences, and also on my identity as a teacher and researcher. I have therefore included autobiographical elements into the writing of the research narrative. I gained more understandings and knowledge of second language methodology as I interpreted stories and engaged in self-reflection (see Chapter 5, Surprises in the Findings and My Change through the Research).

Research Context

In North America, TESL programs of various levels and kinds have become popular for students who want to teach ESL in Canada and the US, or who want to teach EFL overseas. Also, many international students come to North America to study in TESL programs. Some in-service ESL teachers study in the graduate TESL programs at universities to obtain better qualifications. Canadian universities and educational institutes contributed to the field by educating ESL and EFL teachers of various levels.

In the city where I conducted this research, there are a few TESL programs offered by local universities and educational institutes. The private language institutes contribute to the education industry by offering language courses to international students and preparing international students for their future study at Canadian universities. In

addition to these, there are adult ESL program for immigrants and refugees offered by federal, provincial, and municipal governments, the school boards, communities, and non-profit organizations. Every year, in the local university and language institutes, many students are present in the different levels of ESL/EFL teacher education programs.

The seven research participants in this study are ESL teachers and TESL teacher educators from four different schools in the Atlantic Canada area. They have different educational backgrounds and working experiences. Originally they came from different places in Canada and even outside of Canada. All of them were working or studying in the same city during the time of the research.

Research Procedures

Qualitative researchers collect a variety of empirical data in a long list of ways: case study, personal experience, introspection, life story, interview, artifacts, cultural texts and productions, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts, to describe the experiences of individuals and interpret their meanings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). To gain deeper understandings of teachers and their teaching, I interviewed ESL teachers and TESL educators and observed their teaching in their classrooms. The various research data include interview transcripts, field notes, follow-up interview transcripts, and autobiographic threads. Over the next few pages, I outline the research procedures for my study and also discuss participants' recruitment as well as ethical considerations.

Interviews. Different types of interviews are used in educational research: the structured interview, unstructured interview, semi-structured interview, and the focus group. In order to understand teachers and teacher educators, I used a semi-structured interview research method because they allow the researcher to probe deeper into the unexpected issues or topics during the process of interviewing in order to further understand the interviewee's perspective and experiences. O'Leary (2004) explains semi-structured interviews as follows:

> As the name suggests, these interviews are neither fully fixed nor fully free, and are perhaps best seen as flexible. Interviewers generally start with some defined questioning plan, but pursue a more conversational style of interview that may see questions answered in an order more natural to the flow of conversation. They may also start with a few defined questions but be ready to pursue any interesting tangents that may develop. (p. 164)

In semi-structured interviews, the flow of conversation and share of views is natural, and the interviewers are able to improvise follow-up questions and to explore meanings and areas of interest that emerge (Arksey & Knight, 1999). In semi-structured interviews, the order of the questions is not fixed, but it is still controlled by a list of questions and the topics need to be covered during the interview. This research method allowed me to discover ESL teachers' and TESL teacher educators' conceptions, personal beliefs, and attitudes.

Specifically, with the goal of understanding the experiences of ESL teachers and TESL educators, from January to March 2007, I conducted semi-structured interviews

with seven research participants. Five of them are women, and two are men. All of the interviewees are ESL teachers. Four of them were or are also TESL educators. Six of these teachers have Canadian study experiences, and four of them have obtained a Master's degree or were studying graduate level TESL courses. All have overseas teaching experiences, and six have over ten years of experience. Four teachers had experiences with the same British educational organization in four different countries, where two of them worked as EFL teachers, and the other two were TESL teacher educators. I am acquainted with one of the participants, and I encountered three of the participants at a professional meeting. The other three were contacted by one of the participants.

At the time of interviews, each of which lasted about one hour, six teachers were teaching at three different language schools. Because of the issue of third-party permission, I could only observe five teachers in their classrooms. I did follow-up interviews with the teachers after observing their teaching. The follow-up interviews lasted about 20 minutes each.

I used an interview guide which includes a mix of open and closed questions (see Appendix A). Before the interview, I explained the purpose of my interview and asked the interviewee to sign the informed consent (see Appendix D and Appendix F). I started the interview with questions that are not sensitive but important to the interviewee. For example, I asked "How many years have you taught?" In one instance, one of the participants told me in the email that she just completed her graduate thesis. So, before I started the questions, I said congratulations to her and asked her if she would like to tell me a little bit more about her thesis. That participant was very pleased to share her story

about her thesis writing with me. During the interview, I followed the flow of conversation and listened actively to the stories. I asked my participants to give detailed information if their answers were too simple, and when necessary I asked them to clarify some of their statements. I responded to the issues raised by the interviewee, but worked to avoid imposing opinions and making judgments.

I personally transcribed all the interviews and follow-up interviews. The transcripts were sent back to each participant for review. Some of them made changes to the transcripts.

In-class field observations. Originally, I planned to conduct two sessions of one-hour observations with each of the in-service ESL teachers. As I mentioned earlier, during the time of the study, six of the teachers were in-service, and because of the issue of third party permission, I could not observe one of these six teachers. In order to better fit teachers' teaching schedules, I instead observed their teaching in one session of two to three hours. To understand ESL teachers' teaching actions, I assumed my researcher role in the classroom as reflective interpreter (Boostrom, 1994). Boostrom (1994) suggests that researchers are highly subjective makers of meaning, with eyes to see and ears to hear in the classroom. By this, he means that researchers should not only see what is in the classroom, but also look for possible meanings in what is there. During the classroom observations, I took descriptive notes and interpretive notes. I focused on teachers' teaching actions. I wrote descriptive notes to record the details of classroom settings, teaching activities, or events in the context of my observations. I wrote interpretive notes to record my reactions, my thoughts, my feelings, ideas, or impressions. I referred to both

sets of notes when analyzing the data and writing the stories. I also looked at them a second or third time when revising the stories and creating one coherent narrative.

Follow-up interviews. I conducted follow-up interviews after the field observations. I asked teachers to recall what they had done to learn about the meaning of their teaching actions and how the latter relates to their beliefs. I also took notes during the follow-up interviews. The pre-observation and follow-up interviews took place either in the educational institution where the teachers and teacher educators taught or studied. Each follow-up interview lasted approximately 20 minutes.

Autobiographical threads. Some researchers use autobiography to have their own voices heard. There are many ways to represent the voice of the researcher in the qualitative research text. One of them is to write fictional narratives of self. The researcher may write through a narrator, directly as a character, or through multiple characters (Lincoln & Denzin, 2000). My own experiences are also part of the study, including my experience in teacher education program in China, TESL educational experience in Canada, my EFL and ESL teaching experiences, and my interactions and responses to the participants. I have combined autobiographical threads with the other types of research data that I collected: interview transcripts, field notes, and follow-up interview transcripts. I created a semi-fictional character Joy as the narrator, in whom I integrated my own experiences with those of others at times. My own experiences shape not only the fictional tale that follows in chapter four, but also this entire thesis as I make decisions about what to include and not include as I write.

Ethical considerations. I recruited participants for my research in several different ways. I contacted the directors of language institutes and some of my acquaintances who are ESL teachers. I also approached some of the ESL teachers who were in the TESL program with me. In this research, I knew some of the research participants personally, but I had not previously discussed with them my research topic, or anything related to language teaching methodology. I plan to pursue my doctoral study after I complete my MA research. Therefore, there is no foreseeable possibility that I would become the student or colleague of these ESL teachers and TESL educators in the near future.

Ethical consideration is the social science researchers' respect for the participants. Researchers care about and respect the informed consent, privacy, and confidentiality of the researched (Christians, 2005). Because the participants in my research are humans, I adhered to the ethical guidelines presented in Mount Saint Vincent University's *Policies and Procedures for Ethical Review of Research Involving Humans.* Specifically, participants take part in the research voluntarily, they have the right to be informed about the nature and consequences of the research, they have the right and freedom to discontinue their involvement in the research, at any time of the research, for any reason, without penalty, and their previous contributions can also be withdrawn too, if they wish. Further, participants' privacy and confidentiality are assured against unwanted exposure from the beginning of data collection to the time when I present my research findings. In my thesis, conference presentations, and any resulting publications, I use pseudonyms for any names related to the participants, including the educational institutions where they teach or study.

After my ethics review was approved, I informed the participants in writing of the purpose of my study, tasks to be conducted, significance of the research, possible inconvenience, and the participants' right (see Appendix B). Each individual participant was asked to sign the Informed Consent Form before the interview. The participant and I each kept a copy. Before the in-class observation, the director of the participating institute was asked to sign the Informed Consent Form (see Appendix D). All letters were written in English, all interviews were conducted in English, and all field notes were written in English. All of the interview transcripts and field notes are stored in a locked filing cabinet in my home; electronic files are password protected. After five years, I will destroy the notes and other documents.

Data Analysis

After I collected the research data from interviews, field observations, follow-up interviews, and I incorporated autobiographical elements as I wrote the narrative, I analyzed the data using narrative analysis (Polkinghorne, 1995).

Narrative analysis. Polkinghorne (1995) distinguishes analysis of narratives and narrative analysis. He explains that with analysis of narrative, researchers collect stories as data and analyze them with paradigmatic analytic processes to produce taxonomies and categories out of the common elements. With narrative analysis, "researchers collect descriptions of events and happenings and synthesize or configure them by means of a plot into a story or stories" (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 12). For my research, I conducted a narrative analysis of the data, including the interview transcripts,

field notes, and autobiographical information. I understand narrative analysis as a process whereby the researcher identifies a basic story being told, focuses on the way narrative is constructed by the teller within the context of the narrative, and then integrates and interprets all of this into a story. During this procedure, I organized the data elements into a coherent account (Polkinghorne, 1995). In my research, I paid attention to teachers' stories of their educational experiences as students and their professional experiences as teachers. I looked for the factors that seemed to have the greatest impact on their beliefs and attitudes and that then influenced their teaching actions in the classroom. Also, I listened to the perspectives from TESL teacher educators. I wanted to know what they believe is important for preservice ESL teachers, and I wanted to explore their views on language teaching methods and approaches.

The outcome of a narrative analysis is the generation of a story (Polkinghorne, 1995), which is also the goal of narrative inquiry. The goal is not to write the end of an existing story but to write a more hopeful beginning for new stories (Ellis, 1998b). Therefore, in this MA thesis, I used narrative analysis to process the research data and generate the information into a fictional story: *Methodological Tales of ESL Teachers and TESL Teacher Educators in the Post-Method Era.* In my research, there were three practical procedures in the process of narrative analysis. In the first stage, I synthesized the research data into five separate stories: the story of April, the story of Bridget, the story of Cynthia, the story of David, and the story of Emily. Among these stories, I wrote the story of April in the first person as a monologue. In the second stage, I combined the five stories into one story. I asked myself "How did these five characters meet? When? Where?" I then created the annual TESL Conference in Canterbury as the story context.

In the third stage, I reorganized and refined the single narrative to make it more coherent, and to enable the meanings to become clearer from the greater context and through the process of plotting. I worked with my advisor Dr. Plews to identify different topics across the five separate stories. These topics emerged as: entering the profession by accident, the influence of L2 learning, teaching by principles, the use of music and movement, formation followed by frustration, teaching to school culture, continuing professional development, research in practice, and educating for Guided Discovery and Task-Based Language Teaching. I then reorganized the data so that the characters discuss language teaching methods, approaches, and principles during the three days of the annual TESL Conference. Also I created a semi-fictional character Joy as the story narrator. To make the story coherent, I set the discussions about different topics at different times and locations. For example, the first topic "entering the profession by accident" was at dinner in a Brazilian restaurant, the second theme "the influence of L2 learning" was at the same location, but after the dessert. The story of April is very important in this research. April in the tale is a very special person because of her ethnicity, her educational background, working experiences, and even the way she talks. For these reasons, I put her story at the end of the conversation as a monologue.

During the process of story generating, I included features that give specific meanings to stories: time, place, scene, and plot. Scene is where characters are formed and live out their stories and where cultural and social context play constraining and enabling roles (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). A plot is the conceptual scheme by which a contextual meaning of individual events can be displayed (Polkinghorne, 1995). These

features link the individual events together to create the experiential narratives of individuals: past, present, and future (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

All of the names of the characters in the tales, April, Bridget, Cynthia, David, Emily, and Joy are pseudonyms. Though some of the participants mentioned that they did not mind if I used their real names in my research, I prefer to use pseudonyms for all of the participants, including the names of their schools at which they have studied or worked. Some of the pseudonyms were chosen by the participants themselves.

All of the characters are fictional characters. The tale of each character is not necessarily based on data from one specific research participant. My rationale for creating composite characters is that some of the research participants share similar experiences and beliefs in language teaching, and that the fictional descriptions of these characters help to prevent the research participants being identified in the TESL community. In the next chapter, I present my research findings through the story of five main characters and the narrator at the annual TESL Conference in Canterbury.

Chapter 4

Methodological Tales in the Post-method Era

The General Prologue

Canterbury of Atlantica[6] hosts many academic conferences every year. Every spring, local ESL teachers and TESL educators and those from other Canadian provinces gather for the annual TESL conference. Recently, the conference was hosted at the Knight's University. It was one of the best conferences that I have been to. During the three-day conference, I went to a number of informative presentations and workshops. I met many ESL teachers and TESL teacher educators from different provinces. Most interestingly, I encountered a group of five teachers and teacher educators from Canterbury. They are April, Bridget, Cynthia, David, and Emily.

The conference registration was in the late morning. After that, we went to the cafeteria on campus for lunch. The six of us happened to sit at the same table as a group and introduced ourselves to each other. Cynthia was sitting next to me. She has very nicely cut brown hair, and she was dressed very professionally. Her short hair, her clothes, and even her glasses fit the image of a leader. She looked at my name tag, and asked, "Joy, Where are you from? You have a very nice accent." I told her that I am originally from China. I am a graduate student from the Seaton University, and I am in the second language education program.

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[6] In this MA thesis, pseudonyms are used for the names of the people, places, certificates/diplomas, and institutes and organizations.

"Oh, me too. I am also a graduate student. I am graduating from the Castle University." It was Emily. She was sitting next to me on the other side. She was wearing a blue jacket with a very traditional Chinese flowery pattern.

Cynthia told us that she completed her MA thesis recently. I asked if she was also studying at the Castle University. "No, my graduate studies were through a British university. Personally, I prefer the British scheme in second language education."

"Oh, I like it here in Canada." Emily continued to tell us that the Castle University is one of the local universities providing a variety of arts, science, and professional programs, including the graduate TESL program. Emily is an international student from Taiwan. She has been in Canterbury for three years. Emily had been an ESL teacher and tutor for ten years before she came to Canterbury.

Emily told us that she used to practice martial arts and played soccer. "Oh! Martial arts?" I looked at Emily. She did not look very sporty. I guess the other teachers were surprised too. Everyone was looking at her. Emily seemed a bit shy. "Yes," she continued, "but it was many years ago." Emily loves traveling. She told us that she still remembered her exciting experiences of camel-riding in the desert and horse-back riding in the mountains. Of course, the experiences of feeding fish and snorkeling on a tropical island were unforgettable. Emily also loves music. She plays piano. She sings opera. Again, people at the table seemed to be surprised.

"Well, the TESL people are very interesting. They always seem to have various backgrounds before entering the field," Cynthia said. She told us that she was a youth care worker before she became an ESL teacher. Before that, she had her own theatre company for children. Cynthia's experience of her own theatre company really surprised

me. I guess that's why sometimes she seemed to be more like a businesswoman to me: intelligent, fast-paced.

Currently, Cynthia is the director of a language institute, the King's School. The King's School is one of the independent language schools in Canterbury. It is located in a pretty part of the city. It offers different language, culture, and education programs to language learners and pre-service teachers. The pre-service teacher training program Atlanbury Certificate is associated with the British Educational Organization, one of the two biggest in Britain. The certificate is available in the UK and some other countries. They train native and non-native speakers. They require native-like proficiency for admission. Students at the King's School come from 15 different countries.

Cynthia also told us that she loved traveling. She has been to a few countries: France, Spain, Mexico, UK, and China. I asked which parts of China she had been to. She told us that she visited Beijing, Shanghai, and Hong Kong, and she wanted to visit Tibet in two years. She loves reading, and science fiction is her favorite. She loves writing.

Cynthia started working as a teacher and course designer at the King's School, and she has been there for over ten years. Seven years ago, she was promoted to be the Director of Studies. She has been very active in the field of TESL. Besides teaching, she has done many presentations at different conferences, and she has facilitated a number of workshops for ESL teachers and adult learners.

Cynthia liked to use a lot of gestures when she was talking. In her own words, she is a kinesthetic person. After introducing herself, Cynthia introduced her colleagues Bridget and David to us. She said, "David and I are very different people, but we think the same." I turned to David, who is a tall, blond, young man. David has a very

distinctive British accent. He told us that he was a freelance tutor (teacher educator) in Europe before he came to Canada to join the King's School. David has been in the TESL field for 11 years, nine of which he has been a teacher educator. For a few years, David worked in an international school in Eastern Europe. Over the years, David has taught different levels from beginner to high proficiency; he has taught different age groups, including children, teenagers, and adults. He has taught exam preparation and business English, and he has also done one-to-one tutoring. He seemed to be very confident with his expertise in ESL teaching and teacher education.

Bridget was sitting next to David. Among these talkative teachers, both she and Emily seemed a bit quiet. Bridget has very long dark hair. She was wearing a dark blue skirt suit. Her earrings looked very special. They were a kind of classic pattern. Cynthia said proudly, "Bridget is a returned teacher to the King's School." Bridget told us that her first ESL teaching job was at the King's School. She has been an ESL teacher for almost eleven years, nine of which were in Korea. After teaching younger ESL learners at a village which she called "Rice Field" for seven years, Bridget came back to Canada. She has been teaching in Canterbury ever since.

April was the last one to introduce herself. She is teaching at the Queen's School. The Queen's School is one of the leading language institutes at Canterbury. It offers various English language programs for adult learners. Most of the students there are from Asian countries. Some of the students study English language for a short time, others for over one year before they go to Canadian universities. The Queen's School also offers language programs for professionals who want to improve their English language skills for their working context. In addition to these, pre-service teacher training programs are

also offered. There are dozens of ESL teachers at the Queen's School. April is one of the senior ESL teachers there. She is the most experienced teacher in our group. Before she settled down in Canterbury, April had taught ESL for many years. She taught ESL and EFL in different countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and North America. April liked to joke that she was a member of the United Nations, because she has a mixed cultural background in her family. "I speak five languages as my first languages because of my family background. And both of my children are multilingual as well." April is a very intelligent person. She has three graduate degrees.

Before we left for the workshops and presentations, Cynthia suggested that we meet again later to have dinner together at a Brazilian restaurant downtown.

After the afternoon sessions, the six of us walked from the Knight's University to downtown. Canterbury has over two hundred years of history. It is well-known not only for its history and scenery, but also for its schools. Many things here remind us of its history: the town hall, the churches, the gardens, and the old schools. You can sense the multicultural atmosphere from the food, clothes, and the people walking on the streets. Canterbury is known as "a city of schools" because there are many universities, colleges, and private institutes. Every year, students from different parts of Atlantica, other Canadian provinces, and outside of Canada come here for short-term training or long-term education.

Many of the international students speak English as a second or foreign language. These students need to take a language proficiency test before they can enter Canadian universities. Therefore, various ESL programs have become very popular among the international students in Canterbury. Some students spend two or three years in the

language institutes before going to university. In Canterbury, there are a few ESL programs offered by local universities, such as the ones Emily and I attend. The private language institutes—like the King's School and the Queen's School—also offer English language courses to international students and prepare international students for their future study at Canadian universities. With the increase in ESL learners, more ESL teachers are needed. Every year, in the local universities and language institutes, many students are present in the different levels of TESL teacher education programs. Some ESL teacher education program graduates stay in Canada to teach, but most teach EFL overseas to gain more experience first.

After walking for about 20 minutes, we got to the Brazilian restaurant on Young Street. Young Street is one of the busiest streets in town. The restaurant is in an old two-story building. It was my first time to taste Brazilian grilled food. The chef grilled different kinds of meat and brought them to our table. The food was very good. We also drank some very good beer from a local brewery. At dinner, Cynthia suggested that we should share stories about our ESL teaching. In the pages that follow, I highlight excerpts from some of our conversations about language teaching.

The Accident

Cynthia told us that her ESL teaching journey started in Canterbury.

Cynthia: It was an accident. I fell into it actually. When I moved to Canterbury, one of my roommates actually was working at [a language school]. They needed somebody to work in the daycare. So, as I mentioned briefly earlier, I was

working as a homeless youth care worker, and doing the daycare. And I loved it. So then I applied for an ESL teaching job that came up the following year, and I got it. I loved it. I decided to do my training. So it was an accident.

Bridget: Yah, mine was an accident too. Many things in my life were accidents.

Before she became an ESL teacher, Bridget was studying American Sign Language and working in restaurants in a city on the west coast of Canada. Because of health issues, she could not continue her study of American Sign Language.

Bridget: With the American Sign Language, there is a lot of injury in the elbows and wrists. And after studying for a year or two, I had the injuries. I couldn't continue to do sign language, and I couldn't work in the restaurants any more, because I couldn't move my arms.

Then Bridget went into the TESL field by accident.

Bridget: One of my friends was and is an ESL teacher, and she needed a volunteer in her conversation class. So I volunteered and walked into the field of teaching English as a second language.

David: Well, I can say that I walked into ESL teaching by accident as well. I was a music student in London specializing in performance and composition. I played guitar. I was a self-salaried composer. When I was still in university, I was even a fitness instructor for children and a basketball coach in my hometown. I had a fantastic music degree. But at the end of my degree, there weren't any jobs. Being a self-

salaried composer doesn't pay the rent. And I wasn't quite sure what I wanted to do.

Joy: So what did you do?

David: After graduation, I went to Spain to play guitar. Before I left for Spain, I encountered ESL teaching. I heard someone in my Music Department had gone to Russia to teach English. And I noticed an ad afterwards, so I sent out for more information. I got back from Spain, and I went for the interview. The plan was to go back to Spain to play guitar, but I ended up going to Eastern Europe for six months, and I was there for nine years.

At this point, we were interrupted by the waiter. Desserts were being served.

L2 Learning

After the coffee, Cynthia picked up the conversation about our teaching again.

Cynthia (*turned to me*): What about you, Joy? Going into TESL was an accident for you as well?

Joy: No, mine was not an accident. I wanted to teach English because I had very good language learning experiences.

Emily: Me too! Part of the reasons that I am in the TESL field was my English language learning experience in an international school.

Emily related her decision of being a teacher to her first foreign language learning experience. Before Emily started her education in elementary, she was in an international kindergarten for one year. There, Emily started to learn English as a foreign language. She had two teachers, one of them was a British teacher, and the other was a Taiwanese teacher.

Emily: We spoke English a lot in class. We sang English songs. We played games. My daily life was all in English, for one year. So that was a very great experience for me. I had a lot of fun.

David: So you learned your English in the international schools?

Emily: No. I was in the international school for only one year. It was a kindergarten. My education from elementary to high school was very traditional. I was in a very good high school. It was not easy to get in that school. Study was very hard. We had to prepare for the college entrance examinations. So we had to do a lot of grammar exercises. The teachers were good, but we still had to pass the entrance exams, so the teachers had to focus on grammar.

Emily continued to tell us that before graduating from high school, she wanted either to go to music school or to study English education. It wasn't easy to get into music school, so Emily decided to go into English education.

Emily: I studied literature, linguistics, and communication. I also took a course on Second Language Acquisition. My professor's specialty was English education for children, so my thesis was about English education. I studied a little about

English education through her classes, but I didn't have any training for teaching. But the thing I liked the most was learning through English. It was a great experience.

Joy: I also majored in English Education for my undergraduate study. My study in those four years was hard too, but also fulfilling. April, you are multilingual. Are you teaching because of your language learning experiences?

April: As I told you earlier, I spoke five languages as my first languages. I chose to study English language for my undergraduate study because I wanted to straighten out the language confusion in my family. But my decision to teach ESL was not because of my language learning experiences. I decided to teach because I wanted to do something to help people. To me, teaching is one of the ways to help people.

David: Well, not all language learning experiences are good learning experiences. I took French courses for a few years, but I didn't learn any French. I could not speak French at all.

Joy: How come? I could talk to my teachers from Britain after I studied English for six years in middle schools.

David: We spent most of the time drilling grammar and doing some boring exercises, but I could not speak the language at all. In university I went to do a basic Spanish course, an evening class, the teacher spoke English 50% of the time before we got to the lesson.

April: But you speak other languages, right?

David: Yes, I speak Czech. I know Czech from living in the Czech Republic. I speak some Italian because I worked with Italians for a couple years. Actually I teach Czech on the Atlanbury Certificate training course. One of the main questions for our trainees is, if I travel to Korea, if I travel to Poland or Russia, and I don't speak the language, how can I teach them? So, on the training course we usually start with a language lesson. On the first day, they have one hour of Czech, and it's all in Czech. So they become students for one hour.

Emily: That's very interesting. I read a research article by Flowerdew.[7] In that article, the researcher reported the language learning experience of pre-service teachers. Such experience provides the student teachers opportunities to reflect on language learning as beginners, and language teaching, including different teaching methods, from language learners' perspectives.

David: Yes, we introduce approaches, procedures, and methods through demonstrations and examples.

Cynthia: We certainly can learn a lot from our language learning experiences. My first French teacher was fantastic. She taught with a lot of visuals and interesting activities. But my experience in junior high was not good.

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[7] Flowerdew, J. (1998). Language learning experience in L2 teacher education. *TESOL Quarterly*, *32*(3), 529-546.

Joy: How were you taught then?

Cynthia: I don't remember that French teacher. I remember nothing, which tells me that

what we always did was in the book. My French started to decrease in junior high.

In high school, my first French teacher again was very exciting. Then my French

teacher at grade 10 and 11 was not so good. His classroom management was very

poor. His students didn't respect him. As a result, the class was chaos. So the

classes that I either remember with disgust or don't remember at all are those with

teachers who taught in a way just out of the textbook.

Emily told us that she was just about to start learning French as an absolute

beginner. She was excited about the coming learning experience.

Emily: I am looking forward to such a chance. I learned English and Japanese as foreign

languages. But now, I am going to learn French as a second language in Canada.

When I learned the first two foreign languages, I was just a learner. But now, I am

not only a learner, I am also a language teacher. I will look at language learning

from both a learner's and a teacher's perspectives.

We were all tired. We had to get some sleep for the next day. Before we left the

restaurant, we all agreed to meet for lunch the next day. As I drove home, I thought about

these lovely people I had met: April, the senior teacher from the Queen's School; Bridget,

a returned teacher to the King's School after teaching in Korea for nine years; Cynthia,

the Director of Studies in the King's School; David, an experienced teacher and teacher

educator originally from Britain; and Emily, a Taiwanese student in the Castle

University. I found it very interesting how some people fell into the TESL business by accident; and that a teacher's own L2 learning experience, good or bad, influences his/her teaching. In particular, I remember one thing Cynthia said as an aside to me: "As learners, we all know what we like and what we don't like. It doesn't mean we know how to teach. I, up to the age of 16, have seen people driving a car, and I've been a passenger for years. It doesn't mean I know how to drive a car. So I need some instructions. I need somebody to sit down and give me feedback. After I've done it, tell me what I had done wrong. Let me practice it again. Praise me when I did it well, so that encouraged me to do it. But I can't imagine giving somebody the key and say, okay, you've been watching for 16 years, go ahead."

Teaching by Principles

In the following day, we got together in the cafeteria for lunch. Cynthia took the lead in the discussion.

Cynthia: I just heard a great presentation on teacher talk. In fact, I have done some research on teacher talk as well. After spending a month and a half reading and taking notes, I basically realized, you know, it was a very common fact that when students speak, you need to give them 3-5 seconds of wait time, which I've always known and I think I do it myself. But the research made me very aware of it. When I am observing teacher trainees, it's something I'll be able to say to them. It's really helpful to tell the trainees to say something, and then don't talk

for five seconds. Let the students think. New teachers always ask the question and then often, 8 out 10 of them will just answer the question.

Giving students enough time to formulate their own speech was just one of the foundations of Cynthia's teaching that she was eager to share with us. Because of her own language learning experiences, she also believes that clear instruction is very important.

Cynthia: When I was learning French, some of my teachers could not explain the language clearly. Clear instruction helps students to understand what they are supposed to do, and how to do the task.

Emily: In my graduate studies experience, some of my instructors could not explain well either, and they were not good facilitators.

Cynthia: If I am in a classroom, and the instructor is not a facilitator, but he is more a dictator, I am not happy.

Emily: Yes, but during my graduate studies, some instructors did not facilitate the class at all. The students were asked to facilitate for the whole class, for the whole course. Students didn't have any other choice. In fact, such instructors are good facilitators.

Cynthia: True. If a teacher cannot explain the material, or just says, figure it out for yourself, then, this teacher is not a good teacher. This is true for new material and also when correcting students.

Cynthia was very proud to tell us that she completed her Master's thesis two months ago. In her graduate research, through surveys and interviews, she discovered 89% of her participants, including ESL students, ESL teachers, and TESL teacher educators, believe that error correction was important.

Cynthia: I definitely think that with language, you have to have correction. You have to have support. You need to know where you are going wrong in order to be better at what you are doing… because what frustrates my learners the most at this level is that they have the vocabulary, they have the grammar, people don't understand them, because they've not been corrected or because they know what the word means but they don't know how to say it.

Joy: So is this also an issue of pronunciation?

Cynthia: Well, I've always been a big proponent of doing pronunciation in class.

Bridget: Yes, I like to do pronunciation too. I tried to teach phonics to improve my students' pronunciation when I was teaching in Korea but it turned out to be a disaster…

David: Oh? Why is that?

Bridget (*Paused for a moment*): Well, they had a phonics drill for 45 minutes a week. But even that 45 minutes didn't work out. There were holidays. There were school social events. There were… So it worked out for about 20 hours a year. That's not enough. So it didn't work.

Joy: I also had experience teaching phonics. Some of my students seemed to mix up

some of the English pronunciations because of their L1 dialects. For example, in

some dialects, there is not much difference between [l] and [n]. So the students

might pronounce "light" as "night" or "need" as "lead." When they were in my

phonics class, they seemed to be able to differentiate such confusing

pronunciations. But one year later, when I saw them again, they told me that they

could not tell the difference.

Cynthia: Yes, pronunciation is very important. But I remember when I was a learner, I

didn't care much whether my language was accurate or not. After I could express

my ideas, I started to focus on accuracy. Of course, with World Englishes now,

and the idea that what I speak and what you speak, what my students speak, as

long as we are comprehensible, who cares? So really, when you think of World

English, how can I say to somebody that how you say "a" or your "e" must be like

this, when native speakers don't say it like that either. So it's comprehensibility

that is really the focus now.

Cynthia believed that language comprehensibility is more important than perfect

accuracy. She seemed to be aware of the issue of World Englishes. World Englishes

refers to "all varieties of English worldwide and the different approaches used to

describe and analyze them" (Jenkins, 2006, p.159). Maybe Cynthia noticed that Emily

and I are not English native speakers. Even so, I am pleased. I had a not-so-good

experience in my graduate studies. Once, we were talking about first language and

second language learning in class. One of our colleagues said that he would never teach

French because French was his second language, and that he could only teach English because English was his first language. I was not very sure if this colleague knew that there were at least three people in the class who spoke English as their second or other language. I was one of those three. I didn't ask the other non-native speakers about their feelings. I didn't feel very comfortable.

Whether it is error correction, comprehensibility, or pronunciation, Cynthia is clearly focused on her students' needs.

Cynthia: Method also has to match the students… I believe that I am a big proponent of looking at people's personality and learning style, and trying to match learning strategies with their learning styles… I often do needs-assessments.

Emily: How do you find out your students' learning styles?

Cynthia: On the first couple days of the term, I like to find out their learning styles through various activities. I ask them "What would you like to do? What would you not like? What do you find painful?" The students say, "I like drawing. I don't like to take notes. Speaking English is painful!" If the students find something painful it's because it's the most difficult thing for them. I usually try to find another way to make it easy.

Cynthia also thinks that direct questions like "How do you like to learn?" are useful. She tries to find out the learners' learning styles.

April: When I teach in my writing class, I like to find out how my students like to learn through their essay writing.

Joy: That's good. I remember we were asked to fill out pages of questionnaires in class to find out our learning styles. I did not enjoy such a game of coloring bobbles. Neither did some of my fellow classmates. One of them even said, "Can I not play such a boring game? I don't want to waste my time." Well, we wasted at least half an hour in class to finish the questionnaires.

Cynthia: I don't like sitting still for too long. I am kinesthetic. My students are kinesthetic. So in my class, I try to get my students to move around. I use different colors for my writing on the board. I encourage my students to use pens of different colors to take notes.

Emily: Well, I'm quite auditory in my learning preference.

Then we all noticed that the radio in the cafeteria had been playing pop music all through lunch. We all laughed!

Music and Movement

We carried on the conversation, enjoying the pop songs in the background. Cynthia told us that she liked to have music in the background when the students were discussing with each other.

Cynthia: I don't tend to play rocker to distract them. When I first started to play music in the background, a couple of students found it very distracting. So I said, okay, I understand that, but other than in a classroom setting, or one-on-one tutorial with the door shut, you'll never have this kind of silence.

Emily: I like music. My first teaching job was to teach English through music.

Joy: How did you learn to teach English through music?

Emily: I learned that from the workshops offered by the institute where I was working. Before I started teaching in the classroom, I attended one full week of workshops. It was very hard, from 9am to 9pm, for a whole week. We learned how teachers should use textbooks for the classes, because we had so many classes. There are four textbooks in one course for one year. We need to remember the movements with the music. Also we need to memorize the lyrics. So we learned how to demonstrate the music for them. We learned that the teacher needs to start from the introduction, show the picture, and explain the picture. Also we used some real things like toys to explain the meaning of the lyrics.

April: Yes, music is universal. I like to teach with music too.

April told us that she likes to use music for her listening class.

April: I take down the lyrics of the music, and take out some of the words, so that when the students listen to music, they fill out the missing words. That's one of my favorites.

David: I have a music background. I have a music degree, but I do not teach English with music. My music and my teaching are two different hats, completely. I think my guitar has been in my classroom once. It's two different lives.

Emily: So what activities do you like to do with your students?

David: Fun. By this, I mean activities that require students to participate, work together. So they work in groups or in pairs; activities which involve a bit of thinking as well, and also a lot of personalization. Once we've gone through a lot of the activities, now, substitute a lot of words, and make them relevant to ourselves.

Emily: Back in Taiwan, I took part in the one-week workshops for new teachers, I learned that teachers need to use a lot of visuals and body movements; that teachers do not have to focus on grammar; and that teachers should just give examples if they like to explain something.

Emily relates what she learned and what she did to Total Physical Response (TPR).

Emily: When I was working at the language institute, we used TPR. It was good for small children because they didn't know how to produce language, even in first language. I only taught in TPR because my institute was very strict.

Joy: Did you always teach with TPR?

Emily: No. When I first started teaching, most of my students were from two and a half to six years old. Two years later, I started to teach adult learners. TPR is not good for adult learners. So when they were taught by TPR from very small, they got used to getting information from the teacher. After they become advanced students, they are still waiting for information from the teacher's questions. They can understand very well. Their listening and reading are good but they can't

produce words. They can answer yes or no questions but it is difficult for them to make sentences.

Emily didn't have a name or term for what she did in the adult class. But she told us that only after her graduate studies did she realize that she had been doing a bit of Communicative Approach. At this point, most of us agreed that we know the terminology thanks to the TESL training we received. We decided to skip the next conference session to carry on talking about our TESL training.

Formation Followed by Frustration

In our group, Bridget, Cynthia, and David all have an Atlanbury Certificate. Before David started ESL teaching, he went for a four-week preservice training program in London. During those four weeks, he had eight hours of classroom observations and six hours of teaching practice. On this training course, he was introduced to language teaching methods and approaches. When David did this program, it was called the Anglia Certificate; this has become the current Atlanbury Certificate, but little has changed in the program.

David: It's a preservice course. It was great. So it introduces you to pretty much everything that a teacher has to offer. Basically the course covered language awareness, discourse analysis… Situational Approach was definitely there. So yah, it definitely grabbed my attention.

Both Bridget and Cynthia did their Atlanbury Certificate training in the King's School after they entered the TESL field. Before that, Bridget volunteered in the ESL conversation program in a western city, and Cynthia taught ESL in Canterbury.

Cynthia: I did my Atlanbury training course in the King's School because it was practical. I was teaching already. I could do the training part-time so I could continue working too.

Bridget: I came over from the west coast to Canterbury. I obtained my Atlanbury Certificate in the King's School. I am not saying that what I am saying is absolutely true, but I found that ESL is not yet respected in Canada, as a profession necessarily, as it might be in England. It just seems that way. Now of course this is based on ten years ago, before I went to Korea. So life has changed here. I know that. But my feeling is that the courses here are still very new. ESL is relatively new in Canada. Quite frankly, a lot of what we know about ESL has come out of the British ESL system. I think they are still the leaders, or at least half the leaders. Another thing for me is recognizability [of the certificate].

Cynthia: Yes. I prefer the British scheme though it is difficult. I like the challenge.

Bridget: I was very happy with my preservice training at the King's School. I did not only learn how to teach. It was a really good experience. I think I realized that during the Atlanbury course, I did have a natural ability to do it. I always wondered what I was going to be good at. And I think there were a lot of things that seemed very natural to me. I am not saying that I naturally am a brilliant

teacher, but what we were doing was not a shock to me, or wasn't strange for me. It felt very natural. So I enjoyed it a lot.

Bridget's Atlanbury Certificate also brought her the chance of employment. After she obtained the certificate, Bridget taught at the King's School for the summer and then went back to the west coast to teach for one year. She went for a few job interviews and taught in a few places.

Bridget: I got so many interviews because of the Atlanbury Certificate on my resume. At that time, the Atlanbury Certificate was considered new. Nobody in the west offered the course. So it generated a lot of interest from the ESL schools.

Bridget strongly believes in what she learned from the Atlanbury program. When she started teaching ESL in classroom practice, Bridget was very interested in trying the principles of Atlanbury. After teaching on the western coast of Canada for one year, she joined a teacher exchange program and started her teaching career in Korea. During her nine years in Korea, Bridget taught in high schools and elementary schools.

Bridget: So it was my Atlanbury materials that were my bible when I started teaching, absolutely. I was very focused on trying it out. Because I firmly believed in the Atlanbury program and the principles of Atlanbury, if somebody asked me not to do that, I had a lot of trouble. No, thank you, I will do that. I found my teaching in the high school and junior high to be frustrating and boring. By this, I mean that it was very grammar-based and very translation-based. In this teacher exchange program, I was an assistant teacher to the teacher of English there. All they

wanted me to do was to repeat, or read out of the book, or pronounce it. Such a program is great for teachers without any training and teaching experience, but for trained teachers like me, it was very boring. I was really frustrated, so, two years later, I came back to Canada.

Emily: I understand your feelings. It is not easy if you are not teaching in your own classroom.

Emily continued to tell us that during the time of her graduate studies, she had an opportunity to teach in a language school for four weeks.

Emily: I remember my first time walking into the classroom at a language school in Canterbury. It had been a while since I was teaching. I was so excited that I could teach again. I was going to teach there for four weeks. On that first day, I was there for classroom observation. Before I left, my mentor teacher said, "I know you have experience, but this is MY classroom." Certainly, that was her classroom, and I had no doubt that she knew her students better… I wonder if she said such words to every new teacher, or just me.

For the next four weeks, when Emily was teaching there, she tried hard to fit into the school culture.

Emily: I had to plan my lessons from scratch. My mentor teacher didn't offer me any help at all. But it doesn't mean that I could do whatever I wanted to. Before I could actually teach in her classroom, I showed my lesson plans to that teacher. If

she said yes, I could use what I planned, if she said no, I had to do it again or make changes.

I wonder whether Emily's experience with her mentor teacher is very common in the field of teacher education, whether that's because Emily is not an English native speaker, and she is not a born Canadian. Maybe Emily's mentor teacher acted according to the institutional policy. Or maybe that mentor teacher had had bad experiences before with experienced student-teachers. But, as a Chinese Canadian, an English non-native speaker, and a woman, I understand it really hurts more when you connect your bad experience with your cultural identity. I was hurt very much when I was told by an administrative staff in a language school that his school preferred teachers with blond hair and white skin. I might not get hurt so much if it was not that I happened to be non-white and non-blonde.

At this point, I noticed that David was holding a cup of coffee, standing by the door. He might have gone out to fetch a coffee without being noticed. I guess he heard Emily's story.

Teaching to School Culture

After Emily finished talking about her teaching experience in Canterbury, David came in and sat down with his coffee.

David: Not only teachers have to teach according to the school culture. In my experience, as a tutor for teachers myself, I need to slot into whatever the center does. What I teach really depends on what center I am in and what the center requires.

Emily: Yes. I thought I was going to try a lot of the things that I learned, Communicative Approach, TBLT, etc. Now, when I look at my lesson plans for those four weeks, I could see a bit of TBLT, but I wasn't thinking of that when I was working there. I had to tell my mentor teacher what I wanted to teach, and how much time I needed… I guess what I learned from school influenced my lesson plans, but I wasn't thinking of TBLT at all. I was more worried if my mentor teacher would be happy with the activities.

April: I have been a mentor teacher a few times. I always try my best to help the student teachers. Helping people is one of my missions. When I have supervised other teachers' teaching… When a student teacher has an idea for teaching, I don't tell her she can not do it. I help, support her to improve it, and to make it teachable in our class. David, what do you teach on the teacher training course then?

David: This is a very interesting question. Again, it depends on where I am. I taught ARC[8] in Lisbon. ARC stands for Authentic, Restrictive, and Clarification. It is not an approach. I taught Task-Based Learning in Barcelona. I also taught Communicative Approach for a few years. Where I am now, in the King's School, I teach a bit of everything. So it really depends on the beliefs of the tutor [teacher educator] and the center.

April: So what is your own belief?

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[8] Jim Scrivener (1994) describes ARC in his book *Learning Teaching: A Guidebook for English Language Teachers*.

David: I don't have one belief, to be honest. I think if I have one belief, it makes me a rather one-dimensional teacher. I've met many teachers and tutors who have one belief, and won't be swayed from one or the other.

Though David denied that he has a singular belief regarding teaching, he seemed to agree with eclecticism in language teaching.

David: Actually, four years ago when I was working at the international school in London, we met every three years about what approach we use as an organization. We could not agree on what approach we all use because we borrow from Audiolingualism, Grammar Translation, and we borrow from Task-Based and Communicative Approach, and the Silent Way, all of these things. So the name given back four years ago was the principles of eclecticism.

This reminds me of "a principled approach" to language teaching in the "post-method era" by Brown (2001). Brown is one of the scholars in the field who promotes eclecticism, though Brown's suggested twelve principles are not exactly the same as David's and even Cynthia's. These two teachers clearly teach according to current understandings in the discipline.

Joy: So how should teachers teach?

David: There are many ways to teach. If you have some vocabulary, then a Test Teach Test Approach might work nicely; if you have speaking or writing activities, then a Task-Based might work well; if you have some language or grammar to

introduce, Task-Based can work very well. Guided Discovery can work very well. Or the traditional Presentation Practice Produce can also be effective.

At this point, we realized that it was time to go to the next session. People didn't want to miss another session. However, I could not concentrate on the presentation, thinking about what my new colleagues had been talking about.

Cynthia seems to believe in the theory of learning styles and learning strategies. She is aware of her learning style; she often does needs-assessment to find out the learning styles of her students; she believes that teachers should choose the methods that match the students. Cynthia tries to teach her students different learning strategies based on their learning styles. She teaches in different ways to make sure that she balances what students need and what they enjoy. However, Cynthia uses teaching styles that particularly match her own predominant learning style, but this seems to be true of most teachers.

Bridget firmly believes in the principles of Atlanbury. However, even her teaching bible from Atlanbury did not make her teaching life in Korea easier. In this school culture, Bridget could not try out what she learned from Atlanbury.

Being a teacher educator, David also has to teach according to the school culture. He introduces different methods and approaches to teacher trainees based on the beliefs and school culture of the center where he works.

Emily learned about TBLT and wanted to try it in her teaching in Canada. Eventually she had to teach according to her mentor teacher's requirements.

Most of these teachers and teacher educators (Bridget, Cynthia, and Emily) identify their language teaching beliefs in relation to the teacher education programs.

These teachers want to try out what they learned from teacher education in their teaching practice. Cynthia had the opportunity to do this, but Bridget and Emily didn't. They could not practice their beliefs and principles because they had to teach to fit the school culture. They were professionally frustrated. Director Cynthia certainly influences the school culture in the King's School: Bridget and David are teaching to the school culture of the King's School, but it is one in which they believe. Because these teachers are open to knowing different methods and approaches, they are professionally satisfied.

Professional Development

At the end of the day, we six people got together again. We sat on the couches in the lobby for a while because we could not decide where to go for dinner. I noticed that David seemed to have rich knowledge in second language education, and wanted to know more.

Joy: David, did you learn about second language teaching in graduate school?

David: No, I learned from the people I worked with, and the conferences I had been to. I was working with course book writers when I first became a tutor. Everything I was doing was basically what they were doing. So I was very lucky with whom I worked with.

David was fortunate that he was also paid to go to the conferences, where he learned.

David: I used to work for an international school with a network of 140 schools in 40 countries. Every year we had conferences. What I know was from them, from international high schools, from courses, from conferences, from meetings. We had meetings every year in London, every January for six and a half years. And we had educator conferences, and younger learner conferences. So I used to hate giving talks at the conferences, because other presenters taught me a lot, but I don't know how much I taught them.

In David's view, the ESL and EFL teaching profession in Europe is more informed, and many ESL programs and schools in North America are still very traditional.

David: From the courses I've seen, a lot of schools are very traditional. Well, this is the grammar, teach the grammar, and practice it; now this is an activity… When I came to Canada, I was surprised by how traditional it was. Canterbury was very isolated from the English teaching professionalism in Europe. The ESL teaching in Canada is becoming more recognized now. Well, I was pleasantly surprised, because now I have something to show people. Now when I give presentations, I can teach people the things I learned in Europe.

Cynthia: Well, we're not all behind the times. At the King's School, David and I do a lot of workshops with the staff. We do them weekly. The teachers here do Task-Based because we use the textbook *American Cutting Edge* [(Cunningham & Moor, 2005)]. They do Guided Discovery because we use *American Headway* [(Soars, 2001)]. We do Teach-Test-Teach (TTT). Some use Lexical Approach.

We do Presentation-Practice-Produce (PPP), usually the lower levels, or if you are doing an exam class. You want to get the information out there quickly. They need to have very accurate information for the answers. So we do teach with all the different methods.

Bridget: After I started my ESL teaching in Korea, I also had chance to attend workshops for professional development. They would have the workshops, but basically, here is an activity, try it. Most of the time, what you could do in the workshops couldn't be done in the classroom anyway, because the classroom is more grammar-based and translation-based. One of the reasons that I wanted to study for a Master's program was that I was looking for professional development for myself.

Cynthia: Yes, that's why I did my Pilgrimage Diploma and later the Master's program.

Cynthia told us that she wanted to be a teacher educator after she had been an ESL teacher for ten years. Again, she chose a British program because the Pilgrimage Diploma and Atlanbury Certificate are from the same British Educational Organization.

Cynthia: There was not such a program offered in Canada that I was looking for, so I chose to go to a country where I would not have any culture shock. So I went to New Zealand for 14 weeks.

Joy: I've heard about this program. Someone told me that most people fail the first time.

Cynthia: Yes, this program is very challenging. I was going to bed at three o'clock and getting up at six, for 13 weeks. I had to do seven 3,000-word assignments within 10 weeks. I had to do lesson plans. I had to teach. I had to do post-lesson reflection. I had to do a curriculum task. I had to do a case study at 5,000 words. And there was the final exam. So I was exhausted.

Cynthia said she felt exhausted. But you could tell from looking at her that she was happy with her learning experience.

Cynthia: When I did my observations on the course, it just reinforced what I already do [in my teaching practice].

April: Right, I was already teaching at the Queen's School when I started my graduate TESL program. It took me a few years, because I was teaching full-time. But this TESL program was a nice program because it was like the reaffirmation of what I have learned in my teaching experiences. It reviewed what I already knew, and it also reminded me of what I almost forgot.

Cynthia: Yes, so when I saw somebody was doing some of the things, I saw the reaction of the students, and I thought, yes, well, I do it too. And when I saw some teachers who were doing things, and I saw boredom on the students' faces, I thought, yes, that's why I don't do that. So it was reinforcing, which I think was also a very good learning experience.

Joy: Yes, I remember I had a similar experience when I was observing my mentor teacher's teaching many years ago. I learned what I should do and what I should not do in my class. I learned that you really have to know who your students are.

April: When teachers are observing in the classroom, they seem to be watching everything. When I was teaching in Europe, I once taught a group of Japanese teachers who were learning ESL in the morning and teaching Japanese in the afternoon. It was very interesting that these teachers were not only interested in learning the English language, but also interested in the way that I taught them. They were watching everything I did. The feedback I got from these students included some suggestions for my teaching; for example, please use more visual activities. This made it easy for me to pinpoint the problem.

Cynthia told us that after the Pilgrimage Diploma, she started her graduate studies through a British university. When Cynthia was looking for a graduate program, she wanted to work with people who use the same "method" as she did.

Cynthia: I met someone who is one of the trainers for this course. Her methods were almost identical to mine. I wanted to go somewhere; I wanted to do a course with people who had the same belief system about teaching. So I looked at their program, plus, what I looked at is all research-based, although I love to teach, I love to be in the classroom, I also love to read and write. So I wanted to do a research Master's.

In her graduate studies, Cynthia did research on the areas that she didn't know well. Also, she did study the subjects that she was aware of and believed in. She used her graduate research results in the teacher training program.

Cynthia: I chose to research. I say, four of the six papers I chose to do I knew nothing about, or had never really thought much about it. So I wanted to do something completely different. The other two were things I believed in, and so I wanted to do the research to support what I already believed. In the last two years, I was teaching full time and also doing my administrative job when I was taking two courses each term. I selected topics for my research.

Bridget: You are lucky. It's easy to access resources for thesis writing from Canterbury. But when I was looking for a graduate program for myself a few years ago when I was still in Rice Field, I had to look for a course-based program, because in Rice Field, it was very hard to get any support to write a thesis.

Emily: I enjoyed my graduate studies in Canterbury too, though it was hard. The professors here teach differently from those in Taiwan. It is more student-centered here.

Emily told us that she took a couple of English conversation courses when she was teaching back in Taiwan. Three years ago, Emily decided that she needed to improve her language skills and her teaching skills. Therefore, she came to Canterbury for her graduate studies.

Emily: It was really hard. We had to do a lot of group discussions, and a lot of presentations. But it was good that I could have chance to talk to many teachers.

Emily learned not only from the group discussions, she learned a lot in the library. She was so happy that she could access and have time to read so many books and journals.

Emily: I also learned some knowledge of teaching: Participatory Approach, Task-Based Learning, and Communicative. That was very interesting. And I also realized that I was taught with Direct Method in one of the English conversation courses I took before I came to Canterbury. I like Task-Based Language Teaching.

At the end of the conversation, David told us that he was going to the USA for a training course. When he comes back, he will do workshops for the teachers and student-teachers in the King's School.

April: You are lucky!

David: Yes, I am. But not only because of this trip, but also because the King's School is so open to new approaches and professional development for all its teachers.

Emily: Every time when I learn something new, something good, I always wonder if I could make my teaching from my previous experience better. I know I can't travel back in time, but I still want to know... I want to make things better… I guess that's why I too want to start a new journey. I'm thinking of going west to continue my studies.

Bridget: My graduate studies on a correspondence course through a British university are really amazing.

Through her graduate studies, Bridget had chance to do research and experiments on the theories and principles she was taught.

Bridget: I've taken a lot of the materials, and now we are just talking... take it to your class, do this mini-project, how do they work out for you? So they actually take what they are working on in a module and ask you to apply it in your classroom and see what happens. So it is… They expect practical experiences with the principle. They expect you to use it and then think about it.

Doing classroom-based research helps Bridget in her teaching practice. For example, she realized that sometimes tests are effective because students expect them.

Bridget: I discovered that the fact students pass the test doesn't reflect their reading comprehension, because there are test-taking skills that can help the students to pass the test… Hey, I'm getting hungry. Where should we go for dinner? What about Korean food? I know there's a good Korean restaurant downtown.

One of the good things about Canterbury is that you can find different types of cuisine here. The Korean restaurant served the food differently. We grilled the food on our table by ourselves. The waiter brought a pile of small dishes with sliced pork, beef, lamb, chicken, and seafood.

At dinner, Bridget told us that she loved Asian food, especially sushi and kimchi.

"I love kimchi too," I said, "My mother likes to make kimchi for me, though she herself doesn't like it very much."

Bridget seemed a bit more talkative than usual tonight. Maybe the food reminded her of her living and teaching in Korea.

Research in Practice

Bridget told us that she did not like her first teaching job in Korea. She was working as an assistant teacher. She came back to Canada because she was frustrated. Then she learned from an ESL teacher back in Korea that four schools in a village needed an ESL teacher, so she sent out her resume and planned to stay for one year. Bridget left Canada again and went back to Korea. That is when she started teaching at elementary schools in Rice Field. Bridget stayed for seven years.

Bridget: I hadn't had teaching experience with younger learners before. In the village, there was no material, no program, not even a national curriculum.

Cynthia: Such a circumstance would be challenging for any teacher. I have been trying to find textbooks for our teachers so they don't have to spend hours of time preparing materials.

Bridget: Right. So I had to develop the curriculum all by myself. But I was happy because I was a teacher teaching in my classroom. I was not an assistant teacher.

During those seven years, Bridget explored her ESL teaching with her investigations and experiments. She wanted to find connections between the topics that she taught, and she wanted to develop something that students can build on.

Bridget: Kids tend to learn colors, animals, and numbers really fast in their second language. So why would I spend four weeks doing that and not connecting it with other things? So I thought, being an Atlanbury girl, I wanted to find the connection in my curriculum… I wanted to find connections, I wanted to start with something and build from that. I wanted the kids to discover things and to work things out. I wanted to build up things from color, animals, to descriptions of animals.

Like the other teachers, Bridget was always concerned with students' needs. She believed in needs analysis and that it was important to teach what students need to learn.

Bridget: What do kids really need to do with English, living in Rice Field? You don't need it to do anything. So in terms of needs analysis, teaching kids, you have to look at the functions in their first language. What they do with their first language is what they want to do with their second language. So you have to take things that they would do already, in their L1, and give them the L2 language. And for kids, things like self-maintenance, establishing ownership. You know they are wanting to do things, wanting to get things, and expressing certain things.

April: Yes, students' needs are very important. We try so hard to help our students to reach their goals.

In her own classroom, Bridget learned to teach ESL through her explorations, experiments, and research.

Bridget: So, the Atlanbury girl I am… But back in the time when I was teaching in Rice Field, in the first year I didn't know what I was doing; in the second year, I was learning new things; and in the third year I had better ideas.

With her experiments, explorations, and research, Bridget made progress from not knowing what to do to wanting to find the connection, to trying to teach the language in context(s). At the same time, Bridget realized that things in the book and things in the class might be different.

Bridget: Things in the book and things in the class do not necessarily match. And research is often in ideal circumstances. But the practical situations are in the real world. General guidelines and principles that sound good on paper, probably in a research situation. But when you are in the classroom, Kanto is picking his nose, Kenya is punching Mary. You know, the little girl is crying. Things don't always get talked about in the books.

Even so, Bridget seemed to be pleased with her graduate studies where she was taught "specific ways" and where she learned much more about ESL teaching.

Bridget: [We were taught] specific ways to deal with children, information about how children learn, which explains how they react to the activities I was asking them to do. I learned how to include a little bit of grammar work but not too much

grammar. I realized that authentic material has a place with second language learner-kids.

Cynthia told us that her MA research confirms what she has been doing.

Cynthia: I benefit a lot from my graduate studies. Because of my own language learning experience, I believe clear instruction is important and error correction is essential. I believe I have been doing that. In my MA research, I discovered that 90% of the participants wanted clear instruction, and 89% of the people wanted error correction. This result confirms what I have been doing.

We all seemed to enjoy the Korean food. At this point, the waitress brought a pot of Korean tea. I looked out of the window. It was snowing! We decided to go home before the weather became worse. Before we left, David told us that he was going to do a presentation the next day.

After I got home, I was eager to tell my husband about the Korean grilled food and the new colleagues I had met. David is confident of his expertise and knowledge in ESL teaching and teacher education. He seems to value more his professional networking: He was working with textbook writers; he was paid to attend conferences; he had access to a network of 140 schools in 40 countries. It is a pity that I didn't have such a network when I was teaching in China. I had some colleagues, who did teacher education with me and who were teaching with me, but I didn't have contacts with teachers from so many countries. Teachers seem to have positive learning experiences when they observe other teachers' teaching because they learn what they should do and what they should not do in their teaching practice. In this group of teachers and teacher

educators, most of them have graduate educational experience. Bridget and Cynthia are also graduate researchers. They learned from their research, explorations in class, and experiments. They improved their teaching with their research: Bridget developed from thinking that she knew nothing to having better ideas, and Cynthia used her research results at the teacher education program at the King's School. I was impressed how some of the teachers continue to do research in their teaching practice even after they completed their courses or graduation. They are doing research for their own sake.

Educating for Guided Discovery and TBLT

On the last day of the conference, Emily and I were at David's presentation on the Multi-Sensory Approach, where David described a living room with rhymes and movements.

After the morning sessions, we went for lunch. The day's lunch was offered by the conference committee at the Knight's University. The six of us sat together. Emily started the conversation.

Emily: David, your presentation was great. Where did you learn the Multi-Sensory Approach?

David: I adapt it from my Pilgrimage Diploma course. It has been used a lot for teaching younger learners, but it can also be used for teaching adults. I tried to take visual, audio, and kinesthetic, such different learning styles into consideration. By the end, the students will have a perfect text and it's accurate, so really I still believe, when I teach vocabulary or grammar, I want the students to remember it the next

day, but also the following week, and then the week after. So there's a lot of recycling, recycling activities. Also I like to think that the material will often influence teachers on the best way to approach teaching.

Cynthia: Yes, the reason that I chose *American Cutting Edge* and *American Headway* is that those textbooks use Task-Based and Guided Discovery. These two textbooks are balanced in contents: listening, speaking, grammar, and writing.

Joy: I am not familiar with Guided Discovery. It is not discussed in any of my TESL textbooks.

Cynthia: Guided Discovery and Task-Based Learning are components of Communicative Learning. For me, communicative learning means to introduce authentic language that learners need. I think there is an element of communication that has to be accurate, because otherwise, not accurate as perfect, but accurate as understandable, comprehensive.

April: So what methods do teachers in the King's School use to teach?

Cynthia: We encourage teachers to use different language teaching methods.

David: Yes, in King's School, we do not have an overriding approach. With our trainees now, if it's reading, what approach are we going to use? What procedure? If it's reading and listening, okay, let's use this procedure which is a receptive skill procedure; if this is grammar, what procedures can we use here? Let's use the

Task-Based. This is vocabulary, let's use Test-Teach-Test, and it's a very simplistic way.

Cynthia told us that all but two of the teachers in the King's School have gone through the training course by Cynthia and David.

Cynthia: On the training course, we teach them Guided Discovery, Task-Based learning, TTT, we don't really do PPP, because everybody does that automatically. As a learner, you've been a learner for 20 years of your life, and you've seen the teacher present, practice, and produce. So we don't usually introduce that at the beginning. We might, when we're talking about frameworks later on. This is a very common framework. So introduce the language in a very controlled task, make sure for accuracy, and then a fluency task, but we also talk about the Lexical Approach, and we also do a session on that as well. So we introduce a language by using different methods.

Bridget: I like Guided Discovery a lot.

Both Cynthia and David mentioned Guided Discovery, but I still didn't completely understand what it was. Before I could ask Bridget how she teaches with Guided Discovery, Emily spoke up.

Emily: How do you teach with Guided Discovery?

Bridget: With Guided Discovery, I start my teaching with an activity, then the students discover the grammar, and then I do a follow-up activity where students apply

what they discovered. I am a bit of a Guided Discovery person. I think Guided Discovery is great. So I can do that more on a higher level, or I could do it more with adult learners of different levels... It works for a lot of people, and it also creates energy in the class and discussion between students, which is extremely beneficial.

Cynthia: Yes, in the King's School, our teachers teach with Guided Discovery, Task-Based, and many other different methods.

Bridget: However, if I were ever to learn a language, probably I wouldn't enjoy Guided Discovery. I would be… please just tell me, because that's my learning style. You know, just show me, tell me and I am good. Why am I wasting my time trying to figure it out?

Being aware that Guided Discovery might not work for every learner, Bridget tries to balance her teaching with Guided Discovery and clear explanations of grammar structures.

Bridget: Because I know that not everybody likes Guided Discovery, in the end, you have to clearly give them the structure, if we are talking about, for example, grammar, you have to be very clear, in the end. They have to trust that they are going to come to a conclusion, and they are going to know what they want to know, by the end. So that tends to keep the ones who don't like Guided Discovery happy, patient, talking, discussing; and the ones who love it, they are happy working together. They all know that they are going to get in the end a clear answer.

Cynthia: Right. In our institute, we expect teachers to have clear instructions. A good teacher needs to be able to explain the materials.

Bridget indicated that she learned Task-Based Language Teaching from her preservice training course Atlanbury program at the King's School over ten years ago. However, her "first, real, hands-on experience" was after she came back to teach at the King's School again.

Bridget: Task-Based is very interesting. I kind of ran into Task-Based, of course, where you don't give them any language; you give them a task, and the language comes out of that. You need to hear somebody use the language or they ask you for it. I believe in Task-Based.

In her practice, Bridget realized that her students had difficulty carrying out the task without enough vocabulary or guidelines.

Bridget: So it is great to focus on the language afterwards, but my feeling is, and I've done a little bit of research on Task-Based, of course in my studies, and my experience has been… that students do want to know at the beginning how they are supposed to say something, and there is a higher level of frustration with students who don't have guidelines, or they don't have any language suggestion on how to accomplish a task.

Cynthia: I will introduce the language points before the students start the task, so the students know the language first.

Bridget: And I had students where I did strictly tasks, I meant purest task-based, and they were just frustrated. They said, well, how am I supposed to say that. So then you can stop the activity, and you can explain. But in many ways, the interests of the activities are kind of gone, in my experience.

Cynthia: Well, usually I will not interrupt students in the middle of a fluency task, when they are communicating with each other. I usually take notes of common errors and wait till the end.

I remember that in second education literature, Willis (1996) maintains that TBLT provides a context for grammar teaching and form-focused activities. She explains that the teacher does not pre-select specific linguistic forms to teach before the task. Instead, at the language focus stage, learners ask about the language that they notice during the task cycle (Willis, 1996). Here, I am not very sure if Cynthia was referring to grammar or vocabulary. If she meant grammar, then she might have her own reason of introducing grammar before the task.

Bridget continued to explain her difficulty with TBLT. She didn't find it very necessary to do the task repetition cycle.

Bridget: Once the task is finished, and then you do the language work, what do you do next? Okay, you are supposed to give them… Well, have they finished the task? Well they've already done it, they've communicated. The communication might not have been pretty, it might not have been accurate, but it was accomplished. Why would they want to go and do it all over again?

Joy: I've read that Mondada and Doehler[9] have some discussions about the notion of task accomplishment, and Lynch and Maclean[10] have done some research on repetition in TBLT. You might want to read their articles.

Bridget: Thanks. Another thing about tasks… There was the task, and there was the follow-up language task. I often start with the follow-up language task, because it provides the students with the language that they need to accomplish more fluency-based task. And for the students, they seem to find that more comfortable.

David: Yes, that's why we need to understand the text. Cynthia and I encourage the trainees to understand what the course book wants today, because a lot of time trainees have a hard time understanding what the course book wants them to do. So they would do one thing, but the course book wants them to do another. Once you understand the textbook you are in a better position to decide whether you want to discard it, or you can use the text, or you can adapt it.

After she realized the difficulties that her students have with TBLT, Bridget tried to use the Task-Based course book in a different way. She gave the students a list of phrases before they tried to do the task.

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[9] Mondada and Doehler (2004) argue that "tasks are accomplished in a locally contingent and socially distributed way through the actions of the participants involved and through their ongoing interpretations of the instructional settings" (pp. 509-510). By this, they mean that tasks "require learners to work variable resources and adapt them continuously to the local contingencies of the ongoing activities" (p. 514).

[10] Lynch, T., & Maclean, J. (2001). A case of exercising: Effects of immediate task repetition on learners' performance. In M. Bygate, P. Skehan, & M. Swain (Eds.), *Researching pedagogical tasks: Second language learning, teaching, and testing* (pp. 141-162). Harlow, UK: Pearson Education.

Bridget: Yes. So I gave my students a list of phrases before they try to do the task. The students have a secure learning environment. They need to have the words, and they need to know the structures. The students would feel secure if they can use the phrases that they are given, or at least sentence heads, or sentence phrases.

Over the last year of teaching at the King's School, Bridget has gained experiences with Guided Discovery and Task-Based Learning. Though she admitted that she might not like Guided Discovery as a language learner because of her own learning style, she believed Guided Discovery benefits a lot of learners, especially adult learners. Though she still has difficulty with Task-Based learning and teaching, she is trying to teach TBLT in different ways. Bridget sees some limitations with TBLT and how she first understood it, but she has learned to manipulate it in practice.

At this point lunch was over. We stopped our conversation. The plenary speech began.

There was a poster presentation session in the afternoon. After that the six of us met again at the afternoon coffee break. As soon as we sat down, April spoke up.

April's Story

April: Over the last three days, we talked so much about methods and approaches. What's the difference between method and approach?

David: Approach tends to be based on a theory of language, and a theory of learning. Methods would be how you carry out the theory of learning and the theory of language as a theory of teaching. I guess in some situations method and approach

can be interchangeable. But for me, an approach is based on research and practice, for me, which has a theory of language; it has certain beliefs attached to it. So should language be presented first, or should it come in the end, or should it come in the middle? It's a theory of learning.

Cynthia: Approach or method, it does not matter much to me. For me, there are many ways to teach English. I am using Task-Based Learning with [teaching] quantifiers, doesn't mean Task-Based Learning will work really well for [teaching] reported speech… I use different methods for everything… I think method has to go with the theme and has to go with the language points or the skills you are teaching. So basically I think I am an eclectic mix method… you can't use the same method for everything. I actually think that's the best way to go for most people.

April: I have three graduate degrees. I have never been taught any teaching method or approach. I have taught language teaching methodology in my teaching career, but I do not think there is "the method" in language teaching.

People in the room were surprised. April continued.

April: Teaching is not only a means of earning money and making a living for me, it has become my mission, and part of my religion as well. I am a workaholic. I work very hard in my teaching. I was married to my teaching first before I was married to a man. I think the ethical part of my work is my education experience with the nuns. The nuns really worked like slaves. I really work very hard for my students.

Help them, whether they realize it or not, whether they say thank you or not. But at least I know I did something nice for them. I did something helpful, even if the students don't know what I did for them. Most of my students appreciate my hard work. You can see that from the evaluations from the students. They can sense my sincerity and my kindness of trying to help, though they might not be able to say it because of their limitation in language.

April's path to ESL teaching. Before I became an ESL teacher, I wanted to do different things. I wanted to be a nun, but I was too naughty. I wanted to be a lawyer, but I am too honest. I wanted to be a doctor, but I passed out at the sight of blood in the small surgery. I always wanted to do something to help people, so I decided to teach. Teaching is one way of helping people. Trying to do something good for the other people is the closest I can get to being immortal.

I started teaching ESL right after graduation from university. My first ESL teaching job was teaching at the ESL department at my mother university. I have been teaching ESL for many years and in many countries. Now, I am in Canada. I have taught language teaching methodology, but I do not think there is "the method" for language teaching. In my teaching, my openness, my intuition, my experiences, my flexibility, and my creativity work together.

After teaching at my mother university for a year, I was recruited to teach in Africa. I was young. I wanted to help. I was hired to help, and change the English teachers there. I tried to introduce the Western teaching styles to the African teachers: be friendly, let the students talk, group work, discussion, smiling face, and so on. Nobody believed me. I lost respect among my students. Even my colleagues who were teaching

with the old styles did not think what I was trying to do would work. When I said the old style, I meant the Confucians style, or lecturing. Sometimes I still had to do some old style teaching. I lecture and the students listen. Back when I was teaching in Africa, I was too stubborn to give up my teaching style. I am still stubborn. And I was also patient. I didn't expect good results overnight. It took me a month to reclaim my respect. I tried to convince the teachers there to be open-minded. I tried to convince them to give their students a chance, and give themselves a chance. In the end, I was very successful. I became the window to the modern world for those teachers. I became their favorite.

Besides my teaching jobs, I have also done some volunteer teaching. Volunteering is also another way of helping people. I have families in Europe. I used to visit Europe every summer. So I contributed my time to teaching English as a foreign language there.

I have been teaching at the Queen's School for over ten years. Most of my students are from Asia. They are very intelligent students. They do not have much time fooling around because they want to go to university. So when I teach them, I won't have time for joking a lot, though I still try to bring in some humor in some way. For example, I give out a model essay in my writing class. It is a perfect model essay, except the content is very funny. The topic I choose for them can be very funny. But I know that my students are not into the new styles like music and things like that. They have only eight weeks a term. They need to improve their English and pass the examination. Going to university is their goal. I want to help my students to reach their goal.

April's beliefs of language teaching. I believe teachers always teach in the way that they were taught when they were young learners. I teach in the way that I was

taught. The schools that I have been in were American schools, but I also had teachers who obtained their education in Britain. So basically, I was taught by the Western styles. Teachers tend to teach in the way that they were taught. Also it depends on the kind of students that teachers have. I still remember my French class. My teachers used a lot of visual activities. I remember the mirrors on the side, with the little frogs; we did a lot of the drawing things for the vocabulary activities. The teacher said a word and the students had to draw what it was. We did a lot of role plays, so it was more communicative. We also did a lot of music, which was a lot of fun, and a lot of gap filling and cloze exercises for the listening. Now, when I am teaching I still use visual activities, and music for listening as well, depending on what students I have. In Canada students are from different parts of the world. They have different learning experiences, and they have different needs, and different reasons for coming here. I adjust my teaching to fit my students.

Teachers have to access the needs of their students and find out their learners' learning styles. I would ask my students to write an essay about how English is taught in their home countries, how they learned at home, and what they want to do in Canada. So after I find out all this information, I can adjust my teaching. It's hard, that's why I feel worn out. It took me years to learn these things that we don't get from the textbook. I learned all this in my teaching experiences in a very hard way.

I started my graduate TESL program after I have taught for over 10 years. Before that I already had a graduate degree in Grammar and Literature. This TESL program would be very useful for those who have very little teaching experience, but in my case, I already learned from my years of teaching experiences before I opened the TESL course

book. Every time when the instructor said something, I was pleased to know that I did that in my teaching. I was pleased not only knowing what I did, but also knowing that it worked.

Even with all the knowledge teachers got from their graduate studies, eventually they will teach in the teaching style they had when they were students. When I was a student, one of my teachers liked to do dictation. I didn't enjoy that very much. I do dictation with my students now. I think my underlying reason for doing that is trying to encourage the students to listen to people, even when they go out or get on the bus. I knew some of them don't listen to people. Unless they speak to their own friends on the bus, ESL students should listen to the other people. It is always my wish that if my students are on the bus by themselves, they will try to listen to a conversation, and come back and say somebody said this on the bus, what does that mean? If you say dictation five or six years ago, I would say no, it is boring. But now, I like to do dictation. I learned from my teaching experience that it worked for a lot of students…

April paused for a few seconds, and then she took something out from her purse. It was a card. It was pink. April put on her glasses, and read:

Lord, send me out today

To leave heart prints.

And if someone should say,

"I felt your touch,"

May that one sense YOUR LOVE

Touching through ME

When April was giving her eloquent speech, I looked around the room. I saw a few people nodding their heads at times. I was thinking how Richards and Rogers (2001) suggested that teachers should modify and adjust the approach or method to fit their own teaching practice. Some scholars have suggested that it is very likely that teachers teach in the way that they were taught. I recalled that Freeman and Richards (1993) believe that "the foundations of an individual's ideas about teaching are well established through the experience of being a student" (p. 210). April teaches in what she called the Western Style but she also changes herself to fit her students. She has learned from her experiences that she needs to change her teaching style to fit the students' needs. April has obtained three Master's degrees, but I do not understand why she did not identify any of the mainstream language teaching methods or approaches. I have no doubt that April is a good teacher, working hard to help her students to reach their goals.

Joy: I remember I did a lot of dictations when I was a student. We had to write down the sentences when we listened to the tape.

David: Well, that's one way of doing dictation. With the Multi-Sensory Approach, you can also do dictation. You can make it very visual, that's a live listening, and that's where a live listening can replace a tape recorder. With tape recorder, you can't control the speed, and there is no visual key. With live listening you can go back, and you can forward again, and you can go back again and again, you can clarify, so everything is in context. In my presentation this morning, from that 10-minute model, students have a task, and they have a model which they can use to create their own, it is still very student-focused.

In the room, people started talking about their own language learning experiences again…

The Canterbury TESL conference ended. Over the three days, I certainly learned a lot from the presentations and workshops. Also I have better understandings of ESL teachers and TESL teacher educators after I talked to April, Bridget, Cynthia, David, and Emily. I realize that I have some things in common with each of these ESL teachers/teacher educators. In particular, similar to Emily, I chose to teach English because of my good language learning experiences. Like Bridge and Emily, and many other ESL teachers in practice, we experienced frustrations and difficulties in teaching because of the school culture or institutional policies. Also, like April, I have gained a lot from my teaching experiences.

Chapter 5

Conclusions, Implications for Teacher Education, and

Recommendations for Future Research

When I set forth on this research journey in Chapter one, I provided my overall research question "How do teachers come to know what they know about language teaching?" and three guiding questions:

1. What are teachers' and teacher educators' understandings of and attitudes toward language teaching methods?

2. What do ESL teachers do in the classroom in terms of language teaching methods and approaches?

3. How do ESL teachers view their teaching actions?

In this chapter, I discuss the findings of my research, and especially how they inform these questions.

Research Findings

1. ESL teachers and TESL teacher educators have various educational backgrounds and working experiences before teaching English as a second or foreign language.

In this research, most of the participants did not have a teacher education background before teaching ESL. Some first learned how to teach while on the job, or by

recalling their own L2 learning experiences, and gradually developing a set of beliefs. Only later did most seek out teacher training/education and professional development.

2. A teacher's own L2 learning experience, favorable or unfavorable, influences his/her teaching in practice.

The research findings of this study confirm that ESL teachers tend to teach in the way that they were taught as learners. Freeman and Richards (1993) believe that "the foundations of an individual's ideas about teaching are well established through the experience of being a student" (p. 210). Golombek (1998) maintain that teachers' personal practical knowledge, which is influenced by their experiences as language learners in the classroom, informs their teaching action in the classroom. Teachers in this study (especially, April, Cynthia, and Emily) who had good experiences tend to teach in the way that they were taught. Cynthia liked to use visual materials. Those who had unfavorable experiences (David and Cynthia) tend to avoid teaching in the way that they were taught. David had bad experiences learning French with teachers who taught with the Grammar Translation Method and learning Spanish with teachers who spoke English in class. On teacher training courses, David models language teaching with teaching Czech in Czech. He does not teach in the way that he was taught as a learner. Cynthia also had bad experiences with some of her French teachers, and she seems to avoid what those teachers did. April, who had good language learning experiences, still does what she calls negative activities. Activities such as dictation are very common teaching techniques in language teaching. April learned from her teaching experiences that such activities are good for the students. In this study, I have noticed that teachers who regard

their L2 learning in a positive light are also those who tend to be confident speakers and recognize their own oral and aural competence. David picked up Czech when he was living in the Czech Republic. He is confident with his Czech because he can understand Czech native speakers. I went through a lot of grammar drilling and translation exercises in my EFL study in China. I still believe that the English I learned before was useful, because I could understand English native speakers even before I came to Canada. In contrast, teachers who had less positive L2 learning experiences are those who are less confident in speaking the target language and understanding native speakers. David can read and write some Spanish, but he is not very confident with his Spanish because he can not speak or understand native speakers.

3. Teachers learn to teach differently in various ways: L2 learning experience, on-the-job experience, preservice training, professional development, classroom observation as teaching professionals, networking, graduate studies, and research in practice.

In this research, most of the teachers had positive preservice training experiences where they started to learn to teach. Most of the teachers went to graduate schools with the expectation to improve their teaching skills. Some of these teachers (e.g., Bridget and Cynthia) seem to be especially pleased when talking about doing research in teaching during the time of their graduate studies and thus improving their teaching with their research results. These teachers maintain their researcher identity and do more research for their own sake even after completing courses or graduation. Some teachers/teacher educators (e.g., Cynthia and Emily) had positive learning experiences when they did

classroom observations as student teachers as part of their professionalization. During the process of this research, it was a very valuable learning experience for me, as a teacher and a researcher, that I could do classroom observations with five teachers/teacher educators. The observations have opened my eyes to certain things in teaching.[11]

4. Teachers and teacher educators teach according to their own principles and beliefs but not according to a single method. Some teachers have difficulty with some of the principles that they learned from graduate studies and training. Teachers are professionally frustrated when they can not employ what they learned and what they believe in.

In this research, all of the teachers and teacher educators teach according to their own beliefs in second and foreign language teaching, beliefs that have developed through various means (see point 3 above). The principles that they discussed with me include: sufficient wait time for learners to answer questions, clear instruction, true facilitation, making connections in curriculum, pronunciation practice, comprehensibility before accuracy, attention to students' needs, attention to learning styles, learning strategies, and learning preferences, use of music and movement, less focus on grammar, and attention to age-related approaches/methods.

This reminds me of Brown (2001), Kumaravadivelu (1994, 2001, 2006), and others who suggest teaching according to principles. In this study, a variety of methods and approaches are connected to these principles, to the circumstances in which the

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[11] The classroom observations helped me better understand the ESL teachers and teacher educators in this study. The field notes reinforced my understandings of the participants, their experiences, and their teaching actions. This experience influenced my thesis writing. In addition, I reflected on own teaching experiences. I compared the similarities and differences.

teachers teach, and to the students' context. Yet some approaches are more prominent. This is especially the case with TBLT. In second language education research, some researchers (Carless, 2004; Jeon & Hahn, 2006) have reported the difficulties that teachers have with TBLT. In particular, Jeon and Hahn (2006) reported that lack of knowledge of TBLT and inability to use the target language are the main reasons why Korean teachers avoid TBLT. In this research, some teachers have difficulty with this approach. Bridget, for example, as an English native speaker, is competent in the target language, but she has difficulty with TBLT because of the students' inability to use the target language in the way this approach requires.

What frustrates some of the teachers in my study (e.g., Bridget, Emily) is not the difficulty that they encounter in implementing different language teaching methods or approaches in their classroom teaching, but rather the experience when they could not employ what they learned and what they believed in their teaching practice because of school culture. Kumaravadivelu (1994) proposed teacher autonomy and suggested "location-specific, classroom-oriented innovative practices" (p. 29) in the postmethod condition, but in this research, teachers are only partially autonomous: They adjust their teaching to meet the students' needs, but methods and approaches they choose are related to the school culture.

5. Both teachers and teacher educators teach to fit the school culture. School culture has an influence on the language teaching methods/approaches/principles that teachers use in teaching. Teachers who are involved in research and professional development seem to be more open to different language teaching methods and

approaches. Schools open to different language teaching methods and approaches seem to be more supportive of teachers' professional development.

In this research, the most surprising finding for me is the impact of school culture on teachers' choice of language teaching methods/approaches/principles in their teaching practice. Bridget, David, and Emily indicate that they teach to fit the school culture. In research literature, Gorsuch (2000) reported that educational policies and educational cultures influenced Japanese teachers' use of CLT. Similarly, Mullock (2006) maintain that institutional factors affect teachers' decision making. School culture certainly has a great impact on how teachers in my study teach. It is obvious that Cynthia, the Director of Studies, certainly influences the school culture and policy of the King's School. ESL teacher Bridget and teacher educator David teach according to the school culture and institute policy of the King's School.

Bridget strongly believes in what she was taught in the preservice training program and graduate studies. Yet she also always teaches to fit the school culture. When she was a language assistant, she had to do what the school and her supervisor teacher expected. When she was teaching in Rice Field, she adjusted and improved her teaching through research and experiments. She decided to leave her teaching because she had to be a language assistant again, and so become subordinate to someone else's teaching approach. Bridget believes in TBLT and the Guided Discovery. She also indicates that she started to use those two approaches only after she came back to teach in Canterbury again. The school culture of the King's School could be one of the factors. David has taught different language methods and approaches according to the school culture of the

institutes in which he has worked. But he too now teaches according to the culture of the King's School.

Back in Taiwan, Emily taught TPR with younger learners according to the institute requirements. She changed her teaching method when she taught adult learners. Later her teaching in Canterbury was also an example of teaching according to school culture. She had to meet the expectation and requirements of her mentor teacher.

Cynthia seems to be open to different methods/approaches. She encourages the teachers in the institute to use different methods/approaches. Teachers in the King's School also teach to some of the principles that Cynthia cherishes (e.g., clear instruction, teaching pronunciation). It is very important to point out here that Cynthia/the King's School supports teachers' professional development, and that this supportive perspective is an important part of the school culture there. For example, internal workshops are offered to teachers weekly, and David was sent to do training in the USA and was expected to share the knowledge with other teachers.

6. Teachers and teacher educators to believe in eclectic methods in language teaching.

In second language education literature, Brown (2001, 2002) proposes an eclectic approach to language teaching. In this research, teachers and teacher educators (Cynthia and David) believe in eclecticism and encourage other teachers (e.g., Bridget) to use different methods in teaching practice. All the teachers and teacher educators in this research, including April, who does not believe in any methods, are concerned with students' needs. They teach differently to meet students' needs. What these teachers and

teacher educators believe in is similar to what Grittner(1990) claims that "no teaching method is suggested for any one teacher, for any one class, or for any one individual" (p. 39). This study is also further evidence of Zuengler and Miller's (2006) perspective that relativism has shifted the focus of language teaching methods and approaches away from external ways to deal with language content to the local practice of teachers and the local interpretations of learners.

7. Teachers who do not identify mainstream language teaching methods and approaches also teach effectively.

In this research, teachers (e.g., April[12]) did not identify mainstream language teaching methods/approaches. I believe that their working environment did not require them to know any of the terminology since they did not contextualize their teaching in terms of their school or professionalization as the others did. In research literature, Long (1991) claims that "methods do not matter" and "methods do not exist" (p. 40). As I mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, one of my Canadian colleagues did not believe in any methods, and claimed that "methods do not work." In this research, April holds a similar opinion. She does not believe in any methods, but she has her own beliefs. April has her own teaching principles based almost entirely on her experiences and her concern for students' needs. She teaches to help students reach their academic goals. April also teaches effectively.

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[12] Among the seven teachers and teacher educators I interviewed, two of them did not identify mainstream language teaching methods and approaches. I have merged those two into the composite character of April.

8. Some teachers are particularly loyal to a British system in second and foreign language education.

Among the ESL teachers/teacher educators that I interviewed, four of them (who are represented through three characters in Chapter 4) had experiences working for the same British educational organization in four different countries. Both Bridget and Cynthia indicated that they believed in the British system in ESL education. These teachers chose to study in the British programs for their preservice training and later graduate studies. They associate what they know and how they have come to know about teaching with an education system, and not a particular method or approach.

Surprises in the Findings and My Change through the Research

When I began my research, I believed that different factors influence how teachers teach: language learning experiences, teacher education, professional development, teaching contexts, learners, and the curriculum. This research confirms some of my beliefs and assumptions. There are also surprising findings.

Because of my personal experiences, I believed that it was important for ESL teachers to know both the language itself and how to teach. I thought that teachers already had an impression about what teaching should be like and how to teach, but that that would not be enough when teachers start teaching. This might be the reason why ESL teachers teach in the way that they were taught as language learners, when they were not taught how to teach in teacher education before beginning their jobs. Before the research, I thought teachers would teach in the way that they were taught, no matter

whether it was good or bad. This is supported by research (Freeman & Richards, 1993; Golombek, 1998). I was especially surprised when I found that ESL teachers with bad L2 learning experiences avoiding doing the same bad things that their L2 teachers did with them, because this is not supported by some of the above research. I was still further surprised to find out that some teachers (Bridget and April) taught in the ways that they would not enjoy themselves because they believe such teaching methods/approaches/principles are nonetheless good for the learners.

During my year of graduate TESL study, I noticed that, some ESL teachers, especially those who have teaching experiences, expect to learn more about how to teach, and different and new ways about teaching. I used to believe that teacher education was the most important source for teachers to learn how to teach, though teachers could also learn from many other sources: conferences, institutional professional development such as workshops and presentations, and external networking. I was surprised but also pleased to find out the positive influences of institutional support for teachers' professional development (e.g., the King's School). It was a surprising finding that some teachers (e.g., David) seem to value their external networking more than their teacher education. I was even more surprised by the internal knowledge sharing in the King's School, because in my working experiences in China, there were professional development opportunities for certain teachers, but there was no internal sharing after those teachers' professional development.

In this research, some research participants surprised me with their rich knowledge of language teaching methods and approaches, others, also surprised me because they did not identify any of the mainstream language teaching methods and

approaches. While both groups are effective teachers, the group with richer knowledge of language teaching methods and approaches seem to have more institutional support for their professional development. Teachers' professional development helps teachers get to know more about mainstream language teaching methods and approaches.

Limitations of the Research Findings

Polkinghorne (2005) suggests qualitative researchers should engage with participants in more than a one-shot, one-hour session in order to obtain interview data of sufficient quality to produce worthwhile findings. In my research, I interviewed each participant for about one hour, and I also conducted follow-up interviews with teachers after I observed their teaching. It is likely that the research data would be different if I interviewed the research participants more. So, one of the limitations of this research is the limited research data from interviews.

Another limitation of this research is the limited data from field observations. I could not observe one of the participants in the classroom, because of the issue of third party permission. In my original research design, I planned to conduct two classroom observations of one hour each session with each teacher. However, in order to fit the teachers' schedules, I observed their teaching in one session of two to three hours. I took field notes when I was observing the teachers. My research data would be richer if I could have conducted observations with every research participant more often and for a longer period. The teachers were self-conscious when I was in their classroom. If I could have spent more time in the classroom over a period of longer time, the teachers would be more comfortable with my presence, so they might have taught in a more relaxed way.

Thus I would be able to have deeper understandings of the subject. For these reasons, I limited the use of classroom data in representing my findings in Chapter 4.

The third limitation is the selection of research participants. Among the seven participants, four of them are from one institute. Three participants were contacted by one of the participants. The teacher educators are from a private training institute. It is possible that my research findings might be different if all of the research participants are from different institutes. Teacher educators in this research share opinions with some of the scholars and educators from universities (e.g., Larsen-Freeman, 1999; Bell, 2003, 2007), but I would have to interview university professors of TESL teacher education to fully confirm this.

Implications for TESL Teacher Education

My research findings suggest that (a) sincere ongoing institutional support for teachers' professional development is very necessary and important for the expansion of teachers' knowledge and practice, (b) it is important for teachers and teacher educators to share knowledge after professional development with internal and external networking, (c) teacher education programs should include a teaching methods course (also see, Bell, 2007), and (d) teacher education programs should encourage and, most importantly, support practitioner research in ESL classrooms during the program so that teachers know how to continue with their helpful classroom researching afterwards.

In teacher education programs, one of the topics that I often hear teachers and students talk about is open-mindedness. When we discuss language teaching methodology in the postmethod condition or post-method era, we should keep an open

mind to the range of knowledge, to different methods and approaches, and especially to professional development and sharing its knowledge.

Recommendations for Future Research

The focus of this study was to explore teachers'/teacher educators' beliefs in language teaching methods/approaches/principles and especially how they come to have such beliefs. The perspective was chosen deliberately because of my interest, my own educational background, and teaching experiences. During the process of narrative analysis, several other ideas occurred to me that could be of interest and worthwhile to investigate more thoroughly. It would be interesting to study more deeply why some teachers do not even mention any of the terms in language teaching methodology. How can the researcher explain the difference between what teachers say they do and what they show they know? Do the professional development needs of ESL teachers differ from one institutional or geographical place to another? The research could also be expanded by including university teacher education professors as participants in the study.

Epilogue

Ongoing Discussion in the Continuing Journey

Through this study, I collected the narratives from seven participants and retold the stories as the methodological tales in the post-method era. These teachers and teacher educators are still working hard on their continuing second language teaching journey. April is still working hard at the Queen's School to help her students to reach their goals. Bridget is satisfied with her job at the King's School; she is planning to finish her graduate studies in two years. Cynthia is continuing her research and experiments in second language teaching and teacher education; she is going to work with her colleagues from the UK for further research and publications. David is going to be in the US for a one-month training course. When he comes back, he will do workshops for the teachers and preservice teachers at the King's School. Emily is going on a new journey for her quest of language teaching. The discussion of language teaching methodology is an ongoing topic in the field of teaching English as a second or foreign language, even in this post-method era.

While finishing this thesis, I came across a research paper by David Bell (2007). He interviewed 30 students from one MA program in applied linguistics. He collected direct data of 21 electronic discussion board postings. He also collected data from teachers' autobiographies and teaching journals. In Bell's research, none of the ESL teachers defined method as post-methodologists (e.g., Kumaravadivelu, 1994) would do. Bell (2007) concludes that it is essential for ESL teachers to have knowledge of different

methods; that teachers are aware of the usefulness and limitations of methods; that teachers are intellectually autonomous and discerning of language teaching methods; and that knowledge of language teaching methods are essential in teacher education.

Scholars such as Kumaravadivelu (1994, 2001, 2003a, 2003b, 2005, 2006) and Pennycook (1989, 1990a) suggest that teachers should be more autonomous in language teaching. Bell (2007) reports that teachers are already aware of the usefulness and limitations of methods, and teachers are already autonomous in language teaching. In my MA research, some teachers realize the limitations of some of the methods and approaches, and they are also struggling with those limitations. Teachers and teacher educators are trying to be autonomous by learning through teacher education, self-directed and institutionally-supported professional development, and external and internal networking. However, not all of the teachers are already doing that and much depends on their school culture.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Semi-structured Interview Guide

Preface: Set the interviewee at rest: explain the purpose of the interviews; rules of confidentiality; remind the interviewee of participants' right; sign the informed consent form.

Guiding questions for interview with ESL teachers:

Topic	Questions
Teaching Education	• Can you describe your pre-service training/graduate education?
	• What made you choose to become a language teacher?
	Additional questions, if necessary
	• Where did you receive teacher education? What was that like?
	• What is your best memory from that time?
	• What is the worst memory from that time?
	• Where have you taught? What was that like?
	• Has the pre-service training and education changed the way you teach?

Language Learning	• When did you start learning languages and why? What motivated you to continue? • What was your language learning like? *Additional questions, if necessary* • Can you describe your favorite teacher? • Can you describe your worst teacher? • Can you describe your model student or model learner? • Which kind of teachers do you admire? • Which kind of teachers do you think are not doing such a great job?
Teaching Experiences	• Can you describe your teaching? • What do you recall about teaching methodology from your teacher education or any other professional development experiences? Which methods or approach do you like? *Additional questions, if necessary* • Can you describe the school you are working for? • Can you describe a typical classroom and class? • Can you describe your favorite kinds of activities? • What kinds of activities don't you like but still use? • What kinds of activities do you avoid? Can you describe your own experiences of these activities as a learner? • Which do you think are not so good?

	• How do your colleagues use methodology?
	• In which ways are methodologies helpful?
	• How would you define your teaching in term of language teaching methodology?
	• Give an example, say, if you were to teach travel, how would you go about it? What things do you consider when planning your lessons? What are our basic objects? What would you include if you had all the time and all the resources in the world?
	• Which kinds of students inspire you? How do you think you best encourage your students to learn?

Guiding questions for interview with TESL educators:

Topics	Questions
Teaching	• Can you describe your teaching?
	• What do you think pre-service teachers need to know before they start their teaching practice?
	Additional questions, if necessary
	• Can you describe the school/university you are working for?
	• What do you include in curriculum?
Methods	• Could we turn to the subject of language teaching

| | methodology? What do you understand by the term "teaching methods"?

• What position do you think teaching methodology occupies in the teacher education program? |

Appendix B

Information Letter for Teachers and Teacher Educators

Dear Participant,

My name is Kangxian Zhao. I am a graduate student in the Research Master of Arts in the Faculty of Education at Mount Saint Vincent University.

I invite you to participate in a research project which I am conducting for the purpose of writing a thesis to complete my Master's degree. This research focuses on ESL teachers' and TESL educators' perspectives on the issue of language teaching methods. My goal is to better understand ESL teachers' and TESL teacher educators' beliefs and actions in the classroom.

I will interview each person individually in English about their educational backgrounds and experiences as language learners, student teachers, and language teachers or teachers of language teachers. The interview will take approximately one hour, and it will take place either at Mount Saint Vincent University or at the participant's place of work. I will write some notes during the interview, and I will use a digital recorder to record the interview so I can transcribe it later and review the conversation again for the purpose of analysis. I may also conduct two one-hour field observations in each ESL teachers' classroom. In this case, I will not have any contact or interact with ESL students. I will be introduced as a graduate student from Mount Saint Vincent University, who is observing the teacher. I will take notes during the observation. If classroom observations occur, I will do follow-up interviews which last 30 minutes to

one hour. In these interviews, I will ask participants to recall their classes and further discuss some of their teaching activities.

I will send you the transcripts of interviews that take place for review. All of the notes and transcripts will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in my home. In the case that I move house, all the documents will be moved with the locked filing cabinet to the new house. The electronic files will be password protected. After five years, I will destroy the notes and other documents.

You will be asked to choose a fake name or "pseudonym" for the purposes of assuring confidentiality in reporting the research. Pseudonyms will be used for your name and any names related to you such as those of other people you mention in the interviews or that of the educational institute where you work. I will use these pseudonyms in my thesis, in conference presentations, and in any resulting publications.

If you decide not to continue your involvement in the research at any time, for any reason, you can discontinue without penalty and any contributions can be withdrawn too, if you wish. I intend to write a thesis, and I may present the study at conferences and possibly publish parts as papers in academic journals. The completed thesis will be available for viewing at MSVU library.

Thank you for expressing an interest in this project. If you have questions about how this research is being conducted, you can contact the Chair of the University Research Ethics Board (UREB) c/o MSVU Research Office, who is not directly involved with this study, at 457-6350. Also, please feel free to raise further questions or concerns with me now or at any point during the research. My email address is ███████████████ My supervisors are Dr. Susan Walsh and Dr. John Plews. They

can also address any concerns or questions you may have about this research. Their contact information is:

Dr. Susan Walsh   Phone: (902)457-6598   Email: susan.walsh@msvu.ca

Dr. John Plews   Phone: ███████████   Email: ████████████

Sincerely,

_____

Kangxian Zhao

Graduate Student

Mount Saint Vincent University

Appendix C

Information Letter for Director of Educational Institute

Dear Director,

My name is Kangxian Zhao. I am a graduate student in the Research Master of Arts in the Faculty of Education at Mount Saint Vincent University.

With your permission, I would enjoy the opportunity to conduct two one-hour classroom observations with some of the ESL teachers who are teaching in your institute and who are interested in participating in my research project. This research focuses on ESL teachers' and TESL educators' perspectives on the issue of language teaching methods. My goal is to better understand ESL teachers' and TESL teacher educators' beliefs and actions in the classroom. My observation is going to focus on the teacher's teaching. The ESL students in the classroom are not included in this study. I will not have any contact or interact with the students. I will be introduced to the students as a graduate student from Mount Saint Vincent University, who would like to observe teacher's teaching. I will take notes during the observation. I will also be conducting interviews with those teachers.

Pseudonyms will be used for your institute and any names related to the teacher such as those of other people the teacher mentions in the interviews. I will use these pseudonyms in my thesis, in conference presentations, and in any resulting publications.

If you decide not to continue the involvement in the research at any time, for any reason, you can discontinue without penalty and any contributions can be withdrawn too, if you wish. I intend to write a thesis, and I may present the study at conferences and

possibly publish parts as papers in academic journals. The completed thesis will be available for viewing at MSVU library.

Thank you for your support to this project. If you have questions about how this research is being conducted, you can contact the Chair of the University Research Ethics Board (UREB) c/o MSVU Research Office, who is not directly involved with this study, at 457-6350. Also, please feel free to raise further questions or concerns with me now or at any point during the research. My email address is ████████████████ My supervisors are Dr. Susan Walsh and Dr. John Plews. They can also address any concerns or questions you may have about this research. Their contact information is:

Dr. Susan Walsh   Phone: (902)457-6598   Email: susan.walsh@msvu.ca

Dr. John Plews   Phone: (████████   Email: ██████████

Sincerely,

_____

Kangxian Zhao

Graduate Student

Mount Saint Vincent University

Appendix D

Informed Consent Form for ESL Teachers

I have read the information letter about Kangxian Zhao's research project, dated February 13, 2007. I understand that this research focuses on ESL teachers and TESL teacher educators' perspectives on the issue of language teaching methods and that the goal is to better understand ESL teachers' and TESL teacher educators' beliefs and actions in the classroom.

I understand that I will be interviewed individually. The interviews will take approximately one hour, and will take place either at Mount Saint Vincent University or at my place of work. I understand that the researcher will take some notes and that the interview will be recorded and transcribed. I will be assured of confidentiality. Pseudonyms will be used for my name and any names related to me such as those of other people I mention in the interviews or that of the educational institute where I work. Kangxian Zhao will use these pseudonyms in her thesis, in conference presentations, and in any resulting publications. I understand Kangxian Zhao may conduct two one-hour field observations when I teach in my classroom. In this case, she will not have any contact or interact with my students. She will be introduced to my students as a graduate student from Mount Saint Vincent University, who is observing the teacher. If classroom observations occur, Kangxian Zhao will do one follow-up interview for 30 minutes to one hour. She will send me the transcript of interviews that take place for review.

I understand I can withdraw from the research at any time, for any reason, without penalty. I understand that if I have questions about how this research is being conducted,

I can contact the Chair of the University Research Ethics Board (UREB) c/o MSVU Research Office, who is not directly involved with this study by telephone at 457-6350. Also, I can raise further questions or concerns with Kangxian Zhao, whose email address is ███████████ or with Kangxian Zhao's thesis supervisors Dr. Susan Walsh and Dr. John Plews, whose contact information is:

Dr. Susan Walsh   Phone: (902)457-6598   Email: susan.walsh@msvu.ca

Dr. John Plews   Phone: ███████████   Email: ███████████

In addition, if I am interested, I can request a copy of the finished thesis or view it at the MSVU library or Curriculum Resource Centre (CRC, 4th floor, Seton Academic Centre).

Signature: _____ (Participant) Date: _____

Signature:_____(Kangxian Zhao) Date: _____

Appendix E

Informed Consent Form for Teacher Educators

I have read the information letter about Kangxian Zhao's research project, dated January 16, 2007. I understand that this research focuses on ESL teachers and TESL teacher educators' perspectives on the issue of language teaching methods and the goal is to better understand ESL teachers' and TESL teacher educators' beliefs and actions in the classroom.

I understand that I will be interviewed individually. The interviews will take approximately one hour, and will take place either at Mount Saint Vince University or at my place of work. I understand that the researcher will take some notes, and the interview will be recorded and transcribed. Kangxian Zhao will send me the interview transcript for review. I will be assured of confidentiality. Pseudonyms will be used for my name and any names related to me such as those of other people I mention in the interviews or that of the educational institute where I work. Kangxian Zhao will use these pseudonyms in her thesis, in conference presentations, and in any resulting publications.

I understand I can withdraw from the research at any time, for any reason, without penalty. I understand that if I have questions about how this research is being conducted, I can contact the Chair of the University Research Ethics Board (UREB) c/o MSVU Research Office, who is not directly involved with this study by telephone at 457-6350. Also, I can raise further questions or concerns with Kangxian Zhao, whose email address is ██████████████ or with Kangxian Zhao's thesis supervisors Dr. Susan Walsh and Dr. John Plews, whose contact information is:

Dr. Susan Walsh   Phone: (902)457-6598   Email: susan.walsh@msvu.ca

Dr. John Plews   Phone: ██████████   Email: ██████████

In addition, if I am interested, I can request a copy of the finished thesis or view it at the MSVU library or Curriculum Resource Centre (CRC, 4th floor, Seton Academic Centre).

Signature: _____ (Participant) Date: _____

Signature: _____ (Kangxian Zhao) Date: _____

Appendix F

Informed Consent Form for Director of Participating Institute

I have read the information letter about Kangxian Zhao's research project, dated February 13, 2007. I understand that this research focuses on ESL teachers and TESL teacher educators' perspectives on the issue of language teaching methods and that the goal is to better understand ESL teachers' and TESL teacher educators' beliefs and actions in the classroom.

With my permission, Kangxian Zhao will conduct two one-hour classroom observations with some of the ESL teachers who are teaching in my institute and who are interested in participating in my research project. This research focuses on ESL teachers' and TESL educators' perspectives on the issue of language teaching methods. Her goal is to better understand ESL teachers' and TESL teacher educators' beliefs and actions in the classroom. Kangxian Zhao's observation is going to focus on the teacher's teaching. The ESL students in the classroom are not included in her study. She will not have any contact or interact with the students. She will be introduced to the students as a graduate student from Mount Saint Vincent University, who is observing the teacher. She will take notes during the observation. She will also be conducting interviews with these teachers.

Pseudonyms will be used for my institute and any names related to the teacher such as those of other people the teacher mentions in the interviews. She will use these pseudonyms in her thesis, in conference presentations, and in any resulting publications.

Kangxian Zhao intends to write a thesis, and she may present the study at conferences and possibly publish parts as papers in academic journals. The completed thesis will be available for viewing at MSVU library.

I understand I can withdraw from the research at any time, for any reason, without penalty. I understand that if I have questions about how this research is being conducted, I can contact the Chair of the University Research Ethics Board (UREB) c/o MSVU Research Office, who is not directly involved with this study by telephone at 457-6350. Also, I can raise further questions or concerns with Kangxian Zhao, whose email address is ███████████████ or with Kangxian Zhao's thesis supervisors Dr. Susan Walsh and Dr. John Plews, whose contact information is:

Dr. Susan Walsh   Phone: (902)457-6598   Email: susan.walsh@msvu.ca

Dr. John Plews   Phone: ████████████   Email: ████████████████

In addition, if I am interested, I can request a copy of the finished thesis or view it at the MSVU library or Curriculum Resource Centre (CRC, 4th floor, Seton Academic Centre).

Signature: _____ (Director) Date: _____

Participating Educational Institute   _____

Signature: _____ (Kangxian Zhao) Date: _____