SELF-ASSESSMENT IN
IN-SERVICE DISTANCE TEACHER TRAINING

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts in Teaching Degree at the School for International Training Brattleboro, Vermont

by

Mihaela-Silvia Dascalu

May 1, 2005
Copyright © 2004 by Mihaela-Silvia Dascalu

All Rights Reserved.

The author grants the School for International Training permission to reproduce and distribute papers and electronic copies (for CD-ROM and the Internet) of this document in whole or in part.
This project by Mihaela-Silvia Dascalu is accepted in its present form.

Date__________________________________________________

Project Advisor________________________________________

Project Reader _________________________________________
Acknowledgements

My sincere thanks are due to my friend, Ecaterina Petreanu, the British Council Regional Advisor and the Project Manager for the In-service Distance Teacher Training Course for TEFL Teachers. She trusted my knowledge and skills and persuaded me to join the project team. I would also like to thank Melanie Ellis, the Project Consultant, who guided our team with expertise, calmness and discretion and enabled us to successfully accomplish this pioneering work. Melanie made me discover the importance of distance training to the extent that I am considering it as a career. I owe a great deal of gratitude to all of the members of the wonderful team with whom I shared knowledge, skills, as well as frustrations and the sweet taste of success along the way.

I would like to thank the professors from the School for International Training who participated in the Summer Master of Arts in Teaching 19 (SMAT 19) Program. I especially wish to recognize Diane Larsen-Freeman, my incredible Interim Year Teaching Practicum (IYTP) Advisor. She believed in my teaching abilities and helped me find within myself the secrets of good teaching. It was her example of supportive advice, observations and feedback that I carried forward during the mentoring component of the In-service Distance Teacher Training Course.

Paul Le Vasseur, my Individual Professional Project (IPP) Advisor, accepted my proposal to write about my experiences with the British Program. He listened to my initial ideas, and helped me find the way to express the lessons that I learned.

Finally, I wish to thank the SMAT 19’s, all dear friends of mine who did not let the spirit of the “circles on the hill” die. One classmate and friend, Bill Wood, offered to read my IPP when my original reader let me down. It is his tremendous and dedicated support that I will always remember and be grateful for. Last but not least, I wish to recognize my family, who put up with me during the years that it took to complete this project. My heartfelt thanks to everyone who, knowingly or unknowingly, supported me through rough times to see this journey to its conclusion.
ABSTRACT

This paper is based on my experience as part of a team that designed and implemented a distance-training course for English teachers in Romania. It begins with an overview of the training program. It outlines the importance of distance training for teachers in the Romanian educational system. Later, it focuses on the importance of developing self-assessment and self-evaluation skills as key elements of distance learning. In this paper, I propose some self-assessment techniques and activities based on theories of adult learning and on the specific features of the distance-training course I helped to develop. The final section of this paper evaluates the successes, failures and effectiveness of self-assessment techniques used, and I share the lessons I learned as a distance trainer.

ERIC/CLL Key Words

Teaching Profession
   In-service Teacher Education
   Teacher Education Curriculum
   Teaching Skills
   Teacher Educators

Curriculum/Programs
   Career Education
   Curriculum Development
TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROPOSAL ACCEPTANCE FORM ......................................................i

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ..................................................................ii

ABSTRACT .................................................................................iii

TABLE OF CONTENTS .................................................................iv

FOREWORD – Learning from Experience – East Meets West .............1

INTRODUCTION .........................................................................4

CHAPTER 1 – THE “IN-SERVICE DISTANCE TRAINING COURSE
FOR TEACHERS OF ENGLISH” MANUAL – THE LONG AND
WINDING ROAD .......................................................................5

1.1. The Team ...........................................................................5

1.2. The Manual and Its Self-Assessment Components ....................7

1.3. Other Self-Assessment Components ..................................10

1.4. The Importance of Self-Assessment in Distance Teacher Training ..12

CHAPTER 2 – SELF-ASSESSMENT IN ADULT LEARNING IN
DISTANCE TEACHER TRAINING COURSES ..............................15

2.1. Characteristics of Adult Learning ......................................15

2.2. Self-Assessment in Adult Distance Learning .........................19

2.3. Stages in Developing Trainee Self-Assessment Skills ..............21

2.4. Techniques and Activities for Developing Self-Assessment Skills...22

2.4.1. Self-Awareness Activities .............................................23

2.4.2. Self-Observation Activities ..........................................29

2.4.3. Self-Assessment/Evaluation Activities .............................33
CHAPTER 3 – SELF-EVALUATION ELEMENTS IN THE IN-SERVICE DISTANCE TEACHER TRAINING COURSE – A CRITICAL VIEW ........36

3.1. The Learning Unit .................................................................36

3.1.1. Content-Specific Elements .................................................39

3.1.2. Situation-Specific Elements .................................................43

3.2. First Face-to-Face Meeting ..................................................47

3.3. Lesson Observation and Feedback ..........................................49

CHAPTER 4 – CONCLUSIONS: CONFESSIONS OF A DISTANCE LEARNER AND EDUCATOR ..........................................................52

APPENDIX 1. Self-Analysis...............................................................58

APPENDIX 2. Video Recorded Lesson Observation Sheet.........................59

APPENDIX 3. Self-Observation Sheet ...............................................60

APPENDIX 4. Student Evaluation Sheet ............................................63

BIBLIOGRAPHY .............................................................................65
FOREWORD
Learning from Experience – East meets West

In the later half of the twentieth century there were many changes in the social,
political, and economic environments on the European continent. These changes were
influenced by the decline of communism, the fall of the Soviet Union, the dismantling of
the Warsaw Pact, the reunification of Germany, and the establishment of the European
Union. There were many factors that would cause changes in the relationships between
countries, market places, and the lives of individual people. With these changes came the
need for increased international education, especially increased and improved education
in one of the world’s leading languages – English.

In Romania, not only was English an academic subject for the majority of
students, but it also had become a key to economic opportunity. This caused a deep
and sudden change in the learning needs of students. Consequently, the design of
courses to teach English as a foreign language (TEFL), the teaching methodology,
and classroom textbooks had to follow this change.

During the early 1990’s, the British Council devised a system of face-to-face teacher-
training courses for English teachers in Romania. The main aim was to select the best
teachers to become teacher trainers. These teachers would later train the English teachers
in their areas in the Communicative Approach and help them adapt the old textbooks to
the new methodology. In parallel with the training of trainers and teacher-training
program, another group of teachers was trained to become textbook writers. These
teachers would later produce textbooks for Romanian students of all ages and language
levels using international standards. These two programs were successfully implemented
and lasted for about six years. However, in spite of the sustained efforts to train the
teachers throughout the country, only about 30% of them received proper TEFL training, and the overwhelming majority of these teachers came from the cities. To meet the training needs of a larger teaching population, an alternative strategy for delivering courses had to be adopted. Distance training was viewed as a solution to bridge the gap between English teachers in cities who were well trained and English teachers in villages who could not afford to attend face-to-face teacher training courses.

From 2000 to 2002, the British Council Program for Training English Teachers ran their first distance learning course using printed materials for individuals working and living in remote villages in Romania. Distance learning of this type was new there. The tradition of distance learning courses led by universities already existed in Romania, but the approach used included a lot of input reading, written reports by students, and a final exam. In other words, they were extremely academic. Obviously, such courses offered good theoretical instruction for teachers, but there was no emphasis on the development of practical teaching skills. In this respect, the British Council In-service Distance Teacher Training Course was new for trainees and trainers, and emphasized both aspects of learning: the theoretical and the practical.

The British Council Program established a team to plan and conduct their courses. The team members included two trainers, a university methodologist, two mentors, and a materials writer who assured a good balance between knowledge and skills. The team was first trained by a trainer with experience in this area. The team then designed the curriculum, wrote the training modules, met the trainees in two face-to-face meetings, offered written feedback on the send-away assignments, observed teachers teaching, offered feedback on lessons, and evaluated the course. The entire
experience was challenging, and the team learned a lot about learning in general and about adult learning at a distance. The course materials were published in 2003 by the British Council in a training manual entitled *In-service Distance Training Course for Teachers of English* (Polirom Publishing House, Iasi, Romania).

I was one of the members of this team and one of the authors of the training manual. This paper will reflect my hands-on experience from the first to the last day of this program, the lessons that I learned from this experience as related to the theories of adult learning, and other readings about learning at a distance that I studied after my work with the program.
INTRODUCTION

The concepts and ideas included in this paper are based upon my experiences as a learner in a distance course, an author of training materials, a trainer, and a mentor during the initial British Council Program designed to train English teachers at a distance. My evaluations and supplemental readings on distance adult learning provide a basis for teacher educators to develop and design curriculum and tools for in-service distance English as a foreign language (EFL) teacher training courses using printed materials which are focused on self-assessment and self-development strategies.

In this paper, I demonstrate why in-service distance training courses are a valuable alternative to face-to-face courses. I also will discuss why self-assessment techniques should be at the heart of distance courses, and provide examples from the parts of the course that I devised and implemented. Finally, I suggest some guiding principles and successful techniques that I used, and include others that I incorporated in a similar course after evaluating their effectiveness. My focus will be on the development of teachers who work in remote villages and small towns in the country-side, and the important role that developing self-evaluation and self-assessment skills plays in helping them to become better teachers where they work everyday. This thesis provides examples of what can be done during distance training to help these people learn without us there.
CHAPTER 1

THE “IN-SERVICE DISTANCE TRAINING COURSE FOR TEACHERS OF ENGLISH” MANUAL – THE LONG AND WINDING ROAD

The training manual, *In-Service Distance Training Course for Teachers of English*, was published in 2003, six months after the distance course was completed. The British Council considered the course materials useful tools which enabled the teachers of English in Romania to find their way through the methodology of teaching English communicatively, flexible enough to suit most of the teaching needs of the Romanian teachers of English, and valuable for teacher self-development.

1.1. The Team

This course was the result of cooperation among the members of a team whose knowledge and skills complemented one another. The team was under the wise and effective coordination of our project manager and the outstanding non-intrusive and subtle training style and feedback of our project consultant. Both guided us in such a way that we had the feeling that we did the whole work by ourselves, from the first to the last stage of the project.

The members of the team were: Rada Balan, a SMAT 20, teacher of English and course books writer; Anca Cehan, a SMAT 18, English lecturer and methodologist at the University of Iasi; Cristina Ciuta, teacher of English and teacher trainer; Elza Gheorghiu, teacher of English and mentor; Eleonora Olaru, teacher of English and mentor, and myself, a SMAT 19, teacher of English, teacher trainer and trainer of trainers. Ecaterina Petreanu, the British Council Regional Advisor for Eastern
Romania was the Project Coordinator. She was in charge of the course administration which included contacting teachers and their school administrations; mailing the course units, ensuring networking among team members, trainers and trainees, collecting data; and other administrative tasks. Last but not least, Melanie Ellis, our Project Consultant, trained us in such a way that the outcome, the course itself, was entirely ours and not a model that we had to follow. Her training was a perfect example of how self-development strategies work. They are the ingredients that lead to independence, creativity, and further professional development.

None of the team members had previous experience with developing distance courses. Anca delivered some distance courses for university students, but the approach was exclusively academic and theoretical. I myself had the experience of being a learner on a distance course delivered through printed materials at Manchester University, but I dropped out. This unfortunate experience as a distance learner gave me some insights about what learning at a distance means. Sharing my frustrations with our team helped us be more careful with the way we developed and implemented the course components.

All in all, the skills and knowledge each of us brought to the team were a perfect mix: teaching, training, mentoring, writing materials, and administration. We learned a lot from each other along the way. By the end of the course, we could say that each of us was a trainer, materials writer, mentor, and administrator at the same time.

As far as our contributions to the course materials are concerned, each of us had both different and similar duties. The first introductory unit was written by all of us, following a plan we negotiated together. I was in charge of writing the aims of the
Each unit of the course was written by one of us. I wrote Unit 6 - Evaluation.

We worked together developing the Needs Analysis Form and the End-of-Unit and End-of-Course Evaluation Forms. Besides writing the course itself, we offered each other feedback on the units that each of us wrote. We also planned the two face-to-face meetings together; performed lesson observations and offered feedback; and wrote feedback to the assignments.

1.2. The Manual and Its Self-Assessment Components

The materials we wrote and used in the course (for example, the units of learning and the forms) were gathered by our British Council project coordinator, published in book format, and used as the course manual.

The manual, *In-service Distance Training Course for Teachers of English*, is 350 pages long and contains a letter to the readers, seven units, and two appendices:

- **Unit 1. Introduction**
- **Unit 2. Class Management**
- **Unit 3. Lesson Planning**
- **Unit 4. Developing Language Skills: Speaking and Listening**
- **Unit 5. Developing Language Skills: Reading and Writing**
- **Unit 6. Evaluation**
- **Unit 7. Materials**

**Appendices:**

- 1. Feedback Questionnaire
- 2. Final Course Feedback Questionnaire

As mentioned earlier, this manual contains only the printed materials we used in the course. The organization of each unit; the presentation of the content, format, and style of writing; the types of tasks and activities; and the components of each unit are
consistent throughout the manual. Although each unit was written by a different author, the manual reads as if it was written by a single author. This shows the cohesion and the cooperation among the team members.

During our initial training as a team under our project consultant’s guidance, our main concern focused on the ways we could ensure that the trainees learned in a course where the trainer was not physically present to offer input, guidance, support and immediate feedback. Specifically, how could we make our trainees learn and apply their knowledge confidently and effectively in their classrooms, and experience a feeling of accomplishment at the end of each class, when we would not be there with them along the winding and sometimes rough path to learning? The answer was the development of materials and course components in such a way that the trainees did not need our physical presence in their classes at all times. For example, the materials, tasks, and activities included in the text would enable trainees to assess themselves through self-reflection activities and assignments using their own self-assessment and self-evaluation skills. This experience would eventually lead them to further self-development. The self-assessment tasks and activities we used in the manual are: Self-Assessment Questions, the Teacher’s Voice, “Stop and Think!” Tasks, and The Teacher’s Log.

“Self-Assessment Questions” (marked clearly by an identifiable icon) are tasks, usually in open-ended question format or problem-solving that follow an input text. The suggested solutions are to be found at the end of each unit. Trainees are required to complete the tasks themselves and then compare their answers with the key. The answers generally combine information from the input text with the
teaching issues related to the trainees and force the trainees to reflect on their classroom practices. Answering these questions does not require the presence of trainers.

**The Teacher’s Voice** is another version of the self-assessed question. This version does not have answers in the end-of-unit key but aims at having the trainees react to an imaginary teacher’s situation (Maria, in our manual). Maria raises teaching issues and concerns about various classroom situations, for example, her students’ reactions and her teaching behavior. In fact, these situations are real classroom problems that each of the trainers encountered in our own classrooms at different times, or which we noticed while performing classroom observations in the past. The main aim of this type of task is to have the trainees detach themselves from their own classroom events, take a more objective look at some routine classroom situations that are familiar to them, and adopt a critical attitude toward what is established practice. It is as if we were holding a mirror in front of them to make them see themselves more objectively, but we call it a picture.

“**Stop-and-Think!” Tasks** (marked clearly by an identifiable icon) invite the teacher to reflect on a teaching issue before providing a proposed solution. After reading a short theoretical text as input, the trainees are invited to think of an instance in their own teaching, or imagine a teaching situation connected with the issue presented in the input text, and write down their first thoughts. Suggested answers are provided in a paragraph following this task.
The Teacher’s Log (marked clearly by an identifiable icon) establishes teaching and learning points for daily or weekly reflection. Each point is connected with specific learning objectives for a particular unit. These points focus the trainees’ attention on different aspects of their lessons, and invite them to analyze and explore teaching strategies and techniques in depth. Examples are: pairing up students for a classroom activity and reflecting on how instructions are given; student-to-student interaction during the activity; teacher’s type of monitoring; and the outcome of the activity as compared to a similar previous experience.

Recording progress in a Teacher’s Log provides a way to reflect at different stages in teacher training. Writing in the log often follows the “Stop and Think!” tasks. The reflections written in the teacher’s log are the main source of reference when solving the teaching tasks in the end-of-unit assignments that are sent to the trainer for evaluation and returned to the trainee with feedback notes. These will be referred to following the discussions of lesson observations and feedback.

1.3. Other Self-Assessment Components

In addition to the self-evaluation tasks and activities we used in the manual, the course had other components that led the trainees into self-evaluation. These components are: Action Plan, Feedback on Written Assignments (Send Away Assignments), and Feedback after Lesson Observations.

Action Plan. The Introductory unit invited the trainees to set some personal objectives and write down a few strategies to achieve them. During our first face-to-face meeting, we ran a workshop whose main aim was to have the trainees
individually identify their main teaching needs (for example, classroom behavior that they felt needed changing), turn these needs into learning objectives, and find a few strategies to achieve them. This action plan was written in their teaching log and served as a guide throughout the course. The process of working on these objectives was to be recorded in their log and would serve as a basis for discussion with the trainer after lesson observation feedback.

**Feedback on Written Assignments (Send-Away Assignments).** We agreed that the best way to offer written feedback on SAAs was to ask questions or offer alternatives (for example, “What if you did it this way? What difference would it have made?”) referring to different points in their assignment that invited them to reflect in depth about their statements.

**Feedback after Lesson Observations.** The feedback session, after the three lessons that we observed, was divided into two sections: one focusing on the lessons themselves and the other one on the personal teaching objectives in their action plan. The approach we used during the feedback session was that of counseling, that is, holding the “mirror” in front of the trainees and having them detach from the lesson and analyze it as if they had been the observers of their own lessons. This approach was not familiar to our trainees. They expected us to criticize each and every aspect of their teaching. They were overly critical of themselves. In order to reduce frustration and focus learning, the types of questions we used, and the familiarity with the units they worked on, enabled learners to adapt to the new approach very quickly. The same thing happened while discussing the stages reaching their learning objectives. One of the main things that we all agreed on after this feedback
experience was that we needed to do more learner training because the Introductory Unit was not thorough enough in this respect.

In countries with a long history of totalitarian rule, self-assessment and self-evaluation are viewed as criticism and self-criticism. It is extremely difficult to expect trainees to do a mental and psychological exercise that is totally unfamiliar to them. We learned from this course that we needed to concentrate more on learner training in self-assessment during our first face-to-face meeting. During that meeting, we needed to work together on exercising and clarifying what self-assessment is about and why it is of crucial importance in a distance course where the trainer is not there to hold the mirror at all times.

1.4. The Importance of Self-Assessment in Distance Teacher Training

I refer to the importance of self-evaluation elements in a distance-training course at this point for two main reasons:

- To make the transition between the description of the manual and course itself (including the self-evaluation) and the theoretical part that follows.
- To give the chronology of the events which led me to write this paper.

There is no question about the importance of self-evaluation and self-assessment as the essential ingredients of any distance training course. The absence of direct contact between the trainee and the trainer makes the task more difficult. There are few opportunities for direct guidance and support during the study of the learning units, lesson preparation, teaching a lesson, and feedback. Trainees are studying the distance learning units or preparing their lessons by themselves at home. Or, they are in the classroom teaching, and questioning their own classroom routine, the new
knowledge, their own teaching beliefs, even themselves. They need to make choices, test them, evaluate them, change them, keep them, or throw them away. It is a painful endeavor. What the trainers need to do is empower them by building their self-evaluation and self-assessment skills.

There is often a discrepancy between what teachers think they are doing in the classroom and what they actually do. Many teachers are not generally aware of this discrepancy. Bridging the gap between perceived and actual classroom performance is one of the main training aims of the course. The only way this can be achieved is by developing awareness about each teacher’s behavior at the beginning of the course, about their teaching needs, and about the changes they make in their behavior during the course. Helping teachers develop self-awareness skills which are conducive to more objective self-assessment is the only effective way to get the most from in-service training (Britten 1993, 87). Developing a trainee’s self-evaluation and self-assessment skills will not only bridge this gap, but also ensures career-long teacher-development skills.

A clarification of terminology is needed regarding the terms: self-evaluation and self-assessment. Self-evaluation is not the same as self-assessment. When conducting self-evaluation, a teacher reflects on the outcome of a particular lesson and the degree to which the lesson objectives have been achieved (for example, “Did I do what I planned to do?”). In contrast, self-assessment involves the teacher knowing what is happening in the classroom; understanding how choices in methods and techniques affect student learning; and what is to be learned about the teaching/learning process and about the teacher’s own self (for example, “What
worked and what didn’t work? Why?”, “How can I improve this lesson?”). Self-evaluation generally leads to self-assessment. If this becomes second nature to the trainees, it will lead to self-development. Helping teachers develop self-evaluation and self-assessment skills is extremely important in all types of teacher training courses, but a must in all distance teacher training courses.
CHAPTER 2
SELF-ASSESSMENT IN ADULT LEARNING IN DISTANCE TEACHER TRAINING COURSES

In Chapter 1, I gave a brief description of our course, the manual, and the self-assessment techniques used in the British Council program. The techniques are ones we experienced ourselves while taking training courses and which we adapted to the distance training course. We did this without theoretical input on adult learning in general and adult distance-learning in particular.

This chapter will present some theories related to adult learning, and how these principles can be used in distance learning. I will demonstrate the connection between preferred learning styles and adult self-assessment of their performance. I will stress the importance of self-assessment strategies and techniques in adult learning and attempt to offer a few strategies that I consider effective in developing trainee self-assessment skills.

2.1. Characteristics of Adult Learning

Andragogy (Knowles 1984) emphasizes the idea that adults take responsibility for their own decisions and are self-directed. With this in mind, any adult course must take the following assumptions into consideration:

- Adults need to clearly know the purpose of learning something.

- Adults learn experientially, mainly through in-service training courses, where they can immediately apply what they have learned, experiment, and reflect.

- Problem solving is the favorite approach to adult learning.
• Adults learn best when the topic has immediate applicability.

A few principles for training course design follow directly from these:

• Adults need and expect to be involved in planning their instruction.

• Courses should provide hands-on instructional activities and direct experience including mistakes that provide the basis for their learning.

• Courses should concentrate on problem-solving rather than theoretical input.

• Courses should offer a practical purpose directly connected with personal and professional needs of the teacher within their particular teaching situation.

**Cognitive Dissonance Theory** (L. Festinger 1957) assumes that any time there is an inconsistency between beliefs, opinions, attitude, and behavior, something must be done to eliminate the discrepancy. Dissonance occurs most often when an individual has to choose between two seemingly incompatible beliefs or actions. This can happen when an inner belief, reinforced through routine activities, contradicts a new belief from outside sources. The new belief is perceived as valuable and necessary but is not yet understood. Dissonance can also occur when the outcome of routine activities contradicts an expected outcome. The discomfort and the frustration of these contradictions are common. Most often they result in a need to learn how to restore the inner balance. An example applicable to English teachers is the conflict that arises if teachers are required by their institutions to discontinue using the Grammar Translation Method and begin using the Communicative Approach, or the new course books that they are required to use in the classroom and their students’ learning needs contradict their established teaching approach.
There are three ways to eliminate the dissonance:

1) Reduce the importance of the dissonant beliefs.
2) Add more consonant beliefs to outweigh the dissonant ones.
3) Change the dissonant beliefs so that they are no longer inconsistent.

For the distance TEFL trainer, these can be translated in the following ways:

• Use trainee teaching experience as a starting point, and acknowledge it as a valuable asset.

• Discover trainee discomfort zones through needs analysis, and devise course content to respond to their needs.

• Allow trainees to discover the value of acquiring new knowledge and skills and help them test these in their classrooms.

• Give trainees the tools to reflect critically on their classroom experience, mainly during and after experimenting with the new knowledge, which will result in the expected change.

**Constructivist Theory** (J. Bruner). The core philosophy behind this theory is that learning is an active process in which learners construct new knowledge based on their past or current experiences. They use cognitive structure (schemata) to infer new meanings, get new ideas, and organize the new information which is tested in practice. This permits the learner to go beyond the information provided (Bruner, 1973) and restructure and reorganize their knowledge at a higher level.
According to the Constructivist Theory, trainers should:

- Encourage learners to discover the principles themselves by providing short essential input.
- Facilitate self-reflection based on the experience provided by the application of theoretical input into practice.
- Take into account the previous knowledge and experience of learners so that trainees can tailor the course to individual learning needs.
- Use a spiral organization of new knowledge.

**Social Development Theory** (L. Vygotsky, 1978) refers to the essential role played by social interaction in cognitive development. Social learning is a life-long process with development as its end goal, and it occurs in the Zone of Proximal Development. Vygotsky defines it as “the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.”

A few principles relevant to instructional design for distance learning are listed below:

- Scaffolding of new knowledge.
- Interaction between trainer and trainees, and among trainees themselves.
- Trainers should look for discrepancies between trainee efforts and expected solutions, and manage trainee frustrations by foreseeing risky situations and giving constructive feedback.
- Establish manageable tasks in the Zone of Proximal Development.
**Experiential Learning** (C. Rogers) Carl Rogers makes the distinction between cognitive learning (meaningless) and experiential (significant), for example, between academic learning, which is basically theoretical, and experiential learning which addresses the immediate practical needs of the learner. Rogers (1969) lists some key features of experiential learning:

- Personal involvement, self-initiated learning opportunities, and self-evaluation that will have long lasting effects on the learner.
- Personal change and growth are the aims of this type of learning
- The role of the trainers as facilitators.

The trainers who want to use this theory in course design should take the following principles into consideration:

- The subject matter should be relevant to the trainee.
- A non-threatening learning atmosphere will maximize and accelerate learning.
- Self-initiated learning is the most thorough, lasting, and pervasive type of learning.
- Self-evaluation and elements of self-development must be given an important place in the distance teacher-training curriculum.

2.2. **Self-Assessment in Adult Distance Learning**

All of these theories refer to the adult need for independence. Each includes the relevance of new learning material to meet specific learning needs, the acknowledgement of previous experience, direct involvement in and control over learning, and the immediate applicability of the newly learned material. If independence is a key feature of adult learning, then it follows that the assessment of
how well the new knowledge and skills have been learned should also be the responsibility of the learners.

Assessment is an important part of learning. Every stage of learning should be evaluated according to some standards of performance. As adults need independence in and take responsibility for their own learning, they should also be able to assess themselves. In my experience, I have been confronted with a paradoxical situation. Even though most trainees demand independence in learning and react positively to self-discovery techniques and strategies, they do not feel the same about evaluation and assessment. Trainees need and expect to be told whether their performance has attained the required standards. Trainees tend to be critical of themselves when trainers invite them to do some self-assessment of their own lessons using questions for example, “How do you think the lesson went, in broad terms?” “To what extent did you achieve your learning objectives?” “What makes you say that?” When this occurs, they appear unable to analyze their teaching with a certain degree of objectivity, consider appropriate alternatives, or make changes if they re-teach the lesson.

Angy Malderez (Malderez 1999, 122), referring to the importance of developing self-assessment skills of trainees as a tool for ensuring professional development, writes: “It is the mentor’s duty to ensure that the mentees not only reach the standards required by their particular context, but they have internalized a set of standards by which they can self-evaluate in the future, and from which they can develop their personal set of criteria.” Face-to-face teacher training courses offer many good opportunities to train participants in the use of self-assessment strategies by gradually
shifting the responsibility from the teachers to the trainees and by using a number of learner activities, which are clearly monitored by the teachers.

Mentoring is an important aspect of all teacher-training courses. The approaches to mentoring differ substantially based on course structure. In face-to-face training courses, normal mentoring takes place. In on-line courses, teachers and trainers must rely on e-mail or online chats to exchange feedback. Distance courses that rely on written texts and which have little or no face-to-face contact must anticipate the needs of learners and provide tools that permit learners to develop self-mentoring skills.

The main focus in distance training courses should be on developing self-assessment strategies. Trainees should be able to measure their own performance before trainers perform a formal observation. Even though Malderez referred to mentor courses, her words have the same applicability when talking about distance learning. Distance learners need to reach the aims of each unit as well as create their own inner criteria of best performance. This approach resembles the Silent Way method in learning a foreign language. One of the core principles of that method is that the learners develop their own criteria of self-correctness, and from there, their own criteria for self-evaluation and assessment.

2.3. Stages in Developing Trainee Self-Assessment Skills

Building trainee self-assessment skills is a gradual process with four stages. It begins with trainee awareness of the exact nature of the dissonance between old practice and knowledge, and the new requirements imposed by the changed teaching context. This awareness is developed by challenging trainee knowledge and classroom practice through input texts and self-discovery activities. The criteria of
good practice are discretely imbedded in the texts and internalized through practice and reflection. In addition, the trainees develop their own set of criteria of good practice in their own teaching context.

The second stage develops trainee self-observation skills, and begins in the first face-to-face meeting before the beginning of the course. This stage includes an actual (or video recorded) lesson observation using a lesson observation sheet, and provide feedback using active listening techniques through role-play. It is a good place for trainees to begin using self-assessment strategies.

The third stage is self-evaluation and self-assessment. The introduction to self-evaluation and self-assessment should be done during the first face-to-face meeting through follow-up activities after self-observation role-play. The active listening technique should be extended to assessing the lesson.

The fourth stage takes place after the course ends if the learning of new knowledge and skills has been properly scaffolded. It is the life-long self-development stage, when the teachers are independent and able to confidently implement changes in their classroom. At this stage, self-evaluation and self-assessment have been internalized and performed on a daily basis.

2.4. Techniques and Activities for Developing Self-Assessment Skills

The techniques and activities described below follow the stages of developing trainee self-assessment. Some of these activities were used in the course in a different form while others are adapted from books of activities for TEFL teacher training.
2.4.1 Self-Awareness Activities

a. *Needs Awareness and Identification.* The best place for this activity is in the Introductory unit, or it could be part of the needs analysis questionnaire. Trainees are guided to refer back to the form several times during the course.

*Aims:*

- to make the trainees aware of where they are in their teaching and of their own learning needs;
- to help the trainees set their own learning objectives;
- to offer trainees a visualization of where they are in achieving learning objectives.

*Materials:* Worksheet (see Appendix 1), pens of different colors.

*Procedure:*

**Stage 1.** Using a black pen, trainees mark a point on the worksheet where they think they are at the beginning of the course. After that, using a red pen, they mark the point where they think they would like to be by the end of the course. The areas with the greatest difference between the present situation and the desired position provide trainees with goals during the course that are recorded in the teacher’s log.

**Stage 2.** After each learning unit, or any time they need, trainees are required to go back to the worksheet and mark any changes in the
areas mentioned in the worksheet, using a different color each time. They record the reasons for the changes in their teacher’s log.

I learned this type of self-evaluation from Tom Topham during the Soros Conference in Belgrade, and I considered it a useful tool for raising teacher awareness of their actual and desired classroom practice.

b. **Self-Assessment Language Awareness.** As trainers and mentors, it is known that the language used to give feedback affects a teacher’s way of thinking about their teaching performance. This is caused by the difference between using evaluative, judgemental statements and supportive, facilitating language when giving feedback. In distance-training courses, when direct lesson observation and feedback take place, trainers should take care of this aspect of language use very early on the course. The following activity aims at managing teacher language when talking about a lesson. This activity should be introduced during the first face-to-face meeting, and practiced by trainees until the habit is formed.

**Aims:**

- to develop teacher awareness about how the choice of language used can negatively or positively affect their future performance;
- to prepare the teachers for lesson observation and feedback.

**Materials:**

- list of phrases and expressions to replace the ones we have anticipated they would generally use in talking about their lessons;
- cassette recorder and microphone or a listener who can take notes;
- video recorded lesson (optional).

**Procedure:** This activity should be done by the trainee either immediately after the end of a lesson or after watching one of his/her lessons recorded on video tape, and the same procedure can be repeated a few times, when needed.

After the lesson, the trainees record themselves talking about the lesson on audio tape. The recording includes information such as what happened during each activity, why it happened the way it did, how each trainee thought they felt at different stages of the lesson, and how the students felt. After finishing the recording, the tape is played again, and the trainees write down the patterns of language used when assessing their own lesson. Their notes include statements such as: “That activity was terrible”, “I don’t know why this happened at that moment” , “I should/shouldn’t have…” , “Everything went so well”, and “I was awful”. Using the list of suggested expressions from the unit, the trainee replaces the ones used on the recording with the new ones, records the second version of self-assessment and notes the changes in their discourse by listening to the new version.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>I say to myself:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I chose to… because…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The advantage/disadvantage of this was that…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“If I had done that differently, then…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I think this happened because…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Next time I’ll try…and see what happens.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Variation:** In the absence of a cassette recorder, a friend or colleague can play the part of a listener whose role is to listen and write down the patterns of language used by the teacher when analyzing the lesson. Then, the list is given to the teacher who will restart analyzing his/her lesson by replacing the phrases on the list received from the listener with the ones on the task sheet. The role of the listener is totally passive at this point.

**Note:** This activity is based on the distinction between judgemental and facilitative language use when giving feedback made by Tessa Woodward and adapted by Head and Taylor (Head and Taylor 1997, 190). I adapted it to distance learning reality.

c. “Self-Evaluation/Assessment” Role-Play

**Suggested position in the course:** This role-play should occur during the first face-to-face meeting. In addition to the main aim of helping the trainees notice the features of a successful and an unsuccessful lesson, it would also challenge a few of their classroom routines and will definitely raise some questions about where they are in their teaching. “Being someone else” is non-threatening even if total detachment from self is not possible.

**Aims:**

- To help the trainees notice the features of a successful and a less successful lesson;
- To offer the trainees a format for observing their own lessons;
- To raise trainee awareness about the language used for analyzing their own teaching;
- To familiarize the trainees with the language of non-judgemental feedback;
- To raise trainee self-awareness about their own teaching routines;

**Materials:**

- two video recorded 30-minute lessons (a positive and a negative example). lesson observation sheet (Appendix 2);
- role cards.

**Note:** Ensure that trainees do not know either of the teachers who appear in the video lessons.

**Procedure:** The trainees watch the two video recorded lessons and fill in the lesson observation sheet (see Appendix 2). After the lesson observation, the trainees are divided into three groups, according to the roles they are going to play: “the teachers”, “the mentor” and “the observers”. Each member of the group is given a role card as shown below, and in their groups they prepare their roles using the notes from their video recorded observation sheets.

---

**The Teacher’s Role Card**

You have just finished teaching the lesson, and you had some time to think about it in retrospect. You are ready to analyze your lesson and to give reasons for any teaching choices you made. You have some good points about your lesson that you are proud of and some that you do not feel very good about. Be ready to talk about your lesson and answer the questions that your observer will ask you as thoroughly as you can.

**Note:** Start by trying to talk the observer through your lesson, give reasons for your choices, and use phrases such as: “I chose to…because…”, “The advantage/disadvantage was…”, “If I were to teach this lesson/do this activity again I would…”, “Another time I would …, but the disadvantage would be… so I’ll have to think about that”.

Avoid using either self-accusatory or self-laudatory expressions such as: “I was terrible”, “I don’t know why I…”, “I shouldn’t have…”, “I could have…”, “I made the mistake of…”, “It was a great lesson”, “Everything went smoothly”.

---
The Mentor’s Role Card
You have observed the teacher’s lesson, written down some notes, and prepared a set of questions to ask. You are ready to talk to the teacher and try to help him/her notice the good points and the points that the learner needs to consider when teaching another lesson. You know that your job is NOT to judge the teacher and the lesson, but to facilitate his/her reflections on the lesson and help him/her find options, and possibilities for improvement.
Note: Start by asking the teacher to talk you through the lesson. Ask for reasons why he/she chose to do an activity in the way he/she did it. Also you can discuss possible alternatives. Use language such as: “Talk me through it.”, “Tell me more about how/why…”, “I saw/heard…”, “What if…”, “What do you feel was the advantage of taking that option?” Also check your understanding of what the teacher tells you: “Is ...what you mean?”, “So, what you’re saying is….”, Avoid using phrases such as: “You should have done…”, “That was not a good choice”, “If I had been you, I’d have….”, Everything was ok until you….

The Observer’s Role Card
Your role is to monitor the discussion between the Mentor and the Teacher. They will talk about the lesson that you also watched. During their discussion, they are allowed to use some phrases and expressions and are discouraged from using others, as you can see from their role cards. Write these expressions in the grid below (you can add others of your choice):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Mentor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allowed</td>
<td>Not allowed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I chose to…because…”</td>
<td>“It was terrible.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Listen to their dialogue and when you hear a phrase from the “Not allowed” column used by either the Teacher or the Mentor, stop them with the agreed upon sign and ask them to rephrase by offering them an alternative from the “Allowed” column.

After five minutes, everyone gets into groups of three: one “teacher”, one “mentor” and one “observer”. The observer will inform the other two on his/her role during the discussion. They all have to agree on a signal that the
observer will use to stop either the Teacher or the Mentor when they break the rule. The role-play will last about 15 minutes.

After observing the second video recorded lesson, the same procedure follows but the trainees will switch roles.

This activity may be time consuming, but it is worthwhile. The trainees cannot be expected to confidently use this language when they do self-observation and write their post-lesson reflections in their log, but at least they are aware of the difference that the use of language makes in their own thinking about their lessons. With practice in self-reflection, they will internalize this language, which will also be helpful when planning for and reflecting on other lessons.

2.4.2 Self-Observation Activities

a. Focused Self-Observation

*Suggested position in the course:* This activity can be done at different times during the course, and it can follow the Needs Awareness and Identification activity in the previous stage. Or the focus of the self-observation can be suggested in the training materials dealing with various aspects of teaching throughout the course. The self-observation reflections will be recorded in the Teacher’s log and used for self-monitoring.

*Aims:*

- to provide the trainees with a framework for self-observation;
- to provide experience in selecting an observation focus and a practical tool for identifying a focus for self-improvement.

**Materials:** None

**Procedure:** The trainees will choose one aspect of their teaching that they would like to change, and which will be one of the personal aims during the course, for example, reducing the Teacher Taking Time (TTT). This personal learning aim or the one suggested in the training materials, will be broken into more concrete objectives. These objectives will be thought of in terms of very concrete, practical strategies. The personal aim, achievable objectives, and the strategies will be recorded in a form which will look like the following (Birdall, SIT, 2001):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Personal learning aim</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>To reduce TTT in all my classes</td>
<td>- to limit my TTT to a minimum&lt;br&gt;- to be aware of the time when I can let my students work on their own&lt;br&gt;- to let go of control more often</td>
<td>- use more elicitation techniques&lt;br&gt;- use open-ended questions&lt;br&gt;- make room for more pair/group work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During each lesson, the trainees will focus on one or two strategies implemented in the classroom, and will write their reflections on what happened in the classroom and how the students felt when the teacher used elicitation techniques. For example, they record reflections such as what went well and evidence of that, and what could be improved or changed in a future lesson.
This activity was prompted by the one we used in our Peer Counseling sessions with Hugh Birdall during the SMAT course at SIT in 2001.

b. **Whole-lesson Self-observation**

*Suggested position in the course:* Any time or toward the end.

*Aims:*

- to provide the trainees with a structure for self-observation;
- to provide practice in self-observation;
- to prepare the trainees for self-reflection on their lessons;
- to ensure the development of the trainees’ self-observation skills.

*Materials:* Self-observation form included in the training materials (see Appendix 3) and/or a list of headings that the trainees will use as a plan for writing their self-observation report in their Teacher’s Log. If possible, a video or audio recording of the lesson would be a very practical tool for the trainees to have a more objective look at themselves.

*Procedure:* After the lesson or after having watched/listened to the recorded lesson, the trainees take about 20 minutes to fill in the self-observation sheet or write their structured reflections in their log following the suggested plan.

*Note:* This self-observation form can be adapted to suit the focused self-observation as well. Also, this form can be used as a basis for feedback after lesson observation.

c. **Student Observation of Teaching.** The students are the direct beneficiaries of the teacher’s activity in the classroom and what the teacher does affects their learning. In this respect, they should be the ones who provide the teacher with
the most honest feedback, provided they are offered a structure for their observations.

Suggested Position in the Course: As often as possible, ideally after each lesson.

Aims: - to provide the teacher with information about their practice;
       - to bridge the gap between what the teacher believes is going on in the class and what actually happens;
       - to offer a tool for knowing the learners better.

Materials: Student’s observation sheet (Appendix 4).

Procedure: If this is the first time when a teacher uses this technique, a discussion with the students should take place before the form is given to individuals to fill in. This discussion could be the best time when the teacher “confesses” to his/her students that he/she is a learner at that moment and needs the students’ support on this journey. In spite of the apparent vulnerability that most teachers feel when they do this for the first time, this “confession” and request for support from the teacher is always welcome by the students and creates a special relationship between teacher and students based on respect, empathy and mutual support. Toward the end of this discussion, the students are given the feedback/observation form and are given 5 minutes to complete it (Appendix 4).

The teacher should write his/her self-observation form and reflections at the same time. After gathering all feedback forms from the students, the teacher reads them and compares the observations. The areas of obviously different
perceptions of an action or activity are the ones which require more in-depth reflection and could become a new focus for self-improvement.

2.4.3 Self-Assessment/Evaluation Activities

a. **Looking Back**

*Suggested position in the course:* This activity can be used at the end of the course, before coming to the second face-to-face meeting, and should be suggested at the end of the last unit of the course.

*Materials:* The form in Appendix 1; the same form used in the early stages of the course; colored pen; Teacher’s Log.

*Procedure:* After the last send-away assignment has been sent, the trainees mark the place where they think they are in their teaching at the end of the course on a blank form as shown in Appendix 1, using a colored pen. Having completed this sheet, they take the same sheet that they used at the beginning of the course and notice the differences using some suggested guiding questions, such as:

- “What are the areas where the change is really dramatic?”
- “Now, the change has taken place. Do you feel comfortable with it? Do your students feel comfortable with this change/these changes? Any evidence?”
- “Are there any other areas of change that are not mentioned in the form, but you think are worth mentioning? What are they?”

The reflections on the changes will be recorded in the Teacher’s Log, or on a separate sheet of paper and brought to the second face-to-face meeting, which
takes place at the end of the course. These reflections will be shared among
the group of trainees during the meeting.

b. **Development Reports.** Development reports are a means for
participants to review and record their learning from the course process. In the
final section of these reports the trainees evaluate their progress against the
criteria specified in each unit referring to specific areas of teaching based their
own criteria of best practice. These reports are a way for trainers and the
course coordinator to gauge the extent to which the course objectives have
been met, both for the whole group and for individual trainees. The written
feedback on these reports is an opportunity for the trainers to offer individual
counseling.

**Suggested position in the course:** At least twice during the course, with an
initial stage during the first face-to-face meeting.

**Aims:**
- to provide an opportunity for the trainees to review and evaluate their
  progress on the course;
- to provide one more source of evidence for the trainers and course
  coordinators on the group and individual progress;
- to provide a tool for course evaluation.

**Materials:** None
**Procedure:**

1) **Initial stage during the first face-to-face meeting:**

After the “Self-assessment/evaluation” role-play, the trainees brainstorm possible contents of the learning development report. Ideas are collected on the board, discussed in small groups, and short listed. A general group discussion follows during which they reach an agreement on the contents. The contents of this report is typed, photocopied and given to the course participants. This stage should take about 10 minutes.

Afterwards, the trainees brainstorm criteria for evaluating their learning on the course. Ideas are collected on the board. The large group is divided into small groups of three or four. Working together on a pre-prepared list of areas of learning on the course, the trainees discuss and write down one or two criteria for the evaluation of learning in each area using the already brainstormed ideas on the board and adding more of their own. A speaker for each group is appointed to report on their criteria. The trainers play the role of facilitators and providers of ideas. The trainers collect all the lists and compile a list of criteria which is handed in to the trainees before they leave the meeting.

2) **During the course:** Following the content agreed upon during the face-to-face meeting and the evaluation criteria are developed, the
trainees are required to write two self-development reports: one in the middle of the course and one at the end. Ideally, this is accomplished after the completion of the units that do not require a Send-Away Assignment so that the trainees do not feel overwhelmed. These reports will be mailed to the trainer, and they will be sent back with notes and comments.
CHAPTER 3

SELF-EVALUATION ELEMENTS IN THE IN-SERVICE DISTANCE TEACHER TRAINING COURSE - A CRITICAL VIEW

There are two types of self-assessment and evaluation elements in the in-service distance teacher-training course:

- content-specific elements (theory-oriented)
- situation-specific elements (field-oriented)

Both elements are found in the techniques and activities used in all of the course components to ensure that trainees achieve the training aims stated at the beginning of the course,

The content-specific elements are necessary to provide the trainees with the theories and principles that are the basis of the communicative approach to English learning and teaching. This is the approach used in the new course books.

The situation-specific elements are necessary to help the trainees develop critical thinking skills as they study theories. By applying the theories to their own teaching context, trainees learn to create their own criteria of best teaching performance.

In this chapter, I describe and evaluate these two elements using examples from the unit I wrote, my own experience in giving feedback on Send-Away Assignments, and lesson observation and feedback with my group of seven trainees.

3.1. The Learning Unit

If the objectives of Unit 6. Evaluation are achieved, the trainees are able to perform the following tasks at the end of the unit:
• make a fair assessment of student language performance;
• record and analyze their progress;
• select test items suitable for their classes;
• take appropriate measures as a result of the feedback provided by the assessment.

The learning objectives of this unit are expressed in terms of expected observable classroom behavior. Achievement is measured using the Send-Away Assignment (SAA) tasks, the feedback discussion after lesson observation, and the discussions about student tests following lesson observation and feedback. The SAA tasks are all field-oriented. Trainees are required to demonstrate how they apply their learning on this unit to their own teaching context. These written assignments provide evidence of the extent to which the learning objectives stated at the beginning of the unit are achieved.

SAA. Choose one of the following three options:

1. Take a test that you use to evaluate the speaking skills of your students, and:
   a. briefly describe it, stating what it is intended to test;
   b. define the techniques you use in each of its items;
   c. explain how you score the test (objectively and/or subjectively);
   d. evaluate the test in terms of its communicative value, stating its strong and weak points.

2. Use the test of integrated skills described in subchapter 4.1.3.3 and set up a similar test. The topic is “Holidays”. Briefly present the target group of
students to whom you intend to administer the test (age, level). Write the test, thoroughly explain what you intend to test in each component, and describe how you will grade your students.

3. Devise a test to evaluate the writing skills of your students. Consider the following points: the age and language level of the students; the course book you use; the test items you use; the instructions for the test; the marking scheme you use to grade the papers (Dascalu 2003, 252).

The extent to which the learning objectives are achieved can be measured using any of the three tasks so it does not matter which task the trainees choose.

To ensure that the trainees achieve the learning objectives in this unit, I use tasks and activities that include both content-specific and situation-specific elements, and pay close attention to the scaffolding of trainee learning. These tasks and activities enable the trainees to develop their awareness of the principles of communicative assessment and evaluation as well as their self-awareness about ways to use the new knowledge they acquire to implement assessment in their classrooms. These tasks and activities gradually help the trainees internalize the principles, and increase their confidence in using them on a regular basis in their classrooms.

The general approach to writing a learning unit is to start with content-specific tasks, continue with a mixture of content-specific and situation-specific tasks, and end with situation-specific tasks. In other words, trainees first perform controlled or self-controlled tasks, then move to tasks which allow more freedom. However, it can be difficult to be consistent in this approach, since it contradicts the nature of learning itself, which is not always so linear. That is why it is hard to separate these two types
of elements when they are embedded in the tasks and activities. For the sake of clarity, I will try to make this distinction by briefly presenting each of the elements and evaluating their effectiveness.

3.1.1. **Content-Specific Elements**

The content-specific elements included in the course materials are the input texts, including the end-of-unit Glossary of terminology; the Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs); and the Teacher’s Voice.

**The Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs).** The three types of SAQs are:

- Questions with answers in the end-of-unit key (as shown in the following example).
- Questions that do not have an answer in the key because the answer is found in the input text that follows the SAQ.
- Questions with only suggested answers because there can be more options depending on the teaching context.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>?</th>
<th>SAQ 2. Decide which stage you think they belong to by writing the numbers 1, 2, or 3 for each one in the first column and then check your answers with the key in the second column.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Questions and answers</td>
<td>___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The written composition (decontextualized)</td>
<td>___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. “My Family”</td>
<td>___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. A multiple choice item</td>
<td>___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. He is .... engineer. A) a; B) -; C) an; D) the</td>
<td>___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. An information gap item</td>
<td>___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(here follows the description)</td>
<td>___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Fill-in-blanks item (example included)</td>
<td>___</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The feedback forms that trainees gave to the course coordinator indicated that these types of self-assessed activities were well received by all the trainees. The trainees felt more secure having an answer at the end of the unit. This type of SAQ has several advantages: they are easy to design; they apply to all teachers, no matter “where they are” in their teaching; and they are a comfortable way to learn the theory in small chunks and check understanding of the material. The big disadvantage is that the trainees may be led into thinking that there is a single set of learning behaviors and correct classroom procedures, and that they are required to strictly conform to them. For this reason, we also included the type of SAQ that provides suggested answers.

The SAQs with suggested answers had both content-specific and situation-specific features. For example, after the presentation of their portfolios as an alternative means of student evaluation and its features, the trainees were asked to answer the following question:

**SAQ 22.** What information would you include in a student’s portfolio? (The answers in the key are just ideas, but it is you and your students who have to make this decision.)

The SAQs with suggested answers were received differently by different trainees, but the majority of them had a positive response because this type of question showed respect for their teaching experience and considered their opinions as worthwhile.
Still, most trainees preferred to have some feedback to help them validate that their thinking was in conformity with the required standards of good practice. In this respect, the first face-to-face meeting at the beginning of the course, and the discussions following lesson observation and feedback, clarified issues which were raised in the feedback after the completion of the Introductory Unit.

The trainees realized that there were neither recipes that worked in all teaching circumstances, nor did the materials of the course attempt to be a book of recipes. Instead, they understood that what we required was that they think critically about the theories and methodologies, and that this approach would help them become the best teachers in their own teaching circumstances. Even though most trainees expressed a feeling of relief that they could rely on their own thinking about their classroom practice and situations (and that we did not require conformity to strict and all-applicable standards), some viewed this as total detachment from responsibility for their effective learning. Others viewed it as a frustrating situation in which the lack of close control and guidance could make them feel totally insecure.

To ensure that all the trainees get the most from these SAQs, more structured learner training is necessary. It would be helpful to include one activity of this type during the first face-to-face meeting.

The content-specific SAQs are designed to help the trainees evaluate how well they learn the theoretical input, and to challenge their beliefs and established classroom practices. These exercises encourage the trainees to ask themselves questions about what they already know and do, and lead them into self-awareness of
where they are in their teaching and what they think they need to change. The Teacher’s Voice activity has the same aims.

The Teacher’s Voice activity has characteristics of both content-specific and situation-specific elements, but it is mainly content-specific. During the preparation stage of our distance course, we thought about using a subtle way to challenge trainee thinking about the theories and principles underpinning learning and teaching. My idea was to use an imaginary teacher who confessed her worries, problems, and concerns about the classroom situation. The trainees could easily relate to this approach. Knowing many English teachers from all over the country and talking to them on various occasions, it was not difficult to create such a character who would represent the typical untrained teacher. This idea has several advantages. The first is that the language used in the “confessions” can be used as a model for the Teacher’s Log. Second, the methodological principles of learning and teaching a foreign language can be subtly imbedded in an unpretentious form while raising real teaching issues in a mock situation. I relied on the assumption that, in our culture, people are ready to offer advice to anyone in need or comment on everyone’s situation. The following is one example of how we used the Teacher’s Voice in the course manual.

Maria: “Well, when I started teaching using the new textbooks, I was so happy to see that the teacher’s book provided ready-made tests to be used for testing the students after each unit. Hurray, I told myself. This will spare me a lot of time and work. My joy lasted till the moment I looked at the test I was supposed to administer after that unit. It simply didn’t suit my students and what I’d taught so far. For example, some of the items were all right, but others weren’t because I didn’t teach some grammar issues which I thought were more suitable to be taught later in the year. Also, I found that there were no tests of listening and speaking, which I considered important to test in order to have a clearer picture of my students’ level of performance. Consequently, I rolled up my sleeves and started adapting those tests and devising other test items to suit my teaching and the learning of my students so far.”
This Teacher’s Voice task was followed by a SAQ with suggested answers about the advantages and disadvantages of using ready-made tests, and tests that teachers adapt or create.

This type of activity was really appreciated by all the trainees. In the feedback forms, we found specific references to the Teacher’s Voice activity in comments such as: “I could easily identify with Maria, although I knew she was just a character. She expressed problems and concerns that I felt were mine, too. I felt like talking with her and sharing my own concerns. She seemed so real.” (Corina, School no. 1, Marginea). “I felt so much relief that there are teachers who have problems, and that they want to share them and find solutions. In our teachers meetings, it seems that everyone wants to show off and tell everybody how successful they are, as if we didn’t know that each of us has worries and concerns, and feels lost at times. I felt less lonely in the course having Maria there with me.” (Nicolae, Paltinoasa)

In addition to helping the trainees learn self-awareness by comparing, contrasting, and sharing their teaching context with existing or acquired theoretical knowledge, this type of activity makes the trainees explore the depths of their teaching beliefs and practices.

3.1.2. Situation-Specific Elements

The self-evaluation techniques and activities helped trainees to measure the extent to which they understood the theoretical aspects of the Communicative Approach by having them apply the recently acquired knowledge to their specific teaching situations. It raised their self-awareness concerning their teaching techniques with regard to this approach, yet this was not enough to attain the learning objectives
stated at the beginning of the course. Even if we used some activities that aimed at bridging the gap between theory and classroom practice, we considered this as more than enough to achieve the course objectives:

- Making the trainees identify areas of classroom behavior where change was viewed as necessary;
- Monitoring their own change in the absence of the trainer by developing their self-observation skills and self-assessment skills; and
- Creating their own set of criteria for good classroom practice.

We introduced such activities in the course materials, in the first face-to-face meeting, and during feedback after lesson observations.

**“Stop and Think!” Tasks**

These tasks follow an input text that states a general principle or truth. The trainers assume that each task is relatively new for the trainees or controversial.

In the following example, the input text is at the beginning of the subchapter about self-evaluation, and refers to the importance of delegating the responsibility for the quality of learning to the students themselves.

Stop and think! Think of your everyday life. When you have learned something, how do you know how well you learned it?

Judging by the feedback we received after each unit, the “Stop and Think!” tasks were appreciated by learners. The trainees perceived these tasks as a break from theory as well as a way to relate the theory to their everyday experiences or to their classroom practice. The tasks follow a logical and natural pattern of approaching a
statement. We, as experienced readers, usually do this mental exercise when a word, an image, or a statement triggers memories that stir some reactions or critical thinking.

These tasks are usually followed by more input text in which the trainees confirm their ideas or find a different idea that challenges their established pattern of thinking. Both inner responses are valuable. Confirmation results in self-confidence, and contradiction encourages more in-depth study. These tasks can also be followed by an invitation to write in the Teacher’s Log.

The main disadvantage of this type of activity is that it is uncontrollable. At times, there is no evidence that the tasks have been performed. Other times there is indirect evidence identified through the lessons, or the ability of the trainees to reflect on their lesson during the feedback discussion after the Send-Away Assignments.

To ensure that the trainees know how to tackle this type of task, a similar activity could be performed as part of the “Self-Observation” role-play activity during the face-to-face meeting, or it could be part of any other activity in the same meeting. It does not take a long time, and is useful in preparing the trainees for reflection and critical thinking.

The Teacher’s Log

After the “Stop and Think!” tasks, trainees usually wrote down their thoughts or insights in The Teacher’s Log. This log is a personal instrument where trainees can explore their value system, beliefs, and teaching experiences in depth; write down their individual learning goals and objectives; and record the stages of their
achievement, action plans, and other goals. The log is personal, so the trainees were not required to share it with the trainers or peers, unless they wanted to.

The following is an example of “The Teacher’s Voice” activity:

You may want to write down some of your reflections about using ready-made tests.

Because most people at different stages in their lives use a diary to write down their thoughts, record events, and write down quotations from the readings they enjoy, we believed that this task would be an excellent way to help the trainees become more reflective. Five trainees allowed us to read their diaries in the evaluation stage of the course. After reading a few excerpts from their diaries, I realized that our initial assumption was wrong. First, the language they used seemed false, as if they wrote the entries to be read by somebody else. Second, most entries were extremely brief, which showed haste, fear of going into too much detail, or simply lack of this kind of experience. Their reflections after self-observation of their own teaching and their self-assessment after trying an activity, not to mention the analysis of the achievement stages of their personal goals, were also brief, extremely self-critical, or simply “this activity went very well.” There was little or no in-depth analysis of at least one personal goal or activity that they tried in the classroom for the first time.

The conclusion was that the Teacher’s Log would be a more useful tool for the trainees in their learning process and in self-monitoring if we prepared them for it. As with “Stop and Think!” Tasks, and even with the third type of SAQ, a more
structured approach during the face-to-face meeting was necessary. Some activities, suggested in Chapter 2, provide more structure for trainee reflections. Also, had we offered some structure for self-observation in the learning unit, as presented in sections 2.4.1 (Self-Awareness Activities) and 2.4.2 (Self-Observation Activities), the trainees would feel more confident about writing in their Teacher’s Log.

3.2. First Face-to-Face Meeting

The first face-to-face meeting took place as scheduled, at the beginning of the academic year 2001. We carefully prepared this meeting, knowing that the quality of learning on this course depended on the direct contact between the trainers and the trainees early in the course. This meeting had three main aims:

- Discuss administrative procedures.
- Familiarize the trainees with the course requirements as a whole (objectives, tasks, standards, and evaluation criteria).
- Involve trainees in face-to-face guidance activities that will assist them in learning independently throughout the course and monitoring changes in their teaching practice.

We used situation-specific (field-oriented) activities with the trainees. We first asked the trainees identify their own learning needs and write down an action plan based on these needs. Second, we offered them some practice in lesson observation.

The first activity was called the “Suitcase”. Its aim was to have the trainees “pack their suitcases” for a TEFL journey. This activity provided the trainees with an enjoyable framework for identifying and expressing their teaching strengths as well as the areas they felt they needed to change or learn more about. This activity, and the
earlier needs-analysis questionnaire, showed us that our trainees were not well aware of their needs. We knew from our direct experience with some of them that their own needs, as we perceived them, were not the same as the needs they identified. In spite of this obvious dichotomy between their perception of their needs and ours, we used this activity to make them write a personal action plan including goals, objectives, and strategies. The trainees were asked to write their action plan in their Teacher’s Log. We also hoped that, during the course, they would be able to identify their own needs while doing the tasks in each unit, trying out the new techniques in their classrooms, and observing what happened.

Trainees completed the action plan and wrote in their Teacher’s Log when they got back home. Therefore, we did not have any control over how precise the trainees were in finding the right objectives and strategies. In retrospect, the whole process would have been more structured had we used the activity presented in section 2.4.1 (Needs Awareness and Identification). We could have continued having the trainees turn their identified needs into personal aims; and followed with writing achievable objectives and practical strategies, as presented in the first part of the activity in section 2.4.2 (Focused Self-Observation). It would also have helped the trainees start working on their aims as soon as they got back into their classrooms.

The second major activity was to have the trainees watch two videos recorded lessons, one serving as a good model for teaching, the other one as a less desirable classroom performance. Using observation sheets, the trainees took notes about the two lessons. After watching the two lessons, they analyzed them in small groups, evaluated them, and a plenary general discussion followed about the standards of
good practice. The main aims of this activity were to raise their awareness about the features of a good lesson, and familiarize them with a format for lesson observation and evaluation that we would use when we came to observe them teaching and give feedback. The trainers made short presentations on the approach they would use when giving feedback.

The trainees discussed the two lessons, and they noticed the differences and made a fair evaluation of those lessons. It was interesting to notice that some trainees, after talking in groups, honestly admitted that they themselves used patterns of behavior that were assessed as negative and hindering student learning. The discussions made them realize why those behaviors were not conducive to learning, which in this sense proved to be very insightful. Judging by the degree of their engagement in the discussions and the quality of their observations, we thought that the theoretical course materials that they had been studying, the tasks and activities, both theory and field-oriented, would transform them all into reflective teachers by the end of the course.

On the whole, our trainees completed most SAAs fairly well, proving that they learned a lot during the course. However, we could not say the same thing about their classroom practice. I will refer to this aspect in detail in the following subchapter.

3.3. Lesson Observation and Feedback

During the lesson observation and feedback session, I realized that our assumptions about the classroom practice of the trainees were not accurate. The lesson observations started after the first month of the course and continued for approximately two more months. Each trainer observed three classes of each trainee.
Toward the end of the course, we observed a few teachers again to evaluate the course as a whole.

What I noticed was that there was little evidence in the lesson implementation that learning took place. There were some elements that were obviously the result of this learning, but not enough to state that the course was highly successful.

During the feedback session, we tried to use dialogue that would help trainees notice what happened in the classroom during the teaching and learning process. We wanted them to go in-depth with their reasoning, spot the areas where they needed to pay more attention or change, and get some insights about their own teaching. We used a non-judgemental and facilitative approach.

This approach was not familiar to our trainees. They expected us to criticize each and every aspect of their teaching. They were over critical of themselves, but the types of questions we used made them adapt to the new approach quickly enough. The same thing happened while discussing the stages of the achievement of their learning objectives.

Following this experience, we all agreed that it is crucial for learners to be trained to receive feedback and reflect on their classroom performance. We agreed that we needed to do more learner training, as the Introductory Unit was far from enough in this respect. Again, the first face-to-face meeting is the place where the seeds of self-assessment and self-evaluation should be planted. Our trainees obviously needed some hands-on activity that would make them more receptive to giving and receiving feedback in a non-judgemental way. The adaptation of the video-recorded lesson observation to a role-play with some rules about using the language of giving
feedback, as presented in section 2.4.1.c *Self-Evaluation/Assessment” Role-Play*) could offer some initial training in giving and receiving feedback. Also, the activity in section 2.4.1.b (*Self-Assessment Language Awareness*) would be good practice for their use of language when reflecting on their own lessons, and is an activity which can be included in the Introductory unit.

In conclusion, what we learned from the course as a whole was that we definitely needed to concentrate a lot more on learner training in self-assessment under all its aspects in the Introductory Unit and during the first fact-to-face meeting. We could have anticipated these problems better and worked together more attentively and carefully to try to overcome them. All in all, the course was a success due to the high level of trainee motivation and commitment as well as the professional and personal skills of the trainers.
CHAPTER 4

Conclusions

Confessions of a Distance Learner and Educator

Writing this thesis has been a challenging and rewarding exercise of reflecting on my own experience as a distance learner, distance trainer, mentor and writer of distance training materials in light of theoretical learning about adult learning and learning at a distance. I have attempted to bring theory and practice together, and share a few personal insights that might be of general value to any distance educator. These insights revolve around one core principle: there is no effective learning and self-development without self-awareness, self-assessment, and self-monitoring along the way.

As a learner on a distance course, I failed. This was a painful experience, since I had never failed in my academic studies before. At the time, I was very hard on myself and self-accusatory. When I was invited to join the team that was to implement the in-service distance teacher training course, my first reaction was one of rejection: “No, it won’t work. I have been there and I know. Such a course can teach the theory, but to make the teachers change their long-established routines, no way.” On second thought, I accepted for one reason, and that was that I could bring my contribution as a learner who dropped out and whose negative experience could be useful regarding the “don’ts” of a distance course. At the same time I felt the need to exorcise all my past frustrations with this type of course.

My two-year personal experience as a materials writer, trainer, mentor, and evaluator of the first in-service distance teacher training course for ESL teachers in
Romania was the beginning of an interest that developed gradually during all stages of the course and will stay with me for a long time. The choice of writing my IPP using this experience was made after the evaluation of the course was completed and my intention was to take time to explore, as thoroughly as I could, the features that can make a distance course successful for the trainees.

My exploration started with the presentation of the context that brought about the necessity of devising a distance teacher-training course. Chapter 1 was dedicated to the presentation of the experience with this course: the manual that contains all the written materials used on the course, the team who worked on it, the strengths that each member brought to the course and the process of writing and implementing the course. In 2003, because of the success of the course, the British Council published the written materials we wrote and used for the course in book format under the title *In-Service Distance Training Course for Teachers of English*.

In Chapter 2, I explored some theories of adult learning, their implications for distance learning, and the basic principles underpinning each of them. This chapter also discussed the crucial importance of teaching trainees how to develop an awareness of their own learning needs; self-monitor as they made the desired change; and increase their self-appraisal, self-assessment, and evaluation skills. This chapter ends with a few proposals of activities that would assist the trainees in developing these skills so that they could experience success in implementing the desired change in their teaching behavior.

Chapter 3 is a critical evaluation of all the course components as far as the self-development elements are concerned; its strengths and pitfalls; and suggestions for
improving a distance teacher training course in the future. The red line throughout this thesis is the necessity of learner training for self-directed learning on a distance course conducive to self-development.

From the course experience, from my own understanding of theoretical readings, and from the process of writing this thesis, I have learned a number of lessons that changed my perception of the distance learners and distance learning.

**Lessons Learned**

**About Distance Learners.** The potential best learners on a distance course are those who volunteer for the course, thus ensuring a high level of motivation from the start. As in any learning process, the learners are on a quest for meaning and relevance of the materials in their teaching context, but the immediate support in this quest is minimal. Despite their age, experience, and maturity, and their supposed self-reliance, the distance learners in our course needed training to cope with the specificity of a distance course. Moreover, they needed support and guidance to discover their own learning needs starting with self-awareness of where they were in their profession; to identify the changes they needed to make; and to monitor themselves throughout the process. The distance learners have to be trained to be independent learners so that their learning in the course will be efficient, and the desired changes will be turned into habits.

**About Distance Learning.** Distance learning is an exercise in maturity and responsibility on the part of the learner. Motivation, either intrinsic or extrinsic, must be very high to keep the learners going forward in spite of the frustrations and apparent lack of support from tutors and peers.
About the Distance Trainer. As trainers, we cannot impose change and cannot expect change, unless we can help teachers discover their own learning needs by using strategies and techniques to make them aware of these needs. However, we must allow them to decide whether they want to make a change. The willingness to change has to come from within, but the distance trainer should challenge the old constructs of each trainee through subtle tasks and activities so that the desire to change will appear.

I also learned that we should never assume anything about our trainees’ needs, their strengths or weaknesses, about the moments when they are ready to walk on their own, etc. It is in our power to make sure they can identify their own needs, strengths and weaknesses, and ensure that they are ready and able to continue their learning teaching journey on their own. “Never assume, make sure!” is a phrase that will stay with me either in teaching or training.

The distance trainer is the best model of a low-profile instructor, whose role is to facilitate learning by scaffolding the learners’ knowledge, anticipating their difficulties in learning and devising supportive tasks and activities to help them through the process.

About Distance-Training. The most important lesson I learned about distance training is that it is more about training the trainees how to learn rather than what to learn. Distance training is more about empowering the teachers to monitor their own learning rather than to control their learning. To ensure the achievement of the training objectives of the course, the approach should be, “I am not fishing for you, but rather teaching you how to use the fishing rod to catch the fish yourself”.

56
About Interaction. In distance courses, the main and obvious type of interaction occurs between the learners and the material. There is also limited direct interaction between trainees and trainers and among peers. The most constructive and beneficial interaction is the quality of interaction with self. The trainees are by themselves in this learning process most of the time, so the ones they can rely on at all times are themselves. Training the learner to communicate with self, through the “Teacher’s Log” or “Stop and Think!” tasks, should lie at the core of the training.

Another very important aspect of communication with self is the language we use when talking to ourselves. Training the learners to use facilitative and self-supportive language in their reflections will make a definite change in their relation with themselves.

About Myself. First, I learned that experiential learning works for me. I started with the experience, I reflected on it, and, with some theoretical input, I managed to make generalizations. I am now able to put my learning into practice to see the extent to which it is valid. This process will eventually lead me into another learning cycle.

The experience I acquired as a trainer on this course, and the awareness I gained by reading about distance learning and reflecting on both, made me a better teacher and trainer. I am definitely not the same teacher and teacher trainer that I was before this course. I have become less controlling, and my work is directed toward enabling the learners to know themselves and their needs; enabling them to choose the learning strategies that suit them; and giving them the tools to evaluate their own learning. My goal is that at the end of the learning process, they are able to say: “Oh, I learned it all by myself!”
I would highly recommend that face-to-face course trainers try training in a
distance course. It is hard work, stimulating, and challenging, with highs and lows.
However, after trying it, one is not the same.
## Where am I as a teacher? Where do I want to be?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I always use the textbook</th>
<th>I never use the textbook</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I do all of the talking in class</td>
<td>My students do all of the talking in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My students often do not seem interested in the lessons</td>
<td>My students are constantly active and involved in my lessons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My students are corrected every time they make a mistake</td>
<td>My students are never corrected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do all the correction in my lessons</td>
<td>My students do all the correction in my lessons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am serious and formal in my lessons</td>
<td>I am an entertainer in my lessons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have very fixed routines in my lessons</td>
<td>Everything we do in my lessons is new and different</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everything happens in students' native tongue</td>
<td>Everything happens in English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everything that is in English gets translated into students' native tongue</td>
<td>Nothing that is in English gets translated into Russian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I carefully plan every minute of every lesson</td>
<td>My lessons are entirely spontaneous and &quot;off the cuff&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everything we do is in open class</td>
<td>Everything we do is in pairs or groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We focus on memorization</td>
<td>We focus on self-expression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All student learning happens at home</td>
<td>All student learning happens in the classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We always talk about and analyze grammar in class</td>
<td>We never talk about and analyze grammar in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I always determine the agenda in my classes</td>
<td>My students always determine the agenda in my classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do all the work in my lessons</td>
<td>My students do all the work in my lessons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I hate my work</td>
<td>I love my work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2. Video Recorded Lesson Observation Sheet

You are going to watch a 30-minute video recorded lesson. Take three minutes to read this observation task sheet to familiarize yourself with its format and content. Ask any clarifying questions before you start watching the lesson.

Please, fill in this form with as many details as possible while watching the lesson. You can use the back of this sheet if you run out of writing space.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson Implementation:</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Was there any introduction/lead-in? What?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Were the stages of the lesson clear?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Was there a smooth transition between stages and activities?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Did the teacher organize feedback after each activity? How?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Did the teacher evaluate the students? How? When?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Did the teacher do any error correction? How? When?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Were the learning objectives clear?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom Management:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Were the instructions clear? Did the teacher check them?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Were the explanations clear?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What teaching materials did the teacher use? Were they used effectively?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What interaction patterns did you notice? Were they used effectively?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What was the ratio STT/TTT?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How did the teacher adapt to unforeseen situations?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How did the teacher deal with discipline problems?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Was the time used efficiently?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher’s Personal Qualities:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Voice quality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Rapport with students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Presence/Style</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall evaluation:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Do you think the learning objectives were achieved?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3. Self-Observation Sheet  
(Adapted from the *Self-observation schedule*, Appendix 6, Malderez 199, 209-210)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson:</th>
<th>Class:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. What were the best points of the lesson?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Best points</th>
<th>Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. What did the students actually do? (Speak, write, sing, recite, etc.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What they did</th>
<th>Type of interaction (% class involvement)</th>
<th>What I planned for them to do</th>
<th>Reasons for differences between what they did and what I planned for them to do</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How did my actions affect what the students did?

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

3. What did my students learn?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What they learned</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>What I planned for them to learn</th>
<th>Reasons for any difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. How did the activities contribute to student learning? (1=no learning to 5=students learned a lot)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Rank (from 1 to 5)</th>
<th>How can I change or improve it?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. What have I learned?

a) About my students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What did I discover during the lesson?</th>
<th>What did I discover on reflection?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b) About myself as a teacher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What did I discover during the lesson?</th>
<th>What did I discover on reflection?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. What do I intend to do now? What action should I take?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

7. Personal aims:

a) Have I achieved my personal aim? What else do I need to do to achieve it?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________
b) Shall I work on the same personal aim or should I change it? What is my new personal aim?

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

8. How do I feel having observed myself?

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
Appendix 4. Student Evaluation Sheet

Class: ________________________ Date: _______________
Lesson: _______________________
Name (optional): _______________

1. What were the best moments of this lesson for you?
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

2. What did you do? (I wrote, spoke, sang, played,…)
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

3. What activities didn’t work for you in this lesson? Why?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities that did not work for me</th>
<th>Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e.g. 1. The fill in the gaps exercise</td>
<td>I didn’t know whether my options were ok, or if they weren’t, why not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. What could I have done so that the activities in question 3 worked better for you?
5. What do you think you learned in this lesson (i.e. what are you confident that you can use)?

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

Thank you!
Bibliography


66