A TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAM
ON REFLECTION

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports the teacher training program I developed and conducted to introduce student teachers to the practice of reflection. The paper is based on the lesson plans, participants' reactions and observations, and personal reflections on how the program evolved. The data collected in my research draws on relevant materials published in the literature of this area. As a final conclusion, I analyze the program as a whole. From this analysis I derive conclusions which might be useful to other teachers and teacher trainers interested in the reflective practice.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

"The ideal teachers are those who make bridges out of themselves,
inviting the learners to cross them, and afterwards, having made the
crossing possible, fall apart with joy, encouraging the learners to create
their own bridges."

Nikos Kazantzaski (in *Living, Loving and Learning*)

My history as a student as well as a teacher of English as a foreign language for about 19 years includes a noticeable variety of approaches I was exposed to along the way. I was a student of English under the Audio Lingual Method domain for over four years in the mid-seventies. As an EFL teacher in language institutes, I was intensively trained to teach in light of the Communicative Approach in its golden years in Brazil. My training as a teacher included being here and there exposed to some Community Language Learning, Suggestopedia and the Natural Approach techniques. Bombarded with lists of Do's and Don'ts in teaching from several short-term teacher training programs and feeling deeply guilty when applying a technique that did not conform to the Communicative Approach principles (at least the interpretation they were given here in Brazil), I was feeling uneasy and ungrounded about my teaching. The diversity of approaches I had been presented with was causing conflicts in my mind, which made me understand I needed to redefine my own beliefs.

After a couple of years of unstructured inner debate over the matter I realized I would not be able to put all the pieces together by myself. I needed to hear voices from the outside. To this end I applied to the graduate program at the School for International Training, in Brattleboro, Vermont, USA.

When the program started I had my mind filled up with questions, such as:

❖ Which approach do I follow in my teaching? What do I believe in?

❖ Is it the best approach I can apply in my classes?

❖ How can I be a better teacher?

❖ What connections and discrepancies are there between what I preach and my practice?

❖ Am I aware of what is going on in my classes?

❖ How can I analyze myself as a teacher?

❖ How can I analyze my classes in order to see if WHAT I am doing really leads to the intended goals? And this list could go on and on endlessly.

As I read back one of my first Approaches Class response papers, I see the biggest question of all for me was WHAT IS THE BEST TEACHING METHOD?. Claire Stanley, my approaches teacher, answered it saying that was something I would have to decide or devise myself. Her reply to my question made me feel even more unsettled than at first. I needed somebody to give me that answer. I then realized the only possible way out was to engage totally in the program, not losing sight of my search. To that end, little by little we were reminded to let go of judgment, and stop reacting defensively. I forced myself to question my own beliefs to the

same extent I inquired about all methods presented in our classes. This non-judgmental, open attitude allowed me to consider a range of different techniques without feeling guilty for not keeping faithful to only one method. It turned out to be a very freeing process, one which shuffled all teaching cards in my mind, though the questioning on what the best teaching method was still remained unanswered.

The three different phases of the program I went through each had its own importance for the growing awareness they triggered. Throughout all first summer we were challenged to engage in reflecting on our experiences (learning and teaching ones), and sharing them with others. This first stage was key to raise questions about my own beliefs, at the same time it helped me understand that what I was doing and the way I was doing things in class was closely related to the different learning experiences I had had as a learner myself.

The interim year teaching practicum made it possible for me to try out different principles I had developed in Summer I with my groups, which I learned a lot from. It became crystal clear to me that the teaching experiences would not have been so remarkable and serve as fertile soil to grow on if it had not been for the reflections I did on them. By reflecting not only on WHAT I and my students were doing, but also on HOW and WHY we were doing this or that, I started picking up a couple of cards that made sense together. It was a growing process. The more I did it, the more I felt good about it, and the more it became meaningful to me. Still during the interim year teaching practicum, the visit of my supervisor added structure, challenge and different perspectives to my reflections. Bonnie Mennell, my supervisor, showed me how questions are of key importance in this unveiling process, regardless of finding an answer to

them or not. Her visit made it clear for me that a reflection partner, someone you can trust, feel supported by and still be challenged by, can make the process much more fruitful and engaging. A partner can help you see facts from different perspectives and challenge you to move from superficial reflections to a deeper level of inquiry. Thus, the interim year was a phase of getting into the habit of reflecting while trying out old as well as new techniques based on principles as I developed my own approach to teaching, learning to appreciate the questions more than the answers, and learning that a partner can add richness to the process of reflection.

The second summer at SIT was a very settling, driving-the-point-home experience. It was very reassuring to see how much we had developed as a group, how much maturity we were able to add to our teaching, how resourceful we had all become. Above all, learning that it was OK to be eclectic in my teaching, provided that the techniques and procedures I selected made sense in light of my beliefs was the most valuable accomplishment. That is what I refer to as a principled eclecticism. This grounding stage was key to help me move ahead in my search for the best way (or ways) to teach, now knowing one method does not contain all truths of all individuals' learning in itself.

Undoubtedly sticking to one only method to teaching might have made things easier as one can even imagine classroom procedures in a package, or in form of a recipe. So, why my personal choice for a principled eclecticism? For the simple fact that it covers both sides of my needs as a teacher: the first need being of *freedom* in making choices not limited to one only method; the second need being of *security* in making sound choices. Being eclectic and still conform to principles is not an easy

task as it demands maturity and awareness on the part of the teacher, but it certainly is the most rewarding one for me.

In my opinion, it is unquestionable that this maturity and awareness can only be achieved through getting involved in the process of searching for one's own principled approach, in which observing, describing, questioning and therefore reflecting on play central role. Only this way is it possible for me to sort out cards in sets that make sense together. For example, for one task in the interim year practicum I had to video part of a lesson, and then describe what was going on, report my observations and students' reactions. I knew there was something I did not feel good about in the way I conducted the lesson but it was blurred to me as to exactly what the problem was. At this point of an intense wrestling, guided by questions my supervisor, Bonnie Mennel, posed to me I could realize the mismatch between what I wanted to get out of that lesson and the techniques I was employing. At the same time I wanted my students to express their personal feelings, I got them engaged in a very mechanical drill, which led to totally impersonal (though accurate) remarks. In this aspect my choice of activity was inappropriate. When I acknowledged this fact I understood what Claire Stanley meant by *devising my own approach to teaching.* I learned I can do it by reflecting on a regular, integral , structured basis. I also learned that it is a never ending process, one step taking to a next one, one realization bringing up a different investigation, one finding leading to re-exploring an old trailed path, and so on. Reflection is to teaching what a psychiatrist is to his patient: the one that helps build knowledge, open new vistas, question long existing beliefs, and find out discrepancies between beliefs and practice.

Looking back at my history as a teacher up to this point, I can see two distinct stages. I categorize all I had been exposed to before the graduate program at SIT as my teacher training period, one in which I learned how to be a technician of the language. All the process during and following the program I classify as my professional (as well as personal) development. Dialoguing with myself, my own ideas and attitudes has made me more mature through a bigger awareness of the world outside and inside myself. I have growingly become less judgmental as to what is *right* and what is *wrong*, and instead I have been giving way to concentrating my energy on what *works* and what *does not work* and for whom. It has made me less anxious as a teacher because I know I am not the one in charge of *constructing answers*. The answers are there, and it is my responsibility to dig the what-happened soil to find them. Once again I emphasize that can only be possible through reflection.

Reflecting on my teaching has been since then an immensely rewarding practice. I have been feeling way more confident about my lessons and how to deal with problems that arise regularly since I got into the discipline of describing what happened, how I felt, how students reacted on a daily basis. I have felt that my load of concern and frustration as a teacher can be lightened if I do not pile up problems or unsettling feelings until they surmount to a frustrating stage, but instead I face them as they come up. At times it can be a painful practice for I may have to face the fact that I have chosen the least appropriate path, the least suitable tools for the most adequate learning situation. I remember one day when I finished a lesson I had prepared so carefully that nothing could possibly go wrong, and yet a strange feeling took over me as soon as I dismissed the class. I immediately started journaling on the lesson that

had been planned to be a success and that was in fact causing disturbing feelings. After some free writing describing it, I realized that I was so attached to my lesson plan and following my agenda, that I neglected how my students were doing in terms of my timing of the activities. Through my reflections I felt they probably had needed some more practice time. Still unsure about the answers I got to in my questioning, I decided to ask the students about it the following class. They confirmed my wonderings and said that somehow it interfered with their taking in of the items we were working on. This reflection taught me two lessons. One being that if I had resorted to reflection-in-action I could have spotted what was going on during class and in this way I would have been able to act on that immediately. The other lesson was that learning involves several aspects and that I certainly do not *own* all truths in all aspects, and being humble enough to invite my students to help me find the answers not only gives me more precise observations, but also in no way makes them lose confidence in me as their teacher. On the contrary, I noticed that they felt acknowledged as a very important part in my planning, which has also improved our connections at a personal level, and that they have a role to perform in their own learning. As I keep on saying, the rewards which spring from the challenge of practicing reflection have contributed to my development as a professional and as a person.

Given the fact that I am also a teacher trainer in my working set (a language institute in Brazil), I decided to offer the teachers in my school a program to initiate them in the challenging art of reflecting. I thought others might benefit from reflection as I did, and cross the language teaching desert of shifting sands and changing winds in a more secure caravan, learning to find their own ways through greater awareness, by

being more able to tell fashionable and misleading paths from those worth consideration. Having this thought in mind, I designed a teacher development program focusing on introducing teachers to reflective teaching and reflection tools, which I carried out with a group of teachers in my language institute.

Inspired by Nikos Kazantzakski, I believe not only can I be a bridge for my students' learning, but also a bridge to other professionals interested in investigating their own teaching. This is the seed that germinated and produced this paper, which I hope other professionals in the ELT area will benefit from.

Following this chapter, which describes the sparkles that started bringing life to the Teacher Development Program on Reflection, the thesis comprises four subsequent chapters.

Chapter 2 provides the literature review about the roots of Reflective Teaching, and contributions from well-known authors about aspects to be considered in the reflection practice. This literature has served as the foundations for the Teacher Development Program on Reflection.

Chapter 3 is a description of how the Teacher Development Program on Reflection took shape, its conception steps, and a few thoughts on what led to the aspects selected to underpin the program.

Chapter 4 describes the Teacher Development Program on Reflection as a whole. Not only there is a description of all activities held in each of the meetings and their corresponding analyses, but also a section dedicated to possible alternatives I generated in light of my analyses.

Chapter 5 presents a conclusion of the whole process.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to better understand what Reflective Teaching is, I find of utmost relevance to travel back in time and discover the treasures granted to us by illuminated minds.

One of the first educational theorists to attribute a more participatory role to teachers in the educational system in the United States was John Dewey, an early 20th century educational philosopher. He brought into perspective the concept of teachers as reflective practitioners. Dewey defined reflective action as "*that which involves active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or practice in light of the reasons that support it and the further consequences to which it leads*" (Zeichner and Liston, 1996, p. 9).

Dewey's definition depicts reflection as the investigation of assumptions or practice in a threefold way: the fact itself, what is behind it, and the outcome produced by it. Action and reflection must go hand-in-hand in a well-thought and consistent way.

His concept of reflection involves intuition, emotion and passion for it is more than a logical and rational problem-solving process (Zeichner and Liston, 1996, p.9). The act of reflection takes more than activating our reasoning skills. In fact, our emotional insights, our capacity to perceive the invisible cannot be divorced from the concrete in the reflection process. Otherwise, reflection turns out to be no more than a superficial account of facts, which reveals no more than the surface.

For Dewey (1933) integral to reflective action are attitudes of open-mindedness, responsibility, and whole-heartedness.

An attitude of *open-mindedness* entails critical believers, those who are willing to unveil the other side of the coin, not for the futile purpose of refuting it afterwards, but because they treasure the continuing transformation of reality. To this end they are capable of acknowledging that opposing points of view have the power of either strengthening or demystifying their own beliefs.

Responsibility, also obligatory in the reflective action, encompasses taking full attention to the consequences of one's own teaching in personal, academic, and socio-political spheres and more. *"Reflective teachers evaluate their teaching by asking broader questions, "are the results good, for whom and in what ways," not merely "have my objectives been met?""* (Zeichner and Liston, 1996, p.11)

The third component, *wholeheartedness*, implies that the teacher must be committed to the process of reflection on a regular basis and develop a non-defensive attitude. He must keep his mind free of judgment, approach situations in a way that is open, involved, and do it regularly.

The attitudes mentioned above are compulsory in leading teachers to explore, examine, question their own and others' beliefs and practices in light of different prisms.

Dewey provided us with the basis for understanding the concept of reflective teaching. After him, others have also helped guide the large community of teachers towards how we can implement a reflective approach to teaching in our daily work lives. Speaking to this, another great contributor to the reflective practice movement has been Schön of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

In his understanding of the reflective practice, Schön sees reflection occurring in two time frames. He has called *reflection-on-action* the kind that is done before action (when planning a lesson, for example) and after action (evaluating, considering, describing, etc after the teaching situation). Whereas that is essential to teaching, it is also well known to everyone that teachers too often have to make on-the-spot decisions. Unexpected problems or reactions may call for a "right-here-right-now" adjustment of instruction to the newly faced situation. This instantaneous dialogue with the situation in search of naming the problem and finding the best solution to it is what Schön has called *reflection-in-action*.

Frequently teachers find themselves doing things automatically, without an awareness of what has originated their attitudes. By carrying out both kinds of reflection will teachers be able to surface actions, understandings, and judgments that they hold with them spontaneously. When those are brought to a conscious level, they can then be criticized, analyzed, and improved.

Schön emphasizes that this unveiling of problems must be done using information collected in teachers' own work settings. They can this way create knowledge, develop and learn from their own experience.

Perrone (1989) and Duckworth (1987) raised the question that the more practice with reflection-on-action a teacher has the more skilled in reflection-in-action she will be. In this way, she will make better informed choices for she will have developed a greater awareness of her teaching (Stanley, 1998).

Schön's conception of reflection-in and on-action and the continuous cycle of appreciation, action, and reappreciation have added much to the matter (see the Reflective Practitioner, Schön (1983)). Nevertheless, his

description of teaching reflectively gained him a lot of criticism especially with respect to his neglecting the dialogical dimension of teacher learning. He approaches it as a solitary process, rather than as a social one.

This social aspect of reflection has been greatly stressed in recent work. Although it can be a lonely endeavor, the consistent support of a colleague brings light to one's quest. Someone who is sympathetic, attentive, and willing to have a heart and mind wide open to share the task with another teacher learner will doubtlessly enrich the experience. For this process, reflective practitioners need someone they trust to share their objectives with, to critique their plans or actions, and to encourage them to try and try again. This mutual support is what keeps things going and growing. (Hubbard and Power, 1993, 131)

Jack Richards and Charles Lockhart have also given valuable contributions to learning how to become a reflective practitioner. They introduce their book entitled Reflective Teaching in Second Language Classrooms (Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 3 & 4) by pointing out the assumptions that underlie the book, which I quote below for they reflect the fact that teachers can only discover if what they are doing in class is conducive to students' learning through reflection:

1.   *An informed teacher has an extensive knowledge base about teaching.*

2.   *Much can be learned about teaching through self-inquiry.*

3.   *Much of what happens in teaching is unknown to the teacher.*

4.   *Experience is insufficient as a basis for development.*

5.   *Critical reflection can trigger a deeper understanding of teaching.*

More recently, Dr. Claire Stanley, a teacher educator at the School for International Training, published *A Framework for Teacher Reflectivity* (TESOL Quarterly, Fall 1998). Based on her research, she found five different phases in the process of developing a reflective teaching practice, which are:

1.   Engaging with reflection

Willingness to get into the process is not in itself the green card to enter this stage. Even when contextual and professional factors favor this engagement, there may be personal issues that surface and may inhibit it, if these are not overcome. As Stanley puts it, *"it takes a healthy degree of ego development to put oneself and one's work under the microscope."*

2.   Thinking reflectively

Learning to go beyond the think-back, describe-what-happened, describe-how-you-felt triad of initial reflection is a goal at this stage.

3.   Using reflection

At this stage teachers begin to have a clearer sense of what works better for them because they understand what reflection is and how to think reflectively. They are mostly engaged with reflection-on-action, but try a few steps into reflection-in-action with greater awareness.

4.   Sustaining reflection

This is a very critical point in that a lot of what we deny or do not know about our teaching and our inner selves is unmasked. Emotional reactions may arise and teachers may want to give up. It is important, though, to stay in touch with reflection through other means such as readings, workshops, etc, until this distancing and new input gotten from other sources can help them overcome difficulties. These "safe practices"

will maintain the link and make it possible to go back to the commitment of investigating one's teaching thoroughly.

     5.   *Practicing reflection*

     Reflection at this stage becomes integral to one's teaching practice. Once teachers at this point already know a great deal about the stuff of reflection, they start devising reflection procedures which are most useful for them and that will help them move from thinking reflectively to acting reflectively in their classrooms.

     The table below is extracted from *A Framework for Teacher Reflectivity*, by Claire Stanley (Tesol Quarterly, Fall 1998). It serves as a point of reference for the phases.

Engaging with Reflection	Thinking Reflectively	Using Reflection	Sustaining Reflection	Practicing Reflection
interest, psychological strength, and contextual support	initially descriptive thinking and feeling responses	clarity of reflective thinking which can be done at will	uncovering problematic pedagogical or political issues	strategies in place for dealing with difficult feelings
partial or total lack of skill in reflective thinking	possible positivist view of education	mostly engaged with reflection-on-action	painful emotions triggered as a result of investigation	easily engaged with both reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action

	lack of clarity as to what reflective thinking is and isn't	ability to generate multiple reasons for actions	finding ways to sustain reflection from other perspectives	precision of data in the moment or later
	reflective thinking seemingly random	greater precision of data		multiple reasons and responses generated in the moment and later
	struggling to find time to reflect	greater awareness of moments of reflection-in-action		systems in place for consistent reflection-on-action
		able to make time for consistent reflection-on-action		reflection-on-action includes analysis of both pedagogical and political dimensions of teaching
		able to		use of

		examine larger systemic issues as well as classroom realities		frameworks for analysis bring broader interpretations
		responses to situations reflected on are creative and appropriate		actions taken after reflection involves both students and the broader educational community

Understanding these phases has helped me as a reflective practitioner as well as a teacher trainer assess my own and my trainees' development along the way. It is important to note that Stanley's framework of the phases does not represent a rigid sequence to be followed, *"but rather moments in time and particular experiences which constitute a particular phase."* (Stanley, 1998)

From the foundations built by Dewey, the walls erected by Schön, the finishings provided by so many other teacher educators among whom the contributions of Hubbard and Power, Richards and Lockhart, and Stanley stand out, reflective teaching has come to aid the community of teachers interested in growing and developing personally and professionally. This development can only be achieved by using the wealth

of opportunities a teacher has on a daily basis to systematically explore, question, frame, re-frame, challenge herself and her own teaching under a holistic view in order to make well–grounded interpretations and then be able to make informed choices.

As Jack Richards (1997) puts it, reflective teaching is quite an endeavor if we acknowledge the fact that it cannot be dissociated with critical self-examination.

In the next chapter we will see how the theory presented here was applied to give shape and conceive the Teacher Development Program on Reflection.

CHAPTER 3
CONCEPTION OF THE PROGRAM

Reflecting on my teaching became so meaningful for me in my development as a teacher for all the questioning that it provokes, that I decided to share it with other professionals in my working set. As a teacher trainer in a language institute in my hometown, I designed an in-service program which I entitled Teacher Development Program on Reflection (hereafter TDPR) with the purpose of introducing to language teachers the general notions and promote initial practice on reflection as a means for them to further develop as professionals.

Reflection has enabled me to be more aware of myself as a teacher, and as a human being as well – you teach who you are, so the teacher and the person cannot be dissociated. In my search for the "best" method, the "right" way to teach, I found I had the pieces to put this puzzle together in myself, my students, and what we did in the classroom. Thus, reflection has enabled me to be more aware of what goes on in my classes. Awareness of the WHAT's and WHY's is empowering in the sense that if teachers are informed of which grounds they are trekking, they can then experiment with, change or stay with an idea or behavior. By being more aware of the hidden curriculum or agenda in my classes, that is to say, of what is behind the choices I make on a daily basis, I have growingly felt more confident about my teaching. As a result of this, I thought of the other teachers in my language institute, and how they could benefit from the experience as I did. I see the exposure to different approaches and their inherent techniques as part of a first stage in teacher training which, if followed by reflective teaching as a way to enable experienced teachers to make sound choices

among the array they have at their selection, they will have all the necessary tools for their development. Reflective teaching frees teachers from pre-established *recipes* for good teaching, and makes room for *personalized* teaching, and consequently learning.

The group was composed by nine colleagues, who had been teaching English as a foreign language in Brazil. Their experience time in this field ranged from two to eight years, having had at least one teacher training course on methods and techniques. Furthermore, all of them showed a genuine willingness to examine their own experience and assumptions in a systematic and nonjudgmental way.

It had to be planned to fit in seven sessions because this was the number of weeks which remained before summer vacation. I wanted them to have a comprehensive continuous experience on the process of reflection, thus it was desirable not to interrupt the course with the summer break. We had our meeting once a week for two hours and a half each throughout seven weeks in a row. Individuals held separate meetings with their support group peers as necessary after the second week.

We decided to hold the meetings in the institute we all work at for practical reasons such as availability of materials. Nevertheless, I would have preferred to meet somewhere outside the working place. I believe the physical stepping aside makes way for the psychological stepping aside and looking at experiences from a more detached perspective, allowing us to see other truths.

In order to avoid jumping evasively from one aspect of their teaching to another, I decided it would be important to instruct participants to find a focus for reflection, e.g., interaction in the classroom, how I am dealing with the seven intelligences in my class, etc.

Once a focus was identified, a number of tools (adapted from Richards and Lockhart, 1996) are introduced, such as:

- Teaching journals. In the form of written accounts of teaching experiences;

- Lesson reports. Written descriptions of the main features of the lessons;

- Written or recorded feedback. Guided questions student teachers answer that aim at collecting information on a particular aspect of teaching or learning;

- Audio and video recordings. Recordings of a whole lesson or part of a lesson;

- Peer observation sheets. Tasks completed by a teacher visiting a colleague's class;

- Action research. Implementation of an action plan, followed by monitoring of the effects of the innovation.

The data collected is qualitative in nature.

"*Qualitative data consist of records of phenomena which deal with the qualities or characteristics of those phenomena, rather than with measurements, frequencies, scores, or ratings. In recent years qualitative research methods have been adopted by education from anthropology and sociology, and several methodological texts have appeared.*"

(Barley and Nunan 1996, 2)

In order to analyze data I decided to count on two major agents. The first being the teacher herself by reflecting on her own observation and further questioning. The second, being the reflection partner very important

in bringing new perspectives to the reflection process, functioning as a mirror that may eventually reflect unseen facets of a given situation.

Concerning the agenda, I designed the meetings to comprise the following:

- Theoretical Foundations of Reflective Teaching;
- Community Building;
- Support Groups Arrangement and Planning;
- Sharing Learnings and the Experiential Learning Cycle;
- Graded Activities.

I planned to present the theoretical components in the meetings because they serve as an anchor for the process. They provide the needed support and safety as one grounds his or her steps on studies previously carried out by researchers of excellence.

I believe reflection can be favored and enhanced if one feels he or she is not alone in the task. Thus, there must be a sense of community among all members involved. So that members trust one another, each must gain confidence and respect from the community, at the same time he or she practices trusting and respecting the others in the same community. Working on this aspect also facilitates support group or reflection partner arrangements.

Participants were encouraged to have one or two reflection partners to work with throughout the program. Together they made plans for class observation, focus of observation, when to meet for reflection and analysis, etc. The frequency of their meetings depended on each group's needs. It is advisable to meet once before class observation in order to work on better focusing observation, and another time immediately after reflection entries are made in the journal (after class is observed).

Promoting opportunities for teachers to re-think their experiences and learn from them and from others is another important aspect to consider. Experiential Learning (Kolb, 1984) entails departing from one's own experiences (the known)... "*to the new through a process of making sense of some immediate experience, and then going beyond the immediate experience through a process of transformation.*" (Nunan, 1999, p. 6). I am a follower of the principle that learning is a spiral process. Experiences and findings (what is known) can be better explored and serve the purpose of learning from them if you reflect on what happened, bring voices from the outside, plan on what to do next, try again (the new), and the whole cycle is formed again and again. I believe these steps add richness and substance to learning, and results can be maximized if opportunities for sharing it with others are provided.

Assigning graded activities aimed to help teachers gradually move from superficial to deeper levels of reflection, as well as experiment with different possibilities for reflection, e.g., using different tools, trying something new, etc.

It is important to note that I would have been unable to give shape to the program if it were not for the several readings of the literature I refer to in Chapter 2, and the experience I myself went through in the process of becoming a reflective practitioner. I would like to close this chapter recalling the fact that the TDPR I developed was meant to be only a starting point in the process of learning to reflect on one's own teaching. Its purpose is to show trainees ways of finding out more about the treasures hidden in the richest laboratory in the world – the classroom. It also aims at giving participants a taste of the rewards which spring from the experience, not to say the adventure, of questioning oneself and the world around.

CHAPTER 4
THE TEACHER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM ON REFLECTION

*"Some riddles have no final answers.
A few answerless riddles are still worth asking.
They are worth asking not for their answers, since they have none,
but for what we do in struggling with them."*
Earl Stevick, A Way and Ways

The Teacher Development Program on Reflection has probably been the most significant experience I have had as a teacher trainer in my language institute. I attribute its relevance first to the fact that through reflection I have developed into a more aware, self-critical teacher with a greater sense of self-direction, and in this way I strongly believed in what I was sharing with the teachers involved in the program, which made me passionate about it since the very first time I sat down to start designing it. Second, it was delightful to observe the way things progressed along the course and the effect they had on each teacher's teaching. I could clearly see that the atmosphere created was effective and comfortable enough to promote positive learning experiences, participants were encouraged to value the knowledge, skills, personalities, learning styles and interests of each member which contributed to enrich the course, and they had the opportunity to develop in areas they were individually interested in. As a result of this, I observed they felt more confident in choosing their own ways in teaching. Moreover, the strong bonds that were created among

members of the group reverberated through the institution as a whole in a very constructive way favoring the process of working in community.

Having the initial phase of conception and recruitment for the program being dealt with, we then moved on to the program itself.

It consisted of seven whole group meetings that lasted two hours and thirty minutes each. These meetings revolved mostly around community building, presentation of the theory on reflective teaching, introducing tasks, presenting results of tasks, and sharing observations and reflections.

Participants held meetings outside of class time with their support group peers to prepare for some of the tasks such as class observation, and to give each other feedback after observation was made.

Feedback questions were an integral part of all meetings. For me as a trainer, the participants' responses helped direct the course as I got a sense of how they were feeling about the tasks I proposed and to what extent they were profiting from them, which informed me of what to stay with as well as what I should look into changing in my plans. For the group as a whole, feedback was a very important and exacting part of class observation by adding new perspectives to the observations.

I find it vital that one's confidence is not shattered during a feedback session. For this reason, I made sure to include only positive elements initially, and in later stages positive points shared room with points for improvement.

Halfway through the course I held a check-in meeting with individuals in order to verify how they were feeling about the program, to what extent their goals were being accomplished, and what suggestions they had for the second part.

In order to be able to make sound suggestions of alternatives to future meetings as well as improvements on the program, I reflected on each day by keeping journal entries. My journaling consisted mainly of my own observations of the participants' responses and what was happening at the time I felt energy to decrease.

Let us now move on to the program itself and how it evolved. First, I will present a *description* on how activities were carried out and a justification for the employment of such activities. Second, I will include a section called *Analysis*, where I make general comments on how the activities proposed or blocked opportunities for student teachers to reach the objectives for the day. Finally, *Alternatives* is a section where I offer suggestions of different ways of working on selected aspects, which is a result of the reflections I made after each class in my reflective journal.

Hereafter, as I refer to a member of the group, I will use the pronoun SHE for the fact that only women teachers participated in the program.

Before the first meeting, I gave student teachers some homework assignment (appendix 01) to be done for the first day.

Day One

Learning is finding out what
You already know.
Doing is demonstrating that
You know it.
Teaching is reminding others

xxx

That they know it
Just as well as you.
You are all learners,
Doers, teachers.
Richard Bach

Description. My main goals for the first day were to develop a sense of community among the group members, have them draw on their own past experiences and observe how these experiences are connected with who they are as teachers now. In addition to this, I also planned to introduce the theory on reflective teaching, the process of reflection and its tools.

To start with the first part about drawing on experiences, I explained to the participants how important it is to really listen to what others are saying in actually getting a message and being totally present, and how energizing it is to feel listened to. To this end, I introduced the practice of active listening, one in which the listener is totally invested in what the speaker is saying, and demonstrates this by saying back to the speaker what he or she just said after small intervals. I emphasized the importance of not adding words, not changing words, and confirming with the speaker if that is exactly what he or she said. Following this brief introduction, I modeled it with one volunteer, and then had them form pairs to apply active listening as they talked about the best vacation of their lives. This worked as an opportunity for them to start practicing listening to one another, and establish closer connections by sharing something which was personal.

Immediately after this activity, I invited them to share with the group what it was like for them. As listeners most of them pointed out a struggle

to stay tuned in caused by the pressure of having to recall exactly what was said later on. It turned out to be a practice of discipline, and they acknowledged it as positive. As speakers, they reported an appreciation for feeling listened to, which in its turn triggered their self-expression. On the other hand, some of them experimented with negative feelings when the listener showed to have misunderstood them, or not listened at all.

Looking at previous experience as constituting an invaluable element in the analysis of what we do today (see Chapter 2), I instructed them to apply active listening and giving understanding responses this time talking about a *learning experience* which was in some way remarkable to them. Next, I asked them to follow the same process having a *teaching experience* as a focus. I made a group with two other members and participated actively, sharing air time with them.

When I observed they were ready to move on, I put on some background music and invited them to take some minutes to freewrite into how they see these past experiences have influenced their present teaching.

Sharing these thoughts was a very rich part of the day for we all started making connections between the past and the present. Small sparks of awareness were precious light at this stage: "I hated the anxiety in Mr. Marques' words and gestures. Do I look anxious to my students?" (Sarah); "I'll never forget Mrs. Ferreira's sweet voice. I always try to sound like her." (Alice); "I don't believe ALM works. I scorn drills... and every now and then I find myself using them in class disguised as something else... Is it because I was taught through ALM for some time? (Elisa); "Why is it that I avoid doing listening activities in class? I remember as a teenager ... once a classmate of mine making fun of me because I couldn't pick up words in a famous pop song like she could." (Isa); "Like in learning to ride a bike I still tend to give

up easily when the task is challenging...I am defeated before I try...or try other ways of getting there. In the same way, I think I probably try to make tasks easy enough so that my students don't have to face failure." (Betty).

Now that participants had interacted at a personal level and started making links between their past teaching and learning experiences and their present way of doing things, I led them into trying to word their own assumptions on how learning occurs and what teaching is effective. They shared their ideas with peers first, and then with the whole group.

They seemed to be bound by teaching rules most of the time, as I observed in some remarks, such as: "Listening must preceed the other skills." (Isa); "Don't teach grammar before students know how to produce a certain structure orally." (Alice)

I told them to keep their list of beliefs and observe if and how they changed along the course.

Before going on to another part of the meeting, I asked them to share their feelings about listening actively and giving understanding responses to a peer in the activities that preceded this part. All in all, their remarks were basically the same they reported after the first assessment on this practice, which were feelings of struggling to keep tuned in and that it is a good sensation to feel really listened to. They added that it became a little more natural after some exercise.

Once the goals of interacting with peers and tapping into teaching and learning experiences and assumptions had been dealt with, we went on to work on the next chunk of the meeting, Reflective Teaching.

I got the group started by having them share as a whole group what they had in mind about reflective teaching, and what they expected from the course.

Their remarks were rather vague ones, some said it probably was a new approach to teaching with its own set of rules. Others said they had no idea as to what it is. All of them said to be looking forward to the course and their expectations had been heightened by my enthusiasm over the matter and the intriguing title made them want to discover what is behind it. Only one participant said she did not know exactly why she was there. She thought she had already been exposed to enough teaching techniques and did not feel the need for more.

In order to better guide their attention, I asked them to make questions about reflective teaching. Here are some of the questions they came up with: "Is it a new trend in teaching?"; "Will I have to forget about all I've learned so far?"; "Have I been doing the wrong thing all my teaching life?"; "Is it very time consuming?". I told them to keep these questions in mind, and they would have an answer to them along the meetings.

Then I encouraged them to write three goals they wanted to achieve in the TDPR. If you do not know where you are going, how can you possibly get there?

I started introducing Reflective Teaching by recalling a scene in a teacher's room in which one teacher was concentrating all her energy in finding the best way to introduce the Present Perfect Tense to a group of middle-aged professionals, another one was grappling with activities that would be appropriate to a group of housewives who have been away from school for quite a while, on the other end of the table two colleagues were exchanging ideas on how to approach that group of teenagers who seem to be always unstimulated, no matter how teachers approach the subject matter; in the meantime, another teacher entered the room revealing in her face and words her disappointment with the class in which everything went

wrong: students did not respond in the expected way, activities did not have the desired outcome, etc.

I invited them to recall how many times they have been in one of those teachers' place, and they all seemed to relate to the description. Then, I pointed out that all those teachers were in fact reflecting on their teaching.

At a superficial, initial level of reflection they were somehow getting into the area of reflection. In this way, what we were about to start was not exactly totally new to them. I explained that I was going to help them engage in the process by adding structure, shape, discipline, and consistency to what they had been doing informally.

I then went on to present the roots of reflective teaching in a lecture fashion, aided by the use of flip charts with a skeleton of the explanations.

Next, I briefly presented the process of experiential learning (see Kolb, 1984 and the experiential learning cycle (appendix 4) as a model to help us get the most out of the experience, something we would be drawing on regularly.

*"We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time."*

T.S. Eliot

Following this introduction I asked pairs to get together and bring up an experience of their own in which they have applied the experiential learning cycle, though unaware of the fact that they were doing something entitled as such. They were also encouraged to brainstorm possible advantages of adopting the cycle as a routine.

As we were running short of time, I handed them the Fundamentals of the Program to be read for the following week (appendix 02), and explained to them the homework assignment.

The purpose behind homework assignment A (bring something you treasure) was to go on building a community in which members interact as a whole, not only professionally. The reading assignment aimed to give them a chance to recycle and deepen the theoretical notions around reflective teaching. I chose to give them an idea of the topic before setting them to read about it probably because this is a technique that works for me. Anyway, it seems to have worked out, according to their feedback after the second meeting.

Interpretation. The choice of aspects to be emphasized in this first meeting was very appropriate to set the tone of the program. Building a community of trust and respect in which members assume a supportive role since the beginning is key to making the most of time and intensity of reflection. This is especially true of a program in which time is a concern or a limiting factor, and thus getting to deeper levels of reflection is a challenge. To this end, active listening seems to be very suitable. The fact that they were discouraged from judging things and people as either good or bad, right or wrong by refraining from adding comments on facts, and staying with what they heard only, I introduced them to setting up a non-judgmental mind, and thus making room for reality to surface. Active listening is specially important in a context where Latin people have the instinctive behavior to put words into others' mouths, jump to conclusions, cut others short, or do second-storying. I observed they were gradually feeling freer to express themselves as they knew they would get no judgment from their peers. Instead, their listening seemed to activate their

peers' thinking fountain which translated into a flow of words and ideas the speakers themselves were surprised at: "Where did all that come from? I didn't know I had it so nicely set in my mind. I like that." (Carol)

I think it worked mostly because the simple act of showing one was LISTENING to the other (as opposed to "hearing") was a two-way street of reward: the one who listened had a better comprehension of what she was told, and thus derived more learnings from the experience: the one who was listened to tasted the joy of factually having the company of the peer whose presence, in the most comprehensive sense of the word, energized her in turn and helped her dig for deeper awareness. They both practiced being totally present without adding judgment to it, but rather simply staying with what was there. "I gradually felt more at ease as I realized my partner not only got my point, but also didn't add her own words and opinion to it. I felt respected.", said Sylvia.

This kind of practice very closely resembles meditation techniques of mindful presence. Activities like this one also serve the purpose of learning to separate reacting and responding. As Jack Millet puts it so well, "A reaction is like a snap of one's finger, an automatic type of response that does not have any assessment or thought to it. What I emphasize is assessing the situation and giving space so that one can respond to really serve the learning rather than serve a need to react." (The Tesol Matters, October/November 1997, p. 20). In this way, active listening and understanding responses were rather effective in serving the learning from the experience by staying with what is, instead of reacting to it.

With respect of the choice of topics, they seemed to have served the purposes I wanted to achieve. Drawing on their own learning and teaching experiences and assumptions provided the basis for the core of the

program, that of growing from one's own experiences, creating the new from the known. In sharing a personal experience as they talked about the best vacation of their lives, they interacted with a certain detachment from the working context, which brought them closer together: "I never thought you'd plan a vacation like that. I'd love to see your photos and hear more about it. It's something I've always dreamed of doing." (Alice to Elisa)

Surficing their wonderings provided the perfect link to the theory that underlies reflecting on one's own teaching. They were intrigued by the novelty of the idea of designing their own method of teaching, somehow scared to investigate their own procedures but above all wanting to take the challenge.

In this particular first meeting, they gave very positive reactions. Among the strongest points, the following were mentioned:

- experimenting with listening in the real sense of the word;
- interacting with peers at a personal level;
- "discovering" others as knowledgeable people in one area or another (e.g., "I didn't know Isa knew so much about these theories!");
- initially feeling a misfit, but gradually evidencing that she had a lot to contribute;
- feeling more grounded by the introduction to reflective teaching theory;
- time went by quickly;
- urge to start doing it; feeling of curiosity;
- the supportive role most of them took up.

Some of their responses made me reflect on what I was getting them involved in doing and that made me more aware of the seriousness that it entails. What I mean is that this experience could be a remarkable turning

point in their professional lives and I was in charge of showing them the way or ways. Words such as "I trust you.", "I'm sure you can help me find the answers to my doubts.", "Are you sure I'm prepared for that (shuffling teaching cards)?", made me rethink my role in the program. At this point I felt even more intensely the weight of the responsibility upon my shoulders and the importance of the process we had just initiated.

I observed different reactions concerning opening their personal side. I noticed one participant resisted to opening up and interacting with others, some felt it was freeing and had their curiosity stimulated, while others simply surrendered to the process and were undoubtedly able to profit more.

Taking these different responses into account I knew I would have to keep my plans for the future meetings open enough so as to make sure everyone would have a choice from a selection of possibilities and pick out what made sense to them, or what best suited their personalities.

Looking back at this first day and how it developed, I see activities were integrated in a consistent way, conducive to the matter at hand.

Alternatives. First, I thought that some extra initial preparation can be of help in getting them to interact with each other. To this end, playing games that lead to cooperating and working in tune with one another may work efficiently. One game that epitomizes this kind of training is playing shuttlecock with one arm and one leg tied to a partner's, being pairs arranged in a circle. I suggest that it be followed by reflection on what is happening at the time the play heated up and they started doing better, or what helped those pairs that stood out to display a better performance.

Second, with respect of giving understanding responses, a demonstration using a tape with a recorded passage might make it less

personal in the beginning. The tape could be stopped at intervals and the instructor might do the initial modeling, followed by the participants in subsequent chunks.

Finally, I think it would be a good idea to have them make a visual that expresses each one's views on teaching and learning to wrap up the first part of the day. This visual could be kept during the program and referred to at the end in order to verify what changed for them during the course and what aspects they would stay with.

Day Two

"…you do need someone, somewhere, who can help you develop ideas. You need to have people you trust to read or listen to your research proposals, to critique your design and budget plans, and to encourage you to try and try again when a proposal is rejected."
Hubbard and Power (in The Art of Classroom Inquiry)

Description. Objectives selected for the day proved suitable. I corroborate Zeichner and Liston's belief that although reflection can be a solitary and individualistic endeavor, it can be greatly enhanced by communication and dialogue with others. For this reason, community building tops the list of objectives again. By tapping into reflective teaching as opposed to technical teaching we gave continuation to the work started in the first meeting, that of developing the idea of looking into our teaching unbiasedly. Last, but not least, getting organized for the first reflection

activity took place. Let us take a look at how these objectives were developed along the 2 ½-hour meeting.

Sitting in a circle, as in all whole group activities, I reminded teachers of how council works, and asked them to place their chosen objects in the middle of the circle. Applying council format, they were encouraged to talk about an object they treasure and what it represents to them. Participants signaled when they were ready to talk by picking up their objects. On the first round, reports were rather superficial and obvious, e.g., a person who had brought a photo of her family limited to say her family was the most important thing in her life. On the second round, I encouraged them to forget about judgment (self and others') and speak from the heart, and that it was fine to cry, laugh, scream, whatever feeling they felt the need to express. The activity turned out to be one of the most intense experiences we had in the training program. Student teachers felt really involved and comfortable with crying, sharing their inner selves, and being supportive to those who had the most intense emotions as they unveiled their hidden jewels to the group. This time the trainee I mentioned above, looking at the photo she had brought, talked about the joy her family represents to her nowadays and that it has not always been like that. She described moments of extreme pain that occurred before this positive phase, moments in which she felt defeated, worthless, hopeless. Another one described a piece of a student's work and the strenuous process it had been for him to get to produce it due to cognitive barriers he had. She recalled with emotion the happiness in the student's face and words, which translated his feeling of achievement.

Some techniques helped me meet my objective of providing an opportunity for them to be closer to each other and feel in a community.

The circle format, the soft background music, the process of opening up gradually and as one feels comfortable speaking, all members keeping eye contact and empathizing with the one who has the floor seemed to contribute to the proposed goal. I believe these elements help create a unified stream of energy and trust, which invites participants to interact with their own selves innerly and innerly.

I acknowledged the value each one placed in the group that took them to open their hearts, which can only happen when one trusts the others and feels supported by. To close, we gave a group hug, followed by peers hug to solidify the bond that was created. "In an atmosphere of growing mutual trust there is less need for hiding pertinent thoughts or feelings." (Luft, 1982). They could be more like themselves, and to perceive others as they are. The atmosphere created by this activity reflected in the work they did later, setting a tone of real sharing and togetherness. Although it took longer than I had previously planned, it was well worth the full hour dedicated to it. It is important to note that their linguistic proficiency was not the point in this activity. Thus, I encouraged them to speak up and not feel restricted by language constraints.

As we were all emotionally charged, my reflection-in-action told me it was time for a break in activities before moving on.

I felt the need to go back to the theory of reflective teaching to promote one more opportunity to make their theoretical background more substantial. Back to class, the group chose one member to go to the board and draw a word web as they, in a chain, were calling out key words that stayed in their minds from the Zeichner and Liston chapters they had read. Next, I gave them some minutes to ask for clarification of items they were still unsure about. I encouraged peers to present their understanding, and I

only intervened when necessary. In order to sum it up, I asked them to put TEACHING in one sentence. They came up with very interesting thoughts, such as "Teaching is learning.", "Teaching is thinking and feeling.", "There's no teaching without learning.", "Teaching involves questioning more than following a set of procedures.", "I am willing to question my teaching.", to which I added "Teaching is a spiritual experience for it forces the teacher to introspect and know herself and her students deeply."

In order to introduce the fundamentals of the program I split the group into three smaller groups. I assigned each group one different part of the handout (appendix 02) so that they would draw a poster that condensed the part they were to work on. To wrap up the activity each small group presented and explained their poster to the other groups.

In respect of the guidelines for getting the most out of the program, I suggested that after one had read an item, the next one in the circle gave an example, or made a brief comment on it. This practice helped in getting participants to relate more to the program as they were challenged to think of practical ways, attitudes that translate each of the guidelines. By leading these two activities in a way in which participants had a very active role, I intended to fight the boredom that lecturing may cause. Their reaction to this variation was positive.

Now that the grounds of working in a community and reflective teaching theory had been tapped into, we went on to form support groups.

The purpose of these groups is twofold. First, they can help enhance the level of reflection for the same subject will very often be seen from different perspectives. Second, having a peer to share uncertainties as well as findings makes one feel that she is not alone in the task, that she belongs to a group with a common goal: question!

Given the fact that they had already spontaneously split themselves into pairs and one group of three, we stepped into structuring their work.

Unstructured support groups may do themselves a disservice. In order to better direct their work, groups must have clearly stated goals and required tasks for each member. In addition, rules can be very helpful to give shape to the meetings, participants' posture, and means used to get to the intended end. For this reason, I presented the rules for support groups (appendix 03), which are suggestions adapted from Hubbard and Power (1993, pp. 132-133) and Piercy (1991, pp.15-16). As I presented them, I encouraged student teachers to elaborate and expand on them. This gave them an opportunity to take in what their role was and which aspects they should take attention to.

Next, groups got together to work with Opening Lines, by Philip McArthur, which brings a list of likely-to-happen situations that could represent a hindrance to the process, and a list of suggestions as to how to react to them in a constructive way. I instructed them to cover the second half (right side) of the page, read through the WHEN... list, and try to come up with their own YOU MIGHT SAY... list, before checking the suggestions in the text. I observed that they felt reassured whenever their suggestions were somewhat similar to the ones on the printed page. "I see we're in tune with the task.", said Sylvia.

Support group meetings were to be held at an extra–class time, a time at which peers were available before our next section.

In order to prepare for their first support group meeting and discuss about their wonderings, I found it important to highlight the fact that all teachers have questions worth pursuing. No question is too small to be disregarded, so they should stay with their questions, observe the issues at

hand, and describe what happened in their journal entries. The partner's role at this point is to help her see which questions can spring from or are related to her wonderings, and thus help decide on a focus of observation.

This meeting evolved into a very intense one for they shared strong inner feelings. My reflection-in-action informed me it would be appropriate to promote an opportunity for them to share each other's lighter side next time. Thus, I asked them to bring an object that symbolizes some kind of amusement to them for the next meeting.

Then I instructed them on how to go about their first support group meeting to be held some time before our next meeting. I found it essential to pinpoint the relevance of keeping the fundamentals of the program in mind, and being ruled by attitudes of openmindedness, responsibility and wholeheartedness (Dewey). In this meeting they should also estate their individual teaching goals, and share them with their partners. This aims to give partners better directions for them to help peers stay on track.

Instructions on homework assignment also included my modelling in brainstorming areas of concern, and narrowing them down to one or two issues that stand out and are worth investigating. This was followed by transforming them into questions, and then generating as many questions as possible about the topics at hand. This practice is meant to add flexibility in accounting for various different possibilities, and thus look at issues unbiasedly, openmindedly.

Concerning the journal notes, my directions were mainly towards keeping focused on their areas of investigation, and being *descriptive* – describe what happened, how they felt, how students reacted, what happened when they did this or that, etc – rather than *prescriptive*, which is oppressive in that it presupposes a ready-made formula that serves as an

answer for all those who question the same issue, disregarding the uniqueness of each individual and situation. "Detailed descriptions of teaching can provide explorers with a wealth of knowledge that can result in a great deal of awareness of what is." (Gebhard and Oprandy, 1999, p. XV)

Finally, I told student teachers to take a couple of minutes to reflect on how the day went for them, and what they were taking with them from the meeting. "To be honest, I've always been reluctant to share my real self. The atmosphere that was created as you described your treasures made me connect to you from a different angle. That also made me feel like sharing.", said Luísa.

Analysis.   Objectives selected for the day proved suitable. I corroborate Zeichner and Liston's belief that although reflection can be a solitary and individualistic endeavor, it can be greatly enhanced by communication and dialogue with others. For this reason, community building tops the list of objectives again. The initial activity set the tone of uniqueness along with appreciation for one another as human beings. They could be more like themselves, and to perceive others as they are. The atmosphere created by this activity reflected in the work they did later, setting a tone of real sharing and togetherness. Although it took longer than I had previously planned, it was well worth the full hour dedicated to it.

By tapping into reflective teaching as opposed to technical teaching we gave continuation to the work started in the first meeting, that of developing the idea of looking into our teaching unbiasedly. Then turning to getting organized came as a sound step into the process.

Referring back to Hubbard and Power's statement which I used to introduce this part, I conclude that an atmosphere conducive to freeing individuals to express themselves as a whole constitutes a major target for

effectiveness in the process of reflection. According to student teachers' feedback, the activities proposed led to this goal. Among those comments, here I quote a few that stood out for me, as they seemed to sum up what the others said:

"Now we are really a group, not only teachers. I believe this will help me do a good job." Elisa

"Just this: it's a relief for me to be among friends." Luísa

"I felt you, Niura, very confident in leading us, and supportive towards our lack of confidence. This makes me feel more relaxed." Carol

"I've been working here for so many years, and today I felt how I am attached to these people. I also felt I can develop a lot in this group, and that a real partnership is very important to give us confidence in this kind of task." Alice

"This meeting made me realize I don't have to be perfect all the time." Betty

"It's very difficult for me to do this kind of thing. To be honest, I hate showing my feelings to people I'm not very connected with. Here I felt among friends, so it was OK." Isa

"We had a very friendly atmosphere. I'm sure I'll grow a lot." Carla

"Today's meeting shook my heart and my mind. In my early teaching time I used to think that teaching was only from the mind. A few years ago I started putting my heart in my classes, and I discovered how meaningful and gratifying teaching can be. Today we were taken to put our hearts here." Alice

Alternatives. The level of reflection that was reached in this section was optimal. Participants stayed on task and responded accordingly, letting go of judgment and connecting with other members more deeply. I was so

happy about the way our meeting progressed that I find it hard to propose alternatives. It all worked neatly in a growing evolution. I will stay with the plan as it is.

Day Three

For the naive thinker, the important thing is accommodation to this normalized "today". For the critic, the important thing is the continuing humanization of man."
Paulo Freire (in Pedagogy of the Oppressed)

Description. The items chosen to be worked on in this third meeting provided a smooth transition from initial preparation to the experimentation with reflection itself. Let us now look at how activities were carried out as well as the reasons that motivated the selection of tasks.

The first activity was about student teachers sharing their lighter side as interacting at a personal level. I decided to propose this focus to promote an opportunity for them to get in contact with each other's relaxed selves, as opposed to the intense selves that sprang in the last meeting.

First I had them form a circle and reminded them of the council rules. I instructed participants to place their objects in the middle of the circle. As a member wanted to tell the group about her amusing experience she should signal this by picking up her object. They reported events that included eating snails for the first time and not knowing how to go about it, feeling sick at the time she was about to start a job interview, introducing her first boyfriend to her parents and other funny moments. They went on

until everyone had had a chance to speak. We wrapped up the activity by having each member say what struck her most from what she heard. There was a rather relaxed tone in the air, that was revealed in the laughter and comments they made: "Isa , I never thought you'd do something like that!", said Elisa.They also sounded wondered to discover one more human side in their mates, the one that makes embarrassing mistakes, does foolish things and has reactions like theirs.

At home they had read the work of Handal and Lauvas (Liston and Zeichner's chapter 3) which presented the more particular and subtle features of reflective teaching, adding substance and texture to the more generalistic conceptualizations dealt with before. In order to review the content of this chapter, student teachers in pairs prepared a visual that represents the knowledge they could derive from chapter 3 in their text. At first their reaction was somehow reticent, but as soon as they started their visuals and felt they were able do it, they got really involved and completed the task sactisfactorily. After each pair's presentation of their visual, I asked them to point out what had been the highlights of the passage for them. They all seemed to stay in the boundaries of teaching as a result of who we are and how we perceive the world, which was exactly what I wanted them to get. Having achieved this objective, we then moved on to the next activity, which ensured a more experience-related task.

The third activity in this meeting was a result of their first support group meeting. I asked participants to share with the group what issues they listed as their points of concern in teaching, and the questions in which they transformed those issues. They produced very interesting questioning on matters such as how to keep students motivated, how to deal with error correction, how to provide enough practice in class, how to promote

interaction in class, how to get students more invested in their learning process, what kind of activities best suit a particular group and how one looks and sounds in class as a teacher.

Next, participants told the group which question(s) they had elected as their focus of reflection and why. The group, in turn, helped their investigations by contributing questions around the topic. For example, Sylvia chose to reflect on how she could keep her students motivated. The other participants helped her expand on the issue by asking her these questions:

How do you know when they lack motivation?

- What happens before/after that?
- How do you feel?
- How do you respond to it?
- What is the student's reaction?
- Does it affect other numbers of the class?
- What do you do next?

Journal entries on one or two issues they had selected were then shared. The first experience with journalling usually generates an unsettling feeling for the simple fact that there are endless ways of approaching it, with no pre-stablished recipes on how to carry it out. I tried to attend to this by having them share their journal entries, and thus see various modes of describing events. Also in an attempt to exercise reflection, they were taken to interact with peers by asking pertinent questions or making related comments, and thus help deepen or open new vistas to the investigations.

Finally, each member acknowledged the group for the contributions by reflecting on them and reporting a few that seemed to be worthy of closer attention. Alice said, "Your questioning has made me consider aspects

I hadn't thought of yet, such as what happens when their level of energy lowers. I'm sure I'll be able to analyze this matter (pair work) more thoroughly now. The only problem for me is to sort out which path to take. I mean, there are so many questions about it now that I don't know where to direct my reflections to." At this point I reminded the group that they were experiencing unsettling feelings provoked by the investigation they had just started, which was by its nature a part of the process. This aspect corresponds to the second phase in Stanley's Framework, that which is characterized by "*lack of clarity as to what reflective teaching is and isn't*" and "*reflective teaching seemingly random*" (TESOL Quarterly, Fall 1998). I also pointed out what Earl Stevick has said about questions, represented in the quotation I used to introduce this chapter: "*They (riddles) are worth asking not for their answers, since they have none but for what we do in struggling with them.*" (Earl Stevick, in A Way and Ways). In short, the process one goes through when inquiring about his or her teaching may be more important than the results they can reach at the end.

Concerning the homework items, I found it important to make a few more considerations on journaling, which is key to reflection in this initial stage. I asked them to journal on their selected focus of reflection. To this end, I gave them a handout containing some guidelines (appendix 05) that range from functional aspects such as timing and modes of writing, to what sort of questions to ask, and stay on task by being specific.

Another homework assignment was to observe one of their reflection partner's classes. Due to its fragile nature, I made more careful considerations on class observation. Although they were going to observe a class in order to gather information and not to evaluate their peers, and they were feeling relatively comfortable with their reflection partners, I

found it relevant to better guide them so as to guarantee that it would be a positive experience. Hence, I gave them a handout (appendix 06), which is an adaptation from Reflective Teaching in Second Language Classrooms by Richards and Lockhart, Guidelines for Peer Observation, pages 24,25 and 26. The main points that address this issue are listing their priorities for observation and getting their peers in tune with their matters of investigation in order to make it a productive experience.

*Analysis***:** Tapping into connecting members of the group having this time the lighter side set the tone helped them relax and loosen up as noticed in the council group. It was interesting to observe how people can get closer to each other when they are given the chance to discover or uncover their other selves, specially if this other facet brings lightness to an environment. They all got very involved by one another's reports, and second–storying was almost inevitable. Among the highlights of the activity, most of them mentioned that they were very pleased to see colleagues from this other perspective, which added a view of wholeness to each individual.

I observed that they enjoyed the way I proposed (visual) to approach the theory revision, which they evaluated as 'creative and appealing', and the fact that they again felt they were not alone in a task (pairs).

Drawing on what they are puzzled by in their classrooms and sharing it with the whole group was elucidatory in two aspects. First, by airing their concerns and what justifies them, they could sift through which questions still remain important to them. The simple fact of wording thoughts may bring along with it an automatic assessment of the validity or importance of the things one is wondering about. Second, by listening to their teaching colleagues and the issues they were debating with they could relate to their own areas of concern, which made the group more cohesive. Sylvia said "*I*

thought my questions were foolish, too small to be taken into account. Now I see they're relevant because some others in the group are also worried about those points. So, it's worth looking into them". The group's active participation by contributing questions around each member's topics added different prisms to the investigations.

In this way, the agenda for the day seemed suitable in getting participants more grounded on how to get started in reflective teaching. They had an opportunity to re-evaluate their concerns and add different perspectives to them, see different ways of describing events, by sharing their journals and thus develop a more critic appoach to their observation for "*the continuing transformation of reality*" (Paullo Freire, in Pedagogy of the Oppessed).

When giving feedback on the day's meeting, they reported several learnings that stood out for them, such as: there is no pre-set format for journaling; airing thoughts can make one see their different nuances, it is OK to change one's focus of observation if observed that the former focus no longer bears relevance or has diverted to another point. Concerning next meeting, they suggested working more on class observation. Some of them said they would rather wait until the first experience and say something about it - " *have a beginner's mind*" (Gebhard, 1999,p.17)-, whereas others were admitedly feeling unsteady about it.

Alternatives. After careful reflection on the plan and how it went, I generated the possibility of making the theory review a little shorter, and as a result of this, being able to allot some more time to exercising reflection. Not that the theory was not worth so much time, but as we had a very tight schedule, our class time could be optimized by prioritizing the practice of

reflection. The chapter review could be done in form of a semantic map, or simply going straight to eliciting the highlights of the passage.

In respect of exercising reflection, which is at he heart of this program, I feel it sensible to address the other party involved in the teaching-learning process: the student. Thus, I propose that student teachers go to a couple of students and have them (the students) ask Wh-questions about the issues teachers are looking into. In my opinion, this investigation can further enrich their pursuit, once they already have their own and their peer's perspectives.

Day Four

"The human person, the human condition, and the realities of life as we know and experience them, are never exact and precise, and so never have such carefully "Worked out" and clearly resolved answers.

Life has much mystery to it, and so requires trust, commitment and giving of oneself without secure assurances of success or fulfillment."

Charles Curran, UNDERSTANDING – An

Essential Ingredient in human Belonging

Description. The day's themes were mainly threefold: beginning with sifting through objectives, then moving on to more grounding on how to go about class observation, and finally devising action plans based on observations. Let us see how the meeting went.

Initially, student teachers drew on the teaching goals they had set in their first support group meeting to reflect on how they were working on them. Looking back at their observation notes and investigation questions, they had a chance to weigh which questions remained worth pursuing.

I reminded them to focus on a few items only, rather than trying to cover a very broad range of issues, which can be overwhelming and impede quality observation. Not surprisingly, they were able to evaluate their areas of concern and either eliminate some that had lost meaning or rephrase others in order to be more specific. "This time I feel more straightforward about my goals. Rewording them has made a difference." (Betty). "What at first looks important may fade out in another moment ." (Alice)

Again, although very briefly this time, I referred to the issues that sustain their relevance overtime and that these are worth investigating.

Next, I instructed them to reflect on how it was for them to have had a class observed and to work with and as a reflection partner. In order to help them be more objective, I had them complete these statements and answer the following question:

1. As a teacher, I felt ……………………because ……………………

   I also ……………………because………………………

2. As an observer, I felt ……………………because…………………

   I also …………………… because…………………………

3. Personally, how do you think observing and being observed can help you learn something about the classroom experience while it is happening?

Teachers' remarks about observation reflected different attitudes.

"I don't really mind having my lesson observed. I'm used to doing that myself, and I've learned a lot from both experiences. I'm sure that because I know you all very well and we get along, the negative reactions are lessened for me."(Sylvia)

"It shook me this time as it did before. I'm not quite myself and neither are students as we are observed. Maybe in a second, third visit we'll have a sample of what my classes are really like." (Isabel)

"For me it's OK. I don't think things change much with the presence of a "stranger" to the class... at least not after the first 10 or 15 minutes. The problem is that I don't see the feedback the observer gives to go much beyond a superficial level." (Clara)

"I really like it when some of you watch my classes. I rarely have the time to talk to other teachers about new ideas. This is a good opportunity for me to get a different perspective on my classes. I felt so relaxed that I think at a point I was "showing off." (Carol)

All in all, they agreed that it is an extremely useful learning tool in that it provides a kind of mirror of the action that place in the classroom.

Concerning how class observation can better help them develop an awareness, trainees gave meaningful feedback:

"I think I need more directions on how to observe." (Isabel)

"For me, giving feedback in at the heart of this question. I need to be better prepared to both give and receive feedback that's honest and still respects the receiver's feelings." (Sarah)

"How about allowing room for the observer to give extra contributions, of things she saw that can be relevant to the teacher?" (Betty)

I acknowledged their suggestions and told them that how to observe is utterly improved with practice. The more one does it, the better she becomes at it. It helps selecting a focus of observation and then brainstorming aspects related to it before doing the observation. This is likely to raise questions that will direct your observation. Giving feedback is best developed if teachers limit their remarks to positive findings initially. As

the course progresses, they can gradually insert notes about points for improvement. Even so, words of encouragement must be used so that one's confidence in teaching is not shattered. I told them to try changing BUT into AND. For instance, instead of saying "You corrected your student's mistakes on the spot, but that made her feel insecure.", try "You corrected your student's mistakes on the spot, and you might want to consider other alternatives."

Above all, I reminded them that it is of utmost importance to listen with the heart, and then speak from the heart. Furthermore, holding a positive, reassuring attitude, an encouraging presence that is clearly revealed in their words, gestures, posture, and looks will undoubtedly make the teacher they are observing welcome their remarks. This aspect is intrinsically related to the intention an observer has in her feedback. They should let their intention of contributing to growth translate into the way they affect their peers.

They raised the issue of questions observers may have that are not the focus of observation set by the teacher. I told them it should be discussed with the one in charge of making decisions on what to investigate – the teacher. Moreover, they should remember that pursuing too many goals or diverting questions may lead to adding an extra observation point, and it is relevant to limit it to one or two issues to be explored so that they do not lose sight of their objectives – less is more.

The activity that followed aimed to help trainees move from Engaging with Reflection to Thinking Reflectively in Stanley's Framework for Teacher Reflectivity (see p. 14). They had made their journal entries in form of a description of what happened in their classroom as soon as the lesson was finished. Now that these notes were sitting for a while, I had students re-

visit them and try to expand on their notes, evaluate what aspects of their descriptions remain unaltered and work on the ones they have different insights about by asking themselves investigative questions. Here is an example of what they did.

Betty's journal excerpt: "I stopped the explanation to ask Pedro to stop disturbing the class. Then he was quiet for a few minutes..."

Betty's questions on her journal excerpt:

-----Why was Pedro disturbing class?

-----How often does he do it?

-----On what parts of the lesson does it happen most frequently?

-----What was I doing when I had to stop class?

-----What about the other students?

-----What happened as a result of that?

This activity was also useful in having them feel more confident about how to observe classes.

Finally, they gave me feedback on what they learned in this day's lesson that they were not aware of before. A few remarks were mainly around a crescent engagement with reflection and how to go about it, dreads they have in common with other fellow teachers, the need for patience and consistency in reflecting so as to reach sound insights, how enriching it can be to observe and be observed. The most remarkable one to me was that of "...how we affect and are affected by those around us." (Clara), and that "Having a certain positive intention is not enough. One has to make sure her intention is clear to the receiver and that the means (voice, eyes, etc) that carry it are used in a way to serve its goal.

Analysis. The reactions I observed in the trainees were completely in accordance with the characteristics Stanley describes in her framework

second stage (struggling to make room for the task in their busy schedules, lacking clarity as to what reflecting really is, "right" way or not, lacking objectivity in their reflective thinking). In spite of all these unsettling feelings, I could see they still want to go on with it for they recognize the educational value in it. Their reactions sound to me much more as "I want to do it better" rather than "I don't want to do it anymore". In order to keep their motivation at this stage of gaining skills, I find it very important to get them involved in discussions and activities that help them see they have made progress, make the insights they have gained through the reflection process more tangible to them.

Having these aspects in mind, the agenda for the day seemed to have served my objectives of having them observe how their goals are being achieved, expanding on class observation by looking at what it is like to observe and be observed, what matters are worth investigating and how to do it, embrace the questions, rather than the need for immediate results. I again highlighted the importance of letting go of judgment and staying on task by focusing on the process.

Alternatives. From my perspective, a possible way to drill on class observation as a positive experience to spur reflection is to experiment it opposed to evaluation. To this end, I propose a roleplay in which four groups of teachers examine the lesson they hear, watch or read about in the role they are given:

1. Enthusiastic Teachers
2. Critical Teachers
3. Supportive evaluator
4. Negative evaluator

During and after the lesson, they should take notes on their experience of positive and negative points. They should remember to stay in role. Next, they create new groups of four: each group should contain, as far as possible, someone from the original group 1,2,3 and 4. Still in role, they present their perspective on the examination.

To conclude the class, have teachers reflect on and share with the group how they felt in the roles they were given and why. This activity is an adaptation of Shifting Viewpoints p.9, Tanner and Green in Tasks for Teacher Education-a reflective approach.

Midterm Check-In

The main reason to hold this check-in meeting was to verify how things were going, and plan for changes if advisable. Agenda matters were dealt with in random order because I let them free to speak their minds and their hearts concerning the program up to this point.

According to their prevailing comments on the process, they said it to have been conducive to the task at hand in a number of ways. They felt it as a growing process of engagement, from getting to know the basics of reflective teaching to actually experimenting with, and implementing it on a daily basis.

The work done on building an atmosphere of trust and respect was key to the process of "dropping guns". They said that the supportive, non-judgmental, safe environment that was drawn on made them feel more at ease to work with the group, and come to terms with themselves in the task

of inquiring about themselves and their own teaching. They felt the community building work that was developed in the beginning to be of key importance for the fulfillment of the subsequent tasks.

As for the process going on inside themselves they said to be experimenting the unsettling feeling of having their truths surface in a way not known before – "It's not easy to see what I'm actually doing." (Isabel). This was at times acknowledged as an integral even fundamental part of the process, and other times as an unwanted discomfort.

Although a lot of exercise was done on journalling, they found they still needed more practice with it to be able to say they feel confident about the way they were doing it. To this end, I gave them a few more guidelines on how to direct their notes, such as:

♦   write down a general description of events;

♦   describe your feelings;

♦   describe the moment you felt most successful and why;

♦   describe the moment you felt frustrated and why;

♦   describe any changes in plans and why you decided to change them;

♦   describe what you were doing most of the time;

♦   describe what your students were doing most of the time;

Concerning class observation, they have reported the reflection partner to be an invaluable element in enhancing reflection – "My partner has challenged me to go further and deeper." (Alice). Although they still find themselves very often producing shallow descriptions, pursuing "safe" questions, and making "safe" observations. The question that remains at the back of some of their minds is "Who am I to say this or that to her?"(Betty).

Thus, I can say that in spite of the fact that peers interact in a very positive way, class observation still remains a challenge to both parties.

They seemed to be reasonably aware of the aspects that have either triggered or being impediments to reflection for them. Among the things pinpointed as to have helped in the process up to that point they referred to the following:

- ♦ sticking to a focus of observation;
- ♦ developing non-judgmental minds;
- ♦ the connection that was created among members;
- ♦ the supportive role taken up by reflection partners;
- ♦ learning to really listen to others and feel listened to;
- ♦ the way the meetings were being led – supportive and challenging at the same time.

As barriers to their own growth they listed:

- ♦ the anxiety about finding ANSWERS;
- ♦ at times, an inner refusal to go deeper and maybe find out how wrong they were about a certain matter;
- ♦ wanting to pursue more than feasible and then getting frustrated;
- ♦ time constraints.

Based on their reports, I then selected a couple of readings to help them with the issues mentioned. They read The Discovery of the Two Selves, from The Inner Game of Tennis by W. Timothy Gallwey, that looks at how judgment can impede performance, Voices from Tesol Quarterly, by

Jack Millet that helps see the richness in reflecting, and Tell me More: On The Fine Art of Listening from UTNE Reader, November/December, 1992 by Brenda Ueland, that talks about the art of listening and as a consequence treasure moments as they are. Above all, they would have to fight their inner judgmental self and let go of anxiety in order to allow room for the reflective teacher to develop.

Day Five

Whenever a man loses hope
The Lord knows he has lost a man.
(source unknown)

Description. After a brief introduction to our fifth meeting in which I read a poem for them to share feelings, I asked reflection partners to get together to revisit their week's class observation notes. Like in the other classes they had observed, soon after the one this week, they gathered to share what they saw in each other's class. In this meeting I asked them to refer back to their notes and see what views remained the same, which aspects they would like to find out more about, and to which they could attach new learnings. This activity helped them re-connect with their description and analysis on the day of the observation and how they see it some days later. This step also prepared fellow trainees for the technique that followed it - watching the video of their classes - because it tapped into their on-sight perspective of the lesson, to be later contrasted with the perspective generated by class observation.

As soon as they were done with the class observation notes, I modelled the activity by showing them a video excerpt of one of my own classes. I posed the question I was looking into and had them ask me related questions and tell me what they observed. After that, each pair / trio went to a different room to watch each other's videoed class. I instructed them to keep the same focus of observation they had set or the in-spot notes and be open to new insights, or even opposing views that might arise by using a different tool (the video).

Watching the video pieces and making notes on what they see was followed by pairs writing down reflections on their notes and sharing them with their reflection peers, discussing their observations, and finally planning for future classes. Throughout these activities I kept going to groups to show I was available if they needed and give any guidelines or suggestions in case they asked for.

Discussing their observations took a long time and was worth the practice. As they started sharing and spotted a divergent view, I encouraged them to rewind the tape and allow themselves the plus the video offers us to zoom-in-on a specific part and go back to it as many times as needed. Clara said after the second time they played the tape:

"What happens to me that I see one thing when I'm in class, and something else in each viewing of the video?" As a response to it I reminded her to tolerate ambiguity and welcome the debate provoked by the observations for it will be the generator of her growing awareness. "I hadn't noticed Carlos' (a student) delight at this point in the lesson. Let me see it again. What made him so enthusiastic?", when she faced the fact that she was unaware of it during the class itself. In order to trigger more reflection I asked her to add the question 'What was I doing at that time?'.

With their reflection partners, they planned their forthcoming lesson for the same group they had videoed and observed. I find it important to be consistent with the process and follow through on insights derived, design a plan of action based on these, experiment and observe what happens. This is the reason why I chose to have them keep the same class as their subject of investigation. "I feel more grounded to plan this lesson now. I mean, I know a couple of things I will certainly try out in class", said Sarah.

I invited trainees to contrast their in-site observations with their video ones, list similarities and discrepancies. I wanted them to realize that a single event may be interpreted differently and produce varied meanings if we change the angle of observation and experiment with different tools. That was exactly what happened.

Finally, we held a feedbak section on how they felt about observing their own videoed classes and how it can be of use to them. They shared having felt utterly resistant to it, found themselves in attitudes of denial such as disconnecting from the activity at times, experimenting with unsettling feelings. Although the common sense was that it is a valuable source of data for their reflections, they agreed that watching oneself raises defensive feelings and reluctancy for "… it is irrefutable proof of what is, what you do …"(Sylvia). This is likely to be gradually decreased as one starts deriving precious learnings from this tool.

Analysis. The activities I planned for this meeting provided opportunities for student teachers to enrich their reflections in three relevant ways. First, reflecting on the same lesson through two different lenses - their own and the video - showed that each different tool, as well as different times at which the tool is referred to, will add different interpretations of the same event. It is like reading a text. Any variables

connected to each reading produce different insights. Second, the video is an instrument that makes it possible for the observers to revisit their focus of investigations as many times as needed. Third, the video constitutes a documentary the teacher holds to follow through on how she has progressed as a teacher on her selected issues, and how she has developed her awareness as a practioner of teaching reflectively along time.

I found that some aspects represented a hindrance here. Mainly the issue of putting oneself at stake and playing both roles - the actor and the spectator – is a big challenge. It is like detaching the soul from the body, stepping aside and watching the body act. A totally new perspective is added to what one sees, and this distancing initially evokes feelings as if one were losing his or her oneness.

Functional issues also posed an extra challenge to the activity. Getting the video camera properly set, dealing with technical matters imply devoting time, too. In this world of very tight schedules we are in, it may add stress to the whole process, which may in turn contribute to trainees favoring other tools. All in all, I see the points raised that represented barriers for reflecting by using a videoed class very predictable ones. The avoidance to putting oneself under investigation with such concrete evidence is inherent of the human nature.

Nevertheless, as one sees how much can be profited from going through this process, and that meaningful substantial learning is not necessarily painless, it tends to become a more released practice. How is best learning achieved? In situations of love or pain is when our inner selves are most invested, and our mindful presence makes room for awareness.

Alternative. My concern on video observation is that teachers may not implement its use for the reasons I mentioned above (mainly their

resistance to it) and thus miss the gains that can spring from such a rich source of data. In this way, thinking about how to lower their affective filter, I thought it might help have student teachers observe the tape only images first, and in a second or third viewing add the sound to it. I believe this would lessen the conflict produced by observing oneself from two channels, seeing and hearing. Furthermore, we are more exposed to our own images (photos, mirrors) than sounds. So, video images only at first might bridge the process until sound is attached.

Day Six

"Wherever you want to go,
you have no choice but to start from where you are."
(Karl Popper)

Description: Day six was planned to present student teachers with the last reflection instrument selected for the TTPR: audio recordings of a class.

Initially, I modelled the activity they were about to do using a recorded piece of one of my own classes. I asked them to listen to the tape and make notes on the issues of teacher and student presence. My choice of using an experience of mine to serve as a model for the activity was again an attempt to lower their anxiety towards being at stake. By doing so, I hoped to epitomize that I too was willing to undergo observation because I had issues of concern to me which I wanted to find out more about. Trainees were my reflection partners this time. As they shared their observations with me, I made sure I acknowledged their insights as precious contributions to my further reflection. I shared my own notes, highlighted

the similarities and discrepancies between theirs and mine, and how both can trigger deeper reflection and consequently learning.

Next, reflection peers gathered to develop the listening to their own recorded classes. As in previous activities, each trainee set her selected focus of observation, they both listened to the tape as many times as needed and then shared notes. My only observation this time was that for each listening they wrote their notes in a different color. This procedure was to purposefully help them see visually how things may look different at different times. Isabel made an interesting remark: 'Funny thing is that my first listening notes still remain more meaningful to me. The other ones sound artificial as if I were forcefully trying to see something that was not there.' This reminded me of a meditation instruction my guide at SIT, Claire Stanley, used to give, 'If you find yourself wandering around, gently bring yourself back to this focus of meditation'.

Then, based on their observation outcomes, partners planned a forthcoming lesson. Besides the general lesson plan notes, I asked them to add an attachment with reminders related to their own behavior in class. My purpose here was to have them see that there is more in a lesson plan than just the list of activities, procedures and materials. The adjacent, peripheral ingredients are important elements in a successful lesson. Their attachments brought reminders such as: keep eye contact with all class evenly, be selective of errors to correct, have students share air time, and many others.

After this, we gathered together as a group to work on in-sight observation juxtaposed to audio recording observation.

Before airing their findings, they reflected on how in-sight observation is similar to or different from its recorded version. In this respect, they were

rather unanimous to state that like all other observation tools, the audio recording made different aspects emerge. Once a channel (visual) is blocked, the other (hearing) is activated in an intensity so as to compensate for its lack, and this results in realizing facets not captured through the eyes.

Finally, when giving feedback on this meeting they demonstrated positive reactions towards the practical, easy-to-set and easy-to-use nature of the tool. A teacher can arrange for it without having to mobilize other people.

Another positive side to it is that audible data is stored entirely and can be assessed at any time in the future for further examination. 'I know I'll have it ...', said Alice.

On the other hand, there still remains a relative resistance to listening to oneself for it is a practice we are less used to: 'It's weird to listen to my own voice and to what I'm saying. I feel like changing some parts ... in fact, I probably did it mentally during the activity', said Clara. Furthermore, five of them reported feeling initially unable to derive any substantial observations from it. 'I had a very shallow, obvious view of what I heard', reported Isa.

My feedback on their feedback was that it is natural in this process of experimenting with something new to activate our defensive system to protect ourselves from criticism, we are prone to see events differently from what they are and believe in what we see in an attitude of denial. This barrier is gradually removed as the teacher tries to remain open to see what is there – letting go of judgment - and applies this tool more frequently. The more familiar one is with a technique, the lower the affective filter and the higher the level of observation.

For next time, the last meeting of this program, I asked student teachers to write a two to three-page learning journal on the process they

went through along the course, what expectations they had initially and how they were attended to or remained unfulfilled, how their feelings and perceptions changed or how they feel about the different tools for observation and reflection.

Analysis: Admitledly, modeling the activity before actually doing it makes a difference. This is especially true if the model subject is a fellow that belongs to the same community in search of a common objective: a growing awareness.

Coloring notes differently for each listening time was a procedure that helped student teachers visualize their insights as they progressed in the task. Three of them (out of nine) said that their initial observations on the cassette were more meaningful. They reported the notes that followed the other listening stances as "… rather made up." (Carol). I interpret what happened here as a need for teachers to develop an attitude of crediting their sparks of awareness, the ones they have from a beginner's, and maybe let them sit for a while until other facets can be spotted more clearly. It is like waiting until the wind stops blowing and the dust settles down that one can see which objects need more cleaning, which are left upside down, which remain intact. The others showed an enthusiasm for each listening as complemmentary observations.

Learning as a spiral process was again tapped into. Designing behavior reminders promoted an opportunity to go back to aspects they had been investigating or discovered as a result of their investigations, and thus not lose sight of them. This activity helped trainees develop an increased motivation because their progress was becoming more tangible to them. They could see it in their reminders list. They developed an awareness of aspects like what interaction patterns a teacher favors in class, how oral

error correction is addressed, how the teacher reacts to students' mistakes – voice and gesture changes.

Concerning the parallels trainees drew from in-sight versus audio recording observation, I conjure up to their analysis. I believe that observation can be enhanced if different channels of reception are activated. For instance, the sight channel will capture one perspective of the event, which can be enriched by the perspective the listening channel touches. Audio recording can be a handy tool because it does not require elaborate procedures and arrangements. There is one last advantage I can attach to it as opposed to in-sight data collection. In the latter, an observer may leave relevant items unnoticed because it takes refined awareness to be able to see all that is there. The recording will keep an integral register of the event, which can be assessed at any point in the future.

The trainees' responses to the activities I proposed for this time sound coherent with the process. From my perspective, they were gradually developing an awareness of facts while experimenting with different tools. Besides, their resistance to being observed lowered as they had learnings derived from it. Their observations produced an inner conflict, which in its turn led to reflections that required a plan for future action.

Alternatives: After reflecting on how the day went, I see it makes sense to carry out this day's plan before day five – the video observation - because the process might be smoother. I propose an inversion in the order of activities. Whereas the video recording challenges two of our senses - sight and hearing -, the audio recording stretches the hearing only. For me, it might be valuable trying out the audiotaped class before the video due to the fact that it challenges less of our self-defences and sounds more

reasonable if we are to consider becoming a reflective practitioner a crescent process.

Day Seven

'Human beings are no more than a result of their thoughts. Whatever they think is what they will come to be.'

(Gandhi)

Description : The last meeting in a series of seven, the day was devoted to reflecting on how the program evolved for them, in which ways it helped them develop in light of their goals and which plans they will make for the future.

My organization for the day started by the environment that I wanted to favor introspection, reflection and subsequent sharing. I arranged for nice, soft background music, some flowers in the middle of the chairs set in a circle, and a card containing a thought taped under each chair. On the walls, I had posters with the poems that I used to introduce the meeting days described on this paper.

Initially, I asked them to find the thought cards under their seats, take a few minutes to reflect on them, and then share with a peer. My purpose with this warm-up was to build a bridge for connecting, strengthening the bonds created along the course.

Following this activity, student teachers sat together with their reflection partners to share in which ways the reflection partners helped them in this program and what they would like to have more of in future

activities. I asked them to refer to three aspects that learning involves: cognitive, linguistic and affective (Brown, 2001), and be specific on each issue that stood out for them so that their feedback to each other was constructive. Meanwhile, I made my own reflections on how they helped me develop the program and myself. When they gathered back as a group, I had them share one or two positive aspects of having had that colleague as a reflection partner. This was a way of making "public" acknowledgements for the positive features the peer applied to her role. Isabel said Clara had been very true to her. Sarah described Carol as having been inspiring. Alice referred to Sylvia's presence as challenging yet smooth. Isa and Luísa thanked Betty for her readiness and flexibility . In this whole group event, I decided not to draw on how they could be of more help to each other because they would not feel comfortable sharing it "publicly". Drawing on strengths and highlighting them gives enough ground to build on.

Next, we shared our reflection journals on how the program went, how they developed as teachers, and what plans they now have for the future in light of what happened in the TTPR. In their evaluation of the program as a whole they gave positive feedback with respect of how time was used for the variety of procedures presented, the atmosphere created and the relevance of reflecting on their practice. From their perspective meeting time was maximized in the way it comprehended a number of activities. "I think we did a lot in only two months!" (Betty), "Although I feel I needed more time for practice, I'm sure we did what we could possibly have done for these days." (Isabel), "For me the program was extremely productive. I doubt we could 've had more or better in this time span." (Sarah).

They made the point of how fundamental it is to work on creating a positive atmosphere and building a community. As a matter of fact, they were unanimous to say it was a *sine-qua* non facet of the program, particularly because its lack affects an individual's affective side and prevents opening up. "I think I would have felt refrained to expose if I hadn't connected with you like we did in the activities in the beginning of the course." (Sylvia).

From their perspective, the highest point of the program was having shown them there is so much to be discovered about their teaching and that all the data they need is in what happens in their classes. They talked about the fact that for many of them before the TTPR they had no directions as to what to improve in their teaching and how to go about it. "I wanted to learn more about good teaching, but I didn't know where to start because I didn't even know what to look at.", remarked Alice. A contradictory feeling was also raised by Isabel:" It was a mix of anxiety and conflict brought about all the explorations and their branches of interpretation, and the satisfaction for having objectives in mind and every now and then come up with sensible observations on them."

Concerning plans for the future, one teacher said she was unsure about whether to pursue Reflective Teaching as a constant practice for she thinks it might add extra work load to her tight schedule, in spite of the fact that she saw a value in it. Three trainees demonstrated to be willing to adopt the reflective journal as a regular practice, but they were not sure about other tools. "It might take me some more time before I familiarize with recordings, for example. I still think they're time-consuming", said Luísa. The other five student teachers showed a firm intention to apply the different reflection tools for a more extended period of time in order to gain

experience in dealing with them and then decide which one(s) to stay with. One point they all agreed on was that now that they had been introduced to the practice of reflection they will surely be doing it even if it is inadvertently, as a result of an awareness button that was touched in the TTPR.

As a final activity, I invited teachers to work on the notes they had made in the beginning of the program concerning TEACHING , LEARNING and their ASSUMPTIONS. When planning this activity I wanted it to build a link with the beginning of the program - resembling the idea of the experiential learning cycle (see Kolb, 1984). Being so, besides alluding to the same topic, I decided to handle it the same way. Thus, I asked them to jot down their current views on the referred issues. Next, they got together with a peer and shared their insights by doing active listening (see Day 1-description). As soon as they were done with it, I allowed them a couple of minutes to reflect on how their beliefs changed or remained the same. The next step was sharing their findings with the whole group. They all reported aspects that were unchanged, but they focused mainly on assumptions they had felt challenged to redesign. These were points that made them feel they had achieved progress. Carol said her struggle had been "...compensated by the learning she got from it.", and that was the value she was taking with her. Isabel added that "...all the instability caused by the questioning in fact helped *oxygen old cells*, and made me have a refreshed view on old concepts."

To finalize the program, I expressed my gratitude for their willingness to participate in the TTPR and stay throughout the whole course. I also congratulated them on their openenness to share a huge piece of themselves.

Analysis. The last day of meetings was purposefully designed to promote a return to the first day and reflect on how issues evolved. On the side of the trainee I found it relevant to evaluate how they developed their teaching and themselves as teachers, and which of the observation tools presented in the TTPR can be of use to them in the future. As for me, I needed to assemble the pieces I had chosen to design this program and have an assessment on how efficient they were to promote reflection. Generally speaking, the agenda matched what trainees and I expected to have achieved. My goals of introducing teachers to reflection and its tools were fulfilled and the way the program developed allowed me to revisit my notions of reflective teaching, become more experienced with its practice, and observe what procedures can or should be changed for future teacher development programs.

Alternatives. There are always alternative ways to approach matters. For this closure of the TTPR I might suggest that student teachers write a reflection letter to a fellow trainee, which she will reply later on. This task not only makes them practice reflection and share with peers, but also has a future in that it requires a response, and thus the cycle is formed again. Another possibility is to have fellow trainees write a dialogue in pairs, reacting to each other's journals.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Having gone through all the steps in organizing this Teacher Training Program on Reflection – bibliographical research, selecting what to include, deciding how to go about activities, dealing with functional issues -, holding the group meetings and the individual check-in section, my conclusions concern mainly two aspects: that of an evaluation of the program, and a macroscopic view of what the reflective practice entails.

Reflecting on my own teaching has been the most challenging and yet rewarding way for me to grow as a teacher, and it was likewise for my trainees in this program. The challenges inherent in reflection spring from an inner fight generated by questioning long-held beliefs and principles, a reluctance to face who you are and what you actually do, investigating one's own effectiveness as a professional, an awareness that will certainly call for action, and all these aspects remove one out of his or her comfort zone. Another difficulty is that the fear to unveil oneself and the world around might impede a genuine willingness to do it for it encompasses other issues, too. It requires a great deal of detachment to move up from a teaching plateau to a crescent development, it takes time to make the transition, and the agent in charge does not feel competent at what he or she is doing. The struggle against one's own previous training which is traditionally set to occupy space, not to open it, and now learn to appreciate questions rather than their answers also poses an extra challenge to the reflective pattern of teaching.

Once the challenges I mentioned above are somehow dealt with, or at least minimized, the reflection practitioners face their most significant barrier. It is really difficult to think reflectively, to get any level of analysis. Most teachers often focus on "I did this wrong." or "Students did that

wrong.", whereas the ultimate goal is to reach "That didn't go well. I wonder why."

Initially, only superficial, safe descriptions are produced. As the process progresses, one must look for deeper observations. Ideally, the teacher will mature her reflective practice and attain a level of reflection in which she is able to understand what is happening for the students linguistically, cognitively, and affectively. This understanding will inform the teacher what action to take next.

Rewards compensate qualitatively for the debate produced by the process of reflection. It is the way that leads to a growing awareness, the only educable thing (Gattegno, p.8). It makes one move from a shallow to a deeper understanding of what happens, the sources of these events, and what they lead to. It is similar to the study of history, in which one describes the present, understands it as a product of the past and a determining factor for the future. Through this awareness the teacher can evolve from being merely a language teacher to being a critical pedagogue, an agent for change.

A teacher's way of teaching is as unique as her fingerprint, and teaching reflectively will enable her to be more confident in choosing her own ways.

Once I heard from a friend of mine that the most significant learnings occurr in two situations: love or pain. Her words somehow shocked me or originated a feeling of repulsion for pain. Why should learning be linked to pain? As I grew more mature, life taught me that she was right. The process one goes through when suffering is so intense that the marks left are likely to be remembered as a lesson learnt. That makes pain as remarkable as love. I see this life lesson very closely related to reflecting on one's own

teaching. In my opinion, the reflective practice comprises both of them. Teachers who are willing to undertake the task genuinely care for their teaching and its impact on students because they *love* what they do. The *pain* results from the individual responsibility for their own learning, and especially the feeling of vulnerability as one's wholeness is unveiled. This strain is welcome when teachers realize that it will be the generator of grounded, sound changes in their teaching. As a matter of fact, it is common sense that it takes a long, dark night until the sun shines brightly, and you, having surrendered to what the darkness offers you, will be reenergized to enjoy the light of the day to its most. To say the least, it is worthwhile.

With respect of the Teacher Training Program on Reflection, I was able to derive significant learnings that concern the trainees, the process they were involved in, and how my plan helped me achieve my objectives.

The trainees must have certain qualities that will make reflection possible. First, effective learning takes place when trainer and trainees tap into existing knowledge and experience. Thus, trainees ideally have had some previous experience in teaching and have taken a teacher training course that made them acquainted with the teaching basics. Second, they must be willing to move from their teaching-by-recipe comfort zone to a self-critical and self-directed approach. This requires a great deal of detachment and can only be achieved if one is intrinsically motivated. Specifically in this program, I observed trainees reached different levels of abstraction as a result of how they differ in the aspects I raised above. Additionally, the level of engagement one reaches along the course makes a determining difference in where one gets in the end.

The process in initiating student teachers into reflection as a means for their development can be facilitated or hindered by the kind of atmosphere that is created, the consistency with which the practice of reflection and its principles are exercised, and observing how one is progressing. Building a community that values the knowledge, skills, needs, learning styles, personalities and interests each member of the group brings to the program is key to the success of such an endeavor.

Recent studies, this program, and my own experience likewise have shown that merely observing a class, journalling, viewing or listening to an audio or video excerpt of a class does not guarantee improvement in teachers' understanding of their own teaching. It is necessary to establish a systematic and objective way to explore the data collected. To this end, teachers need to not only know what they are looking for, but also keep an open mind for new discoveries. Besides, teachers must be aware that it only works satisfactorily if adopted as a continuous process. In this aspect the Teacher Training Program on Reflection provided enough opportunities for trainees to keep their objectives in mind and still make room for other alternatives along the way.

It is common sense that the process that involves becoming a reflective practitioner takes time, discipline and practice. As for this program, I conclude it is an efficient plan to follow due to its feasibility. Although not complete, it still is a practical, objective, graded, and comprehensive mode to present teachers with the practice of reflection and its tools as an avenue for their development, "For the critic [thinker], the important thing is the continuing transformation of reality,..." (Freire, p. 73). Once perfection is unattainable, I am satisfied with the steady improvement I could observe in

the teachers who participated in the Teacher Training Program on Reflection and myself as their instructor.

Reflecting on one's own teaching is not difficult as I initially thought. It is indeed *extremely* difficult. The avenues that lead to genuine learning from it are like pathways in the desert – they cannot be seen from the surface. Nevertheless, if we remain focused and in tune with what is in the deeper layers of the sand, we will find a water vein that will take us to an oasis.

"The secret of happiness is making sure you do all you can to get what you want. And afterwards, you keep wanting what you got. No matter what happens along this way, don't ever lose your tenderness."

(I heard this from a friend)

APPENDIX

Appendix 1

Homework Assignment for Day One

CCBEU - October 1998
AN INTRODUCTION TO REFLECTIVE TEACHING
INSTRUCTOR: Niura Regiane Henke
Assignment due October 9

1. Freewrite into TEACHING for 5 minutes. You may put your thoughts, feelings, raise questions, describe a positive experience you've had and what helped you, describe a negative experience and think of what was a hindrance... in short, whatever comes to mind. This is a non-stop writing activity. Don't allow your hand to stop within these 5 minutes.

2. Do the same as above for LEARNING. Try to list everything you can think of which is related to learning. You can describe an experience you had as a learner, which conditions favored/hindered it.

3. Write about your TEACHING/LEARNING ASSUMPTIONS for 20 minutes. Here I suggest that you take the time to think about what your beliefs are with respect to:
   - The four skills
   - Motivation
   - Atmosphere
   - Fluency vs. Accuracy
   - The teacher must...
   - The student must...

4. Write what you think reflective teaching is all about. At least 5 minutes.

Have fun! Enjoy the weekend!

Appendix 02

AN INTRODUCTION TO REFLECTIVE TEACHING

The Program Fundamentals

"Men live in a community in virtue of the things which they have in common; and communication is the way in which they come to possess things in common".
John Dewey (1916) – Democracy and Education

GOALS:

The goal of this teacher development course entitled AND INTRODUCTION TO REFLECTIVE TEACHING is to help teachers move from a mechanical, technical top-down approach to teaching to the first steps of teaching reflectively. Teachers will be presented with useful tools and a variety of techniques to structure reflection. Such teachers:

- have the necessary pedagogical skills to implement their approaches;
- have good knowledge of the language to be taught;
- have knowledge of how people learn;
- have the necessary interpersonal skills to teach effectively;
- have the will to continue to grow professionally;
- behave responsibly as professionals and as members of this teaching community;

- are genuinely interested in becoming more aware of what is going on in their classes at a linguistic, cognitive, and emotional levels;
- are open to change;
- must be available and committed to meeting as a group at the appointed time for 8 weeks in a row.

ASSUMPTIONS UNDERLYING THE PROGRAM:

- Each learner has a unique contribution to make to the group, and for this reason he or she must be respected and valued.
- Learning in a group requires that each individual take responsibility for his or her effect on others.
- Learning is change. As such, individuals must be willing to investigate their own assumptions, course of action, efficiency as professionals and patterns of thought.
- Learning is favored:
    o in an atmosphere of trust and respect;
    o when learners take responsibility for their learning;
    o when it is based on concrete experience;
    o when learners are genuinely invested in the subject matter.
- Much of what happens in the classroom is unknown to the teacher. Teachers very frequently are not tuned in what the students are doing. Rather, they are invested in following the curriculum and covering their lesson plan for the day. Jack Millet writes, *"Their awareness of students is somewhat on the periphery rather than at the center of their teaching".* (The Tesol Matters, October/November, 1997, p. 20). As teachers develop their ability

to stay with their students and what is happening right here, right now, they become more fully present, and thus more aware of what is going on.

- Experience is not enough in becoming competent and effective as a language teacher. *"Experience is the starting point for teacher development, but in order for experience to play a productive rule, it is necessary to examine such experience systematically".* (Jack Richards, in Reflective Teaching in Second Language Classrooms).

- If not the teacher, who? Nobody else is better equipped than the teacher to inquire about herself, her teaching and her students. She is the one who knows toe soil better than anyone else, has chosen the seeds, has decide when and how to plant them. She knows what kind of follow-up procedures are important for a healthy growing. Outside voices can undoubtedly enrich, enlighten, and help sustain the reflective experience, but they cannot do it FOR the teacher, or give her THE answer.

- Reflecting is a never-ending process. First, because the more teacher do it the better they get at it. Consequently, the more they find out, and the more they want to do it. Second, there are no two situations exactly alike. Like every human being, every situation is unique and as such it takes specific interpretations. Despite the fact that practice with reflection facilitates interpretations and helps one move faster to reflective action, it does not provide ready made solutions to similar puzzles. Last, there is no much to be uncovered even behind the most ordinary situation that trying to get a handle of every aspect involved at

once can be too demanding and lose meaning, specially in the case of a novice practitioner.

- *"Exploration leads to further exploration, discovery to still further discovery".* (Odell, 1987).

GUIDELINESS FOR GETTING THE MOST OUT OF THE PROGRAM:

Forecasting that some initially obvious behavior may get blurred as the program develops, I find it useful to remind you of a few engagement tips that you need to draw upon.

- ❑ Develop a non-judgmental mind.
- ❑ Develop an acceptance of human differences and make them work FOR and not against you or the group.
- ❑ Develop an openness to share feelings, thoughts, experience and expertise.
- ❑ Develop an ability to express yourself in a timely manner.
- ❑ Develop an ability to monitor your own behavior and is impact on others.
- ❑ Accept the importance of learning form others.
- ❑ Prepare to give and receive positive criticism.
- ❑ Be committed to yourself and the group.
- ❑ Listen from the heart, speak from the heart.
- ❑ Be punctual.
- ❑ Be disciplined with respect to doing all tasks, meeting deadlines, and attending all meetings.
- ❑ Contribute with your best.

❑ Contribute to building an environment that favors genuine communication.

REQUIRED TET: Reflective Teaching: An Introduction, by Zeichner and Liston.

"..., not only does social life demand teaching and learning for its own permanence, but the very process of living together educates. It enlarges and enlightens experience; it stimulates and enriches imagination; it creates responsibility for accuracy and vividness of statement and thought".

John Dewey (1916) – Democracy and Education.

Appendix 03

Support Group Rules

1. Agree upon when to meet.

> Day and time of meetings must be appropriate to all members, but make sure you meet at least once a week for these two months.

2. Try to meet outside of your school.

> Stepping aside from your working context can enhance new perspectives on the awareness you are looking for.

3. Develop attitudes of respect, equality, and support.

> Keep it in mind that only in communities where people are physically, emotionally, and intelectually respected can growth occurr. Acknowledging each member as equally capable of contributing to one another's development is crux to profiting the most from the experience. Remember you are not alone, and will not leave anyone alone.

4. Keep a teaching journal with your reflections.

> Store your notes in a teaching journal right after the teaching itself. Share your observations, learnings, and questions with your reflection partner(s) in your meetings. BE DISCIPLINED!

5. Set up support rules.

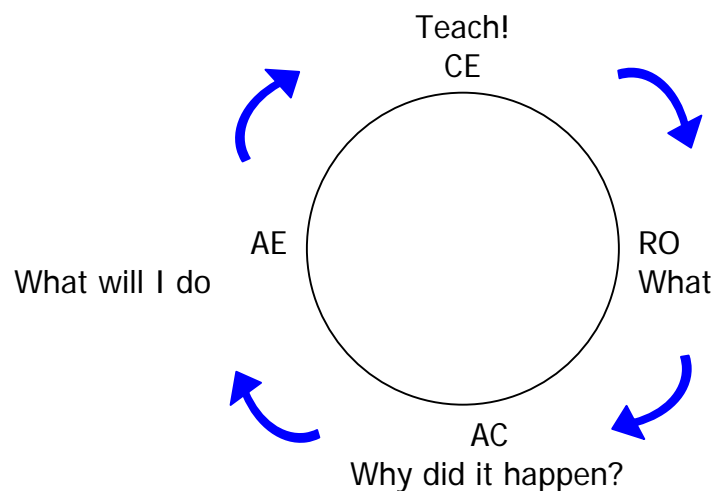> Agree on ground rules to ensure fairness to all parties involved, such as:

- What will you do if:

- someone does not complete a task?
- talks and proposed topics diverge?
- someone is not punctual?
- someone does not come to a meeting?

6. Honor confidenciality.

Appendix 4

Experiential Learning Cycle

Teach!
CE

AE

RO

What will I do

What

AC
Why did it happen?

Appendix 5

GUIDELINESS ON REFLECTING

- Try timed practice – at least ten minutes a day. Be disciplined!

- Put your pen to paper and keep your hand moving, writing about the things that happened in your classroom.

- Leave a white margin on your paper where you can afterwards write down your reflection upon your descriptions.

- Question about your focus of reflection and be specific in it – not fruit, but apple; not Mario, but the guy who lives next door.

- Don't reject or needlessly broaden your questions. Instead, with your reflection partner (this can be done together), brainstorm related questions to start moving from observation to thinking reflectively (see Stanley in TESOL Quarterly, Fall 1998). Ask yourself and one another questions beginning by What procedures promote...?; What is the role of...?; What happens when?; What is the difference between...?; How does ...affect...?;How do students...?; How do you...?; The WHAT and HOW-questions are most often the key to setting the reflective practitioners free to describe the process they are inquiring about. Last but not least allow yourselves to modify your questions if in the course of your investigations you feel your concerns lie some other place.

Appendix 6

GUIDELINES FOR PEER OBSERVATION

I thought I should give you some more guidelines in order to make it clear for you which steps to take for this week's task of observing each other's class. If you have already set about it in a different way, don't worry. These are some suggestions to make this process a smooth one.

1. Make a list of points you'd like to observe/have in your class.
2. Prioritize. End up with a list of the three main ones. Also register why you want to have those points observed.
3. Get together with your reflection partner prior to observation. Discuss the nature of the class to be observed, the kind of material being taught, the kinds of students in the class, schedule, and above all tell your observer what you three priorities are and why. This will provide a focus for your observer to collect useful information for you and thus increase the value of observation.
4. Class observation. Observer will make notes of all the class flow, but she'll keep the three objectives as the main focus of observation. It's important to keep a record of everyghing. It may help clarify points. Remember that the observer should remain an observer in order to be effective as one.
5. As soon as class is finished, you and your partner will take 5 to 10 minutes to make notes of observations, feelings, reactions.

6. Immediately afterwards get together to discuss your observations face to face. You read your notes first (on each point) and your partner (observer) follows. The observer should ask questions to increase reflection. Discuss discrepancies.

7. You and your observer give each other feedback on what it was like to have worked together in this first experience. This is not only about the class observation, but rather how the two of you interacted along the process.

Enjoy your experience

Niura.

Appendix 7

Plan for Day One

Objectives.

1.   Community Building. Help student teachers develop a sense of
appreciation for their peers and their background experience by
developing a keener skill in listening to one another.

2.   Learning/Teaching experiences. Promote opportunities for
student teachers to draw on their own experiences and acknowledge
them as powerful determiners of present action.

3.   Learning/Teaching assumptions. Give participants an
opportunity to come to grips with their own beliefs by having them
explicitly word them.

4.   Reflective Teaching theory. Introduce participants to the theory
on which reflective teaching is fundamented, as well as the process of
reflection and reflection tools.

Activities:

1.   Active Listening/Understanding Responses

1.1 Learning/Teaching experiences:

a. Instructor explains what active listening is and how they can benefit from practicing it.

b. Instructor models.

c. Pairs practice it by talking about their last vacation.

d. Share (whole group).

e. Pairs practice active listening and giving understanding responses this time by talking about their own teaching and learning experiences.

f. Individually they freewrite into how they see these past experiences reflect on their present behavior.

g. Share findings (whole group).

1.2   Learning/Teaching assumptions:

a. Pairs practice active listening and giving understanding responses by drawing on their own learning and teaching assumptions.

b. Share findings (whole group).

1.3Feedback on active listening.

Participants describe how they felt and how active listening and understanding responses helped them in the activities proposed.

2.   Council (Reflective Teaching thoughts):

As a whole group, participants share what they think reflective teaching is, their expectations and goals.

3.   Reflective Teaching theory - Instructor's presentation:

3.1   Dewey's outline of reflective teaching:

a)   definition (see Zeichner and Liston, 1996, p.9). In short,
consider the fact itself, what is behind it, and the outcome produced by
it.

b)   attitudes of openmindedness, responsibility, and
wholeheartedness which require teachers to examine their teaching
through different lenses, and question beliefs and practices (Dewey,
1933).

c)   the role of intuition, emotion and passion (see Zeichner and
Liston, 1996, p....)

3.2   Schön's contribution:

• reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action (see Zeichner and Liston,
1996, p.........)

3.3   Stanley's condensed work of Dewey and Schön (see Learning to
Think, Feel and Teach Reflectively, Stanley................)

3.4   Stanley's framework for teacher reflectivity (see A Framework for
Teacher Reflectivity)

3.5   Reflection tools (see Richards and Lockhart, 1996, p. 6)
Give general notions only.

3.6   Stress the importance of:

a)   building a community of trust and respect;

b)   developing non-judgmental minds;

c)   listening to others and to one's own inner self;

d)   Focus on the process, not on the outcomes.

4.   For next meeting:

a)   bring an object you treasure.

b)   read Reflective Teaching – Zeichner and Liston, Introduction

and Chapters 1 and 2.

5.   Feedback:

Orally as a group, participants report on how the first meeting was for

them, what they felt, and give suggestions for next time.

Appendix 8

Plan for Day Two

Main focus of the day:

1. Community building
2. Reflective Teaching vs. Technical Teaching
3. Getting organized

Activities:

1. Council (an object you treasure):
   a. introduce the origin of council and council rules.
   b. all objects are put in the middle of the circle. A participant who wants to speak has to hold his or her object, and tell the group what is so special about it. Go on until everyone has had a chance to speak.
   c. to close, each one says what struck him or her most about another member of the group.
2. Sharing (Program Fundamentals):
   a. split the group into three small groups
   b. assign each group one different part of the handout entitled Program Fundamentals .
   c. small group members get together and draw a poster that condenses the part they were assigned.
   d. small groups present and explain their poster to the other groups.
3. Web (Zeichner and Liston Introduction, Chapters 1 &2):

a. instructor draws word web on the board (key words to rebuild the text read).

b. participants are given 10 minutes for questions. Other members answer. Instructor only intervenes if necessary.

c. participants retell reading in a chain.

4. Support groups organization:

a. splitting into pairs or triads.

b. groups set their own goals.

c. groups establish their own rules.

d. Philip McArthur's Opening Lines

5. For next meeting:

a. bring an object that makes you happy/laugh.

b. read Zeichner and Liston chapter 3

c. list aspects in your teaching that you keep on wondering about.

d. have first meeting with your reflection partner, discuss "c" above, transform these aspects into questions.

e. journal on a few of the questions you have listed.

6. Feedback:

Written: participants write a few lines about what the golden nuggets of today's meeting were. Next they will share with the group.

Appendix 9

Play for Day Three

Objetcives:

1. Community building. Promote an opportunity for students and teachers to share their lighter side as interacting at a personal level;
2. Reflective Teaching Theory. Exchange ideas on the nature and sources of teachers' appreciative systems and how they are (not) connected with teachers' practices;
3. Week's focus on observation. Teacher students will share areas of concern in order to broaden their views on those issues;
4. Journal entries. Teacher students will contribute to each other's reflection process by offering their own perspectives.

Activities:

1. Council (an object that reminds you of some funny event):
   a. remind council rules;
   b. council;
   c. highlights of council.

2. Visual Reading (Zeichner and Liston's chapter 3):
   a. prepare visuals;
   b. pairs present their visuals;

    c. highlights of the passage.

3. Sharing goals/areas that intrigue you (from first reflection pair meeting).

4. Sharing Journal entries.

5. Homework assignment:

    a. Read Zeichner and Liston, Chapter 4.

    b. Observe at least ONE of your reflection partner's classes.

    c. Journal on your focus of reflection.

6. Feedback:

In writing participants give answers to the questions below:

"What are you taking with you from today's meeting that you did not know about or were not aware of before?"

"What do you feel you need (more of) for next meeting?"

Appendix 10

Plan for Day Four

1.Goals.
     Have student teachers reflect on objectives and how they have be en
     accomplished so far.
2.Class observation.

     Broaden their experience with class observation by reflecting on its

     usefulness and sharing with others.

3.Thinking reflectively.

     Practice reflecting on their own observations.

4.Action.

     Help them move from reflection to action.

 Activities:

1. Keeping track of objectives juxtaposed to achievements.

 a. reflect on goals set;

 a. reflect on investigations;

 b. sift through investigations questions. Choose which to stay with.

2. Expanding on class observation (process):

 a.   reflection: class observation and reflection partner;

 b. share;

 c. plusses and minusses;

 d. What next?

3.Learning to think reflectively.

a. model journal excerpt questioning;

b. own excerpts questioning;

c. sharing.

4. Action planning.

a. lesson plan;

b. share plan;

5. Homework:

a. Observe your reflection partner's planned lesson;

b. Get together with your reflection partner and discuss observations;

c. Reflection groups should have a halfway check-in section with me. Sign up for a time after your class observation this week;

d. Journal on your focus of reflection.

REFLECTIVE TEACHING

Instructor: Niura Regiane Henke

This week's assignment – due October 30

1. Sign up for a talk with me either individual or with your reflection partner(s). This is to be a decision taken by both of you (or the three of you). Bring your class observation notes, the objectives you set for yourself and your reflective writing on the experience (#7 in last week's list). Once this is a check-in meeting, feel free to bring any suggestions you may have for this week's observations.

2. Observe each other's class (one class + follow the same steps as last week's, if not instructed otherwise in our check-in). See if your objectives for this week still remain the same. Have it clear for you why you decided to keep/change them.

3. Read Chapter 2 from Zeichner and Liston and be prepared to talk about it in our next meeting. I suggest that you take time to jot down what struck you most as you read the chapter, write out a summary of each part just for yourself, or talk to your workmates along the week.

Have a nice and profitable week. I'm looking forward to talking to you about your classes observation. Don't forget to sign up.

"Some riddles have no final answers.
A few answerless riddles are still worth asking.
They are worth asking not for their answers, since they have none, but for
what we do in struggling with them".
Earl Stevick in A WAY AND WAYS

Appendix 11

Lesson Plan for Day 5

<u>DAY FIVE:</u>

Main focus of the day:

1. Experimenting with video recording as a tool to help develop a deeper understanding of teaching.

2. Comparing class observation outcomes and video analysis.

Activities:

1. A model for video analysis.

    A. First viewing: Instructor plays a ten-minute video of one of her own classes and invites teachers to watch it, focusing on the following questions:

    a.1. What is problematic about the way I approached error correction here? Why?

    a.2. Which techniques could have been more effective for error correction? Why?

    B. Second viewing: Teachers watch the video piece again to help better ground their observations, and to add any further observations they have been able to make.

2. Video analysis exercise.

    A. Reflection partners get together to :

        A.1. Set their focus of observation.

A.2. Watch their own and each other's videos, and write down observations.

A.3. Discuss observations.

A.4. Air possibilities for future classes based on the observations made.

3. **Video analysis and class observation - comparison of results.**

A.Teachers will reflect on what different perspectives were touched by one way (class observation) and the other (video observation).

B. Share learnings with the group.

4. **Homework.**

A. Observe one of your partner's classes.

B. Record the class observed in an audio cassette.

5. **Feedback.**

Teachers answer the questions below orally, after having reflected on it: "What are you taking with you from today's class?"

"How can videoing your classes be useful to you?"

PLAN FOR DAY 1

5. Community Building. Help student teachers develop a sense of appreciation for their peers and their background experience by developing a keener skill in listening to one another.

6. Learning/Teaching experiences. Promote opportunities for student teachers to draw on their own experiences and acknowledge them as powerful determiners of present action.

7. Learning/Teaching assumptions. Give participants an opportunity to come to grips with their own beliefs by having them explicitly word them.

8. Reflective Teaching theory. Introduce participants to the theory on which reflective teaching is fundamented, as well as the process of reflection and reflection tools.

     Activities:

6. Active Listening/Understanding Responses

1.4   Learning/Teaching experiences:

h. Instructor explains what active listening is and how they can benefit from practicing it.

i. Instructor models.

j. Pairs practice it by talking about their last vacation.

k. Share (whole group).

l. Pairs practice active listening and giving understanding responses this time by talking about their own teaching and learning experiences.

m. Individually they freewrite into how they see these past experiences reflect on their present behavior.

n. Share findings (whole group).

1.5   Learning/Teaching assumptions:

      a. Pairs practice active listening and giving understanding responses by drawing on their own learning and teaching assumptions.

      b. Share findings (whole group).

1.6   Feedback on active listening.

Participants describe how they felt and how active listening and understanding responses helped them in the activities proposed.

7. Council (Reflective Teaching thoughts):

As a whole group, participants share what they think reflective teaching is, their expectations and goals.

8. Reflective Teaching theory - Instructor's presentation:

3.7   Dewey's outline of reflective teaching:

d) definition (see Zeichner and Liston, 1996, p.9). In short, consider the fact itself, what is behind it, and the outcome produced by it.

e) attitudes of openmindedness, responsibility, and wholeheartedness which require teachers to examine their teaching through different lenses, and question beliefs and practices (Dewey, 1933).

f) the role of intuition, emotion and passion (see Zeichner and Liston, 1996, p....)

3.8   Schön's contribution:

- reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action

3.9   Stanley's condensed work of Dewey and Schön (see Learning to Think, Feel and Teach Reflectively, Stanley.

3.10   Stanley's framework for teacher reflectivity (see A Framework for Teacher Reflectivity)

3.11   Reflection tools (see Richards and Lockhart, 1996, p. 6) Give general notions only.

3.12   Stress the importance of:

e) building a community of trust and respect;

f) developing non-judgmental minds;

g) listening to others and to one's own inner self;

h) Focus on the process, not on the outcomes.

9. For next meeting:

c) bring an object you treasure.

d) read Reflective Teaching – Zeichner and Liston, Introduction and Chapters 1 and 2.

      10.   Feedback:

          Orally as a group, participants report on how the first meeting was for them, what they felt, and give suggestions for next time.

Appendix 12

Lesson Plan for Day 6

MAING GOALS:

1. Video and class observation
2. Contrast live observation with video observation

Activities:

1. Warm-up.
2. Class observation – share with peers.
3. Video analysis:
   - model for exploring it;
   - trainees set focus on observation;
   - watch video and write down observations;
   - discuss observations;
   - plant future classes.
4. Video analysis and class observation contrast.
5. Homework: observe and to the radio recording of peer's class.
6. Feedback.

Appendix 13

Lesson Plan for Day 07

Participants get together to

1. Share learnings - What has changed?
2. Plan for the future - What next?
3. Celebrate progress - acknowledge growth due to individuals' efforts and investment.
4. Feedback - suggestions for future programs.

Appendix 14

Voices

By Wayne Johnson

JACK MILLETT

Jack Millet is a senior faculty member and teacher educator in the Master of Arts in Teaching program at the School for International Training (SIT) in Brattleboro, Vermont. Ha has been affiliated with SIT since 1971, when he received his Masters of Arts in Teaching. A teacher educator who has observed and trained teachers throughout the world for more than 25 years, he has played a major role in the development of the MAT program at SIT. Millett was interviewed about teacher education and related topics while doing teacher observations in Kyoto, Japan.

In the early 1970s, I studied at the School for International Training (SIT), and I have with the school ever since, though I left two times temporarily. Once was when I worked in Barcelona, Spain, in the mid-1970′s , teaching teachers about the Silent Way. Then, in 1981, I came to Japan for 2 years and directed the language program at Procter & Gamble. I supported the teachers, did some teaching, and observed some of the instructors who were working there – they were rather special: Donald Freeman, Kathleen Graves, and Alice Hinds. In Japan, I also taught courses related to teacher training in the Silent Way at the Center for Language Learning, in Osaka. I have been back at SIT since 1983, working in the MAT program.

When training teachers, I feel a main goal is to shift a teacher's attention from the material she is using in class to the students. The key os ti help teachers tune in to the energy of the students, to tune in to their learning. I think it is an essential step for anyone who wants to transform his or her teaching and energize it, but for some reason, most teachers do not naturally think about it.

I find that some instructors are sensitive to students, but they do not put them at the center of teaching and make learning the focus of teaching. They are not in tune with what the students are doing at each moment. Their awareness of students is somewhat on the periphery rather than at the center of their teaching. Instructors often put lots of energy into wonderful, creative activities, and they focus on curriculum or interesting communicative situations, but they are not looking to see what the students are doing, what the students can or cannot do. They are not looking at how they can help students do the activity better. Because teachers are not looking carefully at the students and assessing skills, they are simply moving students through activities, assuming they are learning. Teachers usually are not asking themselves important questions such as "What is the interaction within this activity telling me? What are the students actually doing? Are the students using language more effectively at the end of the activity than they were at the beginning? How can I help them improve on the language required by this activity?"

It is important for teachers to design activities during which they can see what the students can or cannot do in whatever realm they have chosen and, based on that observation and assessment, to design the next activity. In this way, students can experience the feeling of success, master something, and then move on from there. But that is not what I see most of

the teachers I work with doing. First, teachers have to look at the purpose of the activity and ask themselves what they want the students to do at the end of an activity and why. Second, what have they mapped out to get them there? Third, how are they assessing this learning, attitude, and participation?

I see a lot of classes where everyone is involved and interested, but at the end of it the students cannot do anything they could not have done at the beginning. There is no difference – they cannot use the language any better than they could at the outset. So what did the activity do? It was fun, everybody was interested, and they had a good time, but did they learn anything? During these activities, the teacher should tune in to or focus on the students' learning. When they do that, teachers begin to see that if they want to improve their teaching and become more aware of the learning, eventually they have to work on themselves.

Those are the two places – focusing on the learning rather than teaching and working on oneself – that I emphasize the most. Basically, the boundary of teaching is not just the classroom because that a teacher is a human being, the same human being in a teaching role as in any other role the teacher might have. If teachers want to be more sensitive in their teaching, then they must also work on themselves. If they wish to be more nonjudgmental in the classroom, then they have to work on themselves as human beings who are being more nonjudgmental. It does not just apply to the classroom. The key is to hear something and accept it and then to respond to it in a way that makes sense. But what I think happens sometimes is that teachers see something and automatically hit the reaction button so that their reaction comes out of patterns and biases that they have – it is sort of an habitual thing that involves being judgmental. One

way to look at this is to separate reacting and responding. A reaction is like the snap of one's fingers, an automatic type of response that does not have any assessment or thought to it. What I emphasize is assessing the situation and giving space so that one can respond to really serve the learning rather than serve a need to react.

One of the things that I find often happens when the teachers start watching the learner is that they shift away from simply reacting to the student – for example, saying to themselves "He or she is slow", "They didn't sleep last night", and the like. But once teachers shift to watching the learning, often what happens is that they go back to themselves and ask, "How can I fix this?" or "How can I adjust this?" In this case, teachers may see that the activity did not work because they did not set it up in a way for it to be successful. After asking theses questions, a new type of awareness comes into play, a kind of thinking that was not there before. Sometimes teachers go back, look, and realize that it was not them, it was what the student was doing; it is not what they have to adjust, it is what the student has to adjust. It is a movement back and forth.

There are different ways to reflect in teaching. In one, you design the lesson, do the lesson, stop, and then afterwards, think back and say, "Oh, I did this, and I could have done that!" But over time, you develop your skill so that you notice something happening during a lesson right in the moment that it is occurring and also observe your responses. One goal is to be able to modify their responses as they occur. What I think often happens is that teachers get in touch with their habits and patterns in their lives that are reactive patterns, that are so habitual they do not even seem to control them. When they start noticing this, then I think people say to themselves, "I want to change that. I don't want to be this way; I want to shift or modify

my behavior in some way". To do this teachers have to start working on themselves. Then their teaching will shift during this process. There are many aspects of teacher education that we can talk about, but these are what I think lie at the heart of the matter.

Another core element of teaching education is becoming more and more able to respond in ways that really are useful for serving that person and serving oneself. When teachers become more aware of their responses, their teaching becomes more learning centered (as opposed to learner centered) in the sense that it is looking at what the person is doing. What I observe is that sometimes *learner centered* means I need to know the history of this person, I need to know about his or her life, and I need to be sensitive. Rather, by being learning centered, I am watching what that person is doing in this activity that has been designed and observing what is happening regarding their learning, their participation. I don't need a lot of information about that person. So I have, you could say, shifted it to the learner rather than activities.

Teachers cannot be planning their next class or be preoccupied with what they are going to do next and still be present and watching what is happening. Teachers put themselves right there in that moment with what is happening. As teachers develop skills in creating and presenting language, a lot of their work is no longer concerned with materials but rather with being more fully present and able to respond to students so that teachers can take their ego out of the picture as much as possible. I usually end up practicing or fine-tuning this skill in meditation. Then I walk back into the classroom with a different skill of being able to hear and be there with what is going on with the class. Aside from meditation I think there are many ways people can learn more about presence. Some people can do it through running.

Others do it through gardening or listening to music. But what one should do is to take this experience and really appreciate it for what is and know that it is special. My sense is that if a teacher becomes more present in one thing, for example, running, gardening, playing guitar, the sensitive can be taken into other parts of life. And then to change one's teaching one needs to ask, "What do I need to do? How do I need to watch myself?"

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