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CLESOL 2018 CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

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THE TESOLANZ JOURNAL

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EDITORIAL

This 27th volume of The TESOLANZ Journal is a special edition containing the proceedings of the 16th National Conference for Community Languages and ESOL, which was organised by TESOLANZ (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages New Zealand) Inc. and CLANZ (Community Languages Association New Zealand). The conference was held at Christ's College in Christchurch, 4 – 7 October 2018. The conference convenors were Kerstin Dofs, Ara Institute of Canterbury and Daryl Streat of Lincoln University.

Thanks are due to all those who attended and participated in CLESOL 2018. It was, as always, a stimulating and enjoyable few days, when educators from all sectors of the ESOL community in Aotearoa came together to learn, share ideas, and network with old friends and colleagues. The programme had parallel streams suited for all TESOLANZ sectors; early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary. It covered various aspects of our profession from aspects of learner identity and teacher education to the use computer-mediated technology. Papers were also presented from the fields of English for Academic Purposes, syllabus design, and testing and assessment, as well as the four core skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. The contents of this special edition of the journal gives a taste of some of the offerings under the conference theme of 'Transforming our Landscape'.

The first paper by Jonathan Tillotson describes an alternative approach to practice and assessment of pronunciation. The author compares speaking and writing procedures for feedback, thereby highlighting that it is often more difficult to give durable and useful feedback for speaking. He then discusses the benefits of interactive and immediate feedback in speaking situations. The article reports on the author's exploration of the effects of using voice recorders on mobile phones, and finds that this allows for error marking, feedback and revision of the speech. The technique is outlined in the article, with examples from real pedagogic contexts.

Kevin Roch, in the second paper, suggests an approach to teaching reading, which includes using authentic human-interest stories from newspapers. He integrates reading instructions, in which students talk about the text, with teacher facilitation of the conversations. He highlights the importance of scaffolding as a pedagogical strategy and identifies useful principals for this. The paper sketches the theoretical rationale for the approach and outlines how it is enacted, or brought to life, in the classroom. The second aim of the paper, supplementary to the pedagogical focus, was to make a case for reflective practice in order to highlight the need for English language teachers to make sense of their own practice, and ultimately develop their own theories for practice.

In the third paper, Mareena Ilyas reports from a two-year study in which she undertook both responsibility for education and support of her students, the participants, who were at a very low level of English language proficiency. She especially investigated health barriers to learning, including physical and psychological conditions. Findings indicate that teachers are in an ideal position to not only enhance language and literacy skills, but also to reduce the impact of trauma and depression. The findings also suggest that teachers can inspire these learners to improve their health through the therapeutic teaching strategies suggested in this article, using learners' own lives as content in the curriculum.

The fourth paper, by Martin Andrew and Oksana Razoumova, presents findings from a qualitative study of 20 teachers undergoing practicum learning at a university in Australia. The objective of the study was twofold: to determine and suggest a range of artefacts to increase authenticity, and to unfold and study what learning that takes place in the practicum phase. Socially situated records of performances over time, which embodied interpretations and reflections, formed the basis for authentic assessment of performance and outcome. Teachers' embedded reflectivity gave information about their intellectual, social, moral, and emotional identity journeys captured as part of the learning trajectory. The article describes how assessment can be based on enhanced authenticity through utilisation of artefacts, and on the teachers' own reflections as they undergo a process of becoming.

The final article, by Tim Edwards, reports on EAL students' difficulties operating in new study environments and a new socio-culture abroad. An intercultural communicative competence course was run in order to lessen any transition issues. Interviews with participants and teachers were conducted post course attendance. The findings show that students have little information about the new study environment pre-arrival, and that the cultural background are not clearly connected to individual students' experiences. The paper includes suggestions on how the transition could be improved through better preparation, suitable resources, and training.

In conclusion, our thanks go to all those presenters who submitted their papers for consideration in this special edition of the journal. All the papers were subjected to double blind review, in that neither authors nor reviewers knew the identities of the respective parties. Part of the process in preparing a manuscript for publication requires responding to questions and advice from experienced peers. In this respect, we are extremely grateful to the many reviewers who, willingly giving their time and expertise, worked hard and long to read and report back on the manuscripts they were assigned, and to write detailed and constructive feedback to the authors.

Kerstin Dofs & Margi Memory

PILOTING A TOOL TO PRACTICE AND ASSESS PRONUNCIATION USING MOBILE PHONE VOICE RECORDERS

Jonathan Tillotson

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Abstract

This article will consider the difficulties faced by testing and improving learnt pronunciation skills in the light of the limited opportunities for durable feedback compared to those relating to writing. It may be too much to hope that students will remember corrections made to spoken English, while sending students an annotated audio copy of a spoken selection of text, using screen casting software, can be complicated and still prevent an immediate, interactive feedback between student and teacher. However, by using the voice recorders of two mobile phones, one belonging to the student the other to the teacher, feedback that is interactive, durable, and capable of being reflected upon any number of times by the student, can be achieved. This technique will be outlined in this article with examples from real pedagogical contexts. The recording session using both phones allows for error marking, feedback and revision of the speech.

Introduction

While using technology inside and outside the classroom to teach pronunciation is not new, to date research has mainly focused on the use of podcasting and audio files created by students in isolation from the teacher (Aoki, 2014). It has also focused on the efficacy of students' self-study reflection on their teacher's feedback when that takes place alone and at a distance from the teacher (Ducate & Lomicka, 2009). Yet the reception of such feedback is different and may be inferior to the 'live' type that can only be received in class-time directly from a teacher dedicated to work on pronunciation. This paper indicates the development of a technique that I discovered and applied in my pedagogical practice with Chinese learners of Academic English at an English Medium University in China, Xi'an-Jiaotong Liverpool University (XJTLU). I believe it enables the provision of immediate and durable feedback on a student's spoken performance and, for only taking up 10-15 minutes, it is also efficient in the use that is makes of both students' and teachers' time. Utilizing technology in a simple but innovative way, this method only requires the use of mobile phones, and their voice recorders with which most phones now come equipped.

Problems that teaching pronunciation may face

While there is no doubt beneficial for students to later reflect, at their own pace, on their recordings and on related teacher feedback, as suggested by Kukulska, Hulme, and Shield (2008), such feedback is not often spontaneous and immediate. It will not be given at the moment of speech, or shortly thereafter, when a student is most likely to remember and absorb the instruction and any suggested modifications. This is because it is very difficult for a teacher to pay such a close and spontaneous attention to individuals during class time without over-focusing on the specific needs of one student at the expense of the others. Live instruction and correction is instead often limited to a rather general elicitation and correction of speech from all students speaking in unison. Indeed, due to these and other difficulties faced by teachers in knowing how to teach pronunciation effectively, many choose simply not to do so. Lord (2008) proposes that some teachers may consider it a subsidiary and less important skill to develop, compared to, for example, grammar and vocabulary. While this puts into sharper focus the need for a supplementary out-of-class self-study devoted to pronunciation, there still remains the challenge of how to involve the much-needed teacher in the process of the correction and improvement of non-native speaker speech.

An additional difficulty facing the teaching of pronunciation concerns the longevity and durability of the form or type of feedback received when compared with feedback on written work. When correcting writing, student texts can be annotated with a feedback code, focusing on such errors as missing words, wrong tense, lack of linking devices, or poor spelling. The effectiveness of these techniques is well-attested, even if controversy remains about its extent (Ferris, et.al., 2013). When it comes to pronunciation, however, a teacher may of course interrupt a student in class to correct specific segmental errors relating to phonemes or particular stresses, or they may wait until the end of a group of words to correct suprasegmental errors as those pertain to groups of sounds or intonation, stress, and tone across a clause or sentence. Nevertheless, unless this feedback is reinforced with a written account or it is captured by an audio recording, the student is more likely to forget these corrections. While it is true that a teacher outside class time, using certain software, may overlay their verbal or written comments onto an audio file using sophisticated software such as Jing, Audacity, or Camtasia, as suggested by Liu & Hung (2016), or summarizing and modelling areas for improvement at the end of a student's recording, this can be a time-consuming process, requiring considerable editing on the

part of the teacher. This approach involves physical separation between teacher and student and can therefore adversely affect students' engagement since it entirely depends on their own attention to the feedback.

For these reasons, I felt for a long time during my teaching practice that a new method should be found to incorporate both of these requirements: providing immediate feedback, and making a permanent record of this feedback available to students. As it happens, I chanced upon such an easy, convenient method in a drama class that I was teaching at XJTLU and felt that it could equally well be adapted to the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) classroom. While I appreciate that the types of texts used below as examples are very different, the technique was equally useful in relation to both types of text and the same principles of immediate and durable feedback apply.

Discovery: The Waste Land by T. S. Eliot

In the winter of 2016, thirteen students at XJTLU agreed to participate in a dramatic recitation of 'The Waste Land' by T.S.Eliot (1963), which I had arranged the previous summer. It was clear to me that, since all these students were non-native speakers of English, and the text itself was challenging enough even for native speakers, its recitation was going to need considerable work at both the segmental and suprasegmental levels. This was the case even though all volunteers were relatively advanced speakers of English, and enthusiastic about the presentation of their spoken English. Naturally, I forwarded them professional recordings of the poem's recitation by distinguished actors such as Alec Guinness and Fiona Shaw, although I sensed that these examples were not going to be enough. Moreover, turning a poem into an interactive dialogue would need an attention to aspects of intonation, pausing, and stress that would not be encountered if the piece was only recited as a monologue.

In addition, while the phonetic script was a resource I could have used, not all students were sufficiently knowledgeable about it. In any case, it would not have helped with the suprasegmental flows of sustained, connected speech over the course of a clause or sentence.

Development of the Technique

For these reasons I devised my own error correction code for pronunciation that could be marked directly onto the text as a guideline. It was one that didn't include phonetic detail but

instead envisaged that that segmental aspect of voice delivery could be modelled for the student more directly. These following notations were employed:

- An underscore (_) to indicate that this sound should be stressed or that the phoneme is mistaken.
- A double underscore (=) to indicate that this sound should be stressed with a particular emphasis.
- A slanted dash (\ ) to indicate a pause of a perhaps unexpected kind, for example, when <u>not</u> found at the end of a line of Eliot's verse.
- A double slanted dash (\\ ) to indicate a longer pause.
- A superscription upward slanted dash ($^{/}$) for rising intonation and subscripted. downward dash for falling intonation ($_{\setminus}$).
- An extended underscore (_____) for suprasegmental problems with pacing and fluency.
- Parentheses ( ) for chunks of texts that are to be delivered at a different pitch, tone, pace or volume to the surrounding text.

After using these simple notations on copies of the written text, I then had to explain and model them to the students, so I arranged a one-to-one consultation with each actor. Figure 1 shows an example extract from the poem with notations illustrating how one actor, Alice, might recite this particular part. It should be noticed, of course, that these modellings were not prescriptive but suggestions, and they were the ones that I felt best suited the dramatic and dialogic form to which I had adapted the poem. My intention was to merely improve upon her performance, not to decree how it must be spoken. In reality, many of my suggestions were not taken up in performance, but having gone through this reflective experience, I still felt it was a valuable pedagogical intervention, and that the end result was significantly improved upon, compared to students' initial recitations. For example, in the case of Alice, originally no pauses were included in her speech except at the end of lines, and the placement of her stresses did not correlate with any distinctive communication of meaning or emotional involvement. The recitation, instead, was rather ghostly and detached. However, after receiving this instruction her performance was transformed. She also noticed her own improvement after I explained the suggested new form of recitation.

<u>Af</u>ter the <u>tor</u>ch-light red on <u>swe</u>aty faces
<u>Af</u>ter the <u>fr</u>osty silence in the gardens
<u>Af</u>ter the <u>ag</u>ony in <u>st</u>ony places/
The sh<u>ou</u>ting and the cr<u>yi</u>ng
(Prison and place and reverberation
Of thunder of spring over distant mountains)//

<u>He</u> who was <u>living</u> is now dead
<u>We</u> who were living/ are now dying//

<u>Extract from T.S.Eliot's 'The Waste Land'</u>

I feared, nonetheless, that she might not remember the new suggestions, even with the notations added to the text. It then occurred to me that she could record her speech on her mobile phone and then use this to critique her performance, in line with uses that have been made of audio files for some time (Brown, 2012). As expected, she had a suitable phone with her, so I asked her to produce it. I also realized, moreover, that she could include my feedback and suggestions onto that same recording. There was still, however, a problem in that to spontaneously improve by remodeling her speech in a way that would not be forgotten, I needed to interrupt her at the precise moment of delivery, just after she made a mistake. Unfortunately, however, if I did this live, I would interrupt her suprasegmental flow. An alternative would be to wait and mention errors and model suggestions after she finished, though this was also not ideal because the moment in which she made her errors would have passed. It remained a challenge, therefore, to know how to offer immediate intervention and feedback correction in a way that would not interrupt her flow, and also in a form that she could then take away as a piece of enduring feedback.

The solution, of course, lay in the simultaneous use our two phone's voice recorders. If an uninterrupted recording of Alice's spoken recitation of the extract could also be made on my phone, this could be played back afterwards and become the basis on which we could both analyse, critically examine and improve her performance. To help me in this I could add any new errors on my copy of the script while she was speaking from her annotated copy. I could then show her my copy afterwards and together we could play back her speech. By comparing this script with hers, we could together see the mistakes she had made and hear whether or not she had spoken in line with my suggested notations. Crucially, this feedback session would continue to be recorded throughout on her own phone and as an extension of her same audio file. During the feedback session itself I would pause the recording where she made errors, modelling improvements and asking her to repeat them. I would then continue in this manner, playing and pausing for the rest of the recording. Then, at the end I would ask her to repeat the entire extract, but this time reading from my copy, which indicated mistakes that she had made, and suggested improved ways that she should have spoken. Typically, these second recordings would be much

improved because the errors she had made were so fresh in her mind and my fresh notations were clear enough to focus her mind. Finally, at the end of the session, Alice would have a single audio file composed of three parts, her original recitation, our feedback session and the second newly annotated recitation for later reflection and self-analysis. She could also take away my copy of the freshly annotated extract, indicating her errors, as an additional resource.

Transition to EAP Contexts

After acknowledging the success of this method in quickly improving my actors' pronunciation, I realized this method could be used in the EAP classroom. I therefore proceeded to incorporate it into one-to-one workshops that I arranged through the Continuing Support department at XJTLU. However, it soon became apparent that the methodology could not be entirely the same. An EAP class is not focused on the recitation of one particular text, even less one of the most difficult poems in the English language. I felt therefore, that in the early stages of the process I did not need and should not present students with a transcript that already incorporated my suggestions. The focus should instead rest on general error correction in the context of the type of texts appropriate for their level of English competence. I should first wait to hear what errors they typically made. Only then should I proceed to offer corrections and suggestions. For this reason, I adapted and broke down the following methodology into the following stages:

1. A few days prior to the 15 minutes pronunciation workshops, I send them a short text and ask them to think about how they would recite it and to practice doing so (see Appendix 1). I also send them a copy of the simplified pronunciation notations, and ask them to become familiar with it.
2. I remind them to bring their phones, just in case they don't, though this would be unlikely, and I check that their phone has a voice recorder. I also check that they are happy that their own voice will be recorded, stressing that only they and I will have copies of the recording, and that I will not keep a copy after the session, unless they authorise me to do so for teaching or research purposes.
3. I ask them to bring a copy of the transcript to the workshop but I print out two copies in case they forget.
4. As the workshop commences, I explain what will happen and ask them to open their voice recorder app on their phone and get ready to turn it on and to start the recitation. I also prepare to start recording on my own phone.
5. After we both start recording, the student starts speaking and as they do so I note down mistakes or omissions in their speech on my copy of the transcript (see Appendix 2).

6. Then, when they have finished, I show them my copy, stop my recording and play back their recording on my phone, while we together focus on this transcript. Meanwhile, the student continues to record our workshop interactions on their own phone.
7. At the moments in the recording that correspond with notations that I have marked on my transcript I pause the recording, indicate the error, model an improvement and ask the student to imitate the corrected phoneme, or other problematic item of speech, such as relating to pausing, stress or intonation.
8. At the end I ask the student to repeat the recitation, though this time from my annotated copy. Apart from merely relying on short term memory recall, this will provide a further reminder of where the errors lie.
9. As the student speaks, I will once again add notations if the same errors are made to provide further feedback, and the whole process may be repeated before the end of the workshop.
10. Finally, the student will leave with my one or two transcripts indicating their spoken performance, as well as hopefully their improvements in the second case. Also taken away will be a single audio file containing their original recitation, our feedback and correction sessions and the second and maybe third more reflective recitations.
11. I will then ask the student to reflect on the audio file for homework, understand the mistakes they have made and how their second and third performance differ from their first. Finally, I will ask them to remain conscious and alert regarding how they make similar mistakes with aspects of their spoken English in other contexts.

Closing considerations and other uses in EAP contexts

Evidently, this technique is best suited only to a one-to-one student-teacher context such as that provided in a consultation or workshop. This may be problematic, however, if a teacher has many students since, although a session may take only 15 minutes, it is not really compatible with classroom teaching, unless individual students can perhaps consult with the teacher in an adjoining room or else at the front of the classroom if this I not too disturbing to other students while they, for example, work on written tasks that do not need to be supervised. The effectiveness of the technique for the classroom, however, is necessarily limited, and it is not intended for this context.

Another possible application that I have briefly experimented with would be a peer-to-peer usage, whereby students would assess and evaluate each other's pronunciation in this way. Mennim (2012) and Cooke (2013) have shown that peer-peer reflection is useful and can be valuable. When I experimented with this approach, the students certainly found it useful and helpful and believed that it assisted their pronunciation. One drawback if the peer-to-peer pair-work takes place in class, however, can be noise interference from one pair to another. Naturally,

this problem can be overcome if they conduct their peer-to-peer workshops outside class time in a quiet place.

Another problem I have encountered is the lack of expertise of students in matters relating to pronunciation. They may lack the ability to spot and correct errors that each student makes. Naturally, this could lead to errors not being noted and can even lead to situations whereby one student can introduce new errors that had not existed beforehand by misidentifying segments or suprasegments of speech as erroneous.

Conclusion

As described above, utilising mobile phones together with this method, enables a twofold challenge to the teaching of pronunciation to be addressed. Specifically, it allows for the immediate interruption and examination of certain parts of a student's speech but without interrupting the flow of its delivery; and it allows for the teacher to give durable, lasting feedback on a recording of a student's speech that they can save and keep. This immediate and durable feedback is normally not given as there is usually a kind of distance involved when teachers send feedback to students on submitted files via audio recording software. Another advantage is that this is very simple to organise and manage, not requiring any additional steps to be taken. There is no editing, for example, or use of any other technology, besides those found on an ordinary smart phone.

It remains to be seen, of course, how popular this methodology proves with students and also how effective it is found to be, when measured both by students and use of objective metrics of assessment. For this reason, this technique will be used at XJTLU in the coming months and semesters, for assessments and surveys designed to establish how effective this approach can be.

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Appendix 1

<u>Sample Text used with Alex, an Y1 LS learner of English at XJTLU)</u>

First, you should consider which language skill needs most attention. Which of the four skills, reading, writing, listening or speaking do I need to improve the most?

Reading is a great way of practicing your English on your own. You can take one word at a time at your own pace, without your teacher peering over your shoulder. If you're studying at a beginner to intermediate level, pick up a graded reader from the library where the language will be easier than an adult book.

If you're interested in improving your pronunciation, make the most of the recorder on your smartphone. This is a good way of learning pronunciation because you can keep a record of what is good pronunciation, as modelled by your teacher, and also of the mistakes that you are making yourself. This will enable you to become more self-aware about how you need to improve. Make sure, however, that you always get permission from your teacher to use your recorder in class.

Appendix 2

Sample Text used with Alex, a Y1 LS learner of English at XJTLU), with notations added

First, you should consider <u>wh</u>ich language skill needs most attention. Which of the four skills, / reading, writing, listening or speaking do I need to improve the most[/]?

Reading is a great way of practicing your English on your <u>ow</u>n. You can take one word at a time at your own pace, without your teacher pee<u>ri</u>ng over your shoulder. If you're studying at a beginner to intermediate level, / <u>pick up a graded reader from the library</u> <u>where the language will be easier</u> than <u>an</u> <u>a</u>dult book.

If you're interested in improving your pron<u>un</u>ciation, make the most of the recorder on your smartphone. This is a good way of learning pronunciation <u>be</u>cause you can keep a record of what is good pronunciation, as modelled by your teacher, and also of the mistakes that <u>you are</u> making yourself. This will enable you to become more self-aware about how you need to improve. Make sure, however, that you <u>alw</u>ays get permission from your teacher to use your recorder in class.

(Adapted from <u>http://www.skola.co.uk/tips-improving-english.html</u>

TEACHING READING TO ADULT MIGRANTS: REFLECTIVE PRACTICE AS A PERSONAL JOURNEY

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Abstract

This paper is based on a workshop given at CLESOL 2018 which outlined an approach to teaching reading in the adult ESOL classroom using authentic, human interest stories from the printed news media. The approach integrates reading instruction and classroom interaction drawing on the notions of 'talk around text' (Barton & Lee, 2011) and what van Lier (1996) has termed 'instructional conversation'. While 'talk around text' provides the theoretical rationale for talking about a topical newspaper story in the classroom, 'instructional conversation' refers to what the teacher actually does to facilitate meaning in classroom talk and highlights the importance of scaffolding as a pedagogical strategy. After outlining the context of adult might ESOL, the paper sketches the theoretical rationale for the approach and outlines how it is enacted, or brought to life, in the classroom. A number of principles that teachers might wish to adopt in their own contexts when teaching reading are then identified. A second aim of the paper, supplementary to the pedagogical focus, makes a case for reflective practice in order to highlight the need for English language teachers to make sense of their own practice, and ultimately develop their own theories of/for practice.

Introduction

This paper is based on a practical workshop given at CLESOL 2018 on the teaching of reading to adult migrant ESOL learners. The paper is framed by two concerns. The first of these, in line with the workshop, is to outline a social practice approach to teaching reading (Roach, 2018). Discussing the field of literacy studies, Barton and Lee (2011) argue that viewing reading through the lens of social practice shifts the focus from acquisition and the development of individual skills to what one *does* with reading in real world contexts. Two key contentions are that literacy allows people to fulfil personal goals and make sense of life around them, and that reading frequently involves talk about the text. A social practice approach adopts this kind of thinking and applies it to the adult ESOL classroom. While reading is the main focus, the approach acknowledges that language instruction can usefully integrate all four macro-skills (Burns & Siegel, 2018), in this case, primarily reading and oral interaction. Implicated therefore is the key role of classroom interaction in facilitating opportunities for second language literacy development and more broadly, language learning, in particular the pedagogical use of 'instructional conversation' (van Lier, 1996) to extend classroom talk beyond the routine and

engage learners in meaningful discussion about the text. This aspect of the approach highlights both sociocultural understandings of classroom language learning and the teacher's role in facilitating such learning (see also van Lier, 2001; 2002).

The second concern of the paper is broader in that it highlights the role of practitioner inquiry in language teacher development. While practitioner inquiry encompasses a number of approaches – including action research, reflective practice and participatory practice – usually involving systematic, intentional, and self-critical inquiry about one's work (Bailey, 2012; Barnard & Ryan, 2017; Farrell, 2018; Richards & Farrell, 2005), the account described in this paper results from reflection on my own practice over time, supported not by the collection and analysis of empirical data but by on-going reading and scholarship. It is essentially a synthesis of received and experiential knowledge, or theoretical and practice-based knowledge (Jourdenais, 2009). Such reflection involves what Johnson (1999) calls 'sense-making', or the reasoning that underpins teachers' practices. Influential in my own reasoning has been a long involvement with adult migrant ESOL, as a classroom practitioner and teacher educator, a growing understanding of literacy and adult literacy education, a recognition of the key role that classroom interaction plays in facilitating English language learning, and a wider acknowledgement that classroom life is jointly constructed by teachers and learners (Breen, 2001). A guiding principle throughout this period has been a recognition of the 'quality of life' in the classroom as well as the 'quality of work' (Allwright, 2002, cited in Gieve & Miller, 2005, p. 20).

As a language teacher educator, a key motivation for the paper has been the claim that teaching needs to be seen from the inside, articulated by teachers themselves (Freeman, 2002). While, in this instance, my sense-making does not involve the systematic collection of classroom data I nevertheless draw on a kind of reflective practice aimed at better understanding my own work. In this regard, Farrell (2012) usefully characterises reflective practice as "a compass of sorts to guide teachers when they may be seeking direction […] as to what they are doing in their classrooms" (p. 7). The metaphor of reflection as a compass has enabled me to think about my own practice in a principled manner, and to seek new ways of teaching reading in adult migrant ESOL classrooms. This kind of 'self-directed learning' (Richards & Farrell, 2005, pp. 13-14; see also Mann, 2005, p. 104) offers an insider perspective to teaching, one endorsed by Freeman (2002), cited above. It is an approach to teacher development that encourages teachers to explore

their own contexts, construct their own knowledge and understandings of what takes place in their classrooms, and to articulate their understandings.

The paper is thus a personal account of my own practice that offers a forum for other ESOL teachers, not necessarily involved with adult migrant ESOL, to explore issues around teaching reading that arise in their own classrooms. As Burton (2003) notes in the preface to the *Case Studies in TESOL Practices Series*, such accounts make teachers' knowledge and experience accessible in straightforward yet disciplined ways and being informative by nature, provide valuable insights for professional development, teacher education and further research.

The paper proceeds as follows: after outlining the context of adult migrant ESOL, the discussion turns to the theoretical rationale for the approach; one mediated through my own understandings of the literature (Ellis, 1997, Ch. 10) and underpinned by reflection over time. The next section illustrates how the approach is enacted, or brought to life in the classroom, by adopting a four-phase approach to reading instruction. A number of working principles are then identified, not as prescriptive measures but in the spirit of what Stenhouse (1975) has called 'provisional specifications'. The principles, thus, offer guidance to practitioners to try out the approach in their own classrooms to see if it works for them in the contexts they teach in. The paper concludes by reiterating the benefits of practitioner inquiry, in particular reflective practice, as a means of facilitating professional development, with implications for language teacher education.

The context of adult migrant ESOL

Adult migrant ESOL classrooms can be seen as "globalized social learning spaces" (Burns & Roberts, 2010, p. 411) containing learners who have migrated or have been displaced, and who have goals and aspirations for themselves and their families. In the New Zealand context (Yee, 2008), the term 'adult migrant ESOL' refers collectively to a range of programmes, some more formal than others, targeting those with English language needs who settle in the country under a number of immigration categories; refugees accepted under the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Quota Program, and to a much lesser extent, asylum seekers who have gained legal refugee status. Also attracted to adult might ESOL programmes are young adults who may have attended New Zealand schools but do not yet have the language proficiency to enroll in mainstream tertiary education or academic foundation

programmes. Not usually included are international students, although in some instructional settings, migrants, refugees, and international students may sit side by side. In some regions with little or no ESOL provision, English language learners may also be enrolled in adult literacy programmes (Benseman, Lander & Sutton, 2005). However, with the recent introduction of Intensive Literacy and Numeracy (ILN) funding especially targeted at migrants and refugees with lower levels of English, the conflation of adult literacy and adult migrant ESOL may no longer be an issue.

Alternative terms for adult migrant ESOL, used in Australia, namely 'English language adult continuing education' (Burns & Ollerhead, 2017) and 'English for community membership' (de Silva Joyce & Hood, 2009), suggest that course goals and curriculum content aim to enhance learners' lives in the communities in which they want to become participants. The programme in which I often teach can best be described in these terms, formally organized around content that is relevant to learners (re)settlement needs, that is, knowledge about the local community, current affairs, health, recycling and sustainability, consumer affairs and employment strategies, among other topics. A focus on language, however, is not discounted. As Burns & Ollerhead (2017) explain, content-based language instruction variously focuses on content or language, with adult migrant ESOL necessarily accounting for both.

Much of the content in the classes I teach uses teacher-made materials (saved digitally or in shared hard copy), commercial materials mainly designed for the Certificates in Spoken and Written English (CSWE), the curriculum framework that currently underpins the government-funded Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) in Australia, or authentic materials gleaned from the social milieu in which learners live, proficiency levels permitting. In this regard, many of the materials draw on texts – both written and spoken – relevant to learners' lives, with instruction delivered through a number of instructional approaches, in response to learners' affective and developmental needs (see Wette, 2011; for a critique of communicative language teaching in the context of adult migrant ESOL, see Burns, 2009). A social practice approach to teaching reading, described in this paper, is thus just one of the approaches I employ, primarily when using topical, 'human interest' articles from the printed news media. These newspaper articles are called soft news stories since they focus on events that reflect social values and often focus on the family.

It should be noted, however, that the classes I am involved with are not ESOL literacy classes where learners – generally certain refugee groups – have minimal education and/ or minimal first language literacy (see for example, Benseman, 2012; Cooke & Simpson 2008, Ch. 6; Roberts, 2008; Wigglesworth, 2003). In my experience, the approach is most appropriate for at least intermediate level learners; that is, B2 in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). That said, the approach can be used with learners who have lower English language proficiency, but are literate in their first language. In such classrooms, the readings need to be modified, for example, by rewriting the 'human interest' article in less complex language, and additional scaffolding must be provided during the classroom discussion of the text.

The institution is well-resourced, with generous preparation time and support for professional development, and was once one of the largest providers of adult migrant ESOL in New Zealand. The institution also offers language teacher education programmes and at the time of writing, remaining adult migrant ESOL classes are used to support practicum experiences for pre-service language teachers.

A social practice approach for teaching reading

As noted above, a social practice approach combines ideas gleaned from social understandings of literacy and sociocultural understandings of classroom language learning. Above all, my interest lay in an approach to reading instruction that goes beyond information processing and the simple testing of reading using written comprehension questions. As Kern (2012) argues, alternative approaches to reading are needed that highlight the importance of learners' agency in meaning-making and require teachers to introduce learners to new roles of responding to, revising, and reflecting on a text. The aim of the approach is therefore to organise instruction around the social and cultural purposes of reading, where meaning-making is given priority.

In theoretical terms, Barton and Lee (2011) claim that literacy – including reading – is not an end in itself but is always part of a wider social purpose. The pedagogical use of everyday texts in the classroom thus mirrors adult migrants' social purposes for reading in their lives. A

key contention is that 'bringing the outside in' – a notion that covers the pedagogical use of authentic materials from the community and the need to give agency to learners in the classroom to raise their own concerns – fosters motivation and provides a connection to adult learners' lives outside the classroom (Baynham, 2006; Burns, 2003; Burns & Ollerhead, 2017; Condelli, Wrigley & Yoon, 2009; Roberts & Cooke, 2009).

The idea that reading instruction should employ authentic texts in adult migrant ESOL is not new. Feez (1998), for example, outlines a text-based approach to syllabus design in which the teaching of reading is directly linked to the kind of texts learners might encounter outside the classroom. In relation to written texts, these might range from a one word 'Stop' sign to brochures, newspaper articles, recipes and other procedural instructions, or forms and texts commonly found in the workplace, such as memos or reports. While this perspective is part of the shift to a social understanding of language and literacy (Lillis, 2004), the social practice approach I describe in this account falls short of fully adopting a text-based syllabus since it is mainly limited to one text-type, 'human interest' newspaper stories; nor does it adopt the explicit pedagogy associated with a text-based approach, notably, deconstructing and reconstructing the text (e.g., Burns, 2012; de Silva Joyce & Feez, 2012). Instead, a social practice approach is primarily concerned with the notion of 'talk around text' (Barton & Lee, 2011) and how this can be facilitated in the classroom through classroom interaction and meaningful discussion. One common thread, however, is the pedagogical practice of scaffolding, a term explained later in the paper.

The notion of 'talk around text' refers to the way people frequently talk about a text they are reading or have read. As Barton and Lee (2011) explain, we currently live in a "textually mediated social world" (p. 588), where "much of the language spoken by ordinary people in their everyday lives is in fact talk about texts" (p. 606), even when the text may not be physically present. For example, a couple may browse a real estate advertisement – increasingly digitally mediated – and talk about the merits of a particular property. In the workplace, plans may be discussed in reference to a manual or memo. Friends may discuss, over a cup of coffee, a newspaper article or magazine story they have read previously. The notion of 'talk around text' captures what people *do* with literacy. Although reading may on occasions be a silent, individual and cognitive pursuit, from a social practice perspective, 'talk around text' in the adult migrant

ESOL classroom offers opportunities for meaningful conversation, facilitates comprehension of the text and more broadly, affords opportunities for language learning.

While 'talk around text' may be new to ESOL it is not an entirely new notion in wider educational discourse. Maybin and Moss (1993), for example, describe a study in which childrens' informal talk about texts – both electronic and printed – shaped their understanding of the texts. Applying this thinking to reading instruction in the ESOL classroom implicates much more than teaching skills and strategies, or a simple focus on information processing and the overt testing of reading comprehension.

Also important in a social practice approach is the notion of 'talk is work' (Baynham, 2006), the idea that student-initiated dialogue in the adult ESOL classroom affords learner agency. Baynham explains that such talk departs from routine classroom language by opening up classroom discourse, thereby giving learners opportunities to raise topics of their own, related to their own lives. At the same time, it requires the teacher to be responsive to their students' talk, have a genuine interest in what they say, and respond contingently to any 'interruptive moments' that might arise. As Cooke and Simpson (2008, p. 75) explain, contingency "is a way of relating classroom content to students' lives while retaining the freshness and responsiveness of on-the-spot planning".

A final notion underpinning a social practice approach is 'instructional conversation' (van Lier 1996, p. 164), mentioned above. While the concepts of 'talk around text' and 'talk is work' provide a theoretical rationale for introducing authentic dialogue into the classroom, 'instructional conversation' refers to what teachers actually *do* to facilitate classroom interaction and meaningful discussion, and highlights the importance of scaffolding as a pedagogical strategy. In this sense, scaffolding can be seen as a metaphor for the support offered by teachers to help learners achieve something they may not easily be able to do by themselves. The language teacher's role is to listen with a sympathetic ear and to help their students express what they want to say, for example, by eliciting language, filling in any cultural, conceptual or linguistic gaps, and by building on their efforts to communicate. As van Lier (1996) explains, 'instructional conversation' departs from traditional 'lesson talk', in that the teacher and learners respond to the talk as it unfolds, in this case, around the reading of a newspaper story. In a line of thinking similar to Baynham (2006), who makes a case for opening up classroom discourse for

learners to raise topics of their own, instructional conversation allows the classroom to become a site for authentic dialogue. Since adult ESOL migrants frequently report the scarcity of meaningful interactional opportunities in their daily lives, outside of work and routine service encounters (Roberts & Cooke, 2009; Yates, 2011), providing opportunities for meaningful talk in the classroom is of crucial importance.

Bringing the approach to life in the classroom

How might 'talk around text' be enacted in the classroom? Widdowson (1990) claims that only when a syllabus is brought to life through methodology can it be realised in the classroom. Similarly, Graves (2008, p. 152) describes enactment as "the educational experiences jointly created by students and the teacher in the classroom". In this sense, classroom interaction is not planned in advance but is co-produced with learners (Allwright & Bailey, 1991, pp. 23-25). While the literature above points to the theoretical rationale for the approach, this section offers a practice-based account of how the approach is brought to life in the classroom, first by identifying a representative sample of the 'human interest' stories used and second, by highlighting a number of practices, techniques and behaviours which underpin instructional procedures.

Table 1: Examples of texts

Headline	Synopsis
Stupid teacher loses year's savings	Man recently returned from teaching English in Japan has a large sum of money (in Japanese yen) stolen from an unlocked car while window-shopping
Girl calls 111 to help mother	An adopted Russian child (aged five) calls the emergency number after her mother falls down stairs
Love of culture drives school	Local Arabic-speaking community starts a community school to support first language
Working magic with carpets	An Afghani refugee finds employment restoring expensive carpets, continuing his family tradition

Table 1 identifies the headlines of a representative number of stories used and provides a brief synopsis of the texts. Typically the stories used come from community, regional and national newspapers, but on occasions are found in local community magazines. Topics are varied but in general relate to peoples' lives in New Zealand. From the perspective of course planning, the texts lend themselves to being grouped into similar topics so that learners can benefit from the recycling of vocabulary and can consolidate their knowledge through reading about and discussing similar topics and issues. For instance, texts about the lives of new migrants can underpin a unit of work on *Starting a New Life*, although such stories in the news media often position new migrants and refugees in certain ways and need to be read (and discussed) critically. Similarly, the text about the adopted Russian child who calls the emergency number to report her mother's accident can become part of a topic on *Heath*, or more critically about the caveats of adopting young children born overseas. Stories about the lives of new migrants and refugees, in particular, generate considerable classroom discussion, for example, on culture shock and the challenges of resettlement and culture shock, or about intergenerational language loss. Importantly, learners should be allowed to raise concerns of their own, related to their own lives. Equally, the teacher needs to be cognisant of dominating the classroom discussion, or as Walsh (2002, p. 20) puts it, "filling in the gaps".

The approach adopts a number of phases typically suggested for reading instruction (see Richards, 2015, pp. 459-463). As illustrated in Table 2, instruction begins with a pre-reading phase, which is best treated as a teacher-led activity. Based on a two hour lesson, this phase could take up to 30 minutes. The aim in Phase One is to brainstorm ideas in order to establish the context, generate interest in the text, predict the topic and identify what learners already know about it, as well as to elicit learners' own questions about the story they are about to read. Learners are encouraged to formulate their own questions about the text orally, from visual clues such as an accompanying photograph and caption, and/or headline, but without yet sighting the text itself. Questions are elicited from learners and written on the whiteboard for ongoing reference throughout the lesson. The eliciting of questions related to the text thus becomes a collaborative activity, in which the teacher may need to reformulate the questions if needed. Typically, questions are framed as who, what, how, when, and why. Encouraging learners to pose questions orally without writing them down – or subsequently writing down answers – focuses their attention on the actual reading of the text, which occurs in Phase Two. However,

similar written comprehension questions, written by the teacher prior to the lesson, can be provided later in Phase Four for homework. As with accepted reading pedagogy, in Phase One some pre-teaching of vocabulary can occur.

Table 2: Four phases of instruction

Instructional Phase	Teaching Strategies
Phase One	Establish context
	Brainstorm to predict the topic
	Pre-teach vocabulary from the text that emerges from the discussion
	Elicit questions about the story
Phase Two	Provide text for independent reading
	Give instructions of the type of reading strategies needed
	Allocate time for scanning and close reading
Phase Three	Elicit answers to questions
	Open up text for discussion
	Scaffold learner contributions
Phase Four	Invite learners to read text out loud
	Practice pronunciation/ provide corrective feedback
	Explore vocabulary and grammar from the text
	Written response to text
	Review activities such as written comprehension questions, cloze exercises, dictation and vocabulary quizzes

Phase Two entails independent reading of the text. Learners are given a photocopy of the text, complete with any accompanying photo, caption or headline. While it is useful to remind learners of the type of reading strategies needed, the overall aim in this phase is to read the text in its entirety in order to answer the questions posed collaboratively in Phase One. As noted above, learners are encouraged not to write down their answers to the questions but to rely on their working memory, supported by the prior discussion of the context in Phase One. Some learners may begin to use dictionaries or highlight vocabulary items in the text but should be first

encouraged to read the text to the end and to guess meaning from context in order to maximise the goal of reading fluency.

While meaningful talk can occur in establishing the context (Phase One), Phase Three involves the crux of the approach: instructional conversation. In Phase Three, the questions previously elicited are addressed, additional matters are raised, and opinions are expressed. While pair or group work is possible, Phase Three is best approached as a whole-class activity led by the teacher since it affords the greatest opportunity for classroom discussion, and in van Lier's (1996) terms, best facilitates instructional conversation. One caveat is not to let a small number of learners dominate the discussion. Support is particularly important for learners with limited speaking proficiency (but who may be more proficient in other macro-skills), or are shy to speak up in class. The key concern is to provide meaningful opportunities for discussion about the text. In this way not only is reading instruction connected to the wider social context outside the classroom, but literacy practices are also foregrounded. Although located in a pedagogical setting, the reading of a newspaper story becomes a social process in which talk is generated and opinions are expressed.

Phase Four is best seen as follow-up activities, during the same lesson, in a subsequent lesson, or at home for review. In class, individual learners can be invited to read parts of the text out loud, an activity many learners are keen to engage with. This can provide opportunities for corrective feedback on pronunciation. Vocabulary and grammar from the text can be explored using an overhead or data-show projector, possibly supplementing this focus with photocopied exercises from commercial textbooks. Written comprehension questions about the text, prepared beforehand, and vocabulary exercises can also be given to learners to take home for review. Learners are also encouraged to talk about the text with family members at home, although such talk in the home domain may occur in a first language, or may be bilingual talk. In subsequent lessons, however, learners could report back to the class on their family discussions and reactions about the text, further ensuring opportunities for authentic language use in the classroom. Homework might also entail asking learners to write a summary, or draft a response to the text, based on models previously introduced in the course. For example, my students have written recounts on the topics of starting a new life in New Zealand and/or the challenges of culture shock, subsequently edited and published in booklet form for use as a class reading set.

As illustrated above, a social practice approach to teaching reading may incorporate other macro-skills and does not preclude an emphasis on micro-skills; it can also support the development of reading strategies as well as a focus on vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. In this last regard, the approach is not exclusively concerned with classroom interaction of the contingent kind but can involve more traditional activities and routine classroom language. Nevertheless, the procedures described above suggest a number of potentially challenging roles for the teacher. The first entails the facilitation of a particular kind of classroom interaction, grounded in meaningful discussion about the text. The second role involves scaffolding learners' contributions. The third requires the teacher to create a relaxed interpersonal climate in which learners are comfortable to interact, listen to others, even to disagree with or challenge others, including the teacher. Arguably, assuming such roles could be challenging for some teachers, particularly those beginning in the profession. As Baynham (2006) notes, addressing the affective dimension in the classroom as well as facilitating authentic dialogue has complex and demanding implications for teachers and learners alike, in terms of power, identity and agency, and is complicated further by the diverse cultural make-up of adult migrant ESOL classrooms. Despite these challenges, my own observation is that learners respond well to this approach and that efforts to make the classroom a safe, supportive, and interesting space for learning are well appreciated.

Implications for teachers and teacher education

This practice–based account, grounded in reflective practice, has implications for teacher development and language teacher education. As Jourdenais (2009) notes, reflection provides opportunities for teachers "to re-examine their practice in the light of their decisions, concerns, experiences, and knowledge" (p. 649). Through such reflection teachers are said to develop working principles (Breen, Hird, Milton, Oliver & Thwaite, 2001), which in turn facilitates the development of praxis, or the development of a theory of practice. As Ellis (1997, p. 229) explains, praxis entails teachers "making conscious the conceptual structures and visons that underlie their reasons for acting as they do". According to Ellis, such reasoning also involves the application of explicit principles to guide their actions. Based on my own reflections over time, the principles that underpin a social practice approach to teaching reading may be:

- Using authentic texts in the curriculum, related to the social and cultural context in which learners live

- Facilitating talk around pedagogical texts, by incorporating meaningful conversation into classroom interaction

- Adopting contingency as a complement to planned instruction

- Viewing classroom interaction as a means of giving agency to learners

- Scaffolding learners' contributions by helping them express ideas that may be a little beyond their current proficiency

- Facilitating a classroom culture that is conducive to learning

- Encouraging reading practices outside of the classroom.

Such principles offer guidance for other teachers, who may be teaching in a similar context – but may also teach in rather different contexts. Accordingly, ESOL teachers are invited to adopt these principles and the procedures they entail in their own instructional contexts, with their own learners, to see if the approach works for them. A caveat is however necessary. Earlier in the paper, following Johnson (1999), it was argued that teachers' reasoning – or sense-making – is grounded in their knowledge and beliefs. Johnson (1999, p.2) further claims that teachers' reasoning "occurs in and is shaped by" context, making all teaching local and dependent on particular circumstances in specific classrooms with particular students. With this in mind, Stenhouse's (1975) cautious application of research findings (or in this case, the principles that have emerged from reflective practice) finds resonance with this notion of particularity. While experientially-based 'know how' has the potential to offer guidance to other teachers as well as inform language teacher education, consideration does need to be given to the diverse contexts in which English language teachers work. As is increasingly recognised in the TESOL literature, pedagogical recommendations do not always transfer seamlessly from one context to another. Nevertheless, the approach outlined here – and the principles entailed – can usefully alert practitioners to an alternative way of teaching reading and importantly, highlight the growing evidence that all teaching is contingent on teachers' reasoning and sense-making.

Conclusion

The paper began by identifying two aims. The first aim, in conjunction with the workshop, was to illustrate an approach to reading instruction, grounded in social understandings of literacy and socially constructive ways of facilitating language learning through classroom interaction. This concern, it was argued, addresses the importance of recognising learners' agency in meaning-making and helps familiarise learners with new ways of responding to, revising, and reflecting on a text. The second aim, somewhat broader in focus, was to outline an approach to teacher development based on reflection over time. A key motivation for this concern was Freeman's (2002) claim that teaching can only be fully understood if those who teach articulate what they do. This personal account thus gives some legitimacy to the notion of 'teachers' voices', a call that has been resounding in the TESOL literature. The account also goes some way towards illustrating how English language teachers – including those formally engaged in professional development – might bridge the theory/practice divide and develop their own theories of/for practice (Jourdenais, 2009, pp. 652-655). From a personal perspective, what remains to be done, of course, is to adopt a more systematic approach to reflective practice, one that, in this instance, involves the kind of discourse analysis of classroom interaction that can throw some light on learning processes.

As a final word, this personal account bridges two discourse worlds, in the sense used by Ellis (1997, p. 237, citing Gee, 1990) to illustrate the often irreconcilable positions taken by practitioners and academic researchers. On the one hand, the paper is an introspective account of my own practice, written in a mixed register. As was the conference workshop, the paper is a story to be shared with other teachers. On the other hand, since I also have a role as a university lecturer and language teacher educator, the paper also owes allegiance to the world of academic discourse, in particular that related to language teacher education. My dual role in the English language teaching profession has given me the opportunity to walk in both worlds.

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"LEARNING ON MY FEET": THE LEARNING VALUE OF A STRUCTURED TESOL PRACTICUM PORTFOLIO

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Abstract

This paper reports on a qualitative study of the practicum learning experiences of 20 teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages enrolled in a Master's programme at a university in Australia. The practicum, comprising 22 days of placement including seven observations and 15 days of planned, supervised teaching, is a core course. This study has two objectives: to suggest a range of artefacts to include in a practicum portfolio to maximize 'authenticity', and to begin to unfurl from the data some of the learning, both the intended and the serendipitous, that practice teachers report. The advantages of portfolio-based modes of assessing the performances and outcomes of practice teachers' learning on TESOL practicum are well-documented. These are 'authentic' mode of assessment because they are socially situated, contain records of performances over time and embody 'interpretations and reflections' (Mattsson, Rorrison & Eilertsen, 2011). In addition to gaining data on how they link theory to practice, these portfolios incorporate practice teachers' emerging realizations of their agency as practitioners and their perceptions of their enhanced professional competence. Their embedded reflectivity means that information about their intellectual, social, moral, and emotional identity journeys are captured as part of the learning trajectory. A process of 'becoming', rather than a stasis of 'being' is portrayed, enhancing authenticity.

Introduction: Practicum enquiry

The title of this study comes from the reflective observations of two of the 20 practice teachers enrolled in a Master of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) in Australia whose perceptions and experiences inform our enquiry. 'Rebecca' spoke of what emerged for her as a crucial aspect of gaining her 'teacherly' identity during her practicum: "The ability to think on my feet. Not to panic if the lesson doesn't go as planned – go with the flow". 'Wilson' borrowed the same metaphor in recalling a face-saving critical incident that occurred during his practicum: "I was trying to think on my feet about what the appropriate response would be and I was also acutely aware of not wanting to embarrass the students." An awareness of the importance of the ability to 'think on one's feet' looms large in the practicum learning experiences of our participants. This study investigates and reports on the serendipitous and incidental learning of practice teachers on practicum, cognizant of the media by which this learning is reported; namely the components of the portfolio used to compile and assess the

embodied learning that occurs on practicum. This study, then, is also the story of the learning and reflective value of the component evidentiary documentation comprising the MTESOL portfolio, applying the insights of Oprandy (2015).

Pedagogically and theoretically, this is a project grounded in practicum enquiry. Central to practicum enquiry is the post-structural project of 'becoming' via dialogue. *Becoming* a teacher is a multi-faceted process involving individuals intellectually, socially, morally, emotionally and aesthetically engaging in community-focused activity (Graham & Phelps, 2003). In a practicum context, *becoming* is socio-educative with practice teachers witnessing theory in application and becoming members of a real-world community of practice (Ishihara, 2005; Wenger, 1998). This post-structural project of *becoming* intersects with Bourdieu (1986), whose conceptualisations might view practice teachers as gaining dispositions, ways of thinking, being and acting in the ongoing formation of *habitus,* a state of identity, being and becoming marked by the identification and gaining of cultural, social and symbolic capital such as the importance of thinking on one's feet. *Becoming* is a core construct in Gee (1991), for whom the Big 'D' discourses, accessed in real-world communities such as practicums, involve witnessing and participating in "ways of behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking, believing, speaking, and often reading and writing, that are accepted as instantiations of particular socially situated identities" (p. 155).

The portfolio documents used to assess the MTESOL aim to capture learners' interactions with and embodiments of the Big 'D' discourses of authentic TESOL communities. Rather than being mere instruments of measurement, they record the processes of *thinking, being* and *acting* the teacher, with stories of action learning in authentic contexts, and with reports of professional dialogues and their impact on self-growth. As Santos, Olsher, and Wickrama (2015) wrote, "the practicum course remains perhaps the most tangible, most visible reminder of the interdependence of universities and real-world classrooms" (p. 91).

What do we mean by 'practicum'? To clarify, 'practicum' is defined as a course-related, organised learning opportunity where participants spend a specified period in a chosen community to achieve course-related outcomes. Importantly, practicum enquiry focuses "on the

process rather than on a specific method or model of teaching" (Richards & Crookes, 1988, p. 12). We believe, along with Ulvik and Smith (2011), that reading about teaching and observation are insufficient. Practice teachers "have to *practice themselves* because practical knowledge and wisdom are held by the individual and cannot easily be transmitted from person to person" (p. 7). Practicums embody a process of socialization into emergent professional identities and target discourse communities (Danielewicz, 2001; Gee, 1991; Lortie, 1975). As such, the practicum lends itself to an authentic reflective portfolio mode of assessment (Oprandy, 2015). Indeed, without reflection, practicum would "never foster teacher development" (Crookes, 2003, p. 180).

Practicum portfolios

In light of the insights afforded by practicum enquiry and an earlier study of assessment in MTESOL practicum settings (Andrew & Razoumova, 2017), it was important for the content of portfolios to contain a manageable, realistic, globally assessible range of identity texts. By 'identity texts', we mean authentic documents belonging to the discourse community of TESOL educators, as well as embodied, voice-centred narratives evidencing learning via applied reflective practice. In addition to (i) lesson plans and reflective notes on the lessons and (ii) peer, lecturer and supervisory teacher observation reports, the portfolio also incorporates (iii) reflective surveys, an idea supported by Velikova (2013), and (iv) critical incident reports, an idea dating to Pennycook (2004).

Described briefly in the Methodology section, the reflective surveys take the form of narrative frames and are designed to capture process learning about theory and reflection in action. This is because "interpretations and reflections on classroom events during their practicum are central to [learners'] development" (Mattsson, Rorrison, & Eilertsen, 2011, p. 47). Further, embodied reflective practice helps teachers "to analyze and evaluate what is happening" in their own teaching (Zwozdiak-Myers, 2012, p. 3). The portfolio, then, needs assessible texts that are both authentic and likely to maximise reflective potential.

Background and context

The MTESOL in this study runs at a dual sector, multi-ethnic university in West Melbourne, Australia. Rules impacting the practicum are informed by The Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT), which has specific criteria for practicum length and rigour. VIT regulates

members of the teaching profession and it is a legal requirement for all teachers to be registered with VIT in order to be employed in a school, early childhood education, and care service, or in the Victorian children's service. For these compliance reasons, the practicum carries the following features: 20/21/22 days of service and seven observations must be evidenced to auditors; there must be a minimum of 15 days of planned, supervised teaching. Although the practicum may occur in any professional context, like a language centre, school, or community college, the geographical position of the university inclines placement sites towards Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) contexts in the West Melbourne suburbs of Sunshine and Werribee.

Practicum as authentic pedagogy

Apprenticeship to a target professional community and its discourses places practice teachers on a journey of dialogues with lecturers, peers and supervisors (Crookes, 2003; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Richards & Crookes, 1988), contributing towards authentic embodied professional identities (Gee, 1991). We maintain that practicum learning is on-the-job learning and responds to planned and unforeseen challenges (Yunus et al., 2010). Further, practicum learning needs reflection to make sense of practice (Farrell, 2015, 2016). Clearly, a teacher's identity is influenced not only by access to practice, but also by participation within a community (Parks, 2005). Other studies indicate that practical experiences contribute to participants' ongoing professionalization (Uzum, Petron, & Berg, 2014). With appropriate scaffolding, practicum becomes authentic pedagogy (Andrew & Razoumova, 2017).

Iverson, Lewis and Talbot (2008, p. 293) offer guidelines to ensure assessment tasks are authentic. These guidelines indicate that authentic assessment:

(i)   is routinely performed by professional teachers;
(ii)   involves students in the classroom;
(iii)   promotes knowledge of the practice of teaching;
(iv)   offers a prompt for self-reflection; and
(v)   serves a formative purpose.

This authenticity is assured, too, by the multiplicity of modes and texts and by the status of the portfolio as an album of performance events. Teacher portfolios provide opportunities for robust documentation of practice. As Darling-Hammond and Snyder wrote in 2000, as an assessment tool, portfolios can provide a comprehensive look at how the various aspects of a teacher's practice come together: "Portfolios help make teaching stand still long enough to be examined, shared and learned from" (p. 537). Portfolio texts are, then, socially situated, contain records of performances over time and embody interpretations and reflections (Mattsson, Rorrison, & Eilertsen, 2011).

The development of teacher identity, or at least the generation of evidence of learning that is professionally-oriented, characterises authentic assessment for practicum. The key goal of the practicum is to develop a professional identity (Zeichner, 2002). This occurs through one key affordance: it offers opportunities to "develop new dimensions of teaching identities" (Beynon et al., 2004, p.442). In practice, we maintain, this is realised via reflection and is emergent in 'dialogues' reported and embodied in the portfolio and reported in our second storyline in the findings.

Methodology

With an initial sample of 20 over three cohorts, this study is a qualitative descriptive analysis (Sandelowski, 2000), being naturalistic, authentic, interpretative and inductive. The study and its reportage have phenomenological and narrative enquiry undertones (Polkinghorne, 1995) in that they capture critical moments (Farrell, 2004; Pennycook, 2004), "ontological turns" (Barnett, 2004, p. 247) and "moments of experience" (Sandelowski, 2000, p. 337), moments when something makes sense. In this way, the research engages in a process of positioning teachers/ researchers as co-authors of "a reconstruction of experience and meaning" (Mills, Bonner & Francis, 2006), enacting narrative knowledging (Barkhuizen, 2011).

Data come from four sources:
(i)   critical incident reports;
(ii)   observation reports (supervising teachers and peers);
(iii)   reflections on teaching through a dialogue with a supervising teacher, and
(iv)   reflective surveys.

The key questions of the survey were: (i) What are the most valuable forms of learning – intended or serendipitous – gained from the practicum? (ii) What artefacts could be included in a practicum portfolio to maximize 'authenticity'?

As Figure 1 shows, the 20 participants ranged in age from 26 to 73, with 13 being women. The sample includes 14 native and six non-native speakers of English, and their experience ranged from zero to 30 years. A full ethics process was undergone and pseudonyms are used throughout. Not all voices are represented in the findings, but the voices chosen are representative of a larger sample.

'Name'	Experience	Age	Gender	Native speaker status
Amaley	10 years	54	F	NNS
Andrea	None	35	F	NNS
Andrew	None	55	M	NS
Arina	3 years	45	F	NS
Edward	None	59	M	NS
Era	2 years	55	F	NS
Eva	6 months	25	F	NS
Hillary	None	50	F	NS
Lisa	3 years	35	F	NNS
Max	6 months	28	M	NS
Michael	2 years	35	M	NNS
Migul	10 years	56	M	NS
Rebecca	3 years	25	F	NNS
Rima	5 years	26	F	NS
Ronie	None	73	M	NS
Runa	10 years	48	F	NS
Ruth	None	36	F	NNS
Sarah	None	59	F	NS
Vera	5 years	37	F	NS
Wilson	None	52	M	NS

Figure 1: *Table of Participants by Pseudonym*

Data analysis drew on the principles of "evolved" constructivist grounded theory (Mills, Bonner & Francis, 2006) and involved observing indigenous themes (Patton, 1990), using

metaphor- and word-based and scrutiny-based techniques of observation (Ryan & Bernard, 2003; Thomas & Beauchamp, 2011), with two researchers processing the data consecutively to ensure increased reliability and co-creating co-told storylines.

Of the key storylines that emerged, we here report on 'Reflection in/on action', 'Supervisor versus mentor' and 'Finding one's teacher persona'. The storyline method of data presentation affords researchers the opportunity to weave interpretative and analytic commentary into the fabric as common themes provide the weft, also making the convention of a discussion section superfluous.

Findings

Storyline 1: Reflection in and on action

In a reflection on a supervised lesson, Era mused on feedback that her responses to student questions were slow: *"I hesitate before answering questions… This can convey lack of confidence… I need to be 'quicker on my feet' when 'taking the stage' 'at the coalface' in a classroom".* Not only do her metaphors re-engage with that of our title, but also show a realisation that hesitations may imply an absence of linguistic adroitness in the theatre of the classroom. The reflective medium enables her to re-live, re-assess and even re-write critical moments, thereby enacting learning.

Arina, reflecting on her trajectory in practicum, was similarly metaphorical in her re-imagining of herself as observed practice teacher: *"I learned to trust my instincts…. that I actually can do this…The ability to think on my feet. Not to panic if the lesson doesn't go as planned – go with the flow".* This narrative episode is one of confirming confidence and of progress towards a realised teacherly *habitus*.

Wilson, recollecting a critical incident involving the f* word uttered in a class of African women, documented his response to being put on the spot: *"I was trying to think on my feet about what the appropriate response would be and I was also acutely aware of not wanting to embarrass the students".* Instead of selecting a polite deflection or a stern rebuke, he offered a

brief commentary on culture-led politeness and the use of colloquialisms. Again, this critical moment instantiates the 'thinking on the feet' aspect of reflection in action.
Applying the capacity to think on one's feet to one's evolving TESOL educator *habitus* led to a realization of the need to trust in one's instinctive teacherly nature for Eva:

> *I believe it's important to take risks in one's teaching to learn and improve. As I gain experience in this industry, I'm sure that most of the considerations I had overlooked during this incident will become second nature to me.*

The metaphor of 'second nature' aligns semantically with the ability to think on one's feet. Repeated acts of reflection in practice grounds practice teachers in confidence. This is precisely what Ruth meant when she wrote: *"If the teacher is ready to adopt to any situation then he/she can find a solution to face the challenges of the classroom teaching situations".* The capacity to be adaptive and to be authentic echoes, too, in Edward's response to a supervisor's feedback. He writes as if offering advice to his practice teacher peers: "*Throw away over-reliance on books, lesson plans, teach for the real world, be prepared to teach 'off the cuff'…use your natural talents."*

Practicum experience allows these practice teachers to connect with their natural *habitus,* that part of their embodied identity as an educator accessible only via practice and describable only reflectively.

The opportunity to reflect on experience after the practicum events provides interesting insights into what is important in TESOL contexts, such as Andrew's comment on understanding the value of authenticity to keep students invested:

> *During this lesson, I realised how important it is for the texts to be related to students' real lives and why it is important to teach language using authentic texts. Texts as such are necessary for students. Therefore authentic, relevant texts not only motivate students, but also engage them. Students actively participate in learning*

language through texts because they can see the purpose and benefits of learning
these texts.

The value of reflectivity as a tool of practicum enquiry resounds in the storyline, too. Rima writes, "I have never had to think about my teaching so intensively… so, I feel it was very valuable to me as a teacher". This 'thinking intensively' is another articulation of the concept of reflection on action Oprandy (2015) observed as central to practicum enquiry. Yunnus, et al (2010) validate the metaphor as a register of learning, so when Michael writes "I overcame a steep learning curve" and when Migul realises "[He] now know[s] [he's] capable of juggling work and study, and achieving well in both," we can see metaphors in action as articulations of gains in cultural and social capital.

Storyline 2: Supervisor versus mentor

One of the surprises for the researchers was the density of commentary on the value of the supervisory teacher during practicum, particularly the observation that those who exhibited the qualities of the mentor, standing supportively side-by-side, rather than the supervisor, looking down from above with scrutiny, had more productive practicum experiences. Andrea wrote:

In talking to my classmates, it would appear some supervisors wield power more
thoughtfully responsibly than others. It's a challenging, ego-bruising process. It
takes a lot of goodwill and consideration.

Her words depict a toxic workplace culture where fear of loss of position and of face are continual threats. Eva is another one of those who suffered under such scrutiny, leading to unrest:

The main non-teaching challenge I faced was conflict with my supervising teacher.
This was by far the most difficult thing to handle during my practicum and it caused
me to consider quitting.

Rima tells a heated story of jealousy and rivalry, with a micromanaging supervising teacher threatened by the upstart practice teacher, Andrea's words encapsulate the sentiment for both of them:

The most challenging part was the supervising teacher. The way that she was communicating with me was extremely derogatory... I was also threatened by this supervising teacher that I will be failing.

Practicum theoretically works by being apprentice to model practice, but for Runa learning also resulted from observing the stale:

The main 'non- teaching challenge' for me, was to 'bite my tongue' when I witnessed bad practice. I had to refrain from correcting my supervising teacher. Where possible I joined in and began to team-teach.

While, in Runa's case, the apprentice became the teacher, Lisa:

observed how [my supervising teacher] *paid close interest in what the students were saying. He cared about the students' lives outside of* [school], *and he remembered details about their jobs, their motivations, their interests.*

Max, describing a critical moment, will always remember his 'mentorly' supervisor: *"Like Yoda, he said, 'you are a good teacher; you are now becoming a good TESOL teacher'".* Vera concurred: *"My mentor was strongly committed to helping me become a better teacher".*

Of the two thirds who had positive experiences of supervisor teachers, Amaley articulates the theme most roundly:

I was lucky to be supervised by a responsible teacher who was dedicated to his teaching career. Also, he was an expert in mentoring student teachers. He was a good role model for my teaching career. The other teachers were quite supportive too. They always answered my questions in a nice way.

Ideally practice teachers will not only be inspirational; they may also represents aspirations. This was the case for Rebecca: *"The teacher is a facilitator who is always willing to give further support to students when they need it. I can be that person".* To facilitate and to mentor rather than merely to supervise provide fruitful growth in practicum contexts.

Storyline 3: Finding one's teacher persona

The most significant social and cultural capital of the practicum in this study is its role in enabling practice teachers to access fruitful future-oriented visions of themselves as practitioners. Runa quantified them: "*I identified the following personal strengths as a TESOL teacher: Confidence… Preparation... Flexibility... Cultural knowledge.*" Hillary wrote:

> *The practicum experience has really clarified for me that my choice to study TESOL was right and that this is the area into which I will further my teaching career.*

Ruth appreciated the opportunity to work with diversity across TESOL sectors: *"The wide range of EAL industry will provide me varied opportunities to work with a diverse range of students."*

Seeing one's strengths in action via reflective writing proves a valuable aspect of the portfolio texts. There is a clear sense of a more confident, teacherly *habitus* emergent in the following insights, and we also observe a return to the theme of having a naturally 'teacherly' way of doing and being:

> *I feel that I developed personally by being out of my normal comfort zone; by having to interact with new staff and people whom I admired of their care of their students* (Era).

> *I learned that I am a natural teacher and can put things together relatively quickly if I have to* (Wilson).

The practicum functions to enable practice teachers to discover their 'natural' self, building on a 'natural ear' for syntax and pronunciation and drawing on 'natural abilities (Ronie).

Basically, the practicum allowed me to see what kind of teacher I am and what kind of teacher I would ultimately become (Era).

I have a great disposition to learn, to explore new ways of doing things, design material, and most important, learn from my mistakes (Rima).

I am ready to teach… I have the confidence, and based on my supervising teacher, I have the knowledge and experience (Michael).

Without need for an explicitly storylined narrative, these decontextualized quotes from reflective portfolio documents all point to the capacity of the practicum to provide a community of practice where practicum enquiry is enacted, leading to representations of the self as grown, self-knowledgeable and ready to go (Wenger, 1998).

Towards conclusion

The grounding of the study and the reported, small-scale, storylined findings suggest a range of positive affordances of the practicum enquiry embedded in this form of real-world pedagogy in action. The practicum, reported reflectively, affords an opportunity to think and act 'on one's feet' and, unfurl stories of learning under pressure, or of becoming confident. We see, too, that it allows learners to access insights into their progress towards 'teacherhood' under the influence of supervisors and mentors, and particularly mentors. Throughout the storylines we feel an awareness of emerging capacity and agency and, taken as narratives, they chart a record of an evolving teacher persona or *habitus,* confident, prepared and flexible, to recite Runa.

Our storylines point to a preference for *mentorly* over *supervisory* support teachers, and we take from this a need for more vetting of possible on-site teachers; and, in our discussions with them, more use of the concept of 'mentor'. This is because of the relative importance of

pastoral and collegial support as opposed to mere quantitative evaluation and mechanical feedback. Hence, more clarification of the role of mentors is needed for those on-site teachers.

Although we appreciate that this conclusion does not emerge in a linear way from our thematic findings, we believe the study demonstrates how the Practicum Portfolio maximises reflectivity by including chances to write up critical incidents and encouraging enquiry into how practice teachers think their mentors saw them. Such a method of assessment brings important identity work into the realm of reflective practice. The method of aligning reflective surveys with narrative frameworks functions appropriately, too. We believe that the chance to respond to cues/questions fosters reflective evaluation of the learning trajectory, and triangulates the reflective writing done in response to observed lessons and/or supervisory reports. Effectively, they afford responsiveness to professional dialogues.

This paper has little scope to clarify the scaffolding work done in the classroom and online to prepare learners for being and becoming on practicum so it is appropriate to comment here on the preparation of practice teachers for practicum. Obviously there is no panacea, no formula as it's about being and becoming and being given that opportunity to think on one's feet and reflect on one's actions. We can imagine the challenges and expectations to prepare for the unexpected, and we can attempt to teach how to learn as apprentices from supervisor/mentors as in Gee's (1991) and Lave and Wenger's (1991) models; but it is clear that respect needs to flow both ways. We can imagine and rehearse potential dialogues and share the experiences of earlier practicum participants to create possible images of the self on practicum. The real pedagogy, however, is the practicum itself, and the reflective work of the portfolio best captures these images of the self in action and in response to critical incidents.

We hope we have presented some evidence to show that, throughout the production of artifacts for the portfolio, we teach reflective writing as authentic awareness-building about the importance of process over product; for example, less importance is placed on the mechanics of the lesson plan document than on the reflection on how it went.

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ARRIVING IN A NEW HIGHER EDUCATIONAL STUDY ENVIRONMENT: PREPARATION, SUPPORT, AND CULTURAL TRANSITION

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Abstract

Studying abroad is increasingly common. Students report difficulties operating in new learning environments with unexpected types of learning activity, teaching styles, and levels of student independence. Living in a new culture is similarly challenging. To make this transition, students need to develop Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) (Byram, 1997). This study investigated experiences, by a group of international students, of a university pre-sessional EAP course, which was inspired by the ICC concept. Data was gathered from interviews with six students and three teachers, in order to understand what students lacked or brought to the course. Findings show that much existing information does not reach students pre-arrival, and that they thus miss the opportunity for helpful preparation. The study also found that in adapting to a new context, students' individual experiences are not clearly connected to their background cultures. Suggestions are made about how students' experience of the transition could be improved with preparation, resources, and training.

Introduction and literature review

Studying abroad

Around 16% of students at New Zealand universities are internationals (Universities New Zealand, 2019). Studies show that living abroad has become common (Fang & Baker, 2018; Jackson, 2008; Castro, Woodin, Lundgren, & Byram, 2016), and that students studying abroad can develop increased adaptability, intercultural competence, and problem-solving skills (Cushner & Karim, 2004). However, this journey is not easy with the degree of adjustment varying widely, as Cushner and Karim suggest. Studies have found that students have difficulties around assessments, types of learning/teaching experiences including orientation to appropriate use of sources, group work, study skills, and around interactive lectures (Northcott, 2001; Edwards & Ran, 2006; Yuan, 2011; Xiong; 2005). Questions about how people adapt, and the usefulness of preparation are areas that need to be considered.

In the context of an English for academic purposes (EAP) course at a New Zealand university, this study explored how these ideas could be considered in relation to students transitioning to studies in their new environment. The course aims to prepare L2 speakers of English for university studies, developing their language and study skills relevant to the New Zealand university environment. The research aims to find out what students already know or

can do, regarding operating in a new environment, and to offer suggestions on how students can be helped. The findings may also be used to inform development of preparation and training programmes along the lines of those outlined in this article.

Existing research in this area, for example, by Liddicoat and Scarino (2013), suggest that focussing on engagement, reflection, critical thinking, and learning about different behaviour leads to intercultural learning for international students. Castro et al. (2016) also note that many international learners view the host country in stereotypical terms when they arrive. There is also inconsistent, if any, support for incoming or outgoing students. Castro et. al. point out that, while there is desire for training, there are mixed opinions whether this should be targeted at specific cultures or at general intercultural competence. Moreover, Bennett, Bennett, & Landis (2004) draw attention to the importance of knowing whether there are sufficient resources for this kind of support or not.

Intercultural communicative competence framework

One option for preparing to transition to any new environment is training in intercultural communicative competence (ICC), designed to be integrated with language teaching, which has influenced researchers working with international students (Byram, 1997). Byram recommends that students should aim to work with many cultures, learning from and being open-minded towards differences and suspending value judgements. Others in support of this are Houghton, (2012) and Menard-Warwick (2014). This involves decentring views of culture, behaviour, and language, to see multiple perspectives, especially when using an L2 (Liddicoat, 2014); interactions with others influence values, beliefs, and the ability to take others' perspectives (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013).

The ICC model, below, uses classroom, fieldwork, and independent learning to prepare students for new environments by teaching linguistic, sociolinguistic, and discourse competence, as well as *intercultural competence*, which include:

- skills for interpreting and relating through ethnocentric perspectives
- skills of discovering and interacting with knowledge, skills, and practices of different cultures
- attitudes and curiosity relating to (dis)beliefs about cultures

- education, awareness, and critical evaluation of intersections between ideology, practices, and perspectives
- Knowledge about countries or groupings, their products, practices and historical views (Byram, 1997; 2009; Houghton, 2012)
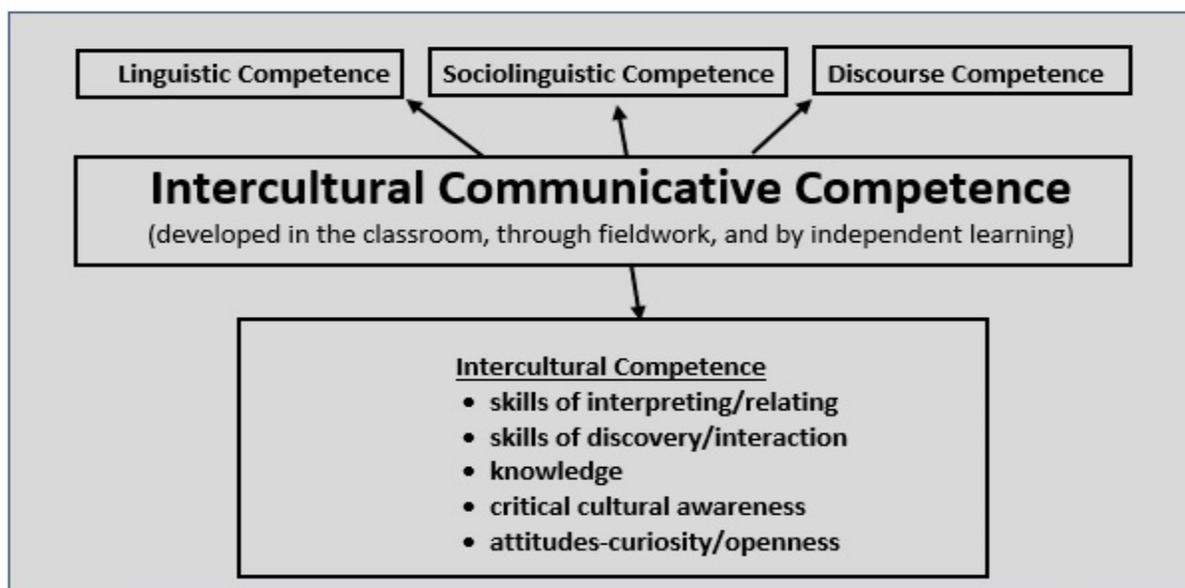

Figure 1. A model of ICC, adapted from Byram (2009, p. 323).

Development of ICC has been exemplified by several authors (Jackson, 2008; 2018; Fang & Baker, 2018; Wu, 2017; Yulita, 2018). Training for ICC, or other forms of intercultural competence, generally involves workshops, discussions, actual intercultural engagement, and critical reflection (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; Jackson, 2018). This model has guided the analysis in this study.

A need for training

Transitioning to operating in a new environment, to a new leaning context with different expectations, is challenging. Institutional support, preparation, and student engagement is often crucial. Overall, for students headed abroad, there is a lack of preparation for encountering change and variation (Fang & Baker, 2018; Liu, 2016; Castro et al., 2016).

Existing literature indicates that there is support in some institutions, and that it is more effective if students understand the need for it. Researchers suggest acculturating (Yuan, 2011), interacting with people familiar with the new context (Hechanova-Alampay, Beehr, Christiansen,

& Van Horn, 2002), learning about unfamiliar cultures and learning environments, and developing multiple identities for varying contexts (Norton, 2013). Suggestions for a training focus on mismatches between educational experiences and expectations (Edwards & Ran, 2006; Northcott, 2001), stereotypical differences between cultures (Xiong, 2005; Yook, 2013), or simple logistics (Jackson, 2018). Those students who have had experiential learning or guidance in critical reflection are seen as becoming more aware of "how their attitudes and actions affect intercultural learning and identity expansion" (Jackson, 2018, p. 374).

In contrast to more fixed, macro understandings of culture, recent models see it as individualised, flexible, and manifesting a person's own behaviour and beliefs constructed by their interactions with the world (Mercieca, 2014), with minor influence from nationality or upbringing (Spencer-Oatey, 2012). This view contributes to Spencer-Oatey's (2012) belief that "culture is a notoriously difficult term to define" (p.1), a sentiment echoed by Lo Bianco (2016). Culture can be seen as dynamic, an individualised phenomenon where anyone can "move across boundaries" (Holliday, 2011, p.26). This implies that any preparation for studying abroad should include acquisition of intercultural skills in some form, rather than focus on stereotypes of the sending or receiving cultures.

For the university and course in this study, this individualised view is relevant for students having difficulties coping with the new context. Difficulties include those that students might experience in daily life, as well as the different expectations that tertiary study places on students in New Zealand, including differences in teaching style, expectations of critical thinking, and student agency. A pilot project by Edwards (2017) as well as points raised by students on a course on *What future students should know about living and studying in New Zealand,* supported this.

Methodology

Taking into account the literature and the feedback from students during the pilot study, three research questions were formed. They were:

1. Prior to commencing the course, what materials or training did the students use, or knew were available to them, to help with difficulties transitioning to study in New Zealand?

2. What skills and knowledge related to adjusting to a new study environment do students on the programme feel that they lack or bring to the course?

3. What skills and knowledge related to adjusting to a new living environment do the same students feel they have, wish they had, or lack?

In the earlier pilot (Edwards, 2017), students were surveyed online. However, this method of data collection left considerable room for students to misunderstand the questions and sometimes give very short answers that lacked useful data. Therefore, interviews were used for this research. Students from China make up the greatest proportion of enrolments across the university, New Zealand universities more generally (Atherton & Li 2016), and further afield (Edwards & Ran, 2006) as well as on this pre-sessional EAP course, Chinese students are therefore the focus of this study, however being of shared nationality does not necessarily mean they represent one culture.

Participants

Data was collected from interviewing six students and three teachers. The students were volunteers from two classes with higher levels of English proficiency. This aimed to allow a greater amount of information to be transmitted, and to reduce linguistic difficulties while gathering information. which was the case in the pilot project. Student participants were recommended by class teachers as likely to be interested in the project or the experience of participating in research. The request for interest in volunteering was couched in language around helping both the university and future students. The teachers interviewed were suggested by the Director of the Institute who runs the course and they represented a range of experience of teaching on the course. The participants agreed to give a 10 -20-minute interview. All names are pseudonyms.

Students

Student	Current course	Age at 31 December 2017	Level of past education	Interview length
Rui	1st	23	Bachelor's degree in China	11min
Cindy	2nd	23	Bachelor's degree in China	10min
Ava	1st	28	Bachelor's degree in China	11.5min
Susan	1st	25	Master's degree in China & Postgraduate Diploma	12min

YuLin	1st	29	Bachelor's degree in China	16.5min
Becky	1st	26	Bachelor's degree in China	11.5min

Teachers

Teacher	Approx. years teaching on the course	Qualification	First language	Interview length
Nancy	12	MATESOL	English	14.5min
Ike	1-2	MATESOL, GDipTchg	English	19min
Huyen	2-3	PhD, MATESOL	Vietnamese	13min

Table 1-2. Demographic information on participants.

Data gathering and analysis

The interviews were semi-structured, allowing freer recall by participants and allowing the interviewer-researcher to adapt the line of questioning as the interview progressed (Friedman, 2012). Interviews took place in teachers' offices or a small meeting room and were audio recorded. Ethics approval was gained from the university in advance. Pseudonyms were used for reporting. Interview questions (see Appendix 1-2), were informed by the pilot project and the presentation mentioned above, and also by ICC considerations around open-mindedness, curiosity, and discovery (Byram, 1997; 2009). Once relevant points had been transcribed by the researcher, the interviews were analysed iteratively for themes (Baralt, 2012).

The analyses of the interviews revealed themes around past study, preparation for and transition to a new learning, and daily life environment, influence of culture (or a lack thereof), and issues around identity, investment, and goals. Due to space limitations, this article will discuss two key themes; (1) a lack of appropriate preparation for the course, and (2) students as individuals and not cultural representatives. For discussion of other findings see Edwards (2018). ICC is used as preparation for new environments and assumes that individuals each react differently to their environment, so focusing on these themes relates to ICC considerations.

Findings

Finding 1: Lack of appropriate preparation

Both teachers and students repeatedly suggested that students preparing to study on the course have too little information about what the course involves and therefore they focus on the use of IELTS training as a catch-all preparation. Teachers were also unclear, and they believed that students did not even know about the resources available for students to prepare for their new study environment. There was an awareness of a paucity of information and both student and teacher responses suggest that information sent by the university, whether focused on marketing, university life, or skills useful for the students' transition, is inaccessible to the students due to internet censorship or a loss of information as it passes through agents. Then information that incoming students do have is currently only found via ex-students on social media forums in China (e.g., Weibo, WeChat). Rui exemplifies this with, "We can find the resources from…people who graduate from the EPP and we ask them for…materials".

One student's sister in Auckland got information about resources, such as the Academic Word List [AWL] by Coxhead (2006), by contacting the university. The remaining students reported receiving or finding no information about the course or how to prepare for it. Cindy said, "Before I came to Wellington, I knew nothing heard about [the course]", and Yulin elucidates further with, "My agent…didn't know clearly about the…course [or] what we need to prepare". Students also reported surprise about the course's classroom activities and assessments, including the use of sources and types of reading and listening activities (Rui and Cindy), and independent study (Cindy). Students can become familiar with these with help from teachers or peers, said Rui, Susan and Ava, and once accents have become familiar, said Becky.

Regarding support during the course, students are encouraged to take their teachers' advice on effective ways of learning, and they are shown support resources. Nancy and Ike both said the course supports students transitioning to the course/university's learning environment, independent study, and focusing on achievable goals. All teachers noted that students are talked through evidence about why the course's learning strategies work, with in-class support provided through training and advice for those who ask. Huyen said, "We really emphasise independent learning and learner autonomy and have lots of guidelines and…class instruction about how to learn…but…old habits die hard". While responses suggested that the students bring with them

various language skills from past English studies (Ava), and online and in-person support networks from past and repeating students (Rui; Ava), their past experience does not provide a sufficient proficiency level.

Ike stressed that there *are* differences between the course's expectations of what education is, compared to students' past learning, both himself and Huyen commenting on it being a big transition to the course's learning style: "The main thing is making the adjustment to…more autonomous learning" (Ike) and, "You've got to keep checking…students generally are not very good at…learning independently" (Huyen).

It is notable from all respondents that little preparation available or done prior to attending the university covers ICC. Existing university support and preparation, which space here precludes describing, does not focus on this either. The university does have some web pages with links to the AWL, speed reading, and New Zealand academic and daily life resources (e.g., New Zealand Links, 2018), but it is unclear whether or how these are highlighted to incoming students. Literature recommends preparing students for overseas study, whether destination-specific (Xiong, 2005; Castro, et al., 2016), as done by this university, or with general ICC-type skills (Jackson, 2018; Fang & Baker, 2018; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; Wu, 2017), which is lacking. As alternative preparation, YuLin suggests, using TV and movies and international conversation partners. YuLin also said she would like to see more advice from existing and recent students providing a true picture rather than city or university marketing information. Much of this highlights the idea that if students don't receive advance information about what to expect or practice (Jackson, 2018; Fang & Baker, 2018; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013), they may waste time, effort, and money.

There is repeated evidence of students using IELTS as a method of improving and preparing for study abroad, and as preparation for the course but then discovering that it requires different skills. Teachers note that IELTS training is different from this EAP course here, and training for IELTS is an inappropriate use of resources. Rui took IELTS classes after knowing she would be attending the course. Some students found IELTS somewhat useful, and others did not. Rui said, "Writing is the most helpful because also about…essay[s]…and also listening…but I think the reading is…different from the [course] task". YuLin noted that the course is different from any English exam in China, IELTS or otherwise, and Becky recommended that future potential students take IELTS.

Some students reported studying academic vocabulary or practicing reading academic articles before arrival. Teachers commented on a few students having done reading or listening practice. This, with comments on the different types of learning/teaching activity and responsibilities expected in a New Zealand university environment, answers the first RQ; *Prior to commencing the course, what materials or training did the students use or knew were available to them, to help with difficulties transitioning to study in New Zealand?* As Fang & Baker (2018), and Castro et al. (2016) found, the right types of preparation are often lacking.

Finding 2: students are individuals, not cultural representatives

If culture is individualised and flexible as Mercieca (2014) and Holliday (2011) suggest, then any patterns in problems, experienced by students, should not be seen as explicitly related to their cultural background. Participant responses appear to agree with this. Students suggested that they bring to the course existing language skills and a support network, while teachers suggested that students bring an individual range of concrete strengths and weaknesses.

Students spoke individually about personal experiences, with no mention of their 'cultural group'. They showed several trends: similar types of off-target preparation; a lack of information about what to expect; a belief that New Zealand was not difficult to operate in; and observations noting differences around politeness and around expectations of academic and personal independence. There was no spontaneous pronouncement of themselves as operating a certain way due to *being Chinese.* While there was mention from the students of experiences being different from studying in China in regard to learning activities and expectations in the educational system, there was no evidence that *all Chinese do things this way*, or any claim that ethnicity causes differences

Teachers spoke about classes of individuals and trends faced by students, not according to cultural grouping, expressing beliefs that each student had individual needs and strengths. Where nationality was mentioned, it was a result of large numbers of one nationality being on the course, making their problems more noticeable. Any mention of nationality included indication that a noticeable *minority* of students from some groups (China and Vietnam) had problems, such as the following from Ike, "when they come into the…program they're quite different…regardless of nationalities". The fact that teachers did not mention problems by nationality, and the suggestion that there are individual needs, gel with the literature that people's

worldviews are influenced by individual experiences and interactions rather than nationality, and that this leads to individualised, not national, characteristics (Riley, 2007; Mercieca, 2014; Spencer-Oatey, 2012).

Teachers commented on individual differences and how a person's own identity and investment influences engagement with the course. In these areas, teachers and students showed similar opinions, that adapting to study on the course and living in New Zealand were individual experiences and difficulties were not suggested as stemming from a specific culture. Staff interviews explicitly suggest individual differences. Ike suggests that the backgrounds, past experiences and learning of the students vary a lot and result in each student bringing different things to the course, whether life experience and maturity, specific goals, or concrete language skills & abilities. An example is; "…How people engage…their experience [informs] how they engage with people around them" (Ike). Nancy and Huyen keep things more conceptual. They believe that some (not all), students bring self-sufficiency (Nancy), acceptance of the reality of where they are and what they need to develop (Nancy), and an ability, often an expectation, to adapt, given time (Nancy; Huyen).

The only discussion by students of culture, covered sociocultural behaviours, such as politeness or chit-chat. Given the individual differences in awareness of how people experience culture (Mercieca, 2014; Spencer-Oatey, 2012), it may not be appropriate to impose one-size-fits-all training and enforce uninvited identity changes (Norton, 2013), but more useful to highlight available resources for adapting.

The final two research questions asked *what skills and knowledge related to adjusting to a new study and living environment do students on the programme feel that they lack or bring to the course?* The information from the interviews suggested that some students do bring individual language skills, goals and motivation to learn 'how to learn', but that there is no discernible patterns of skills, knowledge (or lack thereof), that can be connected to culture. The interviews suggest a general problem with students knowing what learning on the course or at the university involves, and how this might differ from past experiences. Further, the amount that the students engage with the course and the learning activities can be influenced by the teacher and this can influence their success.

Summary of findings

Interview responses demonstrate that issues adapting to the course's learning expectations and life in New Zealand are not based on a home culture, but are individualised with trends around independence and expectations about everyday life. With individualised non-cultural-specific problems, a focus on developing ICC where students, through an L2 learn to work with, be open-minded about, and learn from different perspectives, may help the transition.

While the literature shows that preparation can ease transitions to studying and living in a new environment (Jackson, 2018; Castro et al., 2016; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002), that preparation is often lacking or misdirected (Castro et al., 2016; Northcott, 2001). The present study diverges slightly from the literature in that it highlights the influence of different sources of preparation and information. Information from peers, past students, and education agencies misdirects students to IELTS or vocabulary lists, while much of the information available from the university does not reach students.

Teachers give a general impression that the course supports the transition into its environment, and that some students do transition quickly due to their pre-existing motivations and acceptance of a need to learn. However, some students would transition faster if they had advance information about what to expect once here, or through ICC were prepared for changes.

With students having individual needs and potential for operating in the wider globalised world, and with literature recommending an ability to appreciate the views of multiple, fluid cultural settings, training prior to and/or on arrival can be recommended to be based on ICC as suggested by Jackson (2008 and 2018), Fang & Baker (2018), Castro et al., (2016), Newton (2009). This has been done with university students (Jackson, 2008; 2018; Wu, 2017; Siregar, Newton & Crabbe, 2016), but depends on effort from and resources for teachers in developing the course and being trained to do so (Byram, 1997; Siregar et al., 2016).

Implications

It is important for teachers to know *how* their students have previously learned (Li, 2015), something currently unclear to teachers, so an initial survey such as suggested by Wingate (2007) may help clarify that. A recommendation specifically for the university and the programme is to use various communication channels to ensure information raising awareness of options for preparing to study at the university gets through.

One suggestion from interview comments is to have information from recent students available online. Students already find this, but if posted by the university then it can be quality-assured. This information would be available for incoming students to peruse. They could then predict their own individual educational or cultural difficulties, look for ways to surmount them, and be more interested in ICC development.

Limitations and suggestions for further research

The course had enrolments from many nationalities and language backgrounds in 2017. This research collected data from a small selection of students, of one gender only, and with the same L1. Interviewing or surveying more, and a wider spectrum of, students would provide a greater amount of data and perhaps identify other trends. Further research can look for more specific links between available resources, how they are used and how much, and any influences on students' individual accomplishments. Similarly, there is scope for greater attention on how different types of preparation for transitioning to the course may influence student engagement, investment, and success. For example, exploring whether preparation resources available as a free online course, or as an option on arrival during the students' orientation, enable more students to transition more quickly to the course environment and to living in any new cultural context. Expanded research could also include effectiveness and effects of pastoral support, which was not part of this study.

Conclusion

This study found that a new learning environment and expectations cause difficulties for most students. Crossing "cultures" is a stressful experience, and this is exacerbated by changes in expectations of study style (Cushner & Karim, 2004). Forcing changes in behaviour or communicative style may disturb someone's identity (Norton, 2013), so they may not willingly cooperate. Limited intercultural competence skills or training can also lead to misunderstandings and an avoidance of intercultural contact (Jackson, 2018). This was the case amongst the participants in this study, but through training and preparation, raising awareness of the differences likely to be encountered, learners can become more invested in developing tolerance of, and skills to operate in, new learning cultures. For students heading for studies in New Zealand universities, training should be made available through online pre-arrival and on-campus

post-arrival workshops, and awareness raising activities. The ICC course model provides a starting point for such activities.

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Appendix 1

Questions used in semi-structured interviews

Questions for teachers

1 - Thinking first about the study environment and teaching/learning styles within EPP, have you noticed that students have any problems?

2 - What have you noticed that students have frequent or greatest difficulties with?

3 - Regarding communication styles and cultural aspects of studying or living in New Zealand, have you noticed that students have any problems?

4 - Where do you feel the students have most difficulties, or barriers to their own success in these areas?

5 - Do you know of any materials, training or support available to the students that could help them prepare for or mitigate these problems before beginning to study on EPP, or early in their study? (In New Zealand or their home countries).

Can you comment on how much or how frequently students make use of these resources?

Thinking again about your previous answers; have you noticed that any of these points apply more or less to particular nationalities or cultural groups? If so, to what degree, for example, to all, a clear majority, a few, etc.?

Appendix 2

Questions used in semi-structured interviews

Questions for students

1 - Thinking first about the studying on EPP, thinking about the types of activities you do, have you had any difficulties?

2 - What do you often have difficulty with?

3 - Do you think this is an important or big problem? (how/why?)

4 - Have you had any problems with communicating with teachers or classmates?

5 - How were you able to solve, or try to solve, these problems?

6 - What about living in New Zealand in general, can you tell me about any difficulties with the culture or communication?

7 - Before you started EPP, did you know about any training or preparation materials to help with the difficulties you talked about? (here or in your home country)

8 - Did you use them? (how much?/why/why not?)

9 - Do you know about any help for these problems that you can use *during* EPP?

10 - Have you used them? (how much?/why/why not?)

11 - Except 'practicing English', what do you wish you had spent more time doing, to prepare for study here?

SURVIVORS OF TRAUMA IN SURVIVAL LANGUAGE PROGRAMS: LEARNING AND HEALING TOGETHER

Mareena Ilyas

English Language Partners

Abstract

Refugees who resettle in a new country are frequently survivors of trauma along with numerous other struggles. Adults who are non-literate or have low literacy levels in their first language are also burdened by the need to learn the language of the host country. Teaching English to such a marginalized group, especially in ESL/ EFL contexts, is an issue. The challenge is to provide instruction in basic literacy capabilities while also considering their health barriers, including their physical and psychological conditions. The study involved adult refugee background learners from diverse cultures in two small classes. They were enrolled in a government funded community programme at the time of the investigation. Findings indicate teachers are in an ideal position to not only enhance language and literacy skills, but also to reduce the impact of trauma and depression. The findings also suggest that teachers can inspire these learners to improve their health through therapeutic teaching strategies using learners' own lives as content in the curriculum. Mixed methods were used for collection of data, including learner logs, teacher observations and reflections, feedback from the cultural and language assistants, and informal discussions with the learners in the programme. The success of the project suggests implementation of a customized curriculum in ESL literacy classes for refugees.

Introduction

Refugee children and adults are at increased risk of poor mental and physical health, which in turn affects their settlement process and language learning. The purpose of this paper is to share the author's findings on an exploratory research project carried out in an ESL literacy class with 36 adult refugee learners. These learners were enrolled in a cost-free adult literacy program at English Language Partners in West Auckland. The researcher teaches two literacy classes for refugees. The diverse learner population is challenged with a triad of cultural, linguistic, and health problems. Based on experience working as a teacher in ESL literacy programs with refugee background learners, the researcher identified two main problems: firstly, lack of learner engagement and secondly, health disparities. These problems guided the researcher to investigate an approach which might contribute to the enhancement of second language learning and improve health outcomes for the learners at the same time.

The questions guiding the research were:

1. What can teachers do to create positive learning environments that will help the refugee learners overcome traumatic life experiences and succeed in life?
2. What kind of therapeutic interventions could be integrated into literacy teaching contexts to enhance educational experiences for learners from refugee backgrounds?

Literature Review

The global refugee crisis appears to be one of the greatest challenges of the 21st century. Each year 750 refugees are accepted by New Zealand from around the world. Refugees have no choice and are forcibly displaced by political instability and war in their countries. They leave their homes without any planning and preparation due to fear of persecution and human right violations (Bemak & Chung, 2015).

Many studies have established that refugees have higher rates of depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) than the non-refugee population (Davidson, Murray, & Schweitzer, 2008; Stevens, 2001). These refugees face formidable challenges in adapting and adjusting to their new life in their host country. This can add to the trauma they have suffered in their country (Lepore, 2015). Arriving in a new land does not immediately resolve the effects of their traumatic and stressful experiences as some may suffer from PTSD (Juneau & Rubin, 2014; Nazzal, Forghany, Geevarughese, Mahmoodi, & Wong, 2014).

According to Khawaja, White, Schweitzer & Greenslade (2008) refugees' psychosocial well-being is affected by unique factors including social isolation, the loss of everyday social roles, lack of environmental freedom, insufficient income and health problems. They are burdened by the need to learn a new language and faced with increased pressure to find work. These factors often add to their stress level and therefore they are vulnerable to developing mental health problems.

There has been little research on the language learning and resettlement experiences of adult refugees, particularly, in the New Zealand context. A few studies have exposed holes in the New Zealand education provisions for adult refugees with regards to inadequacies of courses and irrelevance of the course content (Gray & Elliott, 2001; Roach & Roskvist, 2007).

New Zealand refugee education policies for refugees mainly focus on future employment (Marlowe, Bartley, & Hibtit, 2014; Matthews, 2008). However, their holistic needs including social, cultural, individual mental and physical health dimensions get little attention. The New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy (Immigration New Zealand, 2013) prioritizes refugee education for employment and refugee health is placed as a secondary goal. McBrien (2014) argues that helping refugees to achieve physical and mental wellness would increase their educational and employment opportunities.

The health status of refugees is a significant factor in determining their success in learning a new language and settling in their new country. "The trauma associated with the refugee experience, means that refugee students are likely to face substantial obstacles to settling, including learning in our schools" (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2008, p. 4).

This situation presents distinct circumstances and challenges to the ESL teachers. Although, refugee learners have significant and complex mental health needs, "for some, therapy is neither a practical nor a readily available solution and for others, it may present further challenges in terms of stigma or cultural inappropriateness" (Hayward, 2017, p.1). Hayward further suggests as teachers have the opportunities to meet their learners on a regular basis, they are in an ideal position to offer them support and a form of healing.

Burgoyne and Hull (2007) demonstrate that learning all the skills including speaking, listening, reading, and writing simultaneously may be a heavy learning burden for refugee learners. They advocate for greater flexibility in course content and outcomes. This may help the learners to focus on gaining oral language skill before concentrating on other skills.

Teaching traumatized refugees can be successful when the programme integrates educational needs with the learners' physical and psychological needs. This has been proven in a study with traumatized refugees in Sweden (Barton and Pitt, 2003). This study proposes to identify traumatized refugees early so that they can get the special support they need. Medley (2012) suggests that without experiencing some measure of healing from trauma, most language learners will be frustrated as they may not be able to concentrate on learning.

Many theories and pedagogical approaches acknowledge the presence of potential obstacles regarding refugee education and provide ideas that may help teachers to address the needs of their refugee learners. Pinson & Arnot (2010) propose a holistic education approach that incorporates inclusive pedagogies fostering the students' physical and emotional wellbeing. Through this method, while taking pre- and post-displacement issues into consideration, teachers can also provide 'hope for the future' by creating welcoming environments, a sense of self-worth, security and belonging. This will help them to form new relationships and make new friends (Hek 2005; Rutter 2006). West (2004) argues that holistic approaches are critically important to settlement as they can reduce vulnerability and build resilience. Matthews (2008) has also established that the 'holistic' model developed resilience among refugee background learners as it addresses complex and multiple learning, social and emotional needs.

Some educators maintain that it is necessary to apply multifaceted and culturally competent interventions (Burgoyne & Hull, 2007; Victorian Settlement Planning Committee, 2006). Benseman (2012) describes the value of bilingual language tutors (BLTs) who work alongside the teacher. They provide first language support, helping to understand social or cultural issues in the class and assisting in the language learning experience of the refugees. Seufert (1999) draws attention to real-life issues using theme-based and task-based activities. Finn, (2010) encourages the use of a variety of methodologies that provide a safe and fun learning environment using student-generated or chosen texts and topics. Medley (2012) proposes a discourse of multiple intelligences for trauma-affected learners. This approach not only meets the needs of all learners but offers an opportunity for healing by opening up alternative avenues for expression. According to Medley (2012) three issues are important for trauma healing to take place: creating a safe environment, building trust among class members, and acknowledging traumas so that they can be properly mourned. She further adds that, through artful acts of instruction, the learners will thrive and will regain self-efficacy. The above literature suggests that there is a need to implement therapeutic pedagogy that includes strategies to empower the learners. It further indicates that there is a need for teachers to include students' life as curricula providing a nurturing environment that will promote positive thinking.

Course Description

English Language Partners New Zealand (ELPNZ) is a charitable trust that teaches English to help migrants and former refugees settle well in New Zealand. It has 23 centres nationwide offering English programmes.

The learners in this study attended a total of 10 hours each week for four days from Monday to Thursday. The classes had a teacher and a cultural and language assistant (CLA), who worked alongside the teacher and provided first language support where needed. There were two part time CLAs, who worked with both classes at different schedules. Learners had access to both these CLAs on different days during the class.

The lessons were delivered through health-related content teaching activities, to raise learners' health awareness and improve quality of life, along with language learning. The purpose of the study was verbally explained to the learners through first language support by the CLA when necessary. The learners then signed the consent forms. Both L1 and L2 classes had ten hours of class time per week with the teacher (the researcher) and the lessons covered a range of health topics such as common health problems, healthy eating, and healthy habits.

Different teaching techniques were employed depending on the topic and class levels including pictures and illustrations, question and answer exercises, dialogues and role plays, simple reading-based exercises, class surveys, colouring activities, learner logs, and discussions. New vocabulary and simple dialogues were reinforced through drilling and repetition. Class surveys as a speaking activity were incorporated on more important health related topics. Discussions were stimulated through visuals and multimedia presentations, and the learners were encouraged to share their experiences. First language support was offered through the CLAs when needed. Learning was scaffolded through discussions, group work, and pair work. Informal teacher-initiated chats with individual learners had been one of the most valuable tools in gathering data.

The lessons promoted fruit and vegetable consumption for better health, encouraged learners to have six hours of sleep a day, and personal narratives were used to inspire them. The teacher kept a healthy lifestyle log and recorded the food that she ate, amount of water consumption, hours of sleep, duration of walking/exercise and discussed the benefits of such practice with the learners. Taking the teacher as a model, the learners were asked to keep a record of their daily activities. As the learners had limited language, they were given a chart to

just tick or write a word. This was then collected on a weekly basis to note any pattern of unhealthy eating or habits and discussed personally with the learners to raise awareness of unhealthy habits. Leaners continued to fill in the logs during the term break and brought them back when the new term started.

The teacher introduced deliberate 'laughing moments' in the class. Funny video clips were added to the lessons on a regular basis to make the learners feel relaxed. These videos were 3-5 minutes long. The teacher had also developed lessons on how to read medication labels and follow the instructions, knowing the learners had difficulties managing their medications. The lessons also covered the importance of keeping medicines in their bottles and not mixing them together. The learners brought their own medication bottles/ packets to the class and the teacher typically used authentic labels.

All the learners had wartime experiences and had fled their country leaving their loved ones behind. Many indicated that they had little sense of well-being; they appeared to be fatigued in the class and often complained about physical ailments such as headache and stomach ache. Some learners had been diagnosed with diabetes or high blood pressure. Stress, anxiety, and depression were common psychological problems prevalent among these learners. Attendance fluctuated widely from week to week. Lack of enthusiasm and motivation to learn and poor concentration levels, inattentiveness and short attention span were other characteristics of these study participants.

Pedagogical Methods and Intervention Strategies

Various methods were used to help this vulnerable population to improve their learning experience and reduce their health barriers, including:

- Nurturing, and a safe environment: By creating a trusting, nurturing and safe environment the teacher genuinely cared about the learners' social, emotional and educational needs and built trusting relationships with them. The learners knew it was not only safe to ask and answer questions but also that it was safe to make mistakes without being ridiculed. The classroom climate was characterised by tolerance and acceptance.

- Building a classroom community: By developing a classroom community, the teacher helped the learners to make friends, form relationships and maintain friendships. Regular opportunities to develop wider and richer relationships within and beyond the classroom walls were created to help learners, especially for those who would otherwise feel lonely and vulnerable. The teacher acknowledged helpful and respectful behaviour like, giving a courtesy call when someone was absent from the class, visiting the sick and giving someone a ride back home or encouraging other learners to follow or do similar acts.

- Building routines: The teacher introduced structure into the classroom making it more predictable. The learners knew what would happen next.

- Allowing breaks: The teacher noticed that most learners found it difficult to stay focused for long periods of time and experience 'burnout'. To decrease feelings of being overloaded, the teacher incorporated short recesses into the lesson and allowed learners to make a cup of tea / coffee for themselves while having chitchat with the teacher and or the fellow learners.

- Sense of humour: Deliberate laughing moments were created in the classroom for exchanging funny moments with the class. Funny video clips were added into regular lessons.

- Respectful listening: When learners exhibited signs of distress, the teacher listened to them without judging them and comforted them as a fellow human being. Referrals were made when professional intervention was needed.

- Role plays: Role plays were used for drilling the functional and language structures the learners would need to practice. Real world context with a multitude of scenarios were used to add variety to the lessons.

- Class surveys: This was used as a tool for engaging the learners as it allowed them to interact with their peers. Mixing and mingling around the classroom gave them physically movement as opposed to sitting in the classroom.

- Drilling and repetition: Through drilling and repetition learners were provided a safe platform to practice, produce and recycle the language. Frequent repetition helped learners get their tongues around difficult sounds.

- Colouring activities: colouring activities were used as a low-pressure activity to generate quietness and mindfulness.

- Multimedia: Multimedia such as images, sounds and videos were used to capture learners' attention, explain difficult concepts and to generate discussion.

Methodology

The study applied an ethnographic, exploratory methodology and was conducted in the ELPNZ West Auckland Centre. Data was collected during the usual class time for two literacy classes of Level 1 and Level 2 (L1 & L2), over a period of two terms. Various methods were used to collect data, including; observations, learner logs, class surveys, teacher's reflective diary, CLA's feedback, and records of informal chats with the learners. The observations were not only of the interactions between the teachers and the learners but also the interactions between the learners. Participants' self-assessments of their health and well-being and their verbal statements were also included in the data collection, along with written notes of anecdotal data from the researcher's experiences of the day-to-day teaching. The research was also enhanced through prolonged engagement with the learners outside the classroom, which provided a deeper understanding of learners' lives beyond the classroom walls.

There were 36 learners, aged between 25 and 65, included in the study. They were spread over two classes at two different levels, Literacy 1 (L1) and Literacy 2 (L2). L1 learners had little or no English, and L2 learners had limited schooling. Overall, the participants ranged along a continuum from those who have never had any schooling and arrived pre-literate, to those who had a few years of interrupted schooling.

The learners came from diverse backgrounds: Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Myanmar, Burundi, Vietnam, and Sri Lanka. The refugees' native languages included Farsi, Arabic, Pashto, Amharic, Tigrinya, Burmese, Rohingya, Swahili, and Tamil. The range of countries of origin and different languages, values, and customs, created a complex challenge for the teacher.

Table 1 shows the breakdown by county and language spoken by the learners, and Table 2 illustrates their age group and gender.

Table1: Distribution of sample by country of origin and language spoken

Countries of origin	Number of learners	Languages

Afghanistan	5	Pashto, Dari
Burundi	1	Swahili
Burma/ Myanmar	11	Burmese, Rohingya
Eritrea	3	Tigrinya
Ethiopia	3	Amharic
Iran	2	Farsi
Iraq	1	Arabic
Libya	1	Arabic
Somalia	4	Somali, Arabic
Sri Lanka	4	Tamil
Vietnam	1	Vietnamese

Table 2: Distribution of sample by age group and sex

Age group	Male	Female	Total number of learners
25-35	4	3	7
35-45	4	5	9
45-55	6	8	14
55-65	6	0	6

As the table depicts, there were 20 males and 16 females. Most of the learners fall into two age groups, 35-45 (25 %) and 45-55 (38 %), 55% of whom were above 45 years old. Thirty participants were married and living with their families and six were widowed or separated from their spouses.

Data Analysis, Findings, and Discussion

Learner logs, class surveys, teacher's reflective diary, anecdotal evidence, observations, and the CLAs feedback were analysed for emerging themes, as well as participants 'own self-assessments of their health and well-being. The notes with the participants' verbal statements, taken at the beginning and at the end-of-terms were analysed in the same manner. The themes

identified were as follows: food and drink consumption, sleeping time and duration, smoking, physical activities, and sense of wellness.

At the end of the study all participants mentioned that they had started eating one fruit a day, included vegetables in their meal and now drank plenty of water. At the beginning of the study, one learner mentioned "I eat rice and meat 3 times a day and I hate vegetable". As the lessons progressed, he slowly started adding vegetables to his meals. Another one mentioned that she would cook vegetables and soup for her sick and old mother, but she would make or buy 'tasty food 'for her family that included her husband and a 10-year-old son. When probed about what 'tasty food 'meant, she mentioned, pizza, chips, noodles, and cake. As they learned the concept of 'healthy food', their choice of meal changed.

During the informal chat with the learners, one had previously mentioned that she thought fizzy drinks were equal to water, so she did not bother to have water. Another learner said, "I love coca cola and sometimes I finish one bottle a day". Yet, another one added, "I have 8 to 10 cups of coffee a day and drink very little water". By the end of the study, 10 learners out of 36, had completely stopped having fizzy drinks; others mentioned only occasional consumption of fizzy drinks.

The teacher's main concern about this population was their sleeping pattern, as none of them went to bed before 11 o'clock at night, and half of them would wake up a few times throughout the night. During one-on-one chats, they mentioned that they found it hard to fall asleep as they kept thinking of their separated family members; they had lost contact with some, and some had died. Before taking part in the study, 70% of the learners had only three to four hours of sleep a day. The findings showed improvements as 83 % of the learners had managed to get five to six hours of sleep at night.

There were five smokers in the class at the beginning of the study and they had all started smoking due to stress. The end of term analysis revealed that three had completely stopped smoking, one had turned to professional support to quit, and the last one had reduced smoking from having four cigarettes a day to only one a day, and was very close to quitting.

Lack of physical activity was a common characteristic of this group. Coming to class was the only social event for many; watching TV was reported as their favourite activity. However, as

the lessons were tailored to motivate them to be active, their attitudes and behaviour started changing. Four learners had joined a gym; two had joined a football team; seven of them started gardening. Everyone had added a 15-30 walking/jogging activity to their daily routine. Some learners had also lost weight.

The most valuable gain of this study was the improved sense of physical and psychological wellbeing of the participants. At the beginning of the term, many learners had health complications including diabetes, high blood pressure, anxiety and depression. During one to one chat with the learners, when the teacher asked if they were happy, 95 % of them reported 'not happy', 'very sad', 'upset', 'stressed' and 'depressed' and only 5% said feeling 'ok'. At the end of the semester, 79% of the learners said "I'm happy now" while 11% said "very very happy". The rest of the learners expressed mixed feelings such as 'sometimes ok; but sometimes not ok". All the learners mentioned that they enjoyed watching funny videos.

Those who were on regular medication for diabetes and high blood pressure reported that their family doctor said the result were 'looking good' although they did not understand what it meant except it was something positive. Interestingly, one learner had sought counselling during the term break. Earlier in the term she refused to go to a counsellor saying that she was "not mad'. The teacher was successful in persuading her to eschew the stigma and seek professional help when needed. The number of learners who used to ask permission to go home halfway through the lesson saying they 'felt sick' had completely stopped doing this, except for those who had appointments with Work and Income or Housing New Zealand visits or medical check-ups.

The CLAs acknowledged that the teacher had formed strong bonds with the learners, so they trusted her well. They openly shared their problems with her. One CLA mentioned that the teacher had become 'one stop shop' for the learners' problems. Both the CLAs had noted the teacher interpreting or simplifying letters the learners received; answering phone calls on their behalf, representing them for work and income appointments; and visiting them when they were sick. Although they had access to social workers, many did not utilize the service due to language barriers, or unfamiliarity with the service or the person delivering the service. Both CLAs mentioned that the learners felt comfortable talking to the teacher despite having limited

language. One CLA compared how many learners used to fall asleep during the class as opposed to how energetic and active they had become.

By conducting this study, the researcher aimed to promote humanized and personalized language learning experiences through integrated health literacy. This was an empowering experience for both the teacher and the learners as well as for the CLAs. This humanizing pedagogy highlighted the learners' changing understandings and attitudes towards health and their willingness to implement a healthy lifestyle. In general, the participants recognized that healthy eating and healthy habits contributed to physical and mental wellbeing. Overall, this project had produced the following personal outcomes for learners:

- improved self-esteem and self-efficacy
- improved sense of physical and mental wellbeing
- improved knowledge of food and nutrition
- improved understanding of healthy habits
- decreased stigma
- positive attitudes towards life
- improved literacy skills

Many factors contributed to the success of the project. The CLAs feedback indicated that the teacher created a sense of community and belonging in the classroom. According to them she was empathetic, accessible, approachable and caring so that the learners were willing to share their problems or concerns with her, without being afraid or hesitant. One of the CLAs mentioned that "the learning environment was genuinely supportive where every student felt valued, included, and empowered". The other CLA believed that the safe and supportive environment facilitated active participation and engagement of all learners. The findings of this study provide insight into the interconnection between learning experiences of low literacy refugee-background (LLRB) adult learners and their mental health. There was also an important homogenous finding in this study, as all participants' self-assessments stated that their physical and mental wellbeing had improved.

Limitations of the Study

With regards to study limitations, the sample size was small, so it prevents generalisations. Yet despite limited sample, significant benefits for learners were found supporting the study's hypotheses, suggesting that therapeutic teaching interventions could produce robust outcomes improving the lives of refugee background learners.

The teacher had been working with the learners for over two years and so the learners were comfortable approaching her with their problems and sharing their life with her openly. The results may have been different if an outside researcher had carried out this research as the dynamics of the class may change with the presence of a new person. It is believed that the teacher's relationship with the learners had significantly influenced the outcomes. While the results are not generalizable, findings can be used as a baseline for future, more rigorous study with LLRB learner populations.

Recommendations

Teaching LLRB learners requires understanding of the pre-migration displacement experience of refugees because their psychological, cultural, and historical dynamics may have a negative impact on their settlement process, including learning. It is a demanding job as they have to work in complex environments, with learners of different cultures, ages, and learning abilities. This can add additional challenges to teachers' workload. As such, training and ongoing support including teacher remuneration and incentives are critical for such teachers. They should be supported through training, research, technical assistance, networking, and information sharing.

Far too often teachers rely on set curriculums and traditional teaching approaches to teach adult literacy learners. The realities of today's LLRB classroom environment requires solutions that are practical and effective. To date, therapeutic interventions as a pedagogy   has not been an important part of teaching practice; there is a need to incorporate therapeutic teaching strategies and help refugee background learners to reduce health disparities in order for them to benefit from the learning.

It is hoped that this research would inform future pedagogical models for literacy teaching for LLRB adult learners and leads to new insights and encouragement in this area.

Future research is recommended that investigates how teachers can contribute to the settlement and recovery of refugee learners and prevent the development of long-term problems.

Conclusion

This article describes findings of an ethnographic, exploratory study, conducted with a sample of adult refugee learners enrolled in a community-based literacy programme at English Language partners in West Auckland. This study is unique because it combines adult ESL teaching principles, learners' lives as content, and behavioural theory. The findings indicate that, the project was highly effective as it helped to improve the mental health status of the participants. The findings suggest that teachers are in an excellent position to serve refugee learners and help them to prevent deterioration of their mental and physical health. Although teachers are not therapists, artful acts of teaching can be therapeutic. Teachers are in an ideal position to play a role in trauma healing by integrating the learners' life into the curriculum, and including the theme of health and wellbeing. Best practice includes providing a safe and nurturing environment for the learners, whilst fulfilling pedagogical aims. Nevertheless, the findings are valuable in that they contribute to the existing literature in the area of teaching students with traumatic experiences. This study may also shed light and promote more rigorous, future studies in this area. Additionally, it seeks to raise awareness of the challenges of teaching LLRB adult refugee learners, and it calls for more support from the leaders, funders, and policy makers.

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